

# **Texas A&M University-Texarkana**



## **Graduate Studies**

### **Thesis Manual**

## **Introduction**

The Texas A&M University-Texarkana (A&M-Texarkana) Thesis Manual is a guide designed to assist in meeting the thesis requirements established by the Graduate Studies Office of A&M-Texarkana.

The student must write in English and adhere to the instructions outlined in this guide and any other requirements the department may specify.

A variety of style manuals are available to assist in writing the thesis. If any areas in the selected style manual differ from the guidelines in the A&M-Texarkana Thesis Manual, the rules in this manual take precedence. Questions regarding the format of the thesis may be directed to the Graduate Studies Office, (903)-223-3129. Questions should be addressed by the office before preparing the final draft.

The minimum specifications delineated in this guide are required for acceptance by the Graduate Studies Office. Submissions lacking these specifications will not be accepted. Do not wait until the thesis has been completed to determine compliance with these standards and requirements. Do not use previous theses as style and format models because they may not reflect current standards and/or requirements.

## **Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism**

Please refer to the A&M-Texarkana catalog for the policy related to academic integrity and plagiarism.

<http://www.tamut.edu/catalog/index.html>

## **Anticipated Expenses Incurred by Student**

- Registration for a minimum of six semester hours of thesis credit is required. The student may enroll in six credit hours in one semester, or three hours in fall and spring semesters. If the thesis is not completed in two semesters, enrollment in three hours of thesis credit in the fall and spring semesters is required until the thesis receives final approval.
- Professional word processing or editorial services may be employed at the student's discretion.

## Suggested Sequence of Events

**Please note: The following sequence of events is provided as a guide to assist in successful completion of the thesis. It is highly recommended the thesis process be completed within two years from the outset of the research.**

The student is expected to:

- Determine a topic for the thesis.
- Select a thesis committee chairperson. The chairperson must be approved by the dean of the academic college in which the student is enrolled. The committee chairperson serves as the initial point of contact for the student regarding events provided in this sequence.
- Select thesis committee members.
- If appropriate, complete the training on protecting human subject participants at the URL below. Save and print the certificate of completion. Prepare the proposal and Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) forms and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) forms as appropriate.

<http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>

- Submit an electronic version of the proposal, IRB (plus certificate), and IACUC forms to the thesis committee chairperson.
- Revise the proposal using recommendations from the thesis committee chairperson.
- Obtain IRB or IACUC approval following the guidelines established by the university.

<http://www.tamut.edu/irb/index.html>

- Revise the thesis as recommended by the appropriate committee(s) and resubmit to the chairperson for distribution to thesis committee members.
- Schedule a proposal defense meeting with the thesis committee.
- Defend the proposal in compliance with the timetable for the appropriate semester.

- Implement the approved proposal procedures consulting with the thesis committee chairperson as needed.
- Submit a final electronic draft of the thesis to the thesis committee chairperson.
- Revise the thesis as recommended by the thesis committee chairperson and resubmit to the chairperson for distribution to thesis committee members.
- Schedule a final defense meeting with the thesis committee.
- Defend the proposal in compliance with the timetable for the appropriate semester.
- Revise the thesis as recommended by the thesis committee.
- Obtain approval of the thesis committee members and obtain required signatures on a hard copy of the Approval of Thesis and Thesis Defense forms.
- Obtain approval from the Graduate Studies Office to submit the final electronic version of the approved thesis in compliance with the timetable for the appropriate term.
- Submit the original hard copy of the signed Approval of Thesis and Thesis Defense forms to the Graduate Studies Office.

## **Thesis Process**

### **Selection of a Thesis Committee**

The student selects a topic related to the discipline and conducts a preliminary literature review on the topic. The student arranges a meeting with a graduate faculty member from the department to serve as the thesis committee chairperson. If the faculty member agrees to serve as chairperson, a second meeting may be scheduled to discuss the completion of the steps involved in the thesis process.

