



Handbook & Style Guide for Theses and Dissertations

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	1
Table of Contents	2
Chapter 1: University Expectations for Master's and Doctoral Candidates	6
Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Process	6
Overviews of the Master's and Doctoral Process	7
The Thesis Process for Master's Degree Students.....	7
Pre-Candidacy	7
Candidacy	8
Thesis Defense	9
Degree Conferral.....	9
The Dissertation Process for Doctoral Degree Students.....	9
Pre-Candidacy	9
Candidacy	10
Doctoral Defense	11
Degree Conferral.....	11
Graduate Students' Responsibilities	11
Choose the Appropriate Style Manual.....	11
Approved Style Guides	12
Expectations of the Student Researcher.....	12
The Department Responsibilities.....	13
Committee Responsibilities	14
Committee Chair Responsibilities	14
Committee Member Responsibilities.....	14
School of Graduate Studies Responsibilities	15
Thesis/Dissertation Submission Process.....	15
Seek Publishing Opportunities.....	16
Chapter 2: University Expectations for Academic Conduct and Ethical Research	17
Federal Policy on Research Misconduct.....	17
Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism	17
Penalties for Academic Dishonesty	18
The School of Graduate Studies' Document Review of Academic Integrity	19
Secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval.....	19
Tips for Successful IRB application	20
Secure Written Permission for Use of Copyrighted Material	20
Register the Copyright	21

Chapter 3: Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide	22
Review Published Theses/Dissertations in ProQuest	22
Illustration 1: Morgan State University's Earl S. Richardson Library's Website	22
Illustration 2: Library Website Radio Buttons for Databases	22
Illustration 3: Library Website Radio Buttons for ProQuest	22
Illustration 4: Library Website Radio Button for Global Access	22
Illustration 5: Log in to Library Services.....	23
Illustration 6: ProQuest Dissertation & Thesis Global Advanced Search	23
Illustration 7: Morgan State University Advanced Search	23
Preparing Theses and Dissertations	24
Saving Your Work	24
Default Settings.....	24
Alignment and Justification	25
Spacing.....	26
Spacing After Punctuation	26
Illustration 8: Find and Replace to Correct Punctuation Spacing	26
Double Spacing	26
Illustration 9: Double Space Formatting in Google Docs and Microsoft Word	27
Tabs.....	27
Acceptable Fonts.....	27
Margins	28
Illustration 10: Margin Guidance.....	28
Page Numbering.....	28
Table 1: Page Numbering Guidance	29
Sections of the Manuscript.....	29
Section 1: Front Matter	29
Declaration of Authorship.....	29
Abstract	30
Title Page	31
Signature/Approval Page	31
Dedication	32
Acknowledgments.....	32
Table of Contents	32
Lists.....	33
Tables	33
Figures.....	34
Illustrations	35

	4
Abbreviations	36
Section 2: Body.....	36
Chapters	37
Commas and Periods within Quotation Marks	37
Serial Comma.....	37
Ellipses	37
Types of Dashes	38
Hyphen.....	38
En dash.....	38
Em dash.....	38
Minus	39
Negative sign	39
Figural dash.....	39
Double/triple dash (also called the two-em dash and the three-em dash).....	39
Landscaped Pages	40
Widows and Orphans	40
Proper Use of Et al.....	40
Footnotes and Endnotes	40
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Documents.....	41
Section 3: Back Matter.....	41
References/Bibliography/Works Cited	41
Citations	42
Importance of Proper Citations	42
Appendices.....	42
Obtaining Editorial and Proofreading Assistance	43
What Students Need to Know About the Coaching Services Provided by the Coaching Fellows.....	43
References	44
Appendix A: Research Misconduct.....	45
Appendix B: Common Errors Checklist.....	49
Appendix C: Thesis and Dissertation Committee Policy	50
Appendix D: Alphabetical List of Website Links	51
Appendix E: Manuscript Page Setup	53
Appendix G: Required Abstract Page Formatting.....	55
Appendix H: Required Abstract Page Example	56
Appendix I: Required Title Page Formatting	57
Appendix J: Required Title Page Example	58
Appendix K: Required Approval Page Formatting	59

Appendix L: Required Approval Page Example	60
Appendix M: Optional Dedication Page Example.....	61
Appendix N: Optional Acknowledgments Page Example	62
Appendix O: Required Table of Contents Example.....	63

Chapter 1: University Expectations for Master's and Doctoral Candidates

Morgan State University (MSU) is currently classified as an [R2, high research activity institution](#) by the [Carnegie Foundation](#), and this classification rests, in part, upon the successful graduation of doctoral students in research fields. Master's students are also an important part of this classification process, as they have a unique opportunity to segue into our doctoral programs. The quality of an institution is directly reflected by the production of research and the success of its graduates.

The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) publishes the *Handbook and Style Guide for Theses and Dissertations* to assist Morgan State graduate students in the preparation of a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. To provide minimum guidelines common to all disciplines, this *Handbook* includes specific format requirements for the School of Graduate Studies. Information in the *Handbook* should also be helpful to graduate program coordinators, faculty, advisors, committee chairpersons, and committee members in understanding the standards and requirements for writing theses and dissertations at Morgan State University. The School of Graduate Studies expects that all manuscripts will consist of original research that is educationally significant and methodologically sound. The expectation is that the completed thesis or dissertation reflects academic rigor and expertise demonstrated by the student author of the work.

Currently, most candidates for Master of Arts degrees, Master of Science degrees, and candidates from other specialized master's degree programs must prepare a thesis. Please consult the current [School of Graduate Studies Catalog](#) and your program graduate advisor to determine whether a program requires a thesis. At Morgan State University, a dissertation is required for the award of all doctoral degrees.

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Process

Morgan State University uses ProQuest's Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) system to guide the manuscript approval and publication process. This includes five major steps:

1. **Review** the ETD Checklist, which acknowledges your understanding of the gradETD process;
2. **Review** the [SGS Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\) Error Checklist](#), which confirms understanding of the writing process and requirements;
3. **Complete and submit** the Intent to Defend form;
4. **Complete and submit** the Request for Deposit form, which includes proof of publication and graduation fee payments, a Turnitin® similarity score, and proof of departmental approval; and
5. **Upload** a publication-ready manuscript to our official ProQuest ETD site. Publication-ready is defined as a thesis or dissertation prepared, formatted, and edited according to the specific requirements for publication in this *Handbook* and the style guide used when writing your manuscript. This document will be reviewed by the SGS and must be edited as prescribed. No official university transcripts can be released until this process is completed.

To get started with the ETD process, candidates will send an email to gradETD@morgan.edu. The initial email should only include two things: the name of your committee chairperson and the Graduate Coordinator for the pursued degree program. In response, candidates will receive via email DocuSign® Forms 1 and 2, which must be completed using the instructions provided. After receipt of these two documents, the student prepares to defend and completes Form 3. Upon a successful defense, the process is concluded when Forms 4 and 5 are submitted and approved. This process is entirely electronic. Do not attempt to hand-deliver any documents to the School of Graduate Studies. If you have any questions, please email gradETD@morgan.edu for assistance.

Student authors must pay copyrighting, publishing, printing, and binding fees with the [Office of the Bursar](#), in Tyler Hall. Students should keep a receipt so that proof of payment to the School of Graduate Studies may be submitted during the deposit process. Currently, the thesis and dissertation copyright fee is \$65 and the binding fee is \$45 (these fees are subject to change according to fee adjustments by the companies contracted to copyright, microfilm, bind, print, and ship the thesis and dissertation). Only one copy will be printed and bound by the School of Graduate Studies for the [Earl S. Richardson Library](#). The student may [purchase other copies for personal use](#).

Overviews of the Master's and Doctoral Process

To be awarded an advanced degree from Morgan State University, candidates must complete coursework, successfully pass a comprehensive exam, design a proposal/prospectus, and successfully defend a thesis or dissertation directly related to their proposal/prospectus. Each of these requirements has specific standards for successful completion. The process is effectively the same for each discipline, although slight variations may exist within departments. It is imperative that students remain in close contact with their department throughout the entire process, as the guidance received from these designated offices will be crucial to your timeliness and success of matriculation.

The Thesis Process for Master's Degree Students

Master's students have five (5) years from the semester of enrollment to complete their degree. Extensions of time must be approved by your department and the School of Graduate Studies. There are three phases in the thesis process: pre-candidacy, candidacy, and degree conferral. Each phase has specific requirements that must be completed before moving on.

Pre-Candidacy

Before preparing the thesis, the student must:

- complete all required coursework and earn the minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher to be in good academic standing in a degree program, and
- pass all qualifying examinations including, but not limited to, comprehensive examinations and a proposal/prospectus defense (check with your department for a list of required examinations).

