

GSBS GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF THE THESIS OR DISSERTATION

[Updated 09/28/16]

*(The term “thesis” is used throughout this document
but the guidelines apply to both theses and dissertations)*

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

The three most basic requirements for preparation of the thesis are:

1. The thesis must be an original document written by the student.
2. The thesis must be clearly written, grammatically correct and free of typographical errors.
3. Students may not simply bind their publications together in lieu of writing a thesis, but material from their previous publications or the work of others may be included if it meets the guidelines below.

Students are encouraged to contact Brenda Gaughan in the Deans’ Office well in advance of submitting the thesis if they have questions.

Inclusion of material previously published by the student

The spirit of the thesis is that it is the student’s own work, which can be tricky in this age of team science. Work taken from publications authored or co-authored by the student may be included in the thesis, but the following rules apply:

- Keep in mind that the student’s Advisor will be asked to attest on the *Results of Defense* form that the student contributed substantially to any text or figures included in the thesis.
- If the thesis includes text or a figure which is part of the student’s publication but the work was done by someone other than the student, permission must be obtained from the individual and explicitly noted (e.g., “Used with permission...”) in the text or figure legend, as appropriate, and the role played by the other individual must also be clearly acknowledged in the text/figure legend.
- The *Introduction* (first chapter) and *Discussion* (last chapter) of the thesis must be the student’s own work and not taken verbatim from any publication. With permission from GSBS, an exception to this policy is made for text written exclusively by the student as part of a review article on which the student is the primary author. In that case, the work may be used in the *Introduction*. The *Introduction* and *Discussion* should provide a global view of the student’s work, including a discussion of “Future Directions” in the final chapter.
- *Materials and Methods* and *Results* sections may include text and figures taken verbatim from the student’s previously published work. The complete reference and permission of the copyright holder to use the material must be cited.
- Students may use their publication(s) to form the basis of a chapter(s) -- the following rules apply:
 - Note at the start of the chapter “This chapter is based upon (insert full citation)” and cite the permission of the copyright holder (usually the publisher of the journal) using the language provided by the journal.
 - The text must be modified to the same style as the rest of the thesis – there should be good continuity (i.e., flow) between all chapters of the thesis and between each section of a chapter.

- It is permissible to include text from the publication's *Introduction* and *Discussion* in the chapter (note that this is different from the *Introduction* and *Discussion* of the thesis, which must be the student's own work and not taken verbatim from any publication, as mentioned above).
- The student is responsible for obtaining any necessary permission that is required to use previously published work. Journals' websites will likely provide specific guidance for obtaining such permission. Please note that this process may take several weeks.

Inclusion of the published work of others

- Textual material taken from publications **not** authored by the student may be included if it is indented 1/2 inch from the left margin, single-spaced, and properly referenced at the end of the text and in the bibliography.
- Any reproduced text should generally be limited and have a clear purpose other than substituting for text that would normally be expected to be written by the author of an original thesis.
- Figures from the work of others may also be included if clearly indicated and referenced in the figure legend.
- The student is responsible for obtaining any necessary permission to use figures or text from the copyright owner and submitting it along with the thesis.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE THESIS

1. Approval Sheet (follow [this format](#) exactly)
2. Title Page (follow [this format](#) exactly)
3. Copyright*
4. Dedication*
5. Acknowledgments*
6. Abstract (follow [this format](#) exactly)
7. Table of Contents (include titles of sections and page numbers where contents may be found – include all pages in the thesis, including the front pages, i.e., Approval Sheet, Title Page, etc.)
8. List of Illustrations (separate page from the Table of Contents; include Figure #, titles of figures, and page numbers where figures may be found)
9. List of Tables (separate page from the Table of Contents; include Table #, titles of tables, and page numbers where tables may be found)
10. Abbreviations*
11. Text
12. Appendix*
13. Bibliography (start on a new page)
14. Vita (start on a new page and follow [this format](#) exactly)

*Optional -- not all theses contain these items

PAPER

The final thesis submitted to GSBS must be printed on good quality, white paper, such as copier paper. Expensive bond paper is unnecessary. The standard sheet size is 8½ x 11 inches.

MARGINS

The left margin must be at least 1.25 inches, and the top, bottom and right margins at least 0.8 inch. Margins should be consistent throughout. The left margin is most critical since that is the side of the document where binding takes place. If a figure does not fit unless the right margin is less than 0.8 inches, that is OK.

