

Texas A&M University-Texarkana



Graduate Studies

Thesis/Project Manual

Introduction

The Texas A&M University-Texarkana (A&M-Texarkana) Thesis/Project Manual is a guide designed to assist you and your thesis/project committee chairperson in meeting the thesis/project format requirements established by the Graduate Studies Office of A&M-Texarkana.

Your thesis/project must be written in English and must be prepared according to the instructions outlined in this guide. In addition, it must meet any other requirements your department may specify.

A variety of style manuals are available to assist you in writing your thesis/project. If any areas in the selected style manual differ from the guidelines in the A&M-Texarkana Thesis/Project Manual, the rules in this manual take precedence.

The minimum specifications delineated in this guide must be met in order for a thesis/project to be accepted by the Graduate Studies Office. Submissions not meeting these specifications will not be accepted. Do not wait until the thesis/project has been completed to determine compliance with these standards and requirements.

Please 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.

Anticipated Expenses Incurred by Student

- Registration for thesis/project credit
- Professional word processing service, at student's discretion
- English editor, if required

Questions regarding the format of your thesis/project not answered in this manual may be directed to the Graduate Studies Office, (903)-223-3129. If you have any questions, contact the office before preparing your final draft.

Suggested Sequence of Events

Please note: The following sequence of events are provided as a guide to assist you to successfully complete a thesis/project. It is highly recommended that the thesis/project process be completed within one to two years from the outset of your research project.

You will be expected to:

- Select a thesis/project committee chairperson and topic.
- Select thesis/project committee members.
- 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, if required.
- Distribute the electronic version of the proposal, IRB and IACUC forms to the thesis/project committee chairperson.
- Revise the proposal as needed.
- Submit an electronic version of the proposal to the university IRB and/or IACUC, if required.
- Revise the proposal, if needed.
- Obtain IRB or IACUC approval.
- Implement the approved proposal procedures.
- Consult with your thesis/project committee chairperson and/or thesis/project committee as needed.
- Prepare the final electronic draft of your thesis/project.
- Submit the final electronic draft to the thesis/project committee chairperson.
- Revise the thesis/project as needed.
- Distribute the final electronic draft to the thesis/project committee.
- Schedule a thesis/project defense meeting with the thesis/project committee.
- Present the thesis/project at the thesis/project defense meeting, in compliance with the timetable for the appropriate semester.

- Revise the thesis/project as needed.
- Obtain approval of the thesis/project committee members and obtain required signatures on a hard copy of the Approval of Thesis/Project and Thesis/Project Defense form.
- Obtain approval from the Graduate Studies Office to submit the final electronic version of the approved thesis/project, in compliance with the timetable for the appropriate term.
- Submit the original hard copy of the signed Approval of Thesis/Project and Thesis/Project Defense form to the Graduate Studies Office

Thesis/Project Process

Selection of a Thesis/Project Committee

You should select a topic related to your discipline and conduct a preliminary literature review on the topic. Once you have an idea of the research topic, you should arrange a meeting with a **graduate faculty** member from your department whom you wish to have as your thesis/project committee chairperson. If the faculty member agrees to serve as chairperson, a second meeting may be scheduled. At this meeting, the selected committee chairperson and you may discuss a timeline for the completion of the steps involved in the thesis/project process.

You must have a minimum of three **faculty** members on your thesis/project committee. The members must include the following: (a) the chairperson of the student's committee must be a full or part-time faculty member of A&M-Texarkana with a terminal degree, (b) a faculty member from the student's department, and (c) a faculty member from the student's department or from another department.

Protection of Human Subjects (IRB)

University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval must be obtained before data collection begins if the proposed research project involves the use of human subjects. Federal law and university policy require that 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 that must be reviewed 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 determine that the rights of human subjects are protected and that appropriate methods for obtaining informed consent will be utilized. All students

conducting research with human subjects should obtain copies of the IRB forms from the Graduate Studies website located within <http://tamut.edu>.

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/project Proposal Format

The sections of the thesis/project proposal traditionally follow a similar format, although there is often a variation depending on whether the methodology is quantitative or qualitative. The following are examples of how quantitative and qualitative proposals may be organized. The thesis/project committee chairperson will consult with you and approve the proposal format.

Sample Format for Quantitative Proposal:

The quantitative proposal should contain sections as directed by the chairperson but will most likely contain the following content areas that are traditionally included in **quantitative** research proposals:

- Statement of the problem and purpose of study
- Review of literature
- Conceptual/theory framework
- Hypothesis, research questions, or predictions
- Operational definitions
- Limitations
- Assumptions
- Methods
- Sample size requirements
- Sampling plan
- Data collection instrument
- Human subjects protection (consent, risks)
- Data analysis plan
- References

Sample Format for Qualitative Proposal:

Qualitative research proposals usually include the following content areas. There may be some variation depending on the type of **qualitative** research.