During this phase, students will also:

- after completion of coursework, continuously enroll in the XXXX 793 (Pre-Candidacy) course to complete qualifying exams and receive thesis proposal guidance. The pre-candidacy course is only offered in the Fall and Spring semesters, not Summer.
- form a thesis committee. The committee should include a chair and two members. At least two members (chair included) must be members of the department graduate faculty. The other member may be either a graduate faculty member from a closely related discipline, a specialist in the field of the student's minor concentration, or a specialist in a closely related field outside the University.
- write a thesis proposal/prospectus in accordance with your program department's guidance.
- present the thesis proposal in accordance with the candidate's thesis committee.
- receive approval of the thesis proposal from the committee. The approval gives the student permission to pursue the study described in their thesis proposal/prospectus.
- if required, obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) research compliance approval as needed (human subjects, animal care, radiation safety, hazardous materials, etc.) according to procedures established by the MSU [Office of Research Administration](#) before initiating data collection.

Once this phase has been completed, the student is officially a candidate for the designated advanced degree. Your department should confirm your candidacy, at which time you may begin to complete the requirements for degree conferral.

Candidacy

Upon achieving Master's candidacy, the student must continuously register in Fall and Spring terms for XXXX 797 (Thesis Guidance) until the Master's thesis is completed and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies for review. The candidacy course is not offered during the Summer semester, only in the Fall and Spring semesters. The course registration maintains the student's status as a matriculated, full-time student (student is registered for 3 credit hours and the system reports a full-time 9 credit hour load). Other courses cannot be substituted for XXXX 797 and the only eligible grade is "S".

During this phase, the candidate will:

- actively conduct original research that is educationally significant and methodologically sound.
- draft a manuscript that reflects and demonstrates academic rigor and expertise.
- complete the ETD process as previously described.
- publicly and successfully defend their thesis.

Thesis Defense

During the semester of defense, the Master's candidate will enroll in XXXX 797 (Thesis Guidance). At the appropriate time during the semester, the School of Graduate Studies will change the official registration to XXXX 798 (Thesis Defense). This course will count for 9 credit hours of academic load. The only possible grades for XXXX 798 are "P/F" (Pass/Fail). A thesis defense must be publicly and orally defended. A thesis defense date will be collectively planned by the student and their committee and must adhere to the dates determined by the School of Graduate Studies.

During this phase, candidates will:

- orally present and defend their thesis.
- follow the guidance of their thesis committee should it require conditional changes (edits, suggestions, addendums, etc.)
- upon successful defense and final thesis committee approval, begin working with the [School of Graduate Studies on the gradETD process](#).

In its evaluation of the thesis, the committee will assign the following assessments:

- *Passed* (no corrections needed).
- *Conditionally Passed* (minor adjustments are needed in substance and/or format).
- *Deferred* (major adjustments are needed in substance and/or format).
- *Failed* (necessary adjustments are too extensive, or the candidate failed to defend satisfactorily).

Degree Conferral

Degree conferral is the completion of all program requirements as outlined in the [Graduate Student Catalog](#).

The Dissertation Process for Doctoral Degree Students

Doctoral students have seven (7) years from the semester of enrollment to complete their degree. Extensions of time must be approved by your department and the School of Graduate Studies. There are three phases in the doctoral process: pre-candidacy, candidacy, and degree conferral. Each phase has specific requirements that must be completed before moving on.

Pre-Candidacy

Before preparing the dissertation, the student must:

- complete all required coursework and earn the minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher to be in good academic standing in a degree program, and
- pass all qualifying examinations including, but not limited to, comprehensive examinations and a proposal defense (check with your department for a list of required examinations).

During this phase, students will also:

- after completion of coursework, continuously enroll in the XXXX 993 (Pre-Candidacy) course to complete qualifying exams and receive dissertation proposal/prospectus guidance. The pre-candidacy course is only offered in the Fall and Spring semesters, not Summer.
- form a dissertation committee. The committee should include a chair and two members. At least two members (chair included) must be members of the department graduate faculty. The other member may be either a graduate faculty member from a closely related discipline, a specialist in the field of the student's minor concentration, or a specialist in a closely related field outside the University.
- write a dissertation proposal/prospectus in accordance with your program department's guidance.
- present the dissertation proposal/prospectus in accordance with the candidate's dissertation committee.
- receive approval of the dissertation proposal/prospectus by the committee. The approval gives the student permission to pursue the study described in their dissertation proposal/prospectus.
- if required, obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) research compliance approval as needed (human subjects, animal care, radiation safety, hazardous materials, etc.) according to procedures established by the MSU [Office of Research Administration](#) before initiating data collection.

Once this phase has been completed, the student is officially a candidate for the designated advanced degree. The department should confirm candidacy, at which time the student may begin to complete the requirements for degree conferral.

Candidacy

Upon achieving doctoral candidacy, the student must continuously register in Fall and Spring terms for XXXX 997 (Dissertation Guidance) until the doctoral dissertation is completed and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies for review. The candidacy course is not offered during the Summer semester, only in the Fall and Spring semesters. The course registration maintains the student's status as a matriculated, full-time student (student is registered for 3 credit hours and the system reports a full-time 9 credit hour load). Other courses cannot be substituted for XXXX 997 and the only eligible grade is "S".

During this phase, the candidate will:

- actively conduct original research that is educationally significant and methodologically sound.
- draft a manuscript that reflects and demonstrates academic rigor and expertise.
- complete the ETD process as previously described.
- publicly and successfully defend their dissertation.

Doctoral Defense

During the semester of defense, the doctoral candidate will enroll in XXXX 997 (Dissertation Guidance). At the appropriate time during the semester, the School of Graduate Studies will change the official registration to XXXX 998 (Dissertation Defense). This course will count for 9 credit hours of academic load. The only possible grades for XXXX 998 are “P/F” (Pass/Fail). A dissertation must be publicly and orally defended. A dissertation defense date will be collectively planned by the student and their committee and must adhere to the dates determined by the School of Graduate Studies.

During this phase, the candidate will:

- orally present and defend their dissertation.
- follow the guidance of their dissertation committee should it require conditional changes (edits, suggestions, addendums, etc.)
- upon successful defense and final dissertation committee approval, begin working with the [School of Graduate Studies on the gradETD process](#).

In its evaluation of the dissertation, the committee will assign the following assessments:

- *Passed* (no corrections needed).
- *Conditionally Passed* (minor adjustments are needed in substance and/or format).
- *Deferred* (major adjustments are needed in substance and/or format).
- *Failed* (necessary adjustments are too extensive, or the candidate failed to defend satisfactorily).

Degree Conferral

Degree conferral is the completion of all program requirements as outlined in the [Graduate Student Catalog](#).

Graduate Students’ Responsibilities

Choose the Appropriate Style Manual

Each discipline follows an official standard format for its scholarly publications and should be used to structure your assignments and manuscript. Your discipline’s style guide is also used to structure the presentation of your thesis or dissertation. To verify the style manual within your discipline, consult your Program Director or Committee Chair. ***It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with the professional style manual used within your field.*** However, this *Handbook* does have formatting requirements for your manuscript that supersede the guidelines in any style manual. You should become familiar with your style manual and the School of Graduate Studies *Handbook & Style Guide for Theses and Dissertations*.

Approved Style Guides

Currently, Morgan State University allows for the use of nine (9) style guides for theses and dissertations. These style guides are:

- American Chemical Society (ACS)
- American Mathematical Society (AMA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- American Sociological Association (ASA)
- Associated Press (AP) Style Book
- Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- Turabian Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations

Use only one style guide. Do not, under any circumstances, mix style guide methods!

Expectations of the Student Researcher

Although one should expect guidance from the committee chair and committee members, the student is held solely responsible for meeting the standards, citation style, format, and overall quality expected of theses and dissertations. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Choosing a thesis or dissertation topic that represents one's own original research;
- Creating a thesis or dissertation without the aid of another person(s) or application in the form of ghostwriting or artificial intelligence. In other words, you cannot in any way, shape, or form get someone or something to write your thesis or dissertation for you. The student may use technology resources to *correct* grammar (meaning the words were written and the technology source suggested rewording);
- Citing all sources properly, including works or texts which have been submitted by the student author for consideration in other spaces, be it academic, personal, or professional. If a student author is submitting, as part of their *original* thesis or dissertation, any portion of work which has been previously published elsewhere, these resubmissions should not make up the bulk of your dissertation, and must be properly cited according to the selected style guide;
 - "Previously published" includes, but is not limited to
 - Articles published in a journal (peer reviewed or otherwise),

- Papers submitted to Canvas for a grade or other consideration by teachers of record or classmates,
 - Papers written as a student in any academic institution, including and outside Morgan State University,
 - Creative texts written by the author and published elsewhere, for any purpose, whether profitable for philanthropic;
- Titling your manuscript to include words that identify unique or special aspects of the research and that distinguish it from other studies. A clear title should compel other researchers to read your study and is also important for index and research purposes;
 - Consulting regularly with committee chairpersons and committee members to review progress on the development of chapters in the thesis or dissertation;
 - Developing and organizing a theoretical framework which reflects with clarity the content and analysis of arguments and any proposed hypotheses;
 - Assuring that the quality of data is evidence-based and consistent with theories, principles, and methodologies of the discipline;
 - Assuring that the format, composition, text, layout, and appearance of illustrations and the bibliography meet the standards of your style guide;
 - Certifying the accuracy of references and citations;
 - Securing copyrights for the thesis or dissertation through University Microfilm International (UMI)/ProQuest at the end of the submission process;
 - Securing appropriate permission to reproduce copyrighted material in the thesis or dissertation; and
 - Meeting all deadlines set by the School of Graduate Studies for the submission of theses and dissertations.

