

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Guidelines for the preparation of theses, graduate projects and artistic abstracts

by

Office of Graduate Studies

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Introduction

The Master's thesis or Graduate Project identified on the student's program is the culminating academic experience leading to an advanced degree. A Master's thesis is based on the results of original research which substantiates a specific view as expressed in a hypothesis, a concept, or a question. A Master's thesis can consist of making a synthesis of existing data and/or the development of new data in the laboratory or in the library. The term *graduate project* is used to describe a piece of original, creative work which does not lend itself to a book format, e.g., paintings, films, or theatrical productions. Even in some disciplines and departments where the end result of the candidate's work is a bound report, the term *graduate project* is appropriate, since the candidate's subject matter and research have an applied orientation. Examples of such graduate projects might be found in the areas of engineering, computer design and curricula development, and in the implementation of organizational structures in social systems.

A Master's thesis or a Graduate Project provides a demonstration of a graduate student's ability to explore, develop, and organize materials relating to a specific problem or an applied orientation within a field of study. The student must exhibit an ability to pursue research and investigation in a rigorous and perceptive fashion and to present the results in an extended scholarly statement in a clear, direct, and concise manner. The university retains an approved electronic version through Scholarworks@CSUN. This allows the work to be publicly available to other students, faculty, and outside researchers. The thesis or the graduate project, therefore, becomes a visible and permanent measure of the quality of scholarship expected of a graduate student.

For these reasons, the Graduate Studies Committee has adopted a body of regulations and criteria that establishes uniformity in physical format for all theses, graduate projects and artistic abstracts submitted in fulfillment of requirements for advanced degrees. All Master's theses, graduate projects and artistic abstracts must conform to the requirements, format, and approval cycle stipulated in this manual, as well as to any other additional requirements specified by the candidate's department. **It is advisable NOT to use examples of previously approved theses for style or format.** Because students are responsible for every aspect of style and format, the wise student will become fully familiar with the instructions prior to writing the thesis or the graduate project.

General Requirements and Approval Procedures

This section outlines the responsibilities and procedures that students must follow with regard to the completion of a Master's thesis or project. For additional questions, students should contact their department's graduate advisor or their thesis chair. The following standards and procedures apply to all graduate programs at California State University, Northridge. The students, however, are required to check the standards and procedures required by their specific department or program.

Thesis/Project Committee Selection

Once Classified Status is attained you must select the members of your Graduate Thesis/Project Committee. The committee must be comprised of three members one of which will serve as the committee chair. At least **two committee members must be full-time faculty from your department**. You may have one part-time faculty or off-campus committee member; however the part-time faculty or off-campus committee member **cannot** serve as the committee chair. **The part-time faculty or off-campus committee member must meet one of the following minimal qualifications to participate on the committee:**

- a) Hold a M.A./M.S. in the field or in a related field or equivalent degree
- b) Have experience in the topic or area of your Thesis/Project such as employment with an established institution or agency as a staff member or consultant
- c) Professional recognition through publications, reports, papers or membership in a national professional organization and/or working committees in their institution or agency

Once you have formed your Thesis/Project Committee you will need to register and complete the Planning Form on the Electronic Thesis Dissertation system (ETD). Curriculum vitae must be uploaded on the ETD system for all off campus committee members.

Approval of Topic

Before starting research, the student must obtain the approval of all members of the thesis committee.

Joint Theses/Projects

Joint theses/projects **require** an addendum, which must be turned in to the Graduate Studies Office. The addendum must identify the name(s) of co-author(s) and provide a detailed division of their responsibilities. The addendum must be reviewed, endorsed and evaluated by the students Thesis/Project Committee Chair, signed by each student and subsequently approved by the Associate Vice President of Graduate Studies, Research and International Programs.

