

THESIS GUIDE

2024-2025



GRADUATE SCHOOL
JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Introduction



This Guide is designed to aid the graduate student choosing the Thesis Option in the preparation of an acceptable manuscript and to serve as a procedural handbook for required steps leading to final approval of the thesis by the Dean of the Graduate School.

This Guide contains general requirements pertaining to style, organization, format, and reproduction which apply to all theses at Jacksonville State University. Documentation for references, footnotes, bibliographies and reference lists should be prepared according to the most recent APA style format or if approved, the prominent style format preference of the student's field of study. It is the student's responsibility to receive approval from his/her major professor for the documentation style to be used and should be submitted to the Graduate Dean. Previously bound or online theses should not be used as basic guides for preparing current manuscripts because they may reflect obsolete standards and/or unacceptable deviations.

It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with the thesis chair and committee members and adhere to all deadlines for submission. Published deadlines can be found on the Graduate School website. Deadlines, as well as a helpful timeline for the thesis process, has been included within this guide for your convenience. For questions concerning the thesis process or guidelines, please contact Ashlee Hanvey at ahanvey@jsu.edu, 256-782-5764.



Standards for Theses

The thesis must reflect original research and/or creative activity. This scholarly document will demonstrate the student's ability to:

- Select a topic which can be studied in terms of time, equipment needs and experimental population or information available.
- Receive approval of a topic by the student's Thesis Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School.
- Analysis of existing literature for relevant studies and material on the topic of choice.
- Obtain, organize and analyze data and information that is available, using logical and/or statistical analyses appropriate for the project.
- Integrate, in a meaningful way, the findings into the greater body of existing knowledge and state its significance.
- Present a manuscript in an accepted format to the satisfaction of the Thesis Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School.
- Online submission of the approved final version of the thesis to JSU Digital Commons.



Change from Thesis Option to Non-Thesis Option

If a student wishes to change from Thesis Option to Non-Thesis Option, then the student must complete the Request to Change form to notify their chairperson and the Graduate School.

Students who change from the Thesis Option to the Non-Thesis Option and have completed their first 599 thesis course may apply it towards degree completion. The second 599 course cannot be applied towards degree completion and will need to be replaced with other relevant coursework.



Research Approval



Institutional Research Approval

If a student proposes to conduct research that involves human subjects, the student must receive approval from the University Institutional Review Board for Human Use (IRB). Students will receive direction from the Graduate School regarding the IRB approval process.



Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee

The IACUC is required for institutions of higher education when research involves live vertebrate animals. The research is covered under the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals which is under the provision of the Health Research Extension Act (HREA, 198) (Public Law 99-158). The Office of Sponsored Programs oversees and manages the IACUC committee and send protocols to the committee for review.



Preparation

Thesis Committee



When a student selects the Thesis Option, a three-member Thesis Committee is to be established for each student. The members of the committee may be appointed by the department head from the graduate faculty in the student's major field. One member of the Thesis Committee will serve as the student's major professor and chair of the committee. It is the responsibility of the major professor to convene the Thesis Committee to discuss any aspect of research progress or thesis preparation. In some instances, members may be named from outside the institution, with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. These persons from outside the institution serve in addition to the three members from the institution.

Members of the Thesis Committee have the responsibility of requiring the student to prepare a thesis that meets the appropriate standards of scholarship and academic rigor before final approval is submitted to the Graduate School.

Thesis Course Work



Prior to enrolling in the first three semester hours of thesis, a student choosing the Thesis Option must submit a Thesis Option form approved by the student's Thesis Committee to the Graduate School. The [Thesis Option](#) form is available online.

Prior to completing the first three semester hours of thesis, a student choosing the Thesis Option must submit a Prospectus for Thesis form approved by the student's Thesis Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School. The [Prospectus for Thesis](#) form is available online.



Draft Preparation



The student and the thesis committee will decide the appropriate timetable for the draft(s) of the thesis. The student will research and prepare a draft copy under the guidance of the student's major professor. Following the initial review and approval by the major professor, the student will submit a copy to the members of the Thesis Committee, as well as the Graduate School for external review. The first approval draft must be complete prior to submission to the Graduate School. Any document submitted that is incomplete will be returned which may delay the student's ability to move forward with finalizing their manuscript within the identified term. The Thesis Committee may recommend further work or revision on the manuscript or may indicate that it is ready for oral examination. Feedback from the external reviewer must also be reviewed and discussed between the student and the major professor. Once the committee approves the final draft, the Thesis Defense may be scheduled. The student must notify the Graduate School of the date, time, and location two weeks prior to defense by submitting the [Defense Announcement form](#).