The Department Responsibilities

Each department is responsible for the overall academic research content included in each thesis or dissertation submitted through the ETD Process. The department is responsible for collaborating with the Committee Chair to ensure that the student is actively progressing through the thesis or dissertation process.

Committee Responsibilities

The Committee Chair and the committee members are part of a collaborative team that will guide the student during the thesis or dissertation process. This collaboration is designed for the student to have a productive and enriching experience as a researcher.

Committee Chair Responsibilities

The Committee Chair responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Serving as the lead, first point of contact, and signee for all committee-related tasks such as the student's thesis/dissertation proposal/prospectus, IRB application, and thesis/dissertation defense;
- Utilizing their expertise to provide research guidance and approve the student's topic and methodology;
- Assuring that the student is progressing through the research and writing process;
- Assuring that the manuscript meets the Handbook standards prior to beginning the ETD process; and
- Assisting the School of Graduate Studies during the form and style review process by ensuring that the student makes the required revisions to their submitted thesis or dissertation for a publishable manuscript.

Committee Member Responsibilities

The Committee Member responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Utilizing their expertise to guide the student's progress in the research process;
- Reading manuscript drafts to offer timely constructive criticism on a regular basis as it relates to editorial, linguistic, and citation quality;
- Evaluating the thesis or dissertation based on its contribution to the field of work and degree discipline;
- Providing style manual guidance to ensure that the manuscript is written in alignment with the designated official standard format for scholarly publications in the student's discipline;
- Working in collaboration with the Committee Chair to review the student's thesis or dissertation and to check for any signs of similarity and plagiarism; and,
- Assisting the student in meeting the submission deadlines as established by the School of Graduate Studies.

School of Graduate Studies Responsibilities

The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies is responsible for certifying that the standards for the preparation of theses and dissertations have been met. Although the review of theses and dissertations by the Dean or the Dean's designee centers primarily on conformity to the elements of style as outlined in this *Handbook*, the Dean is also concerned with the quality of the content and analysis reflected in the thesis or dissertation. Only after certification by the Dean or the Dean's designee are manuscripts accepted and published in ProQuest.

The School of Graduate Studies' responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Communicating the thesis and dissertation process with the College and School Deans, department chairpersons, and graduate program directors;
- Advising graduate students, committee chairs, and other committee members about the standards for preparation of the thesis or dissertation;
- Providing thesis and dissertation submission deadlines for the Spring and Fall semesters;
- Reviewing each thesis and dissertation to ensure that it conforms to the requirements prescribed in this *Handbook*; and
- Issuing a certification or denial which confirms whether or not the thesis or dissertation has met the necessary standards, including those related to academic integrity, similarity, and plagiarism.

Thesis/Dissertation Submission Process

When a candidate submits a thesis or dissertation to the School of Graduate Studies, the electronic copy should be ready for publication. The School of Graduate Studies now publishes a schedule of dates when theses and dissertations can be submitted for final review and clearance by the School of Graduate Studies. The proposed schedule for the given term is usually the third Friday of October for December graduation of the same year and the third Friday of March for May graduation of the same year. After the closing date for submissions, students cannot submit a thesis or dissertation until the next Fall or Spring term.

Once submitted, if any corrections are needed due to a lack of conformity with the guidelines set forth, the Dean or the Dean's designee will provide a list of necessary corrections to the candidate and the committee chair. Corrections should be made as quickly as possible and must be accepted by the School of Graduate Studies before the diploma is issued and an official transcript can be ordered.

Seek Publishing Opportunities

Students are strongly encouraged to review appropriate publications, including textbooks and referenced journals, in which they could consider publishing a chapter or section of their thesis or dissertation. Communicate with committee chairs and other members of the department to stay abreast of publishing opportunities and academic conferences. Some popular resources for scholarly publication also include [The CFP List](#) and the [University of Pennsylvania's Call for Papers List](#). Students are strongly encouraged to share their research nationally and internationally so that their work directly reflects on and extends beyond Morgan State University.

Chapter 2: University Expectations for Academic Conduct and Ethical Research

The following passages are from the [*Graduate Studies Catalog, Section V: Responsible Academic Conduct and Ethical Research*](#):

Morgan State University, in general, and the School of Graduate Studies, in particular, promote responsible and ethical research among graduate students. Graduate students are cautioned to avoid practices that threaten the integrity of their academic career and their research, including, but not limited to, falsification or fabrication of data, violations of privacy and confidentiality provisions, conflicts of interest, cheating, plagiarism, and copyright infringements. Unethical research threatens the integrity of the academic and scientific enterprise and may subject graduate students to severe penalties.

Federal Policy on Research Misconduct

[Federal Policy](#) defines research misconduct as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. According to federal policy, fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting false data. Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

Federal sanctions for research misconduct include but are not limited to, letters of reprimand, the imposition of special certification or assurance requirements, suspension or termination of an active award, or suspension and debarment in accordance with applicable government-wide rules. In the event of suspension or debarment, the information is made publicly available through the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-procurement Programs, which is maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). The GSA manages the [Entity Information](#) website that provides a current listing of all who have been suspended or debarred from federal contracts.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty is among the most egregious offenses a student can commit because it interferes with the University's primary mission of educating and evaluating students. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, abuse of academic/library materials, stealing and lying, in the preparation of testing, class assignments, or theses and dissertations, is no less egregious. Academic dishonesty, whether in the classroom or in the preparation of the thesis or dissertation, will not be tolerated by the School of Graduate Studies. In particular, any graduate student found to have engaged in plagiarism in the writing and preparation of

coursework, research papers, and/or in the preparation of a thesis or dissertation shall be subject to the full range of penalties at the discretion of the School of Graduate Studies.

Plagiarism is submitting, either orally or in writing, the words, ideas, drawings, or other works which has been previously published. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Submitting material or work for evaluation, in whole or in part, which has been prepared by another student, by an author of a published article or textbook, or by persons producing papers for profit;
- Using a direct quote from another student's papers or from an author of a publication without including the appropriate citation;
- Paraphrasing or summarizing another's work without including the appropriate citation; and,
- Using information stored electronically (e.g., submission of papers and/or information found on computer disks, the Internet, etc.) without including appropriate citation and/or acknowledging the source.
- Self-plagiarism can occur when a writer reuses their own previously published work, ideas, or drawings without proper citation or acknowledgement.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

Any graduate student at Morgan State University who is found to have engaged in academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, in the preparation of written assignments, a dissertation, or a thesis, may be subjected to suspension, expulsion, and/or revocation of a previously awarded degree. Such sanctions may be imposed even though the accused graduate student may never have received a lesser penalty or penalties for previous academic dishonesty.

Suspension from the University. Suspension can be imposed for a specified period, not to exceed two years.

Expulsion from the University. Expulsion is a permanent separation from the University.

Revocation. When acts of academic dishonesty are found to invalidate a major piece of work required for a degree so that the validity of the degree or certification is jeopardized, then the sanction may include a recommendation from the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies to the University's Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs to:

1. reject a thesis, dissertation, or other work.
2. revoke a certification or not grant a certification.
3. revoke a degree.

The School of Graduate Studies' Document Review of Academic Integrity

The School of Graduate Studies currently utilizes a service called [Copyleaks](#) to process manuscripts for potential plagiarism, scrubbing, and improper use of paraphrasing. Copyleaks currently provides the capability of checking the submitted documents against 16,000+ open-access journals, 60 trillion websites, 1 million+ internal documents, and 20+ data repositories including, but not limited to, the UMI/ProQuest database. This process ensures that each submitted thesis and dissertation has been thoroughly reviewed for originality furthering the expectation that the completed work reflects academic rigor and expertise demonstrated by the student.

Students have the opportunity to check their work for similarity using the [Plagiarism Check 2](#) Canvas course. This tool should be periodically used throughout the entire writing process.

Secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

The federal Department of Health and Human Services' [Office of Human Research Protections](#) is the governing body for all Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) in the United States. That office created [the Belmont Report](#) to help IRBs understand the importance of protecting human and animal subjects during research. **No human or animal may be physically or mentally harmed, coerced, or unduly burdened by your research.** At Morgan State University, the [Office of Research Administration](#) is responsible for research compliance and has adopted the [Human Subject Protection Policy](#) as guidance for the approval of research involving human subjects. Students should become familiar with this policy **before** engaging in any research.