- Description of problem area or phenomenon of interest, purpose and/or research questions
- Literature review
- Context: Description of researcher-respondent relationship; description of researcher connection to the topic, as well as strongly held beliefs about the topic
- Participants: Methods of selection clearly outlined and any unique issues addressed
- Plan for data collection: Methods congruent with purpose of study, research questions, and type of qualitative research selected; problems of reliability and validity addressed from a qualitative perspective
- Plan for data processing and data analysis
- Protection of research participants: Informed consent
- References

Preparation of the Thesis/Project

Thesis/Project Quality and Content

The thesis/project must meet acceptable standards of quality, in both content and form, as determined by the thesis/project committee chairperson before it is approved by your committee.

Style Guides

The department in which you conduct research will recommend and approve the writing style guide to follow in writing the thesis/project. 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.

Specific departments may use other approved manuals. It is mandatory that only **one** approved style guide be used consistently throughout the entire thesis/project process.

Form and Style

Corrections and Markings

No highlighting, notes, or tracking markings or comments should remain in the final electronic version that is presented at the oral thesis/project defense and submitted to the Graduate Studies Office.

Pagination

Each page in a thesis/project must be assigned a number. For the preliminaries (pages preceding the first page of the text), lower case Roman numerals (e.g., i, ii, iii, iv) are placed 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/Project and Thesis/Project 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/project, 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

Electronic versions of questionnaires, business forms, data-processing forms, and other similar materials may be added to the thesis/project document.

Oversized documents should be reduced to fit the required margins.

If electronic versions of documents are not available, these documents may be scanned and placed appropriately into the thesis/project document. They must be correctly paginated.

Arrangement of Contents

- Title Page (**see Appendix for sample**)
- Approval Page (Approval of Thesis/Project and Thesis/Project Defense form): Appropriate signatures must be written on the lines provided in blue, permanent ink. (**see Appendix for sample**)
- Abstract: The abstract must be 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 to be included on the Table of Contents page.
 - All chapter headings should be typed in all capital letters.
 - The capitalization of other headings should be typed as they appear in the body of the thesis/project.
 - If a heading is longer than one line, the second line should be 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 should be typed on the Table of Contents page if these headings are included in the text. These headings should be in all capital letters.
- A separate page listing the description of each table, figure, or plate used in the thesis/project should be included.

- If these items are included in the appendix, there should be no separate list of tables, figures, or plates.
- Text – Follow the style manual guidelines approved by the department in which you are receiving your degree.
- Bibliography – Follow the style manual approved by the department in which you are receiving your degree.
- Appendix(es)

Submission of Thesis/Project to the Committee

After your thesis/project committee chairperson has agreed that you have developed a satisfactory final draft of your thesis/project, you should distribute electronic copies of the final draft to each member of your thesis/project committee.

At this time you should also be instructed to schedule your final oral thesis/project defense.

The final draft of the thesis/project must be provided to the committee members at least 14 days before the thesis/project defense examination.

When the time of your thesis/project defense has been established, you must file the **Notice of Thesis/Project Defense Form (see appendix)** with the Graduate Studies Office.

This form should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office at least **14** days prior to the examination during the fall and spring semesters.

THESIS/PROJECT DEFENSE POLICY

The thesis/project 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/project defense, the committee will determine if you have satisfactorily completed your defense of the thesis/project. In some cases, the committee will discuss revisions that may be necessary for the thesis/project to be completed to the committee's satisfaction. If the committee decides that revisions are required, you will make the necessary revisions and resubmit the revised thesis/project to all committee members, including the chairperson and external reviewer.

Once accepted, or if the committee accepts the thesis/project without revisions at the thesis/project defense, you will provide the chairperson of your committee with the **Approval of Thesis/Project and Thesis/Project Defense** form. The chairperson will

have each of the committee members, including the external reviewer, sign that they approve the thesis/project defense and thesis/project. The thesis/project committee chairperson will submit the completed form to the Graduate Studies Office. The form indicates whether or not the thesis/project defense has been successfully completed and whether or not the thesis/project is approved.

The thesis/project is usually defended in either the fall or spring semester after the first day of instruction until one month prior to the deadline the Graduate Studies Office sets for receipt of a thesis/project. For deadlines, please check the Graduate Studies web site at <http://tamut.edu>.

The thesis/project 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. You are encouraged to invite members of the academic community and other interested parties.

Scheduling a Thesis/Project defense: Once it is determined that you are ready to defend, a date and time is selected that is mutually agreeable to all committee members. Typically this date and time will be two weeks or more from the date you are instructed by your thesis/project committee chairperson to schedule a defense.

