

# USC Graduate School

## Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

### INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are designed to assist you in the process of submitting your manuscript to the Graduate School. Students are encouraged to work closely with their program to address discipline-specific writing styles.

#### Early Submission Deadline

Students are exempt from registering in a given semester if they have met the continuous enrollment requirement, completed the Checklist, and submitted the first upload of the manuscript to Thesis Center by the Early Submission deadlines listed on the Thesis Center website. This option is available for fall and spring semesters only.

Please note: International students considering the Early Submission option should confirm with the Office of International Services the lack of course registration will not affect visa status.

#### Checklist Deadline

The Checklist is comprised of the Appointment of Committee form with all signatures and Approval to Submit form completed electronically by all committee members.

#### Manuscript Submission Deadline

The manuscript submission deadline has been met with the **FIRST UPLOAD** of your manuscript, not the final upload after all corrections have been completed and approved.

#### Manuscript Review

Manuscripts are reviewed in the order received. A first read may take up to three weeks. If corrections are requested, re-submitted manuscripts are returned to the end of the queue.

#### Manuscript Style Guidelines

Academic disciplines have different manuscript style requirements. Please consult with your staff graduate advisor, or committee chair, regarding an acceptable manuscript style, such as MLA, APA, or Chicago. Regardless of the style used, it must be consistent throughout the manuscript. This includes the format of headings and subheadings, as well as the font style and size.

## **GENERAL FORMATTING**

### **Paper Size**

- 8 ½” x 11” paper is required for all manuscripts (except musical scores).

### **Margins**

- All margins must be 1”
- Footer margin for page numbers must be 0.5” from bottom of page
- With the exception of page numbers, all other manuscript material must fit within the margin requirements.

### **Spacing**

- Double space text throughout manuscript and indent paragraphs
- Single space footnotes, long quoted passages, figure and table captions, and items in lists and tables
- If style manual requires bibliography or reference entries to be single-spaced, double space between each entry

### **Font Style and Size**

- Font style must be consistent throughout the manuscript
- Font size should be 11 or 12 points for regular paragraph text
- Chapter titles and main sections headings may be as large as 16 points
- Text for footnotes, captions, equations, and within figures and tables may be as small as 9 points
- Font must be black except for hyperlinks or content within tables and figures
- Font can be bolded for headings, subheadings, and chapter titles

### **Page Numbers**

- Page numbers must be 0.5” from the bottom of the page
- Location of page numbers, whether centered or right justified, must be consistent throughout the manuscript
- All page numbers must be of the same font family used in the body text of the manuscript
- Page numbers must not be bolded or italicized

### **Pagination**

- Every page in the manuscript, except the title page, must have a page number
- See Table 1 for the page order
- Preliminary pages are paginated with lower case Roman numerals
- The first preliminary page is paginated with lower case Roman numeral: ii
- The first body page must be paginated with Arabic numeral: 1

### **Landsaped Pages**

- A landsaped page is one containing a table or figure that is landscape-oriented
- Landsaped pages must have page numbers in the same position as on portrait pages of the manuscript
- See Table 2 for an example

## Order of Pages

- The pages should be arranged in a manner consistent with Table 1 below.

Table 1: Order of Manuscript Pages

| Order                    | Element                   | Required or Optional                    | Pagination                                      | Table of Contents Entry |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1                        | Title Page                | Required                                | None                                            | No                      |
| <b>PRELIMINARY PAGES</b> |                           |                                         |                                                 |                         |
| 2                        | Epigraph                  | Optional                                | If first page, use lower case Roman numeral: ii | Yes                     |
| 3                        | Dedication                | Optional                                | If first page, use lower case Roman numeral: ii | Yes                     |
| 4                        | Acknowledgements          | Optional                                | If first page, use lower case Roman numeral: ii | Yes                     |
| 5                        | Table of Contents         | Required                                | If first page, use lower case Roman numeral: ii | No                      |
| 6                        | List of Tables            | Required if manuscript includes tables  | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| 7                        | List of Figures           | Required if manuscript includes figures | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| 8                        | Abbreviations             | Optional                                | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| 9                        | Abstract                  | Required                                | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| 10                       | Preface                   | Optional                                | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| <b>MAIN BODY PAGES</b>   |                           |                                         |                                                 |                         |
| 11                       | Introduction or Chapter 1 | Required                                | Arabic numeral: 1                               | Yes                     |
| 12                       | Glossary                  | Optional                                | Arabic numeral                                  | Yes                     |
| 13                       | Bibliography/References   | Required                                | Arabic numeral                                  | Yes                     |
| 14                       | Appendices                | Optional                                | Arabic numeral                                  | Yes                     |

## Title Page

- See Appendix A for title page templates and format exactly as shown
- Text surrounded by [...] on the templates indicate information unique to each student and should be revised accordingly
- Do not bold text or add any extraneous information
- Degrees are conferred three times per year:  
December (for fall)  
May (for spring)  
August (for summer)
- Only the month and year are required; the day is not.