In part, this policy states:

The policy of the University is to respect and safeguard the rights and welfare of individuals in the conduct of research. The University understands research to be a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes. Actions of the University will be guided, to the extent that they are applicable, by principles as set forth in nationally accepted documents such as the report of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research (April 18, 1979). Actions of the University will also conform to applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. In accordance with this Policy, all University research activities which involve human subjects, regardless of the level of risk foreseen, require review and approval, prior to the initiation of the activity. The University Institutional Review Board (IRB) shall have jurisdiction over all reviews and approvals in accord with procedures set forth in recognized documents, e.g. Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) and/or applicable regulations (45 C.F.R. Part 46).

Students cannot begin using human subjects in surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups until IRB approval is obtained in writing from the Office of Research Administration.

Important: Prior to obtaining IRB approval, students must complete the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI Program\)](#). The CITI Program has two mandatory courses that must be taken: Social & Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research, and Social & Behavioral Research Basic/Refresher. This online self-paced training is provided by Morgan State University at no cost to the student. Upon completion, students will earn a certificate that must be downloaded as a pdf file and attached to their IRB application. Students should begin work on their IRB application as they are finishing their thesis or dissertation proposals, but not before. Even if secondary data is being used, IRB approval is still required. It is advised that students work closely with their committee chair to complete this process.

Tips for Successful IRB application

- Become familiar with the Belmont Report so that you understand why the IRB is necessary for safe, sound research.
- Carefully consider any physical, emotional, or mental health risks to your subjects.
- Think carefully about your research approach because you are not allowed to coerce, unduly burden, or otherwise harm participants in your research.
- If you are working with minors, you must first obtain consent from their parent(s). Then, you must obtain assent from the minor subject.
- Make sure to provide all of your IRB documents in one PDF file.
- Plan accordingly. The IRB committee does not meet during the month of July.
- Do not be apprehensive about looking to your committee chair for guidance.

If there are any questions about the IRB process, Dr. Edet E. Isuk is the current IRB Administrator at Morgan State University. He may be contacted by:

- E-mail: edet.isuk@morgan.edu
- Phone: 443.885.4340, or at
- Office: Tyler Hall, 304 E

Secure Written Permission for Use of Copyrighted Material

The *Copyright Law of the United States and Related Laws Contained in Title 17 of the United States Code* describes the concept of “Fair Use” that covers most academic and scholarly uses of copyrighted materials. Section 107 of the Copyright Law (quoted below) does not provide much detailed guidance, but it does clearly establish parameters for consideration. For the greatest protection, authors are expected to provide full attribution when using the ideas, words, pictures, or other works of another. When in doubt, the best course of action is to request permission from the holder of the copyright (usually, but not always, the identified author through the author’s publisher).

§ 107 • Limitations on exclusive rights: Fair use

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 106 and 106A, the fair use of a copyrighted work, including such use by reproduction in copies or phonorecords or by any other means specified by that section, for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), studentship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright. In determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered shall include—

- 1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- 2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
- 3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and
- 4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

The fact that a work is unpublished shall not itself bar a finding of fair use if such a finding is made upon consideration of all the above factors.¹

There are a plethora of resources that can help provide guidance with the issue of securing permission to reproduce the work of another author. Perhaps the best place to begin is the [Morgan Library](#). Keep in mind that, though data is not protected by copyright, the manner in which an individual displays that data does have copyright protection. When reproducing an illustration from another published or unpublished work, the author should ask permission. The most common practice in this circumstance is to be granted limited permission. The restriction might be something like “applies only to this dissertation, should the author publish another version of the work, additional permission will be required.” To be sure, the use of even a screenshot of the search engine on a Web page like that of UMI/ProQuest Search Engine should be supported with a request for permission to reprint in a booklet like this *Handbook*.

Register the Copyright

The copyrighting of a student’s work occurs in a technical sense when one first puts words into the manuscript (whether on paper or in digital form). The registering of copyright provides the author and the publisher certain rights to pursue those who violate the copyright. Morgan State University requires that every candidate register the copyright through UMI/ProQuest in order to protect the student, the advisors, and the University.

¹ Circular 92: Copyright Law of the United States and Related Laws Contained in Title 17 of the United States Code, October 2009, p. 19.

Chapter 3: Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide

Review Published Theses/Dissertations in ProQuest

Once a fellow student successfully defends their thesis or dissertation, they have advanced within that field of study. It might prove helpful to examine these recent publications for scholarship and organization, being mindful to focus on content while looking to your current style guide for formatting. It is advised that students familiarize themselves with others' works but especially those here at Morgan State University. This will provide some guidance and will help to keep students abreast of recent contributions to the research in their chosen field.

Students may research electronic copies of Morgan State's published theses or dissertations on the [ProQuest](#) database search engine. To access this database

1. Visit the [Morgan Library website](#) and click on "Databases"

Illustration 1: Morgan State University's Earl S. Richardson Library's Website



Illustration 2: Library Website Radio Buttons for Databases



2. Click on "P"

Illustration 3: Library Website Radio Buttons for ProQuest



3. Find "ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global"

Illustration 4: Library Website Radio Button for Global Access

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global [↗](#)

This database is the an authoritative source for information about doctoral dissertations and master's theses. The database represents the work of authors from over 1,000 graduate schools and universities.

4. Sign in. Use the barcode at the back of your Bear Card. Do NOT use the letter "A", which may appear at the beginning and end of your barcode number.

Illustration 5: Log in to Library Services

Log in to Library Services
University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions (USMAI)

Campus affiliation: **Morgan State University**

Your ID/barcode:
 enter the 14 digit number from your ID;
 do not enter spaces

Your last name:

5. From here, you can perform searches specific to your field of study.

Illustration 6: ProQuest Dissertation & Thesis Global Advanced Search

ProQuest Access provided by MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

Advanced Search [Command Line](#) [Field codes](#) [Search tips](#)

in

AND in

[Add a row](#)

Limit to: ☐ Full text

Publication date:

6. Once in the search engine, all Morgan theses and dissertations can be accessed by typing "Morgan State University" in the "University/institution" field.

Illustration 7: Morgan State University Advanced Search

Advanced Search [Command Line](#) [Field codes](#) [Search tips](#)

in

AND in

[Add a row](#)

Limit to: ☐ Full text

Publication date:

Author: [Look up Authors](#)

Advisor: [Look up Advisors](#)

University/institution: [Look up Universities/institutions](#)

Subject heading (all): [Look up Subjects](#)

Index term (keyword): [Look up Index terms \(keywords\)](#)

Preparing Theses and Dissertations

The presentation of your research must be devoid of errors in form and style. The Committee is responsible for vetting the validity of research and data and the School of Graduate Studies is

responsible for ensuring that the research is presented correctly using the conventions of form and style. It is important to the integrity of the researcher, the committee, and the University that this process be done with an even application of rigor, correctness, and uniformity.

The purpose of formatting is to present your work in such a way that the reader is not distracted from your ideas due to poor presentation. Formatting the document after it has been written can sometimes prove difficult; therefore, it is recommended that writers set up their document prior to beginning the manuscript writing process.

Warning: Failure to set up your document correctly could delay publishing and release of your diploma and transcripts.

Below, we have provided guidance.

Saving Your Work

One of the mistakes that student authors make when working for the first time with a large document is to use a naming system that does not have sufficiently robust features for marking copies that may be changed several times a day. Today, there are multiple ways to save and share work for collaboration and feedback. Morgan State University is an official Google campus but your thesis/dissertation committee may use Canvas, DropBox, or other preferred methods to share and edit your electronic work. Most programs, including Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat, have mechanisms for adding comments and recommending changes to your work. Although antiquated, paper still works well with penciled and inked notes too. Whatever form is chosen, be sure to keep multiple copies of all versions in different places. Use Google Drive to save a copy in the cloud but also develop a habit to save all copies on a home computer, laptop, and/or email them to yourself frequently.

It is suggested that students create a numbering system that distinguishes different versions of their work. For example, adding a date in YYYY-MM-DD format **before** the title of your document helps keep it organized within its respective electronic folder. For example, the file 2022-07-05 My Thesis will automatically sort by date in a folder with other files that have the same name but different dates. Additionally, learning how to find and restore a specific version of documents from the version history might prove useful. The process is different depending on the program being used but a quick Google search will provide instructions. Devise a naming and tracking protocol—and do not depend upon the time and date stamp of the computer.

Default Settings

Google Docs and Microsoft Word have a number of default settings that are automatically embedded. Be very cautious of these settings and how they can unintentionally alter your document. To avoid problems that default settings could cause, students may create a template prior to beginning the writing process. This template should consider formatting rules related to all sections of the manuscript that are described below; however, it is strongly suggested that students use the templates provided by the School of Graduate Studies.

Alignment and Justification

Alignment and justification are terms used to describe the way words will show up on a page. There are four available settings: left align, center, right align, and justify. Prior to choosing a setting, communicate with the program advisor or committee chair about the standards used in your discipline. The School of Graduate Studies accepts both justified and unjustified manuscripts, provided that only one style is consistently used throughout the text.