Thesis Course Work



Each member of the Thesis Committee must receive a copy of the chair approved draft within four weeks of the start of the second 599. The Graduate School must also receive a copy of the chair approved draft to submit for external review. Deadlines for submitting a chair approved draft to the Graduate School can be found on the [Graduate School website](#). All documents must be submitted using the [First Draft Submission Form](#).

External Review



All chair approved drafts submitted to the Graduate School will be assigned to an external reader for review. This review includes evaluation of grammar, clarity, and conciseness as well as academic rigor.

When editorial changes are so extensive that the quality of the thesis is compromised, the document will be returned for a more thorough review and edit by the student and the committee.



Thesis Defense

A student anticipating completion of the thesis, and therefore graduation, should submit an Application for Graduation by the due dates for that semester. Due dates for the current and upcoming semester can be found on the [Graduate School website](#). A \$50 non-refundable degree fee is charged each time a student submits the Application for Graduation. If a student fails to graduate in the semester stated on the Application for Graduation, then the student will be required to submit a new Application for Graduation by the due dates for a future semester and pay the additional degree fee.

The Thesis Defense is scheduled after arrangement of a mutually convenient time for committee members. Notices are then distributed by the student's committee chair and students must notify the Graduate School by submitting [Defense Announcement Form](#). The defense must be scheduled so that the student meets the deadlines for final submission per the Graduate School.

At the Thesis Defense, the thesis will be reviewed carefully, and the student will be required to defend the work, including objectives, methodology, results, and conclusions.

On the basis of this defense, the committee will either approve or disapprove the document as submitted. The committee chair is responsible for notating the approval or disapproval on the electronic [Final Thesis Approval Form](#). All committee members must sign agreeing to the indicated outcome.

In the event that the committee disapproves the document, the reasons should be communicated to the student for action. The committee will indicate further research required and/or revisions needed for approval. The committee may require another defense, or it may approve the thesis after revisions without an additional defense. Approval of the thesis must be by unanimous vote of the committee members. Any student failing to successfully defend their thesis will have one additional attempt. Failure to successfully pass the defense in the second attempt will result in the student failing to graduate.



Final Approval



Once a student successfully passes the Thesis Defense and completes corrections/changes from the thesis committee and the Graduate School, the student will be instructed to upload the thesis to JSU Digital Commons by the required deadline. Failure to meet this deadline may result in delaying the student's graduation until a subsequent semester. The student and the thesis committee have the primary responsibility for writing, editing, proofing, and following the appropriate style manual for the thesis.

The purpose of the final approval by the Graduate School is to provide a final evaluation of each thesis as a degree requirement and before it is submitted for publication. This thorough review will concentrate on the student's understanding of and skill in:

1. Use of APA style manual or, if approved, the style manual of the student's field of study particularly as pertains to referencing;
2. Compliance with copyright regulations; and
3. Conformity to the JSU Thesis Guide.

Information concerning dates for submission of final approvals and completion of graduation requirements in a given semester is located online on the [Graduate School Website](#).



Submission to Jax State Digital Commons

Submission to Digital Commons

Upon final approval from the Graduate School, students will be notified via email that their final document should be submitted to JSU Digital Commons. A step-by-step guide will be provided at that time to assist with this process. Students will not be cleared to graduate until this process is complete.



Copyright Information

A thesis may be protected from unauthorized copying by means of copyright. To make notice of copyright, it is necessary only that a copyright page be inserted. This page is worded as follows: (Example)

@1988 (current year)
YOUR NAME IN CAPITAL LETTERS
All rights reserved

A student may personally register a copyright of the thesis with the Copyright Office.

Information may be obtained through the University Library or through the Register of Copyright, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559.

