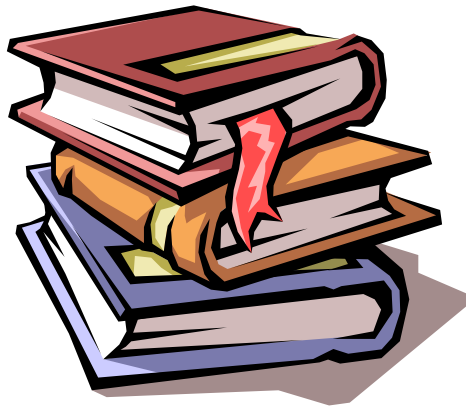


RADFORD UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF GRADUATE
AND
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

THESIS PREPARATION MANUAL



Revised July, 2006

Thesis Preparation Manual
Revised November 2011
Adopted: August, 2006

THESIS PREPARATION MANUAL

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<http://www.radford.edu/gradcollege/>

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INTRODUCTION

The graduate faculty at Radford University has adopted this guide to assist students in writing a thesis for the Master's degree. Revisions to this manual are approved by the Graduate Affairs Council and the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

A thesis is an accurate report of research conducted by the student and as such should reflect credit upon the students, the major department, and Radford University. Therefore, it is important that the student present his/her work in a manner that is grammatically correct, attractive, and academically rewarding.

Graduate students at Radford University are encouraged to pursue research activities as the opportunity for making a significant contribution in their field. However, the decision to write a thesis should be a deliberative one. Writing a thesis is a major research activity and, as such, requires time, planning, and heightened attention to detail. The master's thesis must be able to stand the scrutiny of professional colleagues in the discipline.

The purpose of this manual is to provide graduate students and faculty with a resource to answer most frequently asked questions about graduate policies and procedures. This manual is designed to supplement the *Graduate Catalog* as a reference for planning graduate degree programs.

The thesis requirements presented herein insure that theses can be bound properly and will reflect favorably upon the institution and its students as scholars both in content and quality of presentation. Publication or formatting requirements in this manual supersede the requirements set forth in departmental manuals. Each student must assume full responsibility for the correct form of all copies of the submitted thesis in addition to following the procedures described herein and meeting the stipulated deadlines.

This manual supersedes any previous manuals and/or examples that may be found in McConnell Library. These guidelines become effective August, 2006.

REGISTRATION FOR THESIS CREDIT HOURS AND THE THESIS PROPOSAL

When a thesis topic has been established, the student should submit a *Request for Thesis Advisory Committee* form to the Graduate College in order to register for thesis credit. Standards and criteria for approval of the request are established by the student's Thesis Advisor. Departments and/or Thesis Advisors may require a written proposal prior to signing the *Request for Convening of Thesis Advisory Committee* form. **Students should check with their individual departments for specific pre-requisites.**

A student cannot register for thesis hours until the *Request for Convening of Thesis Advisory Committee* form has been reviewed and approved by 1) the thesis advisor who is in the student's major and has full graduate faculty status, 2) a minimum of two additional committee members with at least associate graduate faculty status, 3) the Department Chair or Graduate Program Director, and 4) the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. See *Thesis Manual Appendix I Forms* under [Student Forms](#) on the Graduate College website.

It is recommended that the student establish the thesis topic and begin work on the proposal as early as possible. The *Thesis Proposal Defense* form is an agreement with the student and signifies that if the work described within an approved proposal is accomplished to a quality acceptable to the Committee, the Committee will honor it as a satisfactory thesis.

Thesis Proposal Document Commonly Consists of:

The *Thesis Proposal/Defense* form serves as the cover page of your thesis proposal as given in this booklet (See Appendix I). Although the information may vary somewhat by department, your thesis proposal may include the following information:

Introduction – This introduces the work to be done so it can be reasonably well understood by a faculty member not working in the research area.

Thesis Statement – A concise statement of the thesis; e.g., the hypothesis to be tested, the thesis to be defended, the question to be answered, description of the creative project, etc.

Methods – The method to be followed in accomplishing the thesis statement, i.e., procedures, controls, sample sizes, theoretical approaches, creative techniques, etc.

Contribution to your field – A brief list of contributions that the thesis will make.