- **Left Align**
 - Text will situate on the line at the left margin and automatically proceed to the next line without adding extra spaces between words. This results in uneven text on the right margin.
- **Center**
 - Text will situate in the middle of a line and automatically proceeds to the next line without adding extra spaces between words. This results in text that is evenly centered on the line.
 - This formatting could be used in titles, Level 1 headings, or large illustrations; it is not used for the body of the manuscript.
- **Right Align**
 - Text will situate on the line at the right margin and automatically proceed to the next line without adding extra spaces between words. This results in uneven text on the left margin.
- **Justify**
 - “When you justify text in Word, you give your text straight edges on both sides of the paragraph. Justifying extends each line of your text to the left and right margins. Justifying text might make the last line of text in a paragraph considerably shorter than the other lines” (Microsoft, 2023).

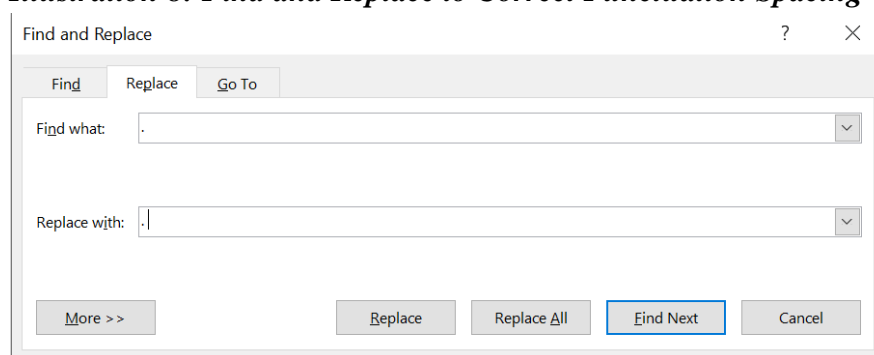
Left	Center	Right	Justify
Alignment and justification are terms used to describe the way words will show up on a page. There are four available settings: left align, center, right align, and justify. Prior to choosing a setting, communicate with the program advisor or committee chair about the standards used in your discipline. The School of Graduate Studies accepts both justified and unjustified manuscripts, provided that only one style is consistently used throughout the text.	Alignment and justification are terms used to describe the way words will show up on a page. There are four available settings: left align, center, right align, and justify. Prior to choosing a setting, communicate with the program advisor or committee chair about the standards used in your discipline. The School of Graduate Studies accepts both justified and unjustified manuscripts, provided that only one style is consistently used throughout the text.	Alignment and justification are terms used to describe the way words will show up on a page. There are four available settings: left align, center, right align, and justify. Prior to choosing a setting, communicate with the program advisor or committee chair about the standards used in your discipline. The School of Graduate Studies accepts both justified and unjustified manuscripts, provided that only one style is consistently used throughout the text.	Alignment and justification are terms used to describe the way words will show up on a page. There are four available settings: left align, center, right align, and justify. Prior to choosing a setting, communicate with the program advisor or committee chair about the standards used in your discipline. The School of Graduate Studies accepts both justified and unjustified manuscripts, provided that only one style is consistently used throughout the text.

Spacing

Spacing After Punctuation

Modern convention requires the use of one space after the end of a sentence. If you have inadvertently used two spaces in some places, simply complete the Find and Replace function in Google Docs or Microsoft Word. Search for a period with two spaces afterwards and replace it with a period and one space. Be careful when using this universal replacement function; check all periods to ensure only the intended update was made.

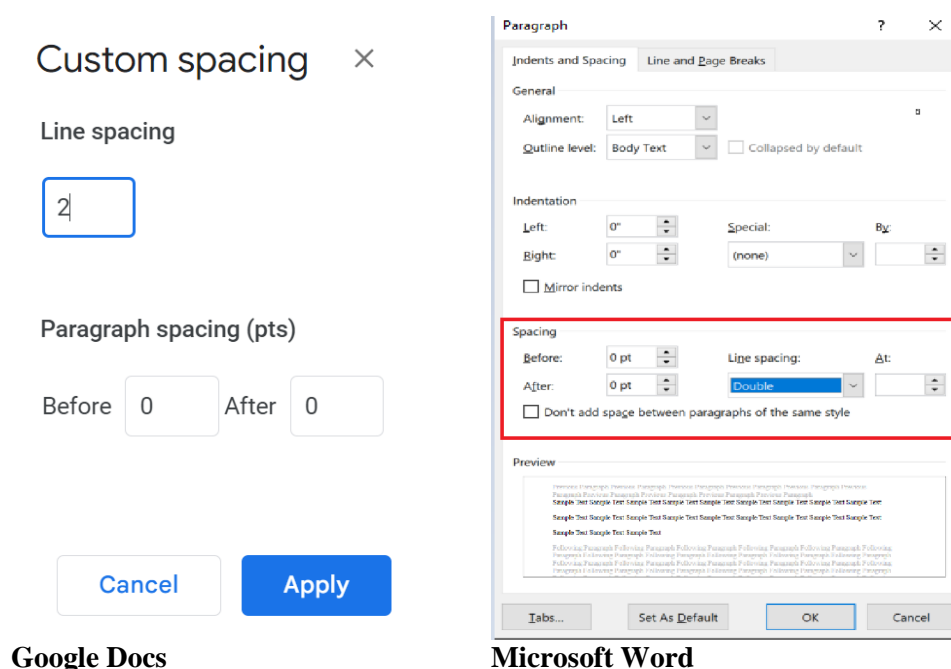
Illustration 8: Find and Replace to Correct Punctuation Spacing



Double Spacing

With the exception of footnotes and endnotes, double spacing should be used throughout the body of the manuscript. Google Docs defaults to space at 1.15 after each ENTER function, which disrupts the formatting of the double space. Microsoft Word defaults to add 8 points after each ENTER function, which disrupts the formatting of the double space. **You must manually correct this to achieve true double spacing.** When setting your paragraph spacing to double, be sure to eliminate the spacing before and after the space, and check the “Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style” box.

Illustration 9: Double Space Formatting in Google Docs and Microsoft Word



Tabs

Throughout the manuscript, tabulations might be necessary to adequately present research according to the style manual being used. Most style manuals recommend a paragraph indentation set at one-half inch, which is also the default tab in both Google Docs and Microsoft Word. This default should not be altered. [This](#) video is useful for understanding how to properly create, change, and delete tabs in Microsoft Word.

Acceptable Fonts

The same font style must be used throughout the manuscript for text, headings, captions, page numbers, and references. A smaller font size (while keeping the same font style) may be used when preparing tables, graphs, and charts; however, do not use a font size smaller than 9 points. Consult your style manual for chapter and section heading guidance. For symbols, use “Symbol” in 12-point size or another symbol font that matches the chosen font.

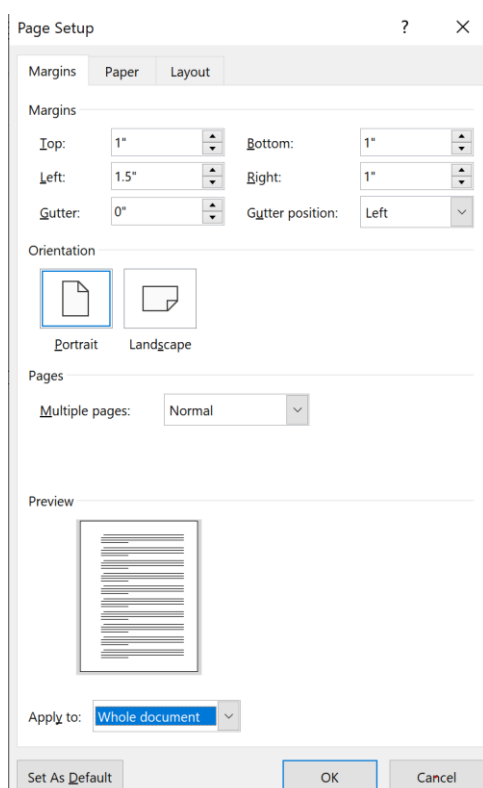
Acceptable fonts and sizes for the submission of your thesis or dissertation only include

Calibri	11pt
Georgia	12pt
Times New Roman	12pt

Margins

The left-hand margin of all manuscripts must be 1 1/2 inches wide to permit the final binding of the thesis or dissertation. All remaining margins (right, top, and bottom) must be 1 inch wide. This is the only acceptable margin formatting; all pages must meet these requirements.

Illustration 10: Margin Guidance



Page Numbering

In the manuscript, create three sections: abstract (no page numbers), front matter (small Roman numerals, no number placed on the title page, but it counts as page “i”; that is, page one), and the body section and back matter.

- Each of the three sections must be marked as “discontinuous” (or separated) from the previous section (do this after the sections are created).
- Use “Insert Page Number” to place the page numbers in the appropriate place according to the appropriate style guide.
- To remove the page number “i” from the title page, select “different first page” in the header/footer formatting list.
- The first page of the body must be Arabic 1 and it must be on the page.