The student has a minimum of three faculty members on the thesis committee. The members include the following: (a) the chairperson who is a full-time faculty member of A&M-Texarkana with a terminal degree; (b) a faculty member from the department; and (c) another faculty member from the student's department or a faculty member from another department.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval must be obtained before data collection begins if the proposed research involves the use of human subjects. Federal

law and university policy require research projects involving human subjects be designed to protect the rights of the subjects. Each proposal involving human subjects and its provisions for their protection must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.

Examples of projects requiring approval by the IRB committee include the following: (a) survey research; (b) personal interviews with subjects; (c) collection of laboratory data from subjects; (d) collection of data from agency records; and (e) sampling body fluids. The IRB review will ensure the rights of human subjects are protected and appropriate methods for obtaining informed consent are utilized. Instructions and forms for submission of research protocols are posted on the University Web site.

<http://www.tamut.edu/irb/index.html>

### **Use of Animals in Research**

Use of vertebrate animals in either field or laboratory activities must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Copies of the IACUC Guide and other pertinent materials may be obtained from the Graduate Studies Office.

### **Thesis Proposal Format**

The sections of the thesis proposal traditionally follow a similar format, although proposals may vary depending on whether the methodology is quantitative or qualitative. The following are examples of quantitative and qualitative proposals. The thesis committee chairperson will consult with the student and approve the proposal format.

#### ***Sample Format for Quantitative Proposal:***

The quantitative proposal should contain sections as directed by the chairperson, but traditionally proposals include the following components:

- Introduction
- Statement of the problem
- Significance of the problem
- Purpose of study
- Review of literature
- Conceptual theory framework/ justification
- Research question(s) and/or hypothesis(es)
- Operational definitions

- Limitations/Delimitations
- Assumptions
- Methods (including design, sampling technique, data collection instrument, procedures, conditions, and data analysis)
- Human subjects protection (consent and risks)
- References

### ***Sample Format for Qualitative Proposal:***

While **qualitative** research proposals may vary, they usually include the following components:

- Description of problem area or phenomenon of interest
- Purpose of the research
- Research question(s) or foreshadowed problems
- Literature review/prior research
- Context (description of researcher-respondent relationship, researcher connection to the topic, strongly-held beliefs about the topic, and possible bias)
- Methods (including design, sampling technique, data collection instrument, procedures, conditions, and data analysis)
- Human subjects protection (consent and risks)
- References

### **Preparation of the Thesis**

#### **Thesis Quality and Content**

The thesis must meet acceptable standards of quality, in both content and form, as determined by the thesis committee chairperson before being approved by the committee.

#### **Style Guides**

Departments approve the writing style guide. The most commonly used style manuals include the following:

- William Campbell, Steven Ballou and Carole Slade, *Form and Style: Theses, Reports, Term Papers*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, current edition
- Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, current edition
- *The Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*, Washington, D.C.: The American Psychological Association, current edition
- *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, New York, current edition.

Departments may use other approved manuals. The student uses one style guide throughout the thesis process.

## **Form and Style**

### **Corrections and Markings**

No highlighting, notes, tracking markings, or comments should remain in the final electronic version the student presents at the oral thesis defense and submits to the Graduate Studies Office.

### **Pagination**

The student assigns a number to each page in the thesis. For the preliminaries (pages preceding the first page of the text), the student places lower case Roman numerals (e.g., i, ii, iii, iv) at the bottom center one inch from the bottom of the page.

The manuscript title page counts as page i, although the number should not appear on the page.

The official approval page (Approval of Thesis and Thesis Defense form) counts as page ii, however, the number does not appear on the page. The abstract is numbered page iii, and the number appears on the page. Please note: The official approval page will appear in the electronic version with all appropriate signatures. It must be scanned and placed appropriately in the document. An original hard copy with all appropriate signatures will also be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office to be placed in the files.

The pages in the body of the thesis, including text, references, and appendices are numbered in Arabic numerals starting with page one.