Thesis Outline – A detailed outline of the written thesis.

Thesis Schedule – A schedule for completion of the thesis.

Resources Required – Some departments request that you list any additional resources that may be needed. Please consult with your Thesis Advisor.

Bibliography/Works Cited or References – A fairly complete bibliography of the research area.

Signatures – Typed names and places for signatures of the members of the thesis committee are to be placed on the title page (See Appendix II).

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Use of Human Subjects, Animals, etc. - All proposed research involving human subjects, animals, or hazardous materials must be submitted to and approved by the Radford University Institutional Review Board (IRB), coordinated by the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs. You may contact her/him at 831-5035.

Three forms are required to complete the thesis process; 1) *Request for Convening of Thesis Advisory Committee*, 2) *Thesis Proposal Defense*, 3) *Report for Final Comprehensive Examination/Thesis Defense*.

An optional fourth form, *A Request for Change in Thesis Advisory Committee*, is also available. All forms are available in the Thesis Preparation Manual on the Graduate College website at <http://www.radford.edu/gradcollege>. Note: An original *Report of Final Comprehensive Examination/Thesis Defense* form must be obtained from the Graduate College in Lucas Hall.

THESIS PREPARATION

Your thesis should make a contribution to your field. Other researchers working in the same or related disciplines should find your completed thesis useful in solving problems they are working on. The thesis should demonstrate creativity and originality. It should require a thorough search of existing literature in your area of research and exhibit the use of skills and techniques acquired during your graduate education. Your department may even recommend that you attempt to publish the results of your research.

The actual organization of a traditional thesis is flexible. This may vary according to your department's standards, but a typical organization would be as follows:

1. **Thesis Cover Sheet (See Appendix I)**
2. **Title Page (See Appendix II)**
3. **Abstract**
4. **Dedication page (optional)**
5. **Acknowledgments (optional)**
6. **Table of Contents**
7. **List of Tables, Figures**
8. **Text Guidelines**

A. Empirical Thesis

Chapter 1 – Introduces the thesis problem and states its importance.

Chapter 2 – A careful overview of related work, referencing similar research.

Chapter 3 – A progressive presentation of the research effort, typically including subsequent chapters or sections on:

- foundational material (terms, definitions, etc.)
- the actual innovations
- validation and analysis of results

Chapter 4 – Overviews of the results/contributions of the thesis.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions, interpretations, implications and recommendations for further research.

B. Humanities Thesis

I. Literary

Chapter 1 – Review of appropriate scholarship with regard to the central issue of the thesis; existing scholarship; description of theoretical approaches to be applied during thesis.

Chapter 2-3 (maybe 4) – Detailed analysis of primary texts through the lens of the chosen theoretical approaches with reference to relevant secondary sources.

Chapter 4 (or 5) – Conclusions, interpretations, implications for future research.

II. Creative

Chapter 1 – Discussion of the primary influences on one's work, with particular examination of primary works whose techniques the thesis writer wishes to emulate. Further discussion of the techniques the thesis writer intends to use in the creative thesis.

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Chapter 2-3 (maybe 4) – The text of the creative thesis.

Chapter 4 or 5 – Reflective self-assessment of the work generated for the thesis, with attention paid to the effectiveness of the techniques employed.

9. Bibliography/ Works Cited

10. Appendices – Contains extended results, samples of surveys, etc.

Preparation Manual(s)

- *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Kate L. Turabian
- *Form and Style of Thesis Writing*, William G. Campbell
- *MLA Handbook*, Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, American Psychological Association
- *Radford University's Graduate College and Professional Studies Thesis Preparation Manual*, Radford University Graduate College Staff
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, University of Chicago Press Staff

Graduate College Final Draft Review

As you begin drafting chapters and revising, make sure you get input from all your faculty members, not just your thesis advisor. This can save you major revisions later on. After the final draft of your thesis is complete and prior to preparation of two original documents in the approved format (see pages 10-11), **students will submit a copy of the final draft on regular paper to the Graduate College two weeks prior to the last day of classes.** The Graduate College will review for conformity to style requirements. (See dates and deadlines at www.radford.edu/gradcollege).