Table 1: Page Numbering Guidance

Roman Numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v . . .) Front Matter	Arabic Numbers (1, 2, 3, 4....) Body & Back Matter
The Abstract Pages are <u>not</u> numbered	
Title Page (always page “i” but number does not appear on this page)	Body of the manuscript (starts at Chapter 1) Chapter 1 always begins with page “1”
Signature Page (always page “ii”)	Reference Pages/Citations/Bibliography
Dedication and Acknowledgments (both are optional)	Appendices
Table of Contents	
Lists (figures, tables, illustrations, abbreviations) some lists may not appear in your manuscript	

When experiencing difficulty, try using the Help function of Google Docs or Microsoft Word. Of course, Google searches and YouTube videos can also be helpful tools for writing.

See [this video](#) for an example of how to set up the sections of your Word document.

Sections of the Manuscript

The manuscript includes three sections: front matter, body, and back matter. Each section is described below.

Section 1: Front Matter

The preliminary section of your thesis or dissertation is called front matter. This section includes the declaration of authorship, the abstract, title page, signature/approval, dedication, acknowledgments, table of contents, and all lists. All front matter headings should be centered in bold text. The front matter ends just before the body of the manuscript begins.

Declaration of Authorship

The Declaration of Authorship is a formal statement made by the student confirming that they have made original contributions to their thesis or dissertation by taking responsibility for the content of their work, and giving permission for it to be published and distributed.

The statement of the student ensures transparency, accountability, and proper attribution of credit as a researcher.

The Declaration of Authorship should:

- Include the required statement below:
I, [Student Name], certify that I am the sole author of this [thesis or dissertation] in its entirety and that this [thesis or dissertation] represents my own work except where otherwise indicated. All statements that were taken from other publications and printed sources have been properly documented. I acknowledge that I have not used artificial intelligence (AI) powered productivity tools to assist me in editing this [thesis or dissertation]. I further declare that I conducted the research in this [thesis or dissertation] on my own and not with any AI-assisted tools. I also have not used the services of any agency providing model, ghostwritten work, or AI tools, other than those specified, in the writing of this [thesis or dissertation]. I have not submitted this work in the same or a similar form to any other examination authority. By submission, I consent that this work may be checked with a third-party software to review authenticity.
- Not be numbered.
- Should include the date that the thesis or dissertation is uploaded into ProQuest.

Abstract

The Abstract is a summary of the thesis/dissertation and should condense your central hypothesis, methodology, findings, and conclusions. The Abstract should be clear and concise about the major findings and methods used, but cannot exceed 250 words. Keywords are included in the ETD process, therefore, they do not need to be included in the Abstract.

The Abstract should:

- Not be numbered.
- Be one paragraph.
- List the title of the thesis/dissertation in all-caps text.
- Be limited to 250 words.
- Not include citations.

Title Page

The Title Page introduces the author, subject of the manuscript, declares Morgan State University as the issuing institution and proclaims the date of publication.

The Title Page must:

- Be placed directly after the Abstract.
- Not be numbered, but is considered page “i.”
- Include the full title of the thesis/dissertation in all-caps text just as it appears on the Abstract page.
- List the Author’s name as it appears in University records.
- Declare this standardized degree statement on three separate single-spaced lines as follows:
 - A [Dissertation OR Thesis] Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
[Doctor of Philosophy OR Master of Arts, etc.]
- List Morgan State University as the institution in all-caps text.
- State the month and year of degree is to be conferred.

Signature/Approval Page

The Signature/Approval Page follows the Title Page, and no longer requires signature lines within your manuscript. A signed version of the Signature/Approval Page will be generated electronically using DocuSign®; however, ***this version must not be included in the published manuscript***. The Signature/Approval Page serves to list the title of the thesis/dissertation, the author, the approval, the defense month and year, and lists the committee members. The Chair’s name always appears first, with the remaining committee members listed in alphabetical order by last name. The chair of the committee is indicated at the end by the term “Chair.” When a student has two Chairs, both are listed as “Co-Chair.” These should be identified as well, with “Chair” on the first line. Follow each committee members’ name by a comma and then their highest degree.

The Signature/Approval page must:

- Immediately follow the Title Page.
- Be numbered as Page “ii”.
- Display the full title of the thesis or dissertation in all-caps text.
- Include the name of the author as it appears in University records, in sentence case.
- Declare the approval of the committee.
- List the month and date of the oral defense in sentence case.
- List the Chair of the committee first, followed alphabetically, by last name, a list of the remaining committee members, with each name followed by the highest degree earned.

Dedication

In order to bestow gratitude on a special person, students may decide to include a Dedication page. Dedications are optional, and when present, should be limited to one page. This space is intended to be for the recognition of people who were particularly significant during the manuscript process.

The Dedication page must:

- If present, be paginated with lower-case Roman numerals.
- Follow the Signature/Approval page.
- Be no more than 1 page in length.
- Be written in indented paragraph form (not centered) and use sentence casing.

Acknowledgments

Where present, the Acknowledgments page notes the special contributions of those persons or agencies that assisted or supported the author in the writing of the thesis or dissertation. If the author wants to recognize someone for providing distinctive assistance or granting unusual permission(s), include an Acknowledgments page. The Acknowledgments page should not contain personal, familial, or religious testimonies. Most style manuals provide directions for writing acknowledgments appropriate to the discipline.

The Acknowledgments page must:

- If present, be paginated with lower-case Roman numerals.
- Follow the Dedication page. If no Dedication page is present, it must follow the Signature/Approval page.
- Be concise.
- Be written in indented paragraph form (not centered) and use sentence casing.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents lists all chapters and headings (including subheadings) arranged exactly as they appear in the body of the manuscript. In addition, the numbering of the entries in the Table of Contents must be absolutely identical to the numbering system used within the text. Students are encouraged to use the Table of Contents feature in Google Docs or Microsoft Word to create the Table of Contents. Manually creating this Table is time-consuming and could result in errors, omissions, or misinformation. Single space may be used between chapter subheadings, but double space is required between chapters or major sections.

No preliminary material such as the Abstract, Dedication, and Acknowledgments should be listed on the Table of Contents. Any List of Tables, List of Figures, or List of Illustrations, however, should appear in the Table of Contents if tables, figures, or illustrations appear in the text. All back matter should appear in the Table of Contents.

The Table of Contents must:

- Be paginated with lower-case Roman numerals.
- Be included.
- Follow the Acknowledgments page. If no Acknowledgments page is present, it must follow the Dedication or Signature/Approval pages.
- Not include the Abstract, Dedication page, or Acknowledgments page.

See [this](#) video for an example of how to create a Table of Contents in Word.

Lists

In writing the manuscript, you may need to use tables, figures, illustrations, or abbreviations to convey ideas or summarize information. If these elements are included within your manuscript, a list is required. Even if one table or one figure is used, a list is required to correspond with the information being presented.

Lists are paginated using lowercase Roman numerals. Each list begins on a separate page and is placed immediately after the Table of Contents. The order in which Lists are presented is (1) Tables, (2) Figures, (3) Illustrations, and (4) Abbreviations. Using one list does not require other lists to be used. For example, if you only need Tables and Illustrations, but not Figures, that is acceptable.

Contemporary software provides manipulation of the text and figures in order to place them in the manuscript. This also allows for the creation of a table of contents. Oversized content that is printed in landscape mode (sideways) should be placed in the thesis or dissertation so that the top of the content is located on the left side of the page. The orientation of the page number must not be changed and the 1.5" left margins must be kept throughout the manuscript.

Tables, figures, and illustrations must include captions and numbering that correspond with those in the Body and Table of Contents. Each style manual requires a different approach, so be sure to consult it for guidance in the design and organization of these elements.

Tables

A List of Tables is required if tables are used within the manuscript. A table depicts tabulated data using headers, rows, and columns. Tables must be numbered separately and sequentially. Do not number tables by chapter (i.e. 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, etc.). Instead, number Tables using sequential Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) as they appear in the manuscript. [This](#) video explains how to format Tables.

Tables should be inserted in the text following the first reference to a table; grouping them at the end of the chapter should be avoided, though, on occasion, it may be necessary. The same is true for placing the tables at the end of the thesis or dissertation. Remember, your manuscript will also be printed as a book and should be easy to read. The page number must be consistent throughout the text. [This](#) video explains how to insert a table into a Microsoft Word document.

Each table must bear a “caption” which also serves as the Table title. The numbers and titles for tables are located above the top line of the table, followed by a double space.

Additionally, tables, if being referenced from another source, must be cited underneath the table as a Note. Refer to your style guide for specific details.

The List of Tables, if present, must:

- Be included if tables are used in the manuscript.
- Appear as an entry on the Table of Contents.
- Be paginated with appropriate lower-case Roman numerals.
- Be on its own separate page. It is acceptable to have multiple pages for a List of Tables if your manuscript requires it.
- Be placed immediately after the Table of Contents.

Tables within the manuscript must be:

- Numbered sequentially.
- Titled relative to the features from the table.
- Properly cited if they are referenced from other sources.