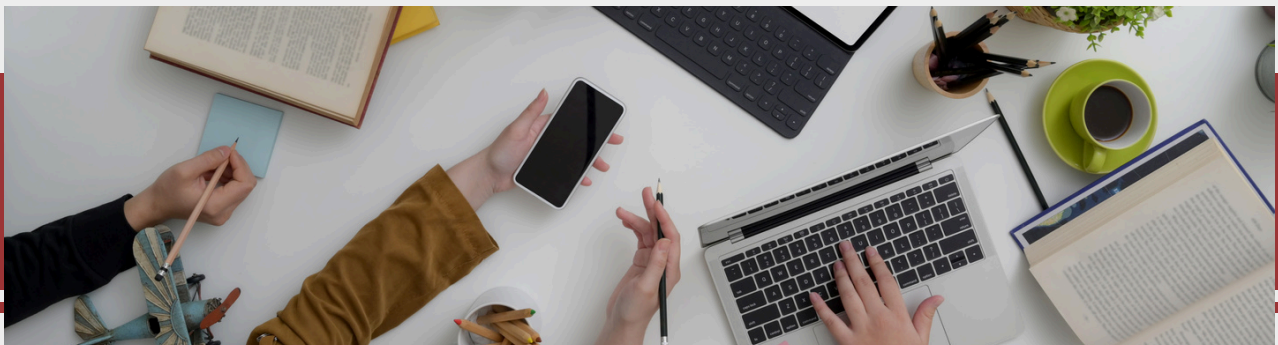


Organization

The thesis is divided into three parts: prefatory materials, text, and reference material. These should not be formatted using chapters. Instead, students should follow the traditional formatting found in scholarly journals: Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Conclusion.

All theses must be assembled in the following order:

- Final Thesis Approval Page
- Title Page
- Copyright Page (if applicable)
- Abstract
- Acknowledgment Page (if applicable)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- List of Figures
- Preface (if applicable)
- Text (to be arranged in accordance with the format of APA style manual or if approved the scholarly journal in the student's field)
- Documentation (footnotes, etc., according to the format of a style manual or scholarly journal in the student's field)
- References (according to the format of APA style manual or scholarly journal in the student's field)
- Appendices (research approval, copyright approval, etc.)



Organization: Prefatory Material

Final Thesis Approval Page

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The final thesis approval page is the first page of the thesis. It is not numbered; however, it is understood to be page Roman numeral one when totaling the number of pages for the abstract.

Names and signatures of all committee members and the Dean of the Graduate School must be included. The final electronic document can be downloaded upon completion of the form routing process.

Title Page

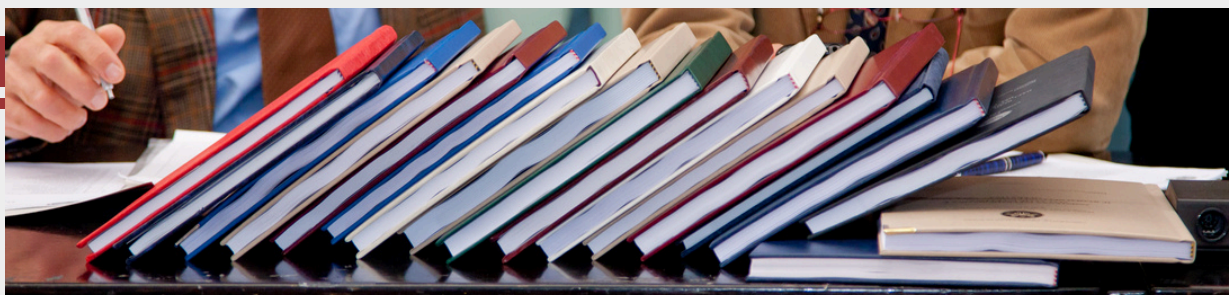
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The title page is not numbered; however, it is understood to be page Roman numeral two when tabulating the total number of pages for the abstract. The title page has three sections: the title of the thesis, the author's name and the submission statement. If two or more lines are needed for the title, they should be double-spaced. Example

The author's full name should be used. The submission statement should read exactly as Example 2, filling in the appropriate degree and the date of graduation.

Special attention should be given to titling the paper. Modern retrieval systems use the words in the title to locate the subject of theses. In order for the subject to be located easily, the title must be a meaningful description of the content. Avoid oblique reference, and the use of word substitutes, formulas, symbols, superscripts, subscripts, and Greek letters.