Arabic page numbers should be placed in the upper right corner of each page

## Tables, Figures and Oversized Materials

The student may add electronic versions of questionnaires, business forms, data-processing forms, and other similar materials to the thesis document.

Oversized documents should be reduced to fit the required margins.

If electronic versions of documents are not available, the student may scan, paginate, and place them appropriately in the thesis document

## Arrangement of Contents

- Title Page (see Appendix for sample)
- Approval Page (Approval of Thesis and Thesis Defense form): Appropriate signatures are written on the lines provided in blue, permanent ink. (see Appendix for sample)
- Abstract: The abstract is double spaced and limited to 300 words or less.
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Preface (optional)
- Table of Contents
  - The title page, approval page, abstract, and acknowledgments are not listed on the Table of Contents page.
  - All chapter headings, center headings, and free standing side headings are included on the Table of Contents page.
  - All chapter headings are typed in all capital letters.
  - Other headings are typed as they appear in the body of the thesis.
  - If a heading is longer than one line, the second line is indented two spaces and single spaced.
  - The headings on the Table of Contents page appear exactly as they do in the text (i.e., the same capitalizations and exactly the same wording).
  - The headings, List of Tables, List of Figures, or List of Plates are typed on the Table of Contents page if these headings are included in the text. These headings are all capital letters.



- A separate page listing the description of each table, figure, or plate used in the thesis is included.
- If these items are included in the appendix, there is no separate list of tables, figures, or plates.
- The student follows the style manual approved by the department awarding the degree for guidelines regarding text and reference lists.
- Appendix(es)

### **Submission of Thesis to the Committee**

After the thesis committee chairperson agrees the thesis is complete, the final oral defense is scheduled and electronic copies distributed to each member of the thesis committee. The student provides the final draft of the thesis to all committee members at least 14 days before the defense.

The student works with the committee chair to establish the time and place of the defense, selects an external reviewer, and files the Notice of Thesis Defense form (see appendix) with the Graduate Studies Office at least 14 days prior to the thesis defense.

### **Thesis Defense Policy**

The thesis defense demonstrates the candidate's scholarly ability to conduct independent research in a manner appropriate to a graduate degree.

At the time of the thesis defense, the committee determines if the student has satisfactorily defended the thesis. In some cases, the committee will discuss revisions necessary for the thesis to meet the committee's satisfaction. If the committee determines revisions are required, the student will make the necessary revisions and resubmit the revised thesis to all committee members, including the chairperson and external reviewer.

Once accepted, the student provides the chairperson with the Approval of Thesis and Thesis Defense forms (see appendix). The chairperson solicits the signatures of all committee members, including the external reviewer, and submits the completed form to the Graduate Studies Office. The form indicates completion and approval of the graduate thesis.

The thesis is defended in either the fall or spring semester after the first day of instruction until one month prior to the deadline designated by the Graduate Studies Office for receipt of a thesis. Deadlines are available on the Graduate Studies Web site.

<http://www.tamut.edu/graduate-studies/index.html>

The thesis defense is an open meeting for anyone who wishes to attend. Faculty and other graduate students are encouraged to attend. Announcements about the date, time, and location of the defense will be posted. The student is encouraged to invite members of the academic community and other interested parties.

### **Format of Oral Thesis Defense Examination**

**Attendees should arrive early since no one is allowed to enter the room after the defense is called to order.**

The general format for the thesis defense meeting includes:

- The chairperson calls the oral thesis defense to order and introduces the student. The student introduces the thesis committee members and the external reviewer. The defense is expected to last approximately 50 minutes.
- The student presents a twenty-minute summary of the research emphasizing the methods, analysis, findings, and conclusions using visual aids to highlight important points.
- The chairperson invites the committee members and external reviewer (examiners) to begin questioning the candidate. Questions rotate among examiners, including the chairperson, each asking one major question until the examiners have no more questions. The chairperson then requests persons from the audience to ask questions. Finally, the examiners are provided an opportunity to ask follow up questions, if necessary.
- The student and all visitors are asked to leave the room while the committee determines the student's performance.