Student Responsibility:

- **Schedule room.** Contact the department secretary for the name and phone number of the person who schedules rooms.
- **A minimum of 14 days prior to the thesis/project defense,** inform the graduate studies secretary of the time, location, thesis/project title, names of the thesis/project committee chairperson and members, and the name of the external reviewer.
- **Fourteen days in advance** of the defense, submit electronic copies of the thesis/project to all committee members. Submit the final electronic version of your thesis/project to the graduate studies secretary for posting under the Thesis/Project Defense link for review by faculty and other students.
- **Day of the meeting:** You need to bring a minimum of two (2) hard copies of the **Approval of Thesis/Project and Thesis/Project Defense** form to the thesis/project defense. Occasionally someone will sign in the wrong place and another clean copy will be required.

Format of Oral Thesis/Project Defense Examination

Attendees should arrive slightly ahead of schedule. Once the process has begun, no one is allowed to enter the room where the defense is being held.

The general format for the thesis/project defense meeting includes:

- The chairperson calls the oral thesis/project defense examination to order. The thesis/project committee members, the external reviewer, and the candidate are introduced. The defense is expected to last approximately 50 minutes.
- The candidate presents a fifteen to twenty-minute brief and succinct summary of the research endeavor emphasizing the methods, analysis, findings, and conclusions. Visual aids are encouraged.
- The chairperson invites the committee members and external reviewer (examiners) to begin questioning the candidate. Questions are often rotated among examiners, including the chairperson, each asking one major question until the examiners have no more questions.
- Time permitting, the chairperson then requests persons from the audience to ask questions of the candidate.
- Finally, the examiners are provided with an opportunity to ask follow up questions of the candidate, if necessary.
- Visitors and the candidate are asked to leave while the examiners determine the candidate's performance.

Three outcomes may be considered:

- *Unconditional Pass* - The thesis/project is accepted 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* - One or more major deficiencies were found which require revision beyond mere editorial changes. You may be required to submit revisions prior to obtaining the signature of the examiners.
- *Fail*- The thesis/project has major deficiencies. Another defense will be scheduled only after the chairperson and other examiners are assured that the problems have been remedied.

The student is invited to return to the meeting, and the chairperson announces the results of the evaluation to the candidate. Depending upon the need for revision, the examiners will sign the **Approval of Thesis/Project and Thesis/Project Defense** form.

Submission of Thesis/Project to the Graduate Studies Office

Upon successful completion of the oral thesis/project defense examination, you must make all suggested revisions and submit the final clean electronic copy of the thesis/project to each committee member, including the external reviewer.

A final electronic version of the thesis/project must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office for approval, in compliance with the timetable for the appropriate semester.

It is essential that all the requirements delineated in the **Preparation of the Thesis/Project** portion of this document be followed completely.

The **Appendix** contains the checklist used by the Graduate Studies Office for reviewing the thesis/project for approval.

After final approval from the Graduate Studies Office is obtained, you may wish, at your own expense, to have hard copies of the thesis/project bound for the committee chairperson, other members of the committee, family members, and yourself.

Copyright

In the preparation of a thesis/project, the author must consider the copyright laws that have evolved to provide protection for work created by others, including the work of others used in writing the thesis/project.

Guidelines are available in the Graduate Studies Office that address fair use of copyrighted printed material, computer programs, and off-air television recording.

Copyright laws also protect your original thesis/project work.

For further information about obtaining permission forms for securing copyright approval for your thesis/project, please contact the Graduate Studies Office.

Appendix

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE FOR THESIS/PROJECT

THESIS/PROJECT TITLE

By

Jane Doe

THESIS/PROJECT

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 2009

APPROVAL OF THESIS/PROJECT AND THESIS/PROJECT DEFENSE FORM

THESIS/PROJECT TITLE

By

Student Name

RECOMMENDED:

Thesis/Project Committee Member

Thesis/Project Committee Member

Thesis/Project Committee Chairperson

ACCEPTED:

Dean, College of Health and Behavioral Sciences

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/PROJECT DEFENSE EXAMINATION**

The Oral Thesis/Project Defense Examination of:

_____ has been scheduled as indicated below.
(Student's Name)

The oral defense must not be held until the student has had the thesis/project approved by the thesis/project committee chairperson.

The oral defense cannot be held in a faculty member's office.

Date and time of examination _____

Location _____

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

COMMITTEE CHAIR:

DEGREE AND PROGRAM: _____

Thesis/Project Title: _____

APPROVALS:

Thesis/Project Committee Chairperson _____
Date

Dean of the College _____
Date

College of: _____

This form must be 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 will be sent to the student, committee members, and the dean of the college.

A copy will be posted in the department office.

Please refer to the current timetable located on the Graduate Studies' website for the deadline for the semester.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY TEXARKANA
Thesis/Project 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: _____

This agreement is made between

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

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: _____