Copyright Page

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The copyright page is blocked and double-spaced. Copyright information is typed just above the bottom margin of the page. The copyright page is numbered Roman Numeral iii. Example

Abstract

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The abstract is a concise summary that is separate from and independent of the text. It should be constructed with the purpose of reporting only the essential characteristics of the study. Regardless of the field, the abstract should describe the problem, procedure or method, results, and conclusions. Abstracts of experimental research studies should contain statements of the problem, methods, and results. In behavioral research the numbers and kinds of subjects should be indicated. References should not be included in the abstract. Example

The total number of typed pages includes both the Roman (prefatory) and Arabic (text) numbers. The abstract is limited to two pages, continues the Roman numeral sequence and is headed ABSTRACT.

Acknowledgements

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Inclusion of this section is optional. Any acknowledgment should be expressed simply and tactfully. Only the persons and institutions that have rendered non-routine aid should be recognized. It is appropriate for you to acknowledge the help of your Thesis Committee as well as selected others. If included, this page is numbered in Roman numerals. Example



Table of Contents

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• • • • •

The Table of Contents must accurately reflect the outline and organization of the thesis. It continues the Roman numeral page numbering sequence. Each title is followed by a row of periods leading to a column close to the right-hand margin containing each page number. The word "Page" should appear as the heading to the column of page numbers on the right side of the page. (See Example 6) The Table of Contents should start with the Table of Contents and should show all major and at least primary subheadings exactly as they appear in the text. Example

Lists of tables, lists of figures, section headings, references and appendix are written in title case. If an entry is longer than one line, it should be single spaced, with double spacing between entries.

List of Tables

• • • • •
• • • • •

The List of Tables should immediately follow the Table of Contents and continue the Roman numeral sequence. The word "Page" should appear as the heading of the column of page numbers on the right side of the page. Tables should be numbered consecutively throughout the text in Arabic numerals. Example

List of Figures

• • • • •
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All illustrative materials other than tables are considered figures, including charts, graphs, drawings, photographs, or formulas. The List of Figures follows the List of Tables and the page should follow the same format. Figures should be numbered consecutively throughout the text in Arabic numerals. Example



Organization: Manuscript Body

Text

The first page of the manuscript is numbered with the Arabic 1 and all subsequent pages, including the reference and appendices, are numbered with Arabic numerals. Each major division is numbered consecutively with a Roman numeral. The main text should be double spaced with each division beginning on a new page. Subdivisions within a division do not begin on a new page unless the preceding page is filled.

Aspects of the internal organization of the manuscript not covered in this Guide (including headings, subheadings, tables, figures, footnotes, references, and appendices) should be consistent with APA style, or if approved, the prominent style of the student's field of study or profession.

Reference Materials

All theses must include references to document the text. The heading used should be consistent with APA style, or if approved, the prominent style of the student's field of study or profession. Only works cited within the body of the manuscript should appear in the reference list.

Appendices

Appendices consist of material related to the text but not suitable for inclusion in it, such as lengthy tables, figures, documents, computer printouts, etc. Appendices should be labeled alphabetically and each should have a descriptive title. Each appendix with its title should be listed in the Table of Contents. Refer to each appendix in an appropriate place in the text. Photographic reduction of material to conform to margin requirements is permitted if the material remains clear and legible.

Illustrative Materials

Drawings, figures, tables, graphs, photographs, maps, and all other illustrative materials may be included only if they are high quality and the author holds copyright permission. Proof of copyright permission must be provided to the Graduate School for protected images or content prior to final approval.





Formation Requirements & Pagination

Prefatory Pages

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The approval page and title page are not numbered, but are understood to be pages i and ii. Thus, numbering begins with the copyright page (iii). All following prefatory pages are numbered consecutively in small Roman numerals on the right hand side at the top of the paper.

Text

.

The body of the manuscript should be numbered in Arabic numerals. Page numbers must be placed as defined by APA style manual or if approved, the prominent style of the student's field of study or profession. Pages for tables and figures are treated just as the regular text.

Margins

.

One-inch margins are used for the entirety of the document.

Spacing

.

Double: The text of the thesis is to be double-spaced and should not include additional spacing between lines and paragraphs.

Single: Single spacing should be used for block indented quotations of at least four lines. Additional guidance for block quotes can be found in the most recent APA style guide.



Preparation for Final Document

Submission to Digital Commons

As a graduation requirement, all JSU graduate students completing a thesis must submit their final version of their document to the Houston Cole Library for archiving. Submission is in a digital format through an online system, [JSU Digital Commons](#).

