Dissertation Format Guide

This *Format Guide for the Dissertation* describes the required format for dissertations.

Aspects of format and style not covered in this guide are to be found in the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA). Where differences occur, the style guide should be used as the primary source.

Your applied dissertation must be correct in all aspects of style, including--but not necessarily limited to--the following:

1. Writing clearly and concisely
2. The mechanics of style
3. Displaying results
4. Crediting sources
5. Reference examples

Included in this document you will find:

- Description of formatting various sections of your document
- Sample manuscript

Editing

It is expected that your document/manuscript will be submitted to your committee and chair prior to your oral defense in a format which meets the formatting and APA requirements. You are responsible for editing and proofreading your dissertation prior to submitting it to your committee chair or to the committee. Proofread carefully for typographical, grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.

If you and your committee chair determine that professional editing assistance is needed for the preparation of the manuscript, you may hire a private editor. Editors must not make changes that affect the content of the applied dissertation.

Format Review

After receiving final approval from your dissertation committee, you will be expected to submit an electronic version of your final manuscript to the Lewis J. Ort Library for review. You should **not** submit this document with the expectation that the library will provide assistance with formatting and editing. They will **not** review the document if it is submitted without meeting the minimal format guidelines. They will provide feedback, but the expectation is that a professional manuscript has been approved by the chair and meets the Ed.D. department’s formatting requirements and APA style.
Paper

Following library approval, the final manuscript must be printed on 8.5-inch by 11-inch white, quality paper (minimum 25% cotton; 20-24 lb.) and submitted to the library for binding. Do not bind or staple the final manuscript. Use only one side of the paper.

You will be required to provide one bound copy for the Lewis J. Ort Library’s Special Collections department. It is recommended that you consider copies for your personal use or gifts. Binding fees will be $20.00 to $25.00 plus tax per copy. This fee is subject to change.

Margins & Alignment

The standard manuscript margins are:

- Top margin: 1 inch
- Bottom margin: 1 inch
- Right margin: 1 inch
- Left margin: 1.5 inch

The bottom margin should be as close as possible to 1 inch, but not smaller than 1 inch. Please note: In order to make the margin 1 inch for all text after adding page numbers, you will likely need to set the bottom margin at less than 1 inch. This may vary depending on your use of PC or MAC and version of windows. The library lib guides recommend trying .5 as a bottom margin setting but be careful to check to see if this works on your document to set all text to no more than one inch margins.

Make sure that the widow/orphan control in your word-processing program is unchecked. This guideline applies also to the References section.

Begin each chapter at the top of a new page.

An exception to the 1-inch bottom margin requirement is a stand-alone subheading (APA Level 2), which should not appear on the last line of a page.

Continue the narrative text to the bottom margin on a page with a short table or figure (i.e., one that is less than a full page) and on a page that precedes a page with a table or figure.

The hyphen that separates two words may appear at the end of a typed line. Do not hyphenate a single word at the end of a line (e.g., do not type “edu-” at the end of a line and “cation” at the beginning of the next line).

The following sections have different margins:
- Title page - Top margin: 2 inches; Bottom margin: 1.5 inches; Left margin: 1.5 inches; Right margin: 1 inch
- Copyright page (optional) – Top margin: 6 inches; Left margin: 1.5 inches; Right margin: 1 inch
- Approval page (optional) - Left margin: 1.5 inches; Right margin: 1 inch
- Appendices section - Margins may be larger, but not smaller than the standard margins, to accommodate materials from other sources.

In some cases, it may be necessary to arrange tables and figures on landscape-oriented pages. In order to provide a consistent manuscript, landscape pages’ margins should be adjusted accordingly. The following margins allow landscape pages to be printed, rotated 90 degrees, and bound with the rest of the manuscript:

- Top margin: 1.5 inch
- Bottom margin: 1 inch
- Left margin: 1 inch
- Right margin: 1 inch

For most of the manuscript, align the text to the left margin and use a ragged (i.e., unjustified) right margin. The following sections are exceptions:

- Title page - Centered
- Copyright page - Centered
- Approval page - Mixed alignment (see sample Approval page for format)
- Table of Contents: Justified
- List of Figures: Justified
- List of Tables: Justified

Do not use running heads.

Page numbers are placed within the bottom margins (middle). Refer to the Pagination section for more details.

**Typeface and Size**

Use only 12-point Times New Roman throughout the document text.

