

# Department of Earth Sciences Thesis Format Guidelines

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

### Type Specifications

Most important in typing a thesis is consistency of format and adherence to the specific instructions given in this guide. The text should be double-spaced.

Use a standard typeface (e.g., Arial, Times, Calibri) of 12-point size. Limit the use of italic (script) print to foreign words, genus and species names, book and journal titles, and special emphasis. If you wish, you may use larger size type for the title of the thesis and for chapter headings, as long as it is not larger than 18- point. Boldface type may also be used on the title page and for headings, as well as in the text, for special symbols or for emphasis.

Reduced type may be used within tables, figures, and appendices. It is permissible to use color in the document.

If your thesis has multiple chapters, begin each chapter on a new page. Do the same with each element of the front matter (list of tables, acknowledgments, etc.), the reference section, and each appendix. Try to avoid typing a heading near the bottom of a page unless there is room for at least two lines of text following the heading. Instead, you should simply leave a little extra space on that page and begin the heading on the next page. If you wish to use a “display” page (a page that shows only the chapter title) at the beginning of chapters or appendices, be sure to do so consistently and to count the display page when numbering the pages.

### Margins

Use a 1” margin on top, bottom and right sides, with a 1.5” margin on the left side for binding purposes.

### Page Numbers

Every page in the document, including those with tables and figures, must be counted. Use lower case Roman numerals for the front matter (see below) and Arabic numbers for the text. **The text (or body) of the thesis must begin on page 1.** Do not number a page with “a” or “b” or skip numbers; do not embellish page numbers with punctuation (dashes, periods, etc.); and do not type the word “page” before the page number. Running headers or footers are not permitted.

The title page does not show a page number, although it is actually page i. The Abstract begins page ii.

Page numbers may be placed in the upper right-hand corner, lower right-hand corner, or centered at the top or bottom of the page. Page numbers should not be placed on the left side of the page. Allow a reasonable distance (0.5" footer) between the page number and any text; in no instance may the page number overlap the text.

## FRONT MATTER

The term “front matter” refers to all the pages in front of the main text of the thesis. Front matter pages are numbered with lower case Roman numerals. These pages are:

- title page (unnumbered)
- abstract (begins on page ii)
- table of contents
- lists of figures, abbreviations, maps, tables or multimedia items (each a separate list)
- preface (optional)  
acknowledgments (optional)  
epigraph, frontispiece, or dedication (optional; do not include in Table of Contents)

### Title Page:

First page of all theses submitted to the department will be the title page. An example of a correctly formatted title page is included in the appendix of this style guide. The title page should not have a page number.

Every thesis must have an abstract. An abstract is a concise summary of the thesis, intended to inform prospective readers about its content. It usually includes a brief description of the research, the procedures or methods, and the results or conclusions. An abstract should not include internal headings, parenthetical citations of items listed in the reference section, diagrams, or other illustrations.

The abstract follows the title page and has the heading ABSTRACT at the top. It always begins on page ii.

### Table of Contents

The table of contents is essentially a topic outline of the thesis. It is compiled by listing the headings in the thesis. You may choose to include first-level headings, first- and second-levels, or all levels. Keep in mind there is no index in a thesis, and thus a fairly detailed table of contents can serve as a useful guide for the reader. The table of contents must appear immediately after the abstract and should not list the abstract, the table of contents itself, the frontispiece, or the epigraph. It should include everything else that appears **after** the table of contents, including the list of figures, list of tables, etc. (See example in Appendix A of this guide.)

Be sure that the headings listed in the table of contents match word-for-word the headings in the text. Double check to be sure that correct page numbers are shown. In listing appendices, indicate the title of each appendix. If using display pages, the number of the display page should appear in the table of contents.

### **List of Figures, List of Tables, etc.**

Include a list of figures (illustrations) and a list of tables if you have one or more items in these categories. Use a separate page for each list. Show the caption and page number of every figure and table in the thesis. Also include lists for abbreviations, nomenclature, maps, etc.