This digital version of the student's thesis will be the official version of record, made publicly accessible, and permanently retained by the library.

The step-by-step submission guide will be provided via email upon the Graduate School's receipt of the signed Thesis Approval form and following the completion of the final review process. Students must complete the JSU Digital Commons submission process in order to be cleared to graduate.

Abbreviations and Names

Abbreviations should be prepared according to APA style, or if approved, the prominent style of the student's field of study or profession. This can be ascertained by examination of style manuals and periodicals in the student's field of study.

Use of Copyright Materials

Students must be careful when using copyrighted materials not to violate the rights of the copyright owners. Students may generally make limited use of short passages from copyrighted materials if they give proper credit to the owner of the copyright. Extensive use of copyrighted materials, however, requires that the student obtain permission from the author or the publisher of the copyrighted materials. Obtaining permission and any payment or compensation required, is the responsibility of the student. If permission is obtained, a letter of release from the copyright owner should be in the student's possession, and included as an appendix item prior to submission of the final document.



Due Dates



Fall 2024

October 2nd, 2024	1st submission of completed draft due to the Graduate School
October 4th, 2024	Graduate School deadline to submit document to the External Reviewer.
October 21st, 2024	External Reviewer comments and suggestions due back to students.
November 15th, 2024	Final drafts, with all edits finalized, due to Graduate School for review and approval.
November 20th, 2024	Electronic final approval forms with all signatures due to the Graduate School.
December 4th, 2024	Final Graduate School approval and Digital Commons instructions sent to student.
December 6th, 2024	Deadline for final approved documents to be submitted to Digital Commons.

Spring 2025

February 19th, 2025	1st submission of completed draft due to the Graduate School
February 21st, 2025	Graduate School deadline to submit document to the External Reviewer.
March 10th, 2025	External Reviewer comments and suggestions due back to students.
April 7th, 2025	Final drafts, with all edits finalized, due to Graduate School for review and approval.
April 9th, 2025	Electronic final approval forms with all signatures due to the Graduate School.
April 14th, 2025	Final Graduate School approval and Digital Commons instructions sent to student.
April 18th, 2025	Deadline for final approved documents to be submitted to Digital Commons.

Summer 2025

June 16th, 2025	1st submission of completed draft due to the Graduate School
June 18th, 2025	Graduate School deadline to submit document to the External Reviewer.
July 2nd, 2025	External Reviewer comments and suggestions due back to students.
July 28th, 2025	Final drafts, with all edits finalized, due to Graduate School for review and approval.
July 30th, 2025	Electronic final approval forms with all signatures due to the Graduate School.
August 1st, 2024	Final Graduate School approval and Digital Commons instructions sent to student.
August 4th, 2024	Deadline for final approved documents to be submitted to Digital Commons.

Roadmap to THESIS

IDENTIFY

Do you want to be thesis or non-thesis?

Identify your track and discuss with your advisor.

Typically within your first semester of enrollment.

SELECT

Ready to start the thesis track?

Select your topic, thesis chair, and your thesis committee.

Some programs assign chairs. Check with your advisor for information on this process.

DECLARE

Declare your track by submitting the Thesis Option Form.

You will need email information for all members of your committee to submit this form.

INITIATE

Complete the Thesis Prospectus Form and complete IRB training.

An IRB application may be required for certain types of research. Check with your committee chair to ensure compliance.

IMPLEMENT

Gather your data, conduct your research, and write your manuscript.

Guidelines for the manuscript can be found in the Graduate School Thesis Guide.

REVIEW

Submit your document for committee, Graduate School, and outside reader review by using the electronic 1st submission form.

Deadlines for Submission to the Graduate School

DEFENSE

Ready to defend your thesis?

Submit the Defense Form to officially notify the Graduate School of your defense date.

After defending, the Defense Approval Form must be submitted.

FINALIZE

Finalize your manuscript and send your final document with edits made for final approval. Submit the Final Approval Form.

Document should be emailed to gradcert@jsu.edu


SUBMIT

Submit your final completed document to Digital Commons upon final approval from the Graduate School.

Directions for this process will be sent via email upon final approval.




Contact Information

 256.782.5764

 gradcert@jsu.edu

 www.jsu.edu/graduate

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Angle Hall 322

Jacksonville, AL 36265



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