## **Table of Contents**

The Table of Contents is a topic outline of the manuscript; therefore, it must accurately reflect the organization within the text. Consistency is key.

- Single space all individual entries
- Double space between chapters or major sections of the manuscript
- Align page numbers to a common right tab, and do not allow text to enter page number column
- Use lower case Roman numerals for preliminary pages and Arabic numerals for the body
- Do not italicize or bold page numbers
- See Appendix B for table of contents sample, although it may vary by academic discipline

## **Bibliography or List of References**

- A bibliography or list of references is required
- The title, whether “Bibliography” or “References,” will vary depending on the academic discipline
- There must be one comprehensive bibliography or reference list at the end of the manuscript
- Do not allow an individual entry to split across two pages
- The bibliography or list of references should not have a chapter number

Table 2: Landscaped Table

| Order                    | Element                   | Required or Optional | Pagination                                      | Table of Contents Entry |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1                        | Title Page                | Required             | None                                            | No                      |
| <b>PRELIMINARY PAGES</b> |                           |                      |                                                 |                         |
| 2                        | Epigraph                  | Optional             | If first page, use lower case Roman numeral: ii | Yes                     |
| 3                        | Dedication                | Optional             | If first page, use lower case Roman numeral: ii | Yes                     |
| 4                        | Acknowledgements          | Optional             | If first page, use lower case Roman numeral: ii | Yes                     |
| 5                        | Table of Contents         | Required             | If first page, use lower case Roman numeral: ii | No                      |
| 6                        | List of Tables            | Required             | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| 7                        | List of Figures           | Required             | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| 8                        | Abbreviations             | Optional             | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| 9                        | Abstract                  | Required             | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| 10                       | Preface                   | Optional             | Lower case Roman numeral                        | Yes                     |
| <b>MAIN BODY PAGES</b>   |                           |                      |                                                 |                         |
| 11                       | Introduction or Chapter 1 | Required             | Arabic numeral: 1                               | Yes                     |
| 12                       | Glossary                  | Optional             | Arabic numeral                                  | Yes                     |
| 13                       | Bibliography/References   | Required             | Arabic numeral                                  | Yes                     |
| 14                       | Appendices                | Optional             | Arabic numeral                                  | Yes                     |

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Sample Title Pages**

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Doctor of Education (EDD)

Other professional doctorates (i.e. DMA, DPPD, etc.)

Master of Arts

Master of Science

Other masters programs (i.e. MPL, MHC, etc.)

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Table of Contents

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

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| List of Tables.....                                                                                                                         | iv |
| List of Figures.....                                                                                                                        | v  |
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| Subchapter .....                                                                                                                            | 5  |
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[TITLE:]

[SUBTITLE]

by

[Your Full Name]

A Dissertation Presented to the  
FACULTY OF THE USC GRADUATE SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
[(MAJOR or DEGREE PROGRAM NAME)]

[December or May or August] [Year]

Copyright [Year]

[Your Full Name]



[TITLE:]

[SUBTITLE]

by

[Your Full Name]

A Dissertation Presented to the  
FACULTY OF THE USC [SCHOOL NAME]  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
DOCTOR OF [MAJOR OR DEGREE PROGRAM NAME]

[December or May or August] [Year]

Copyright [Year]

[Your Full Name]

[TITLE:]

[SUBTITLE]

by

[Your Full Name]

A Dissertation Presented to the  
FACULTY OF THE USC ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

[December or May or August] [Year]

Copyright [Year]

[Your Full Name]

[TITLE:]

[SUBTITLE]

by

[Your Full Name]

A Thesis Presented to the  
FACULTY OF THE USC [SCHOOL NAME]  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
MASTER OF ARTS  
[(MAJOR or DEGREE PROGRAM)]

[December or May or August] [Year]

[TITLE:]

[SUBTITLE]

by

[Your Full Name]

A Thesis Presented to the  
FACULTY OF THE USC [SCHOOL NAME]  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
[(MAJOR or DEGREE PROGRAM)]

[December or May or August] [Year]

[TITLE:]

[SUBTITLE]

by

[Your Full Name]

A Thesis Presented to the  
FACULTY OF THE USC [SCHOOL NAME]  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
MASTER OF [MAJOR OR DEGREE PROGRAM NAME]

[December or May or August] [Year]

Copyright [Year]

[Your Full Name]