Three outcomes are considered:

- *Unconditional Pass* - The committee accepts the thesis with few, if any, significant changes. However, various editorial changes may be expected prior to submitting the final electronic version to the Graduate Studies Office.
  - *Conditional Pass* – The committee finds one or more major deficiencies which require revision beyond mere editorial changes. The student submits revisions prior to obtaining the signatures of committee members.
  - *Fail*- The thesis has major deficiencies. Another defense will be scheduled only after the chairperson and all committee members agree the deficiencies have been corrected.
- The chairperson invites the student to return to the meeting, announces the decision of the committee, and solicits appropriate signatures.

### **Submission of Thesis to the Graduate Studies Office**

Upon successful completion of the oral thesis defense, the student makes all suggested revisions and submits the final electronic copy of the thesis to each committee member, including the external reviewer.

A final electronic version of the thesis is submitted to the Graduate Studies Office for approval, in compliance with the timetable for the appropriate semester. The Appendix contains the checklist used by the Graduate Studies Office for reviewing the thesis for approval.

After final approval from the Graduate Studies Office is obtained, the student may wish to have hard copies of the thesis bound at additional expense.

### **Copyright**

In the preparation of a thesis, the author must consider copyright laws to provide protection for work created by others. Guidelines for fair use of copyrighted printed material, computer programs, and off-air television recordings are available in the Graduate Studies Office.

## Appendix

**SAMPLE TITLE PAGE FOR THESIS**

THESIS TITLE

By

Jane Doe

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the

College of Business

Texas A&M University-Texarkana

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

May 2011

**APPROVAL OF THESIS**

THESIS TITLE

By

Student Name

RECOMMENDED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Committee Chairperson

ACCEPTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dean

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*(Note: Use full names, not nicknames, and include appropriate terminal degrees)*

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-TEXARKANA  
GRADUATE STUDIES  
NOTICE OF ORAL THESIS DEFENSE**

The Oral Thesis Defense of

\_\_\_\_\_ is scheduled as indicated below.  
**(Student's Name)**

Date and time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMITTEE CHAIR: \_\_\_\_\_

DEGREE AND PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Title: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVALS:

Thesis Committee Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Dean of the College \_\_\_\_\_ Date

College: \_\_\_\_\_

This form is submitted to the Graduate Studies Office at least 14 days prior to the oral defense during the fall and spring semesters.

Upon approval by the Graduate Studies Office, copies are sent to the student, committee members, and the dean of the college. A copy is posted in the department office.

Please refer to the current timetable located on the Graduate Studies Web site for the deadline for the semester.

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY TEXARKANA**  
**Thesis Check List**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Id: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Title Page

\_\_\_ Table of Contents

\_\_\_ Abstract

\_\_\_ Signatures, in blue permanent ink

\_\_\_ Tables/Figures

\_\_\_ Charts/Graphs/Photos

\_\_\_ Font

\_\_\_ Spacing

\_\_\_ Page Numbers

\_\_\_ Margins

\_\_\_ Specific instructions not included above

\_\_\_ Deadline for submission met

\_\_\_ Reviewed after above changes/corrections completed

\_\_\_ Accepted when above changes/corrections completed

Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-TEXARKANA  
COPYRIGHTING**

This agreement is made between

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[hereinafter called the author(s)] and A&M-Texarkana for the following described work:

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The author(s) agree(s) to grant the right to A&M-Texarkana to duplicate and distribute the above described work, either as a hard copy or an electronic document. It is understood that the work will be distributed at cost with no profit due the university or royalty due the author(s).

The university recognizes the author(s) as holder of the copyright and agrees to make the requester aware of the copyright privileges of the author(s), both at the time of the request and with a written notice at the time of distribution. The author(s) retain(s) the right to cancel this agreement upon written notice to the Graduate Studies Office.

Date of Signed Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Texas A&M University-Texarkana**

By:

Signature, Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature, Title: \_\_\_\_\_