Research Involving Human/Animal Subjects

Federal law and university regulations require students who conduct research involving human and/or animal subjects to obtain institutional clearance before beginning such research. If you plan to test a hypothesis using humans as subjects, you must prepare a protocol indicating how you will protect the human subjects from unacceptable risk or harm, gain their consent, and ensure confidentiality. You must clear that protocol through a departmental review committee and the campus Standing Advisory Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Protocols utilizing animal subjects must be approved through a departmental review committee and the campus Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Forms are available at <http://www.csun.edu/grip/research/humanresearch> or <http://www.csun.edu/grip/research/animalresearch>. For questions, contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects Compliance Officer, (818) 677-2901.

Submission Deadline

The approved Thesis/Project/Abstract must be submitted through the Electronic Thesis Dissertation system (ETD) on or before the published deadline. For the exact Thesis/Project/Abstract deadlines, please visit <http://www.csun.edu/grip/graduatestudies/>

Committee Approval

The thesis must be submitted to your Thesis Committee in plenty of time for them to read and suggest revisions prior to their final approval. Should your Thesis/Project require approval during a Summer Session, it is imperative that you coordinate in advance with your Thesis Committee in order to obtain their signatures prior to the thesis deadline. It is best for you to check with your committee members for department regulations, since departments often set additional deadlines. Your committee is required to certify the academic soundness of your work and verify that it meets the academic standards of the

degree sought. Committee members must approve through the Electronic Dissertation (ETD) system, as well as signify their approval by signing the Signature Page (Appendix D) where there must be spaces provided for the approval of each of your committee members. All signatures must be in **black ink** on 100 percent cotton watermarked paper (at least 20 pound weight but no more than 24 pound weight). See Appendix B for title page format. *Remember, your thesis Chair signs on the last line.*

****A signed signature page must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies on or before the published deadline.**

Graduate Evaluator Preliminary Draft Approval

The Graduate Evaluator will review a complete online preliminary draft of your Thesis/Project/Abstract to determine whether the format complies with all University requirements. If it does not, it will be rejected, and formal approval will be delayed until necessary revisions are made. Therefore, it is **required** that you resubmit a revised copy electronically of your Thesis/Project/Abstract for preliminary approval.

When the Thesis/Project/Abstract has been prepared in accordance with the enclosed instructions and the 100% copy of the signature page has been signed by the committee. The student must submit the signature page to the Graduate Studies office.

Graduate Final Approval

Once the final Thesis/Project/Abstract is submitted in the ETD system and all committee members have approved the final document, the Office of Graduate Studies will review your final version and academic file for completion of degree requirements.

****Note: Degree and final Thesis/Project/Abstract's will not be approved or conferred until the end of the semester/term.**

Manuscript Requirements

Style and Bibliographic Form

Footnotes, quotations, and bibliographic references are determined by the department's choice of style manual. If your department does not specify a particular style manual, your Committee Chair will recommend a preferred manual for your discipline. Carefully review the following sections on margins, page numbering, and special materials. These guidelines will not be in a style manual.

Format

Font Style/Size

Times New Roman font in 10 or 12 size must be used. **Consistent use of font** throughout the thesis is required. Although committee members generally require draft copies of theses and projects to be double-spaced, the final copy of your thesis/project, with your Committee's approval, may be single-spaced. If the thesis/project is double-spaced, the following text may be in single-spacing format:

- Captions, footnotes and bibliography entries of more than one line, (double space between footnotes and bibliography entries)
- Materials in tables and appendices
- Lengthy quotations (i.e., four or more lines of text)

Headings

Main headings should be centered 1" from top of page. Be consistent within each chapter/section. All main headings should either be BOLD or UNBOLD/ ALL CAPS or First Letter of each Major Word is Capitalized.

Subheadings are a free standing side heading and is placed flush with the left margin. **Capitalize the first letter of each major word.** The subheading must either be underlined, italics, or in bold print. **Only one of these styles may be used at one time.**

Margins

Margin requirements are as follows: left margin, **one and one-half inches** wide; the top, right and bottom margins, **one inch wide**. The same margins must be observed in the preparation of pages containing photographs, maps, charts, graphs, etc., in the text and in the appendix. Fold-out pages must be folded within the margins.