A 10- or 11-point type may be used in tables and figures, if necessary, to fit material within the left and right margins or on a single page. Where reduction is necessary, reduce also the tables’ numbers and titles. Consistency should be used throughout the manuscript.

Italics should only be used as permitted by the APA manual. *(See APA manual, section 4.21, pages 104-106)*
Do not use underlining or colors in text.

Superscript and subscript use should conform to the APA requirements. Do not use superscript for ordinal numbers, e.g. “th” in “5th” (see APA manual, section 4.34, page 113).

Use boldface only for headings (see APA manual, section 3.03, pages 62-63), certain statistical symbols and mathematic copy (see APA manual, section 4.45, pages 117-118) and table data (see APA manual for examples - Table 5.13, pages 131-132, and Table 5.4, page 134).

Seriations

Seriation (presenting lists) should follow APA format (see APA manual, section 3.04, pages 63-65). Bullets are acceptable only as outlined by APA style. Numbers are generally used to indicate sequential order. Refer to the Indentation section for further details.

As per the Indentation section, numbered and bulleted lists should be indented for the number or bullet to begin at a quarter-inch and the list line to begin at half-inch. (Refer to the sample dissertation’s page 2 for an example.)

Line Spacing

Double-space between all lines of text, between paragraphs, between headings and subheadings, between headings and text. Table text can be single or doubled spaced; however, there must be consistency throughout the document.

Single-spacing is required in some sections of preliminary pages. Single-spacing is permissible in multiple-line table titles, table notes, figure captions, and text headings; however, consistency throughout the manuscript is required. Refer to the sample

Spacing After Punctuation

Provide one space after sentence-ending punctuation. APA style is used for all other spacing after punctuation.

Pagination

Page numbers are centered and aligned in the middle of the 1-inch bottom margin, i.e. approximately 0.5 inch from the bottom of the page.

The Title page, Copyright page (optional), and Approval page are unnumbered. The remaining preliminary pages (Acknowledgments, Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Figures, and List of Tables) are numbered with lowercase Roman numeral page numbers, beginning with the number ii. Please note: If there is no Acknowledgements section, the preliminary page numbering (ii) begins on the Abstract page(s).
The main body of the manuscript (from Chapter 1 to the end) uses Arabic numerals, beginning with 1, for page numbers.

The typeface and size of page numbers should be the same as the manuscript type.

Do not use running heads.

Use landscape pages in the document only when necessary for proper display of data and/or visual imagery. As per the Margins section, margins should be adjusted accordingly. Place the page number vertically in the left margin of the landscape page(s). This will ensure that the page number is consistent with the manuscript’s other pages when printed and bound. See the library’s ETD LibGuide (http://libguides.frostburg.edu/etd) for details.

**Indentation**

The first line of each paragraph must have a consistent indentation of a half-inch. In the Table of Contents, use a half-inch indentation for Level 2 headings and, if included, a one-inch indentation for Level 3 headings. The second paragraph of block quotations in the main text, and for the second and subsequent lines of a reference entry (hanging tab format) in the References section. In numbered lists, indent the first line of each item; second and succeeding lines should be flush left. Numbered and bulleted lists should be indented for the number or bullet to begin at a quarter-inch and the list line to begin at half-inch.

**Headings**

Use no more than the five levels of headings as are described in the APA manual, section 3.1, pages 62-63.

Level 1 headings are used for:

- Acknowledgments
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Chapter titles
- References (as a section)
- Appendices’ titles

The wording of headings must match the wording of the corresponding headings in the Table of Contents.

Headings should use an en dash, with a space before and after, instead of a colon. For
example: “Chapter 1 – Introduction”. However, en dash used in the main text should have no space before and after.

As per the Table of Contents section, all Level 1 and Level 2 headings must be included in the Table of Contents (including the Table of Contents itself). Inclusion of Level 3 headings in the Table of Contents is optional but should be applied consistently. Level 4 and 5 headings should not be included in the Table of Contents.

Tables and Figures

Tables and figures must be formatted according to the guidelines of the APA manual, chapter 5, pages 125-167.

Tables and figures should be set aligned to the left margin, presented horizontally, and placed at the appropriate point in text (i.e., following, as soon as possible, the text reference). Avoid placing a table or figure within a paragraph, unless the table or figure is at the top or bottom of the page. Tables may extend to multiple pages or can be presented in landscape format as necessary.

If you have only one table or figure in the manuscript, do not label it with a number; refer to the item as “Table” or “Figure.”