Figures

A List of Figures is required if figures are used within the manuscript. A figure depicts bar graphs, charts, diagrams, drawings, graphs, maps, pie charts, plates, schematics, and any visually interpreted information. Figures are illustrations, but not all illustrations are figures (see the Illustration section below for clarification).

Figures must be numbered separately and sequentially. Do not number figures by chapter (i.e. 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, etc.). Instead, number Figures using sequential Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) as they appear in the manuscript. [This](#) video explains how to format Figures.

Figures should be inserted in the text following the first reference to a figure; grouping them at the end of the chapter should be avoided, though, on occasion, it may be necessary. The same is true for placing the figures at the end of the thesis or dissertation. Remember, your manuscript will also be printed as a book and should be easy to read. The page number must be consistent throughout the text. [This](#) video explains how to insert a figure into a Microsoft Word document.

The numbers for figures are located above the first line of the figure, followed by a double space. Additionally, figures, if being referenced from another source, must be cited. Citations, if required, go underneath the figure as a Note. Notes also can include an explanation to supplement or clarify information in the figure. Refer to your style guide for specific details.

The List of Figures, if present, must:

- Be included if figures are used in the manuscript.
- Appear as an entry on the Table of Contents.
- Be paginated with appropriate lower-case Roman numerals.
- Be on its own separate page. It is acceptable to have multiple pages for a List of Figures if your manuscript requires it.
- Be placed after the Table of Contents and, if present, the List of Tables.

Figures within the manuscript must be:

- Numbered sequentially.
- Titled relative to the features from the figure.
- Properly cited if they are referenced from other sources.

See [this](#) playlist for examples of how to use tables and figures in Word.

Illustrations

A List of Illustrations is required if illustrations are used within the manuscript. An illustration is a picture that is not critical to understanding the text. It is an optional visual aid that has no bearing on the validity of the text. Generally speaking, if you need the illustration to complement the text for understanding, it is a figure (not an illustration), but if the text makes sense without the figure, then it is an illustration. Any illustration with a tabular (column) presentation is a table.

Illustrations must be numbered separately and sequentially. Do not number Illustrations by chapter (i.e. 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, etc.). Instead, number Illustrations using sequential Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) as they appear in the manuscript. [This](#) video explains how to format Illustrations.

Illustrations should be inserted in the text following the first reference to the Illustration; grouping them at the end of the chapter should be avoided, though, on occasion, it may be necessary. The same is true for placing the Illustrations at the end of the thesis or dissertation. Remember, your manuscript will also be printed as a book and should be easy to read. The page number must be consistent throughout the text. [This](#) video explains how to insert an Illustration into a Microsoft Word document.

Each Illustration must bear a “caption” which also serves as the Illustration title. The numbers and captions for Illustrations are located below the last line of the Illustration, preceded by a double space. Additionally, Illustrations, if being referenced from another source, must be cited. Citations, if required, also go underneath the Illustration as a Note. Refer to your style guide for specific details.

The List of Illustrations, if present, must:

- Be included in the manuscript if Illustrations are used.
- Appear as an entry on the Table of Contents.
- Be paginated with appropriate lower-case Roman numerals.
- Be on its own separate page. It is acceptable to have multiple pages for a List of Illustrations if your manuscript requires it.
- Be placed after the Table of Contents and, if present, the List of Tables and Figures, respectively.

Illustrations within the manuscript must be:

- Numbered sequentially.
- Titled relative to the features from the Illustration.
- Properly cited if they are referenced from other sources.

Abbreviations

If multiple instances of an abbreviation are used in your manuscript, a List of Abbreviations should be included. This two-columned alphabetical list helps your audience delineate the jargon used within your manuscript. Upon first use, enclose the abbreviation in parenthesis. After this first abbreviation reference, begin to use the abbreviation throughout the rest of the chapter. It is best practice to completely spell out any abbreviations during the first use in a chapter; however, you only need to do this when first used. The List of Abbreviations is the last of the Lists, and always follows the List of Tables, Figures, and Illustrations, respectively. The List of Abbreviations does not need to be included in the Appendix.

The List of Abbreviations must:

- Be present in the manuscript if multiple instances of an abbreviation are used throughout.
- Appear as an entry on the Table of Contents.
- Be paginated with appropriate lower-case Roman numerals.
- Be on its own separate page. It is acceptable to have multiple pages for a List of Abbreviations if your manuscript requires it.
- Be placed after the Table of Contents and, if present, after the List of Tables, Figures, and Illustrations.

Section 2: Body

The body of the thesis/dissertation should be double-spaced throughout. There are instances in the front matter which may require single spacing, but generally speaking, the entire body of the manuscript is double-spaced. Refer to the Style Guide for the limited instances of single spacing within the manuscript.

The first page of the body is always paginated with an Arabic number, “1” and all subsequent pages are numbered accordingly, all the way to the References and Appendices (if present). Page numbers are never on or in the left margin; page numbers should be in the header or footer and either centered or in the right margin. There is no reversion back to Roman

numerals after the body of the thesis/dissertation has begun. Refer to the appropriate style guide for assistance with page number placement.

Chapters

Generally, the manuscript includes five chapters although this is not a rule. Each chapter must be separated from the previous chapter with a new page. Students should organize the body of the thesis or dissertation around chapters reflecting the content of that manuscript.

The chapters of a standard manuscript are:

1. Introduction
 - a. This is a clear statement of the research problem and/or research objectives.
2. Literature Review
 - a. A thorough review of prior scholarly research organized by theme to demonstrate the researcher's depth and range of the subject material.
3. Methodology
 - a. Explains how the research was carried out and the methods used to collect and analyze the data. It should also show how the study relates to the research questions and why certain techniques were chosen over others.
4. Results
 - a. An analysis of the findings of the research study questions.
5. Conclusion
 - a. A final summary that discusses the importance of the research study as reflected by the research findings.

There are some disciplines that do not follow this format. Consult with your Committee for guidance on the order of chapters in your thesis or dissertation. The organizational requirements of the thesis or dissertation ultimately rests with the committee chairperson and committee members.

Commas and Periods within Quotation Marks

Commas and periods (and all other forms of punctuation) always go inside the quotation marks unless a reference follows. If a reference follows then the period or comma comes after the closed parenthesis.

- “The period always goes inside the quotation mark at the end of a sentence.”
- According to its newly published handbook, “The period always goes inside the quotation mark” (MSU, 2023, p. 32).

Serial Comma

The serial comma, also known as the Harvard comma or the Oxford comma, is the comma before the “and” in “x, y, and z.” This comma is required by Morgan State University and is not optional. Please check your manuscript to be sure the serial comma is used throughout.

Ellipses

An ellipsis is used when the manuscript writer elects to omit words from a direct quotation. The common formation of “...” as the ellipsis is incorrect. Ellipses are formed with three-

spaced periods (as in “. . .”). The punctuation “...” is actually a part of mathematical equations and has a specific meaning. It is required that the author implement the correct use of ellipses during the writing process. Attempting to do so after the manuscript is complete might prove difficult if you have tabs with periods as leaders in your Table of Contents.

Types of Dashes

Writers must use the correct dash within the manuscripts published at Morgan State University. There are at least seven general types of dashes and hyphens and they all have very specific uses.

In Google Docs, use these keystrokes in this exact order: Insert → Special Characters→ Special Dashes.

In Microsoft Word, all dashes (except the hyphen, minus sign, and negative sign) are input using these keystrokes in this exact order: Insert → Symbol → More Symbols... → Special Characters.

Hyphen

A hyphen is a word separator used to conjoin two separate words that could stand alone in another context. Examples of this are:

- six-pack
- merry-go-round
- well-informed

En dash

An en dash is a symbol used to show numerical range. It is oftentimes mistaken for a dash; however, the en dash is slightly longer. There is no space placed before or after an en dash. Examples of this are:

- 1995–1998
- 32–35
- We won by a score of 98–87.

Em dash

An em dash is a symbol used to replace commas, parentheses, colons, and semicolons as a way to draw attention to the information that is being presented. The em dash resembles a horizontal line (—) that is longer than both a hyphen (-) and an en dash (–). There is no space before or after the em dash. Examples of this are:

- We tried Steve’s idea—an idea I thought was terrible—and it somehow worked.
- The prime minister—and her allies in the parliament—pushed for tax reform.

Minus

The minus sign is a symbol in a formula that indicates subtraction. The dash on the face of the keyboard can be used for the minus sign. Do not place a space before or after the minus sign. Examples of this are:

- 7-3
- 1,297-45

Negative sign

The negative sign is a symbol used to express a negative number. Technically, it is not the same as the minus sign, but printers rarely distinguish them. A dash can be used as a negative sign. Do not place a space before or after the negative sign. Examples of this are:

- -79
- -45 < 44

Figural dash

A figural dash is used to separate numbers in sequences such as a telephone number or a social security number. A figural dash is ever so slightly different from an en dash. The en dash is an acceptable substitute for the figural dash. Examples of this are:

- 777-9311
- 443-885-3185
- (443) 885-8226
- 123-45-6789

Double/triple dash (also called the two-em dash and the three-em dash)

The double or two-em dash is used to camouflage text such as names or expletive language. Just as its name suggests, the double/two-em dash can be created by joining two em dashes together. Examples of this are:

- The victim's name is John —.
- "In response to my research study, the subject made me aware that he was not told that completing the survey would take so much — time."

