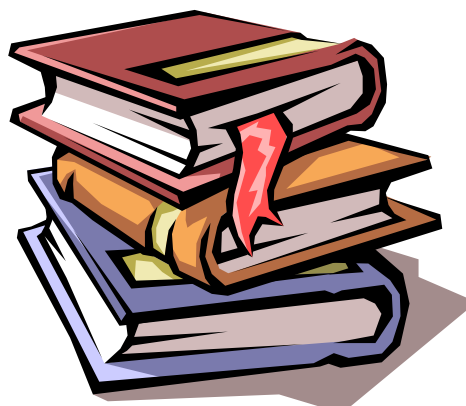


# THESIS & DISSERTATION PREPARATION MANUAL



Revised October 2020

## THESIS & DISSERTATION PREPARATION MANUAL CONTENTS

Table of Contents .....	ii
Introduction .....	1
Proposal and Registration .....	2
Preparation .....	4
Final Draft.....	5
Defense .....	6
Committee .....	7
Copyright.....	8
Graduation .....	9
Guidelines .....	10
Forms .....	Appendix I
Sample Thesis or Dissertation .....	Appendix II

Visit the College of Graduate Studies and Research at our website <http://www.radford.edu/gradcollege>

## **INTRODUCTION**

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

A thesis or dissertation 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 or dissertation should be a deliberative one. Writing a thesis or dissertation is a major research activity and, as such, requires time, planning, and heightened attention to detail. The master's thesis or doctoral dissertation 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 and dissertation requirements presented herein insure that theses and dissertations can be submitted 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 or dissertation 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 June 2016.

## **REGISTRATION FOR THESIS OR DISSERTATION CREDIT HOURS AND THE THESIS OR DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

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

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

It is recommended that the student establish the thesis or dissertation topic and begin work on the proposal as early as possible. The *Thesis or Dissertation 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 or dissertation.

### **Thesis or Dissertation Proposal Document commonly consists of:**

The *Thesis or Dissertation Proposal/Defense* form serves as the cover page of your thesis or dissertation proposal as given in this booklet (See Appendix I). Although the information may vary by department, your thesis or dissertation 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 or Dissertation Statement** – A concise statement of the thesis or dissertation; e.g., the hypothesis to be tested, the thesis or dissertation to be defended, the question to be answered, description of the creative project, etc.

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

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

**Thesis or Dissertation Outline** – A detailed outline of the written thesis or dissertation.

**Thesis or Dissertation Schedule** – A schedule for completion of the thesis or dissertation.

**Resources Required** – Some departments request that you list any additional resources that may be needed. Please consult with your Thesis or Dissertation 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 or dissertation committee are to be placed on the title page (See Appendix II).

**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). You may contact her/him at 831-5290 or irb-iacuc@radford.edu .

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

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

## **THESIS OR DISSERTATION PREPARATION**

Your thesis or dissertation should make a contribution to your field. Other researchers working in the same or related disciplines should find your completed thesis or dissertation useful in solving problems on which they are working. The thesis or dissertation 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 or dissertation is flexible. A Thesis or Dissertation Cover Sheet (See Appendix I-) must be submitted separately.

This may vary according to your department's standards, but a typical organization would be as follows:

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

A. Empirical Thesis or Dissertation

Chapter 1 – Introduces the thesis or dissertation 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 or dissertation.

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

B. Humanities Thesis or Dissertation

I. Literary

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

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 or dissertation writer wishes to emulate. Further discussion of the techniques the thesis or dissertation writer intends to use in the creative thesis or dissertation.

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

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

**8. Bibliography/ Works Cited**

**9. 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 College of Graduate Studies and Research Studies Thesis & Dissertation Preparation Manual*, Radford University Graduate College Staff
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, University of Chicago Press Staff

**Electronic Thesis or Dissertation Final Draft Review**

As you begin drafting chapters and revising, make sure you get input from all your faculty members, not just your thesis or dissertation advisor. This can save you major revisions later on. After the final draft of your thesis or dissertation is complete and prior to electronic submission of the original document in the approved format (see pages 10-11), students will submit an electronic copy of the final draft to McConnell Library for review. The Graduate College Copy Editor will review the draft document for conformity to style requirements. (See dates and deadlines at [www.radford.edu/gradcollege](http://www.radford.edu/gradcollege)).

**To submit the final draft for review, students should follow instructions on the McConnell Library website (<http://library.radford.edu>). Once on the website, students should:**

- Click on Instructions from the red top menu. Click on LibGuides (Course Guides) Click on Theses and Dissertations Submission Instructions: Graduate College Instructions on the right hand side of the screen about half way down. The web address for this is <http://libguides.radford.edu/ScholarsRepository>. Choose “Create an Account. Choose the “Step 2 – Submitting Your Thesis” tab and follow the directions to submit thesis or dissertation for review

- Complete the profile information and provide necessary contact information, etc.

Questions regarding the process or document style should be submitted to the Graduate College Copy Editor  
Technological questions should be referred to Jennifer Resor Whicker ([jrwhicker@radford.edu](mailto:jrwhicker@radford.edu)).



## **THESIS OR DISSERTATION DEFENSE**

### **Purpose**

The purposes of the thesis or dissertation 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 or dissertation ideas.