Page Numbering

Every page in the thesis or graduate project must be numbered with the exception of the title page. The title page is **not numbered** but is **counted** in the pagination as "i" which is considered a silent number. The signature page is numbered "ii" **unless** a copyright page is inserted. Only then is the copyright page numbered "ii" and the signature page numbered "iii".

Preliminary pages, such as the signature page, acknowledgement or dedication, table of contents, abstract, etc., are numbered with lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, etc.). All page numbers are to be in the middle of the page, one-half inch from the bottom. The text, references, and appendices are numbered with Arabic numerals beginning with page one (1) on the **first** page of the text (introduction).

For purposes of page numbering, appendices are considered a continuation of the text and are numbered accordingly. Pages with letter suffixes such as 10a, 10b, and so on will not be acceptable. **Please DO NOT allow your page numbers to be decorated in any manner.**

The page number should be at the bottom of the page, centered, and placed **one-half inch** from the bottom edge of the paper. If facing caption pages are used with figures, illustrations, etc., they should be un-numbered and placed on the facing page (left page) in the same position as above. In this instance, the facing page is printed so that the wider margin (1-1/2") is on the right-hand side of the page.

Corrections

Please edit your material before uploading your final version electronically. Once your dissertation has been submitted on line through the ETD system, it **cannot** be retrieved to make changes and/or corrections.

Special Materials

Tables and Figures

Tables and Figures may be arranged throughout the text and/or placed in an appendix. Table and Figure headings must be consistent throughout the document. Tables and figures which are too large to fit within the required margins **must** be reduced to conform to the margin requirements set forth in these guidelines or uploaded as a supporting document in the ETD system.

Images/Illustrations

Charts, maps, graphs, and diagrams must be kept within the margins or uploaded as a supporting document in the ETD system.

Landscaping photographs, drawings or graphs

Landscaping photographs, drawings or graphs requires a different format in order to include all materials on the page **and** remain within the required margins set forth in these guidelines. For instance, the "landscaped" material will be printed so that the top of the material is at the wider margin (1-1/2") on the left-hand side of the page. However, the page number must comply with the same format previously set forth in these guidelines (centered on the page at least one-half (1/2) inch from the bottom of the page).

Title Page, Signature Page and Abstract

The title page, signature page, and the abstract (see Appendices B, D, and G, respectively), are all standard formats and must be followed. If you are submitting a graduate project or abstract in lieu of the thesis, the title page should be altered to reflect this. That is, it should read, "A graduate project submitted..." or "An abstract submitted...." In addition to your name you will need to list the degree you will be earning as listed on your Master's Degree Graduation Evaluation Form/DARS. The title page of joint theses/projects requires the name of the co-author(s), at bottom of the page, above the date as shown in Appendix C.

The signature page should have a line for each member of your committee. The full name of the committee member will be typed under the line for his or her signature with the chair designated on the bottom line. To the right of the signature, the committee member will insert the date of the signing. **Signatures must be signed in black ink.** At the bottom of the page, one-half inch (1/2") above the page number, include the words, "California State University, Northridge."

Abstract

An abstract is to be included in your thesis/project. In this instance, an abstract is a summary of the thesis/project; refer to (Appendix G). The title of the thesis/project and your name as it appears on your official University transcript must be on the first page of the abstract in addition to the degree as listed on your Master's Degree Graduation Evaluation Form/ DARS.

Arrangement

The required manuscript format is as follows:

1. Title Page
2. Signature Page
3. Preface, Dedication and/or Acknowledgement Page
4. Table of Contents
5. List of Tables, Figures, Illustrations
6. Abstract

(No bolding may appear anywhere on roman numerated pages)

7. Chapters
8. References
9. Appendices

Regulations regarding Abstracts

Candidates in Art, Mass Communication, Music, or Theatre, who present an artistic performance or other creative work in lieu of a thesis, are required to upload an abstract of their performance or other creative work in the ETD system. The abstract must contain a title page and signature page (see Appendix B & D of these instructions), with the exception that the word "abstract" will replace the word "thesis." The abstract's signature page must be signed by members of the departmental thesis committee and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. The content, length, and organization of the abstract will be determined by the departmental thesis committee.

