

Thesis or Dissertation Final Checklist

This checklist emphasizes many of the formatting concerns relevant to thesis and dissertation preparation. However, it highlights important material contained in the *Thesis Formatting Manual*. It is not a substitute for use of the *Thesis Formatting Manual*. TAMIU's Advancing Research and Curriculum Grant program, through the TAMIU Graduate School office, provides both guides and a template for creating your thesis, and we suggest that you use those. Please submit all required forms to your committee chair to be further submitted to the proper departments of your college's Dean, and the College of Arts and Sciences Office of the Dean. For additional help and resources, contact the TAMIU Writing Consultant at ARC, at writingconsultant@tamiu.edu.

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General Concerns

- Have you checked for uniform typeface (font and point size) and vertical spacing in the text?
- Have you checked for uniform text justification style? Text may should be consistently left aligned throughout the manuscript, except for headings, which are center aligned. The Title page, the Approval page, the Table of Contents, and subheadings, which follow their own alignment rules.
- Does all the text exist within the prescribed margins? Left, right, top and bottom margins should be 1". Are all page numbers in the top right corner? (Page numbers should be approximately ½" from the top edge of the paper and 1" from the right edge).
- Have you spell checked the entire document? Also, have you checked all titles that are in capital letters for correct spelling? (Spell check does not always pick up errors in words in all capital letters.)
- Have you checked for correct grammar? Once you submit your manuscript, there can be no further corrections. The only changes will be formatting corrections come from the College of Arts and Sciences Deans Office and the TAMIU Graduate School.
- Are all manuscript equations the same font and point size as the text as each other?
- Are the pages numbered correctly with the preliminary pages? Title page, Copyright page (optional), and Approval page have no page numbers. Page numbers begin with Abstract (either iii or iv) and Roman numerals continue until Chapter 1 or the first section begins, after which, all pages are numbered with Arabic numbers (beginning with 1).
- Has any of the material in your thesis been published previously? If so, check with the Graduate School for instructions.

PDF Conversion

- Have you converted your final draft into a PDF to submit to the Graduate School?
- Have you opened your PDF file before submitting (checking to be sure the file is not

empty)? Does the author and title listed in the PDF properties indicate your name and manuscript title?

- Are all fonts embedded?
- Is security turned off?
- Is your PDF searchable? Open the pdf in “Adobe.” In the pdf you want to edit, click “Tools” in the menu bar and select “Recognize Text.” This will open the Recognize Text panel in the right pane. Click “In This File” and select “PDF Output Style Searchable Image” from the text options. Configure the settings based on the number of pages in your PDF and then click “OK.” This will place an invisible text layer over the image and create a searchable PDF file. Click “Save” to save the changes to your PDF. This helps find words in your document.
- Are pages in the PDF 8.5” x 11”?
- Does the PDF file open to the first (Title) page of the thesis?
- Is lettering in figures at least 1.5 mm?
- Are page numbers on landscape figures in the portrait position?
- LaTeX users—does thesis appear fuzzy on the monitor?

Preliminary Pages

Follow the *Thesis Manual* sample pages very carefully. For examples with spacing, especially the Title page and Approval page, print and physically place your draft page on top of the sample (ARC Writing Consultant webpage document “Thesis Template”). Make sure all major division headings are placed in all caps and centered at the top of each division start after the Abstract (e.g. ABSTRACT, DEDICATION, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, TABLE OF CONTENTS, etc.).

- Title page – Does the vertical alignment match? Does the title of the manuscript match exactly across your Title, Approval and Abstract pages? Title should be all uppercase, centered, and double spaced with no punctuation. The date on the title page must be the month and year of your degree award date; degrees are only awarded in May, August, or December.
- Copyright page (Optional) – Recommended but optional. Unnumbered page, if present. Does it follow the Title page and precede the Approval page?
- Approval page – Is everything spelled correctly? Correct date of graduation? Are the names of committee members correct, with no titles (i.e. Dr., Professor, Mr./Mrs./Mx., etc.) listed for any individual? The date on the approval page must be the month and year of your degree award date; degrees are only awarded in May, August, or December.
- Abstract – Does this have the page number in the top right? Is it the very first page using a page number? Is it properly page iii (or iv)? Is the title of your thesis in upper and lower case letters? Does the vertical spacing of the preliminary lines match the vertical spacing of the text? Is the Abstract’s body text 350 words or less?
- Dedication (Optional) – This section is optional. Is it limited to a single page?
- Acknowledgements (Optional) – This section is optional. Is it the required four pages or fewer?
- Table of Contents – Is there consistent vertical spacing? Consistent capitalization? Are all

