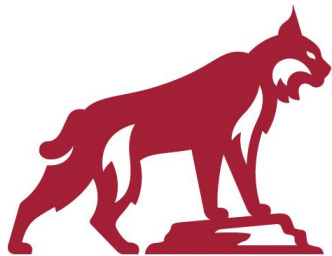# Format Your Master's Thesis or Project

It *Can* Be Done!

● Research and Writing Resources
● University Formatting Guidelines vs. Departmental Designated Style Guide
● Common Formatting Issues and Questions

Presented by: JoAna Brooks, Graduate Research and Writing Coordinator

California State University **Chico**
**Graduate Studies**

Formatting and Writing Resources

The Graduate Studies Research and Writing Resources Canvas page

Graduate Studies Formatting webpage:

- Editable thesis and project templates MS Word documents
- Review Checklist – most common formatting issues.
- Other resources – style guides, how to work with a formatter, etc.

Department Designated Style Guide
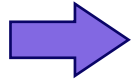
All **Department Style Guides** – contact your committee chair or department Graduate Coordinator for the designated style guide.
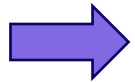
Use the style guideline for formatting the following *four* elements:

- **Citations within the text**

- **The formatting and captions of all tables**

- **The formatting and captions of all figures**

- **Documentation (e.g., References, Works Cited, etc.)**

CAUTION!

- Do ***not*** attempt to follow another student's thesis or project for *either* your departmental style guide requirements ***or*** for the University formatting requirements.

Format Basics

Set Appearance and Typeface

- Text must be in a non-italic type font, at a size of 11-point or 12-point, and double-spaced.
- For accessibility and readability purposes, Sans Serif, Helvetica, Aptos, Calibri (11-point font), and Arial (11-point font) are recommended.

Set Page Numbers

    Four sections of the thesis/project manuscript are comprised of the following sections:

- **Pre-text pages** (Title, Committee Page, Dedication, Publication Rights, Preface/Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures, List of Symbols or Nomenclature, and Abstract pages)
- **Text** (The chapters and main body of the text)
- **Documentation** (e.g., References, Works Cited, etc.)
- **Appendices** (if applicable).

Levels of Heading and Table of Contents

- As you write your thesis/project, be mindful of the section headings within the chapters and paragraph headings within the sections.

Sequence of Pretext Pages

Lower-case Roman numerals start on 3rd page - iii

- Title Page (not numbered)
- Committee Page (not numbered)
- Publication Rights Page - most often is the 3rd page starting with lower-case Roman numeral – iii (optional)
- Dedication (optional)
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- List of Figures
- Abstract

Committee Page and Approval

- Committee Page – second page of pre-text (page is counted but there is no page number)
  - Names to include
    - Graduate Coordinator
    - Committee Chair
    - Committee Members

- Thesis/Project Final Verification Web Form
  - Signed by student
  - Signed by Committee Chair
  - Signed by Graduate Coordinator, if required by the department

TITLE INVERTED PYRAMID WITH THE TOP LINE LONGER THAN NEXT

TITLE CONTINUED IN AN INVERTED PYRAMID

TITLE ALL CAPS

A Thesis

by

Your Name Here

Summer 2023

GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Faculty Name Here, Ph.D.
Graduate Coordinator

Faculty Name Here, Ph.D.
Chair

Faculty Name Here, Ph.D.

General Tips

Use the **template** on the Office of Graduate Studies Thesis/Project Formatting web page.

To start a new page do not use ENTER – this will just move to the next line and create space between text. Instead use the **Ctrl+Enter** keys to insert a page break**.**

Table of Contents
- All dot leaders are aligned
- Ensure all page numbers are correct.

Click on the **paragraph marker** to view the end of paragraphs marker, page breaks, and section breaks.
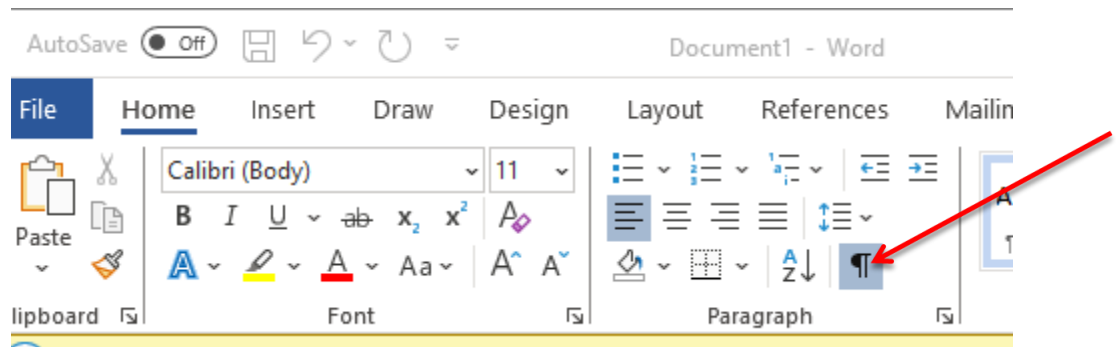
Body of Text