THESIS DEFENSE

Purpose

The purposes of the thesis defense at Radford University are to provide an opportunity:

- for the committee and others to discuss and interact together and with the student on the research;
- for scholarly debate when appropriate;
- to share new research with the educational community;
- to assess the student's ability to express him/herself orally in an academic forum; and
- provide evidence through the written document of the student's research skills and writing ability.

During the defense proceedings, the degree candidate is given an opportunity to debate as a peer and, in this aspect, moves from the role of student to that of colleague in the examination of thesis ideas.

Thesis Defense

The defense of the thesis is open to the public. At the conclusion of the defense, the public will be excused. A common format would require the student to present a rationale for the project, describing the process, methods and outcomes, followed by discussion and/or questions about the project.

Examination Results

At this point, the student is asked to leave the room and the examining committee decides on a result. The possible results are:

- Pass with no revisions
- Minor revision of thesis
- Fail – A student may be reexamined once. A minimum of one month must pass before a subsequent defense can take place, unless approved by the graduate dean.
- Fail – After a second failure the student is terminated from the graduate program.

Results of the thesis defense are recorded on the *Report of Final Comprehensive Examination/Thesis Defense* form (See Appendix I) and submitted to the graduate college by the deadline specified.

Scheduling a Thesis Defense

Scheduling of the thesis defense must be approved by the student's thesis committee.

THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The thesis committee will be composed of a thesis advisor who is in the student's major area of specialization, and who has full graduate faculty status, and a minimum of two additional committee members with at least associate graduate faculty status. Associate graduate faculty may not chair but may serve on a thesis committee with the permission of the Dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies.

To determine faculty status visit the [Graduate Faculty List](#). If you wish to use someone who is not listed, please call the Graduate College at 831-5724 to verify eligibility. A request to have a faculty member completely outside the university on the committee will need specific departmental approval and the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College. This person will serve as a fourth member of your committee. Please ensure that he/she has a terminal degree in the field and request that he/she send a curriculum vita to the Graduate College.

The thesis advisor is responsible for supervising the research, and directing the writing.

The committee members (including the thesis advisor) are responsible for working with the student as needed in the thesis process for determining that the thesis meets the appropriate scholarly standard.

When the committee members are satisfied with the scope and quality of the thesis, they sign the approval page (See Appendix I). *For purposes of appearance and reproduction, all signatures must be in **black ink**.*

The signatures of the thesis advisor and committee members on the approval page signify departmental acceptance of the final document. Signature by the Dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies on the thesis cover sheet signifies the official approval of Radford University.

COPYRIGHT

Copyright is legal protection of intellectual property – in this case your thesis. This protection, in accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, begins automatically as soon as a work is created. It is up to you to decide if you wish to maintain or register your copyright; Radford University has no requirement that you do either one. However, your copyright gives you the exclusive right to print, reprint, copy, and sell your work and to prepare derivative works based on the copyrighted work. It protects an author against anyone's infringement of these rights. In order to maintain your copyright, you should also prepare a copyright notice on the front of your thesis.

If you include the copyright notice, you may also choose to register your copyright. Registration is a legal formality that makes a public record of your copyright. It is not a requirement for protection, but it is necessary if you can ever foresee becoming involved in a copyright lawsuit. If there is a chance that you might take someone to court for using your work unlawfully – for example, if you have developed a separately marketable item such as a testing scale or a computer program – you may want to complete this procedure.

You may obtain the forms to register a copyright from the U.S. Copyright Office website: www.loc.gov/copyright/forms, Application Form TX. Subsequently, you will need to send the completed form, a check for the \$30 registration fee, and the required deposit copies to the Copyright Office at the address noted on the application form. Be certain that you have included a copyright notice on the thesis if you plan to register your copyright.

The copyright symbol should be placed either on the title page at bottom center, or on a sheet of paper (in the center) immediately following the title page, as follows:

Copyright 2006, Chris S. Student

-OR-

© 2006, Chris S. Student

For more information start with the U.S. Copyright Office main web page at www.loc.gov/copyright, where you will find links to pages with Frequently Asked Questions, information circulars, forms, and fact sheets. Or, you may also ask for assistance at the McConnell Library Reference Desk (831-5696).

GRADUATION

Required Materials

Thesis

- Defense results*
- Two copies of thesis on proper paper, each with a cover sheet, in a box or manila envelope.