### **Thesis or Dissertation Defense**

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

### **Scheduling a Thesis or Dissertation Defense**

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

## **THESIS OR DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The thesis or dissertation committee will be composed of:

- One thesis or dissertation chair who is in the student's area of specialization or in a closely related field; a thesis or dissertation chair must have full graduate faculty status. To determine faculty status, review the Graduate Faculty List on the Graduate College web site. If a faculty member is not listed as an approved Graduate Faculty member, please call the College of Graduate Studies and Research at 540-831-6344 to verify eligibility.
- Two or three additional graduate faculty. The majority of the committee must have full graduate faculty status and should be from the student's discipline or closely related field. One of these committee members may be external to the university, and must meet at least associate graduate faculty qualifications. An external committee member may not serve as chair, and their membership on the committee is subject to graduate faculty approval. See the section on "Approval of External Thesis/Dissertation Committee Members" for more information.

### **APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL THESIS/DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS (NEW)**

A thesis/dissertation committee may have one external committee member who is not a faculty member at the Radford University; this individual cannot serve as committee chair, and their membership on the committee is subject to approval. The external committee member must have a *specialization or expertise* in the student's area of specialization or a closely related field, and must be eligible for at least associate graduate faculty status. The proposed external committee member to a thesis/dissertation committee must provide a copy of his/her curriculum vitae or resume and submit a graduate faculty application for the appropriate approvals (department chair, college and graduate deans). Any final decision regarding an external committee member will be communicated in writing; submitting a resume or curriculum vitae does not constitute approval.

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

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

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

The signatures of the thesis or dissertation advisor and committee members on the approval page signify departmental acceptance of the final document. The title page must be scanned and submitted with the thesis or dissertation during the electronic submission process.

## **COPYRIGHT**

Copyright is the legal protection of intellectual property – in this case your thesis or dissertation. 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 or dissertation.

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](http://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 or dissertation 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](http://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 or Dissertation**

- Defense results\*
- Thesis or Dissertation

One copy of the final thesis or dissertation must be submitted electronically to McConnell Library

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

#### **Thesis or Dissertation Grade**

- If you have registered for thesis or dissertation 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 and dissertations 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 the continuous enrollment fee each semester, until you finish your thesis or dissertation (See [Continuous Enrollment](#) form)

**THESIS OR DISSERTATION GUIDELINES AT A GLANCE**

<b>Page Numbering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- centered flush with 1" bottom margin</li> <li>- use Roman numerals placed at the bottom center, i.e., ii, iii, iv, etc., for <u>introductory pages</u>, i.e., abstract, acknowledgements, etc.</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>	
<b>Margins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- - 1" top, bottom, right, left</li> </ul>	
<b>Type/Font</b>	<p>It is mandatory to use the same type font and font size throughout the document with the exception of tables, figures, appendices, etc.</p>	
<b>Spacing</b>	<p>Double spacing is required for all text with the exception of figures, tables, appendices. Endnotes, footnotes &amp; bibliography sections may be single spaced.</p>	
<b>Title Page</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- centered at least 1" top and bottom margins, 1" left margin, 1" right margins</li> <li>- signature lines to include thesis or dissertation advisor &amp; all committee members</li> <li>- signed title page must be scanned and included with the rest of the electronic submission</li> <li>- include the date the final draft is accepted by all committee members</li> </ul>	
<b>Abstract</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- double spaced on one page, indented paragraphs not to exceed 500 words</li> </ul>	
<b>Notes or Citations &amp; Bibliography, Works Cited, or References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Citations and notes may be footnotes, endnotes or written text</li> <li>- Citations used must be <b>consistent</b> with style used</li> </ul>	<p><u>Bibliography/Works Cited:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be <b>consistent</b> with manual style (see page 4)</li> </ul>
<b>Figures/Tables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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</li> <li>- may be used in appendix however the <i>preferred method</i> is in body of text</li> <li>- 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").</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Photographs</b></p>	<p>- scanned images may be used as long as they are good, clear reproductions (if in doubt check with committee or Library)</p>
<p><b>Electronic Submission</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students must submit draft and final copy electronically to McConnell Library (<a href="http://library.radford.edu/">http://library.radford.edu/</a>) for review by the Graduate College Copy Editor.</li> <li>- Click on Instructions from the red top menu. Click on LibGuides (Course Guides). Click on Theses and Dissertations. Submission Instructions: Graduate College Instructions on the right hand side of the screen about half way down</li> <li>- The web address for this is: <a href="http://libguides.radford.edu/ScholarsRepository">http://libguides.radford.edu/ScholarsRepository</a>.</li> <li>- Choose Login</li> <li>- Choose the “Step 2 – Submitting Your Thesis” tab and follow the directions to submit thesis or dissertation for review</li> </ul> <p>After final approval by the student’s committee, the student will submit the final approved copy to the library. The library will catalog the thesis/dissertation and make it available online through the McConnell Library Scholar’s Repository</p>
<p><b>Binding</b></p>	<p>McConnell Library will bind personal copies for students at a minimal cost. Note that the left margin for paper copies must be 1 ½”, in order to leave room for the binding. Thesis binding is \$10.00 per copy, plus \$5.00 for shipping (for up to 5 copies, or \$10 shipping for more than 5 copies - international shipping may cost more). Contact the Library Circulation Desk for details about this service at <a href="mailto:frontdesk@radford.edu">frontdesk@radford.edu</a> or 831-5364.</p>