Tables may use horizontal rules (i.e. lines) but not vertical ones. Do not use heavy, bold lines for rules. Horizontal rules in tables may not extend into the left and right margin areas. Refer to APA manual, section, 5.17, page 141, for more details.

References

Use “References” (Level 1 header) for this section and continue using double spacing throughout the reference list. Each reference entry should follow the style guidelines of the APA manual, including the use the hanging indents. For more information on crediting sources and formatting references, please refer to chapter 6, pages 169-192, and chapter 7, pages 193-224, of the APA manual.

Remove all hyperlinks, such as the underlining of URLs, and use DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers) when available. For more information on citing electronic sources, including the use of DOIs, please refer to section 6.31, pages 187-189, and section 6.32, pages 189-192, of the APA manual.

Appendices

The format of appendix material may deviate from the format used for other sections of the manuscript. However, pagination must be continuous, and no color should be used. Margins for appendix items may be larger, but not smaller, than those required for other pages of the manuscript.
Each appendix item must be on a separate page and labeled alphabetically and listed in the Table of Contents.

Each appendix should be assigned a letter in sequential order, i.e. “Appendix A” for the first appendix. If only one appendix is included in the manuscript, label it as “Appendix” – no letter is necessary.

**Preliminary Pages**

The order of preliminary pages is as follows: Title page, Copyright (if applicable), Approval Page, Acknowledgments (optional), Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Figures and List of Tables.

Use your name as it should appear as author—First M. Last or, if necessary, use your legal name as recorded by the university registrar.

**Title Page**

The top line (title) must be 2 inches from the top of the page (including margin); the bottom line (year) must be 1.5 inches from the bottom of the page. The byline section and the fulfillment-of-requirements section should be placed so that white space is evenly distributed.

List the College, University name, and the month (May, August, or December) and year of graduation in which you expect final approval of your degree award under the university name.

Break each line of the title at a logical point (e.g., avoid the splitting of a phrase). The avoidance of a split phrase takes precedence over the use of a pyramid or inverted pyramid style. Break the lines of the fulfillment statement as shown in the sample.

**Approval Page**

See the sample for the required format. Keep top margin set at 1 inch and space down one double space to begin title. Title should be listed exactly as is on title page. Be certain paragraph settings are set to “0 pt” before and after.

Set signature areas to single space and use two single spaces between signature line and signature text above. Refer to sample.

**Copyright Page (Optional)**

If using a copyright page, leave top margin at 1 inch and space down to begin copyright text at 6 inches from top of page.
Acknowledgments (Optional)

An Acknowledgments page, if included, must be double-spaced with a paragraph indentation. Use the preferred spelling of “Acknowledgments” for the heading. Dedications should also be placed in this section.

Acknowledgments and dedications should be written with an academic tone and be appropriate to a scholarly manuscript.

Abstract

The applied dissertation title, your name, and the year must be identical to the title, name, and year on the title page. Double-spaced with 250-300 words preferably on one page. Body of the abstract should be Times News Roman, 12-point font size.

Include up to five descriptors or keywords/phrases that relate to your study. Use below sample. The term “Keywords” should be italicized and followed by a colon. However, Keyword terms, though, are not italicized. The terms should be separated by commas with no period at the end of the line. For example:

Keywords: goals, educational assessment, strategy, academic priorities

Table of Contents, List of Figures, and List of Tables

See the samples for the required format.

The Title page, Copyright page, and Approval page are not numbered or included in the Table of Contents.

All first and second-level headings should be included in the Table of Contents. Third level headings are optional, fourth and fifth should not be included in the Table of Contents. Lists of Figures and List of Tables follow immediately after the abstract. All first level headings should be flush left and each succeeding level should be indented ½ inch from the preceding level.

Dot leaders, rather than a series of periods, must be used to join headings and titles with their respective page numbers; at least two dots must separate the heading or title from its page number. See example.

The right margin for the Table of Contents, List of Figures, and List of Tables is justified. Do not provide an additional tab (indent) for the second and subsequent lines of a heading, or subheading; begin the second line of the heading or subheading at the same point as the first line. The same rule applies with respect to figures’ captions in the List of Figures and tables’ titles in the List of Tables. Avoid having headings, subheadings, tables’ titles, and
figures’ captions extend into the column of page numbers.

Appendix items are presented in the Table of Contents.