TEXT

The text must be double-spaced. The first line of each paragraph should be indented 6 to 8 spaces.

TITLE

It is best to keep the thesis title concise because long titles are difficult to fit onto the spine of the bound thesis. A maximum of 100 characters/spaces is recommended.

FONT

The font size should be 11 or 12. Print should be dark black characters that are clear, e.g., Times Roman, Courier or Arial. Once a font style is chosen, be consistent -- all text in the thesis should be of the same style and size.

PAGE NUMBERING

- Be sure to count every sheet even if it has only one word on it.
- No page number should appear on the *Approval Sheet* or the *Title Page*, although both should be included in the count
- After the *Title Page*, all pages should be numbered as follows:
 - Preliminary pages should be numbered in lowercase Roman numerals; Arabic numerals should be used beginning with the first page of text.
 - The page that follows the title page is iii (e.g., *Copyright, Dedication, etc.*).
 - The text beginning with the Introduction should begin on page 1.
 - Page numbers should be placed at least one-half inch from the top or bottom and right edges of the page or in the bottom, center of the page. Once the location of page numbers is chosen, be consistent -- the page number should be in the same location for all pages in the thesis.
 - Figure pages need not be numbered but should be included in the count. If not numbered on page, put the page number lightly on the back in pencil in case the final hard copy of the thesis gets out of order.

TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

- Tables and figures are to fit within the limits of the page margins described above.
- Figures and photographs should be publication-quality.
- Each figure and table should appear at the point at which it is discussed for the first time.
- Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively and each should have a unique number. There should be only one Figure 1 in your thesis!

- Do **not** put all figures together at the end (or the beginning) of the thesis as is done, for example, in the preparation of manuscripts for journal publication.
- If a figure or table is small, it may be placed on a page along with text. However, figures should not be reduced just to fit within a text page, and all details of the figure must be legible. The figure legend font should be the same as the text font.
- Figure legends may be placed in one of four ways:
 - on the page preceding the illustration
 - on the same page below the illustration
 - opposite the illustration (since thesis must be printed on one side only, this will make the page preceding the figure appear to be blank, i.e., the legend is printed on the "back"; note that, in this arrangement, the 1.25 inch binding margin must be on the **right** side of the legend page), or
 - on the page behind the figure.

REFERENCES

- References for all chapters must be placed in a single group at the end of the thesis in the *Bibliography*.
- Reference style can be in any style approved for use in scientific journals but should include the names of all authors, the title of the paper, journal name, volume, inclusive page numbers, and year of the journal. (In Endnotes, the *Journal of Immunology* format provides all of the required information.)
- **Provide all authors' names -- do not use "et al."!**
- References must be double-spaced just like the rest of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The abstract should be a concise statement of the nature and content of the thesis, describing its significance as a piece of research. It should be a continuous summary, not disconnected notes or an outline, and it may not exceed 350 words in length. The title must be the same as that of the finished thesis.

Dissertation abstracts only: Submit one extra copy of the abstract with the dissertation (be sure to use the student's full, legal name).

ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION OF DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

- The final version of the thesis (approved by the Advisory Committee) will be published in electronic format on the Digital Commons of the Texas Medical Center Library.
- This service is provided free of charge to GSBS students and allows free public access and download ability. Full instructions on uploading the thesis to the Digital Commons will be provided with the GSBS exit paperwork.
- At the student's request, embargo (delay) of the Digital Commons publication for a period of up to one year can be permitted in order to protect patent or other rights.

- Because electronic publication constitutes publication, students will be held fully responsible for the use of any copyrighted material in their manuscripts. Accordingly, all candidates for degrees are hereby cautioned that they must obtain written permission for the use of any copyrighted material in their dissertations.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

- <http://www.copyright.com/>

This site makes it easy for you to get permission to use a previously published figure. Just create an account and request the journal/year/number of figures, and the software will generate a license number. There's no charge for the service as long as you indicate that you want to use the figure in your thesis (otherwise, there's a fee).

- <http://www.iThenticate.com>

This is an anti-plagiarism site similar to Turnitin except that it is free to MD Anderson employees (including GSBS students at UTHealth). Gain access through MDACC's Research Medical Library link. UTHealth students need to contact rml-help@mdanderson.org to request remote access to the library and to create an iThenticate account. Be sure to identify yourself as a GSBS student.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR CREATING THE TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Use a Word template to create your "Table of Contents" instead of doing it manually
- You will find easy-to-understand instruction videos on YouTube