page numbers correct? Are all major division and subheading level 1 titles included in the Table of Contents? Does the word ‘Page’ (and, if needed, ‘CHAPTER’) appear on continuing pages? Do all chapter titles and subheadings agree with text EXACTLY? Does the spelling of acknowledgements match on the TOC and on the Acknowledgement page, if included? **If you recently edited your paper, did you make sure to check to ensure all pages remain correct in the TOC?**

- **List of Figures/Tables** – Is there consistent vertical spacing? Consistent capitalization? Are all page numbers correct? Do the titles EXACTLY match the wording of the titles in the text (up to the first period)? If both pages are used, does the List of Figures come before List of Tables?

Manuscript Text

The subheading organization must be consistent and coherent throughout the entire thesis. A first level subheading must appear before a second level subheading. Do not omit a level. In addition:

- Are all chapter or major division/section titles in all capital letters and centered, but not in bold?
- (For Section Style theses and dissertations) Does the first major section title include the word ‘Introduction’? Does the last major section title include the word ‘Summary’ and/or ‘Conclusion’?
- (For Chapter Style theses and dissertations) Are all chapters numbered? Are they consistently, internally numbered? Do all chapters include both the title “CHAPTER #” and the title in the line beneath the indicated chapter?
- Does the wording of subheadings match the Table of Contents? Page numbers agree? Are all major headings and 1st level subheadings included on the Table of Contents?
- Is there a consistent capitalization format for subheadings?
- Have you checked to make sure the following requirements are met?
 - No punctuation after freestanding subheadings or major headings (section or chapter titles)
 - No centered, all capital letters for a subheading style
 - No subheadings as the last line on a page
- Do all new chapter titles or major section titles begin on a new page? (Note: Do not start a new page for subheadings.)
- Are all block or insert quotes single-spaced and indented using two “Tab” keystrokes?
- Is the model journal sentence at the bottom of page 1 of the text?
- Is the expression ‘et al.’ written correctly (no period after the ‘et’, period after ‘al.’)?

Tables and Figures

- Have you checked your journal for title positions (above or below the tables or figures)? Do not place titles beside tables or figures.
- Have you checked for first text mention of each table/figure? Each must be mentioned in sequence. Also, have you checked that each text mention is within 1- ½ pages of text before or on the first page of text after the table/figure?

- Have you checked for word agreement of the titles with the List of Figures/tables?
- In the List of Tables and Figures, have you checked that there are no words in figure column or page number column?
- Have you checked for consistent formatting of titles (including capitalization, vertical spacing of title and use of end punctuation)?
- Have you checked each table/figure for legibility and minimum size (capital letters and numbers may be no smaller than 1.5 mm)?
- Have you checked for at least a triple space (3 single spaces) separation from text for any embedded table or figure or between tables and figures?
- Are tables/figures that continue across multiple pages formatted according to *Thesis Formatting Manual* requirements? Do not repeat full title; only table/figure number and column headings.

References

- Has the reference section been organized following your chosen journal style? Is it alphabetized within author, date in text? Is it numbered and non-alphabetized with reference numbers in sequence in the text?
- Have you followed your model journal in the use of italics, bold, underlining, parenthesis, quotes, etc.?
- Is each entry complete (for retrieval)?
- Is there consistent capitalization?
- Does this section include only sources actually referenced in the manuscript?
- Is each entry cited somewhere in the document?
- Do all text citations agree with information in the reference section?

Appendix Material

- Are appendix designations and titles in all capital letters with a double space between them?
- Is all material within the appendix legible and large enough (1.5 mm is the minimum height for capital letters and numbers)?
- Does each appendix page have a page number (continuously numbered from text)?

Vita

- Is this the final page of your manuscript?
- Is the same font and point size as the manuscript text used?
- Does the form of your name agree with the name on the first three pages of your thesis?
- Is your educational background (degree, university, major subject and year for each previous degree) included? **Do not include your in-progress degree (the degree you are earning by completing this Thesis or Dissertation).**
- Is the Vita confined to one page?
- Have you avoided giving personal information that you do not want on the Internet?