Headings, subheadings, and page numbers in the Table of Contents must match the corresponding headings, subheadings, and page numbers in the text. The same rule applies to figures’ numbers, captions and page numbers in the List of Figures and tables’ numbers, titles, and page numbers in the List of Tables.

Do not include an identifying letter or number if you have only one appendix item, one table, or one figure; label the header “Appendix,” “Table,” or “Figure” and begin the title on the next line at the first tab position. Refer to the APA manual for capitalization rules relating to headings and title.
YOUR TITLE HERE, ALL CAPS, NO BOLD:

NO MORE THAN 13 WORDS: DOUBLE SPACE AND TWO INCHES FROM TOP

By

First M. Last

Dissertation Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

College of Education

Frostburg State University

May 2015
Copyright © 2015
All Rights Reserved
By
First M. Last

(Copyright page should only be included if copyrighted. Otherwise it should be left out. Set this page to a 6-inch top margin. Text should be centered and single spaced as shown below. This page should not be assigned a page number and it is not included in the Table of Contents.)
The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the College of Education, have examined and approved this dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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U. Need Tu, Ph.D.
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Almo S. Done, Ed.D.
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Acknowledgements (Level 1)

Start with indented paragraph and you may acknowledge anyone that you would like in this section. Dedication of your work can also be placed in this section. There should not be a separate dedication section.
Abstract (Level 1)

SAME TITLE AND FORMAT AS TITLE PAGE

USE DOUBLE SPACE

By

Glenn E. Thompson

Abstract should be double spaced with indented first line of paragraphs. Preferably 250-300 words. Keywords and phrases should be listed at the end as shown below – up to five. Indent and italicize keywords with commas between listing and no period at the end.

Keywords: Word, phrase, word, word
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Chapter 1 – Introduction (Level 1)

This guide is to be used as a sample format and may not necessarily identify every heading and or the order in which your heading will occur in your study. While this guide provides some of the most common elements in a study, it will not necessarily dictate how you should present your work. This should be determined between you and your chair. However, a five chapter design is required and any deviation from this should be discussed with your chair as well.

The first one to two paragraphs of Chapter 1 should include a brief overview of the topic and of the contents of this section. It should pull the reader instantly into the topic and be broad enough that the reader understands your interest area quickly.

Statement of the Problem (Level 2)

The problem statement describes the topic and focus of the question that will be the subject of your study. Do so in a manner that compels the reader to wonder and think about the problem. The problem statement should be clear and concise so that the reader is clearly seeing the problem. Below are a list of essential elements that should be addressed in Chapter 1. While the titles below are set up as level 2 headings, this could look different, based on your study and based on the preference of your Committee. The below titles are suggested format titles for Chapter 1, but defer to your Chair.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study (Level 2)

Significance of Study (Level 2)

Theoretical (or Conceptual or Contextual) Framework (Level 2)

Research Design Overview (Level 2)
Research Questions (Level 2)

Assumptions (Level 2)

Limitations (Level 2)

Delimitations (Level 2)

Definitions (Level 2)

Organization of the Study (Level 2)
Chapter 2 – Review of Literature (Level 1)

Introduction (Level 2)

This section should be used to provide a clear roadmap to present your literature review and the things that will be covered. Essential elements in Chapter 2 are varied based on the individual study. However, theoretical framework is likely to be one of your headings in the literature review if not fully covered in Chapter 1. Many dissertations introduce the framework in Chapter 1 and provide a more detailed review in Chapter 2 as part of the literature review.

Other elements to consider in the literature review:

- The history and background is stated to set the stage for your topic giving the reader enough information to place the problem in the current context of education;
- A critical review of relevant scholarly literature about the topic is conducted in order to show a deep understanding of the topic as it operates currently;
- Begin to narrow the focus of your inquiry into the topic pointing out an area where there is something that if investigated, would add to the broader understanding of the topic;
- The review of the current state of the topic is drawn primarily from recent published articles and or dissertations;
- The review should come from peer-reviewed journals or sound academic journals and texts; otherwise there is a justification for using other sources;
- A statement about how saturation has been reached in the literature review and efforts to find related research are explained.
Theoretical (or Conceptual) Framework (Level 2)

Essential elements in Chapter 2 are varied based on the individual study. However, theoretical framework is likely to be one of your headings in the Literature review if not fully covered in Chapter 1. Many dissertations introduce the framework in Chapter 1 and provide a more detailed review in Chapter 2 as part of the literature review. Including a section about how you went about conducting your literature review is good practice. Synthesis, including methods used in previous studies, is key.