CHAPTERS I – IV (Numbering Roman Numerals)

    I.   Introduction

    II.   Literature Review

    III.   Methodology

    IV.   Results and Discussion

    V.   Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

References (or Works Cited, etc.) section

Appendices – create half-title page APPENDICES and list in Table of Contents

    – The section is preceded by a half-title page (APPENDIX A, etc.)

    – The sections are labeled A - Z

Headings
(not all headings need to be used)

CHAPTER 1 (Chapter title)

INTRODUCTION (Chapter title)

Background (Centered Heading)

Flush-left Heading

 After the flush-left heading, the paragraph starts below. This is the second level of the heading for the document. Indent the paragraph below the heading.

 Paragraph Heading. The heading underlined, indented (regular 1/2 inch), and followed by a period with new text beginning on the same line immediately after the heading.

  Second Centered Heading. The heading in underlined, indented twice (regular 1/2 inch), and followed by a period with new text beginning on the same line immediately after the heading.

All text is double spaced.

Placing Table and Figures in the Text

Numbering: Tables and figures are numbered as introduced in the text, beginning with Arabic number 1.

- *Example*: **"Table 1 shows the regional drought data"** or **"The region received various levels of rainfall (Table 1)."**
- *Example*: **"Figure 1 shows the region was impacted by drought"** or **"The region was impacted by drought (Figure 1)."**

Placement: Insert each table and figure as <u>close to the first reference</u> as possible and ensure it is not in the middle of a sentence or paragraph.

Table or Figure Title: Follow your Department Style Guide for formatting the table or figure title. Most style guides place the title above the table or figure.

- *Example:* Table 1

  Regional Drought Data
- *Example:* Figure 1

  Impacted of Drought Regional Map

Table or Figure Description: Follow your Department Style Guide for formatting the table or figure description. Most style guides place the table or figure description below the table or figure.

- Table Example: "The regional drought data from 2000 to 2020 compares yearly rainfall."
- Figure E*xample:* "The ongoing drought has impacted the region, and the red area shows the most impacted."

Borrowed Material: A full reference citation below the figure caption for any borrowed material.

Formatting and Writing Questions

Questions to direct to your **graduate advisory committee** include:

- Department style guide issues
- Grammar and spelling
- Human subjects/IRB clearances
- Content issues and editing
- Discipline-specific questions

Questions for the **Graduate Research and Writing Coordinator** include:

- Available Research and Writing Resources
- University Format questions
- Clarification on copyright requirements
- Writing Support

Final Thesis and Project Submission

1. **Formatting:** Ensure your thesis or project is formatted using University Format and departmental style guidelines.

2**. Final Progress Sheet:** Once your thesis or project defense date is scheduled, you may submit the Request For Final Progress Sheet form to the Office of Graduate Studies to be sent to your advisory committee's chair. The request form can be returned to: graduatestudies@csuchico.edu, and it will be forwarded to your Academic Evaluator in the Office of Graduate Studies.

3. **Thesis/Project Defense:** At your thesis or project defense, the advisory committee will sign the Final Progress Sheet confirming you have successfully completed the defense. Your committee chair will then submit the completed Final Progress Sheet to the Office of Graduate Studies.

4. Complete the **Thesis/Project Final Verification web form**.

5. Submit your **thesis/project final PDF document** (along with copyright permission letters, if applicable) to the Graduate Research and Writing Coordinator at submission@csuchico.edu.

6. Receive confirmation that the **review** is in progress.

7. Respond to follow-up emails regarding **making corrections**.

8. Once the **formatting review is completed**, you will receive a confirmation email with the next steps, and your Academic Evaluator is included in the email.

Your Graduate Academic Evaluator

Graduate Evaluators Clear the Degree and Order the Diplomas.

Sarah Lehner clears graduates with last names beginning with **A – H**

Meredith Huddleson clears graduates with last names beginning with **I - Z**

Links to Resources

- [Thesis/Project Formatting](#) webpage

- [Thesis/Project Submission](#) webpage

- [Institutional Research Board (IRB) Clearance and Copyright Permissions](#) (Office of Graduate Studies Policies)

- Graduate Research and Writing Resources Canvas page: email [Graduate Studies Research and Writing Coordinator](#) for access.