Art

In the case of an art exhibit, photographs of work are to be included.

Music

Music composition/performance recording should be uploaded as a supporting document in the Electronic Thesis Dissertation (ETD) system.

Theatre

In the case of a theatrical performance, an abstract of the production must be uploaded in the Electronic Thesis Dissertation (ETD) system.

Mass Communication

Television projects shall be uploaded in the ETD system for film projects and screen plays. All video should be uploaded as a supporting document.

Departments Requiring Abstracts

The student should discuss with the department advisor specific requirements for creative work. In addition, the student shall prepare and submit the following in accordance with these guidelines:

- 1) Title page
- 2) Signature page
- 3) Abstract
- 4) Script

APPENDICES

A. Thesis Chronology

Major steps that each candidate should follow:

1. Select, in consultation with your graduate advisor, the members of your Graduate Thesis Committee. Do this as soon as you attain Classified Status.
2. Register in the Electronic Thesis Dissertation (ETD) system and complete the Planning Form through ETD system. <https://etd.csun.edu/>
3. If you are using human subjects or animals to test your hypothesis, read the appropriate material in these guidelines and obtain your approvals to use human subjects or animals **prior to collecting data for your Thesis/Project/Abstract.**
4. Upload your Thesis/Project/Abstract to the Electronic Thesis Dissertation system for preliminary approval on formatting. <https://etd.csun.edu/>
5. Upload a Final Thesis/Project/Abstract on the Electronic Thesis Dissertation system once Thesis/Project/Abstract is approved.
6. Submit a signed Signature page on the 100%, watermarked, white cotton paper to the Office of Graduate Studies on or before the final published deadline.

NOTE: The "RP/SP" grade for your Thesis/ Project/Abstract course MUST BE CONVERTED by your Committee Chair (through regular channels using the A & R "Change of Grade" form) in order for your graduation process to be completed.

B. Sample Title Page

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

LIFE

AS A CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

(the two lines above should represent student's thesis title)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Science in Counseling,
Marriage, Family and Child Counseling

By

James Russell Lowell

(For projects: replace word "thesis" with graduate project)

Month Year

(Official end of the semester)

C. Sample Title Page-Joint Theses/Projects

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

LIFE

AS A CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

(the two lines above should represent students thesis title)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Science in Counseling,

Marriage, Family and Child Counseling

By

James Russell Lowell

in collaboration with

Robert Russell Johnson

(For projects: replace the word “thesis” with graduate project)

Month Year

(Official end of the semester)

D. Sample Signature Page

The thesis of James Russell Lowell is approved:

Edgar Reis Burroughs, Ph.D.

Date

Dr. Ashley B. Yoshi

Date

Winston S. Otis, Chair

Date

Note: These names are fictitious. You should check with your committee members to find out how they wish to be referred to on your signature page - Professor, Dr., and so on. (For projects: replace the word “thesis” with graduate project)

California State University, Northridge

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E. Sample Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Signature Page	ii
Dedication	iii
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
List of Illustrations	vii
Abstract	viii
Chapter/Section 1: Introduction	1
Subheading	
Chapter/Section 2:	
Subheading	
Chapter/Section 3:	
Subheading	
Chapter/Section 4:	
Subheading	
Conclusion	
References/Bibliography/Works Cited	
Appendix A:	
Appendix B:	

F. Sample Table of Contents for Abstracts

Table of Contents

Signature Page	ii
Dedication	iii
Abstract	v
Program	
Notes	

G. Sample Abstract

ABSTRACT

(this will be your heading for this page)

LIFE

AS A CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

(the two lines above should represent students thesis title)

By

James Russell Lowell

Master of Science in Counseling,

Marriage, Family and Child Counseling

Begin typing abstract here