### **Acknowledgments**

An acknowledgments page is required only if the author must acknowledge grant sources. Otherwise, it is optional. If included, it is used to express the author's professional and personal indebtedness.

### **Epigraph or Frontispiece**

Some authors include a quotation (epigraph) or illustration (frontispiece) as the last page of the front matter. These should not be listed in the table of contents. The source of an epigraph is indicated below the quotation but need not be listed in the bibliography.

### **BACK MATTER**

The back matter (or end matter) of the thesis/dissertation may include some or all of the following items (References section is REQUIRED):

References

appendices (may come either before or after references, and should be numbered consecutively)

### **References**

A thesis must include a reference section listing all works referred to in the text. This section may either precede or follow the appendices (if any), or may appear at the end of each chapter, if there are multiple chapters. Usually a single section is more convenient and useful for both author and reader.

References should be cited according to GSA format accessible at:

[http://www.geosociety.org/pubs/documents/GSA\\_RefGuide\\_Examples\\_000.pdf](http://www.geosociety.org/pubs/documents/GSA_RefGuide_Examples_000.pdf).

### **Appendices**

Material that is pertinent but is somewhat tangential or very detailed (raw data, procedural explanations, etc.) may be placed in an appendix. Appendices should be designated A, B, C (not 1, 2, 3 or I, II, III). If there is only one appendix, call it simply Appendix, not Appendix A. Titles of appendices must be listed in the table of contents. Appendix pages must be numbered consecutively with the text of the thesis/dissertation (do not number the pages A-1, A-2, etc.).

## TABLES AND FIGURES

A **table** is a columnar arrangement of information, often numbers, organized to save space and convey relationships at a glance. A rule of thumb to use in deciding whether given materials are tables or figures is that tables can be typed, but figures must be drawn.

A **figure** is a graphic illustration such as a chart, graph, diagram, map, or photograph.

### Captions and Numbering

Each table and each figure in the text must have a number based on the order referenced in the text and a caption. Number them consecutively throughout, beginning with 1, or by chapter using a decimal system, if your thesis has multiple chapters. In the text of the thesis figures should be referred to parenthetically (e.g. Figure 1 or Fig. 1).

### Placement of Tables and Figures

It is best to place a table or figure immediately after the first mention of it in the text—on the same page if there is room, or on the following page. Alternatively, tables and/or figures may be grouped together at the end of each chapter, or at the end of the thesis text (after the References). Tables or figures of peripheral importance to the text may be placed in an appendix. Tables and figures must be referred to in the text by number, not by a phrase such as “the following table.”

### Landscape Pages

If it makes sense graphically, place a table or figure sideways (landscape style) on the page by rotating it 90 degrees **counterclockwise** from its normal position. Rotate the caption or heading also, so that all parts can be conveniently read together. The page number may be rotated with the figure if the author chooses.

### Separate Caption Page

Use the entire page for the table or figure and place the caption on a separate page preceding it. Type the caption in the same direction (landscape or portrait).

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SAMPLE PAGES**

Title Page

Title Page for Honors Thesis

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

***SAMPLE OF TITLE PAGE***

Dickinson College

Department of Earth Sciences

**A STUDY OF PROGRESSIVE DEFORMATION IN THE HINGE OF THE  
PENNSYLVANIA SALIENT; SOUTHERN VALLEY AND RIDGE PROVINCE, PERRY  
COUNTY, PA**

A Thesis in

Earth Sciences

By

JANE DOE

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Bachelor of Science

May 2016

***SAMPLE OF TITLE PAGE FOR HONORS THESIS***

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## SAMPLE OF TABLE OF CONTENTS

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Introduction	1
Geologic Setting	5
Previous Research	6
Methods	12
Results	17
Discussion	37
Implications	41
Conclusions	43
References	45

**[NOTE: not every thesis will have/use these same headings: consult with your advisor for appropriate headings]**

## ***SAMPLE OF LIST OF FIGURES***

### **LIST OF FIGURES**

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**LIST OF TABLES**

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