*The *Report of Final Comprehensive Examination/Thesis Defense* form is used for the thesis defense and the oral/written comprehensive examination; please mark the appropriate option on the form (See Appendix I).

Thesis Grade

- If you have registered for thesis hours in two or more semesters and received any IP grade (In Progress), the Registrar's Office must receive a grade change for each semester.
- All theses are graded Pass/Fail.
- If you are not registered for any other credits in the term in which you graduate you must be registered for GRAD 799, Continuous Enrollment, and pay a one-hour fee each semester, including the summer until you finish your thesis (See [*Continuous Enrollment*](#) form)

Awards

Each May, during the Graduate Hooding Ceremony, the College of Graduate and Professional Studies presents three awards:

- Best Research Thesis
- Best Creative Thesis
- Exemplary Performance

Students eligible for these awards must have completed degree requirements during the preceding summer or fall semesters, or during the current spring semester.

A faculty member must nominate students for these awards.

Each winner receives a plaque, a cash award, and his or her name is placed on a perpetual plaque located in the Graduate College office. Each student's advisor also receives a plaque.

THESIS GUIDELINES AT A GLANCE

Page Numbering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - centered flush with 1” bottom margin - use Roman numerals placed at the bottom center, i.e., ii, iii, iv, etc., for <u>introductory pages</u>, i.e., abstract, acknowledgements, etc. - starting with the first page of the Chapter 1 (which is page 1) page numbering should be continued (i.e., 1,2,3, etc.), including all Tables, Figures, References and Appendices. 	
Margins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 1/2 “ left margin (for binding purposes) - 1” top, bottom, right 	
Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100 % white cotton or rag fiber (hold the paper up to the light to examine for watermark “100” rag plus brand name” – rag fiber keeps paper from yellowing over time). A suggested brand is Southworth - 100%, acid free, white paper. - only white, unlined 8 ½” x 11”, no recycled paper - approximate cost is \$15-\$25 for 100 sheets at the RU Bookstore (http://radford.bkstore.com/) be careful buying off campus as much of this paper has a recycle symbol in the watermark 	
Type/Font	It is mandatory to use the same type font and font size throughout the document with the exception of of tables, figures, appendices, etc.	
Spacing	Double spacing is required for all text with the exception of figures, tables, appendices. Endnotes, footnotes & bibliography sections may be single spaced.	
Printer	Laser or inkjet printers are acceptable, not dot matrix. If you are unsure bring or send us a copy for review.	
Title Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - centered at least 1” top and bottom margins, 1½” left margin, 1” right margins - signature lines to include thesis advisor & all committee members - signatures must be original on 2 originals submitted to the Graduate College - include the date the final draft is accepted by all committee members 	
Abstract	- double spaced on one page, indented paragraphs not to exceed 500 words	
Notes or Citations & Bibliography, Works Cited, or References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citations and notes may be footnotes, endnotes or written text - Citations used must be <i>consistent</i> with style used 	<u>Bibliography/Works Cited:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be <i>consistent</i> with manual style (see page 4)

Figures/Tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all Figures and Tables must be numbered (e.g., Table 1, Figure 1, Map 1) on separate page <i>just after</i> mention in text - may be used in appendix however the <i>preferred method</i> is in body of text - may shrink if too large to fit within margins, assuring it is readable and no smaller than 8 point font (may be “landscape or portrait”). - the page may be a fold out –always arrange so it opens to the right, & make sure your committee agrees to this - for large maps, etc., a packet in the back of the text is acceptable
Photographs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - original photos, if used are required for both originals - scanned images may be used as long as they are good, clear reproductions (if in doubt check with committee or Graduate College) - to mount use either dry or cold mount method – available at RU Bookstore (a special type of paper is available for reproduction of photo directly onto the paper, i.e., lightweight Polyfibre A.L., not plastic coated, available at camera stores)
Binding	<p>The University pays for binding the two Graduate College originals which will be maintained in McConnell Library. The Library will bind personal copies at a minimal cost. Please provide as many copies as you would like bound and use the “Personal Thesis Binding Request” form available in the library. Each copy should be in its own envelope or box. For more information call 831-6926 or 831-5694.</p>