Essential Element Level 2

When inserting a figure see below for the format. Using the insert table/figures option is recommended for ease of page numbering in the list of tables page. When inserting Figures, there should be no heading above the figure, unlike the format for tables.

![Figure 1](image.png)


A short conclusion and transition to the methodologies chapter should be presented.
Chapter 3 – Research Design and Methodology (Level 1)

This section should start with an introduction to your research study and design noting elemental sections of the chapter.

Research Design (Level 2)

This is where you will describe the research design and provide justification for choosing this design.

Level three headings (Level 3). Level 3 headings can be used when you are trying to provide a breakdown of the content involved in the title of the level 2 heading. The paragraph begins after the period of a level three heading. Level three headings are bold, sentence structure and end with a period. The paragraph/text begins after the period. For example, if you are using a mixed methods design you may want a level 3 heading to describe each method. However, you may not need more than the level 2 heading to describe the design and justification for using the design. This is dependent upon the design and the best approach to being clear with the description.

Research Questions (Level 2)

This is an essential element. A good research question is specific and includes the population, data source, and implies a method and direction, if arguable. For example: Do females age 18-35 score higher than adult males age 18-35 on the WAIS-III? How are online users experiencing or addressing privacy issues on such social networking sites as Facebook and Twitter?

Repeat each sub-section below for every component or phase of a mixed methods study. You might also organize based on the research question. Repetition may occur for the sake of clarity.
Population (or Setting) (Level 2)

This is an essential element describing the population, setting, or site you are studying.

Sample Selection (Level 2)

This is an essential element which addresses how you selected a sample and why the method of sample selection is appropriate. The level of heading is likely to be level 2 or level 3 depending on your design.

Data Source (or Instrument or Materials) (Level 2)

This is an essential element where you describe your data source, instrument, or materials, including coding and levels of measurement in relation to constructs.

Data Collection Procedures (Level 2)

This is an essential element as well. Explain, step-by-step, how data will be collected, recorded (if applicable), and managed. The level of heading is likely to be level 2 or level 3 depending on your design.

Figure 2. Results of group participant tasks. Adapted from “Study of Group Participants Activities in Educational Settings,” by E. Smith and G. Davies, 1994, *Journal of Educational Activity Assessment*, 32, pg. 99. Copyright 1994 by the Educational Activity Association. Adapted with permission.

Data Analysis Procedures (Level 2)

This is an essential element which explains, step-by-step, how data will be...
screened, analyzed, and interpreted. The level of heading is likely to be level 2 or level 3 depending on your design.

When inserting tables use the format illustrated by Table 1 below (refer to APA guidelines). YouTube can be a good source if you are trying to learn how to format a table. Some examples are available through the ETD LibGuide (http://libguides.frostburg.edu/etd).

When inserting tables you should never have a table begin on one page and roll over to the following page. Tables should not span multiple pages. As shown below, the table number and table title should be placed above the table. Notes can be placed below the table to include any explanations of the table contents (i.e., identification of significance level used, explanation of abbreviations used).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Respondents’ Demographics by Age and Participation Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n=128. Respondents were not required to answer every question.

Validity and Reliability (Level 2)

This is an essential element which addresses issues related to legitimacy, consistency or trustworthiness. Risks and benefits of issues are weighed.

Role of Researcher (Level 2)

This is an essential element which describes your role and potential bias in relation to the study.
Measures of Ethical Protection (Level 2)

This is an essential element which addresses issues related to IRB protections and procedure.
Chapter 4 – Findings (Level 1)

Finding 1 (Level 2)

The elements in this section will be determined by your study. This is where you present your study findings.

Table 2

*Survey Respondents’ Demographic Data Showing Comparisons of Faculty Participator and Nonparticipator Groups by College Affiliation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>College of Business</th>
<th>College of Education</th>
<th>College of Liberal Arts and Sciences</th>
<th>All Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% non-participators by college</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% respondent non-participators within college</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total respondents</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% participators by college</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% respondent participators within college</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total respondents</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total respondents</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n=130*

Make sure you are reviewing tables and figure guidelines in the APA manual.
Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Implications (Level 1)

Conclusions (Level 2)

This is an area for discussion of results and conclusions.

Implications for Practice (Level 2)

This is an area where you should discuss the implications of your findings.

Summary (Level 2)
 References


Appendix B – Title of Appendix (Level 1)