The triple/three-em dash is used within bibliographies to repeat the name of a previously mentioned author. As its name suggests, it is created by placing three em dashes together. An example of this is:

- Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon*.
———. *Beloved*.

Landscape Pages

When text must be featured in a horizontal orientation, the landscape function must be used to achieve this look. Landscape pages represent a unique challenge and must be constructed with care.

Landscape pages must remain inside the 1.5” left margin and the 1” right margin, and must feature page numbers in the same place as the portrait-orientated pages in the text.

[This](#) video may prove useful in learning how to change page orientation in Word.

Widows and Orphans

No page of your text should have a line that is not adjoined to another piece of text. When this happens at the bottom of a page, this singular line of text is called an orphan. When a single line of text is left at the top of a page, it is called a widow. Orphans and widows are not acceptable in academic writing. This convention applies to all elements of the manuscript, including tables, figures, and illustrations. Do not separate the elements of a table, figure, or illustration from the captions and notes used to explain them. It is best practice to keep these elements together, creating a new page, if necessary. If your elements are large and span over several pages, be sure to note “continued on the next page” at the bottom of each continuation.

Removing widows and orphans from a manuscript should be one of the last revisions before publication, as editing text tends to shift text on the page. At the conclusion of your writing, if you are attempting to move a text to the next page, do not hit the Enter button until the text rests in your desired location. This will create havoc within the unseen pagination of your text. Instead, place your cursor at the beginning of the text you wish to move and press CTRL+Enter. This will create a new page and preserve the hidden pagination of your text should you need to make additional edits.

Proper Use of Et al.

Et al. is a Latin phrase that means “and others.” Et al. should be used when citing works that have three or more authors as a method to make repeated referencing shorter and simpler (Lee, 2011). The proper form of using et al. is always et (no period)+space+al. (with the period). Consult the appropriate style guide for specific details about how to properly cite in paragraphs and in text. Et al. will only be used for in-text citations. For References or Bibliography, you must generally list all the authors. Examples of proper et al. use are:

- Johnson et al., 2023
- Sharp et al., 2007

Footnotes and Endnotes

A footnote is a comment, explanation, or reference placed at the bottom of a page. It must include a superscripted, sequential number that corresponds to its place within the text.

Endnotes are comments, explanations, or references placed at the end of a section or chapter of the manuscript. Consult the appropriate style guide for specific details about how to properly place and reference footnotes and endnotes.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Documents

Do not include IRB approving documents in the dissertation. As with any other form of permission, it remains the obligation of the author to collect and preserve the documents that grant permission to conduct research. However, such documentation is to be kept secure and in the author's possession. It is not to be placed in the manuscript or as an appendix to the manuscript. A student author should be ready to provide this documentation as proof. Understand that this is a signed document, and as such must not be placed in a published manuscript—especially one that is being published in Web-accessible format. Likewise, letters of support must not be reproduced in the manuscript. If needed, an author can discuss the support and the IRB permission within the text. It is potentially a violation of privacy to reproduce them in the document.

Section 3: Back Matter

References/Bibliography/Works Cited

A page including the full citations of all works cited in the manuscript must be included immediately after the end of the body of the manuscript. Depending on the style guide, this list may be called References, Bibliography, or Works Cited. Some manuals call for both a Reference and Bibliography page. Consult your committee for guidance, then use the appropriate style manual to create your list(s). Ideally, the list of references should be built as the manuscript is being created. Remember to adjust references as they are added or deleted during the editing process.

The differences between each type of reference list are:

- References are a list of works actually cited within the manuscript.
- Bibliography is a list of works cited in the manuscript and also features works that may include background information or seminal materials which may have influenced the ideas of the writer. These citations are not required to be included within the manuscript.
- Works Cited is the same as References, but this terminology is used when working in the Chicago Manual of Style, MLA, or Turabian style manuals.

Where available, writers must use either a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) or a link that leads directly to the source. Many academic journals use DOIs to create continuity of access. All links must be live and working on the day of publication, and must be generally accessible without a log-in requirement. Broken or inaccurate links will be returned to the author with a request for updated links. A student may not delete a link during the form and style review process in an attempt to avoid proper accessible scholarly documentation.

The References (or Works Cited) page must:

- Be included in the manuscript.
- Immediately follow the last page of the body of the manuscript.
- Be paginated with sequential Arabic numbers that continue from the last page of the body of the manuscript.
- Be in order and appropriately listed according to the style manual that is being used.
- Not include any “et al.” references (unless a work has more than 20 authors).
- If available, include DOI and linking information. Links should be formatted in plain black text, not blue and underlined text.
- If used, include links that work on the day of publication.
- Not be widowed and orphaned.

Citations

Part of the mastery process includes learning how to properly cite sources. Students should familiarize themselves with the various citation elements that are associated with different types of references. The MSU Library is a great resource for helping students understand how to properly cite their sources. If students choose to use citation generators, be aware that populated citations and reference lists may contain errors that must be individually corrected prior to publication.

Importance of Proper Citations

- Know your style guide. Do not mix citation styles from more than one manual.
- Be familiar with the elements of your references that are italicized, placed in quotation marks, or sentence cased.
- When you cite a source in the body of your text, also include the source in your References/Works Cited. Your citations and Reference/Works Cited listings should follow a one-to-one correspondence.
- When you remove a source from your manuscript you need to also remove it from your References/Works Cited.
- When including tables and figures include citation “source” notes, as required.
- Cite primary sources. Only in rare instances would you need to cite secondary sources.

Appendices

When information is too long or detailed to be included within the manuscript, it can be added to the Appendix. If there is more than one type of data, several appendices may be included. The data in an appendix must have been mentioned within the text (with the exception of IRB documents). Labeling (A, B, C, etc. or I, II, III, etc.) of the appendix data depends on the discipline and style guide used.

Appendix pages are the last items in the manuscript and immediately follow the References/Bibliography/Works Cited page. All appendix pages are paginated with Arabic numerals consistently consecutive with the prior material. Do not include a cover page for an appendix.

The margins within the Appendix do not change and labels must be centered. Original survey or testing documents created in a different font style are acceptable. In addition, if scanned documents from other sources are included, the copied material must be legible, free of photocopying or scanning irregularities, and they must maintain the same margins as the rest of the document. Authors are responsible for securing the required copyright permissions. Refer to the respective style manual for guidance on appendices.

Obtaining Editorial and Proofreading Assistance

It is required that each student be the sole author of any submitted thesis/dissertation (excluding citations). The School of Graduate Studies does not recommend individual or corporate editors to its students; however, if a student elects to employ a service, it is recommended that the service be provided with this *Handbook*. It is further advised that the student discuss special disciplinary requirements specific to the style guide within their field of study.

The [Morgan State University Writing Center](#) is available to all students. Additionally, the School of Graduate Studies hosts several workshops that support the advancement of our students.

The School of Graduate Studies has Coaching Fellows who provide coaching services to students free of charge. A Coach's role is to support and guide students with formatting based on the work they have already produced. Coaching will only be offered for original, written work. Coaches will not assist with writing a thesis or dissertation. Coaches will not assist with research.

What Students Need to Know About the Coaching Services Provided by the Coaching Fellows

- Coaching Fellows provide thesis and dissertation handbook review support according to the appropriate style manual.
- Students are offered writing services by appointment via a virtual platform.
- Once a student expresses interest, a writing coach is assigned based on the student's discipline and the coaching fellow's speciality.
- Students work with their coaches to edit, revise, and publish manuscripts based on the appropriate style manual.
- Assigned coaches check in with writers to offer support, referrals, and resources.
- All virtual sessions are recorded for student reference.

References

Lee, C. (2011, November 3). *The proper use of et al. in APA Style*. APA Style Blog.

<https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/et-al/>

Microsoft Corporation. (2023). *Align text left or right, center text, or justify text on a page*.

[https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/office/align-text-left-or-right-center-text-or-justify-](https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/office/align-text-left-or-right-center-text-or-justify-text-on-a-page-70da744d-0f4d-472e-916d-1c42d94dc33f#:~:text=When%20you%20justify%20text%20in,shorter%20than%20the%20other%20lines.)

[text-on-a-page-70da744d-0f4d-472e-916d-](https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/office/align-text-left-or-right-center-text-or-justify-text-on-a-page-70da744d-0f4d-472e-916d-1c42d94dc33f#:~:text=When%20you%20justify%20text%20in,shorter%20than%20the%20other%20lines.)

[1c42d94dc33f#:~:text=When%20you%20justify%20text%20in,shorter%20than%20the%](https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/office/align-text-left-or-right-center-text-or-justify-text-on-a-page-70da744d-0f4d-472e-916d-1c42d94dc33f#:~:text=When%20you%20justify%20text%20in,shorter%20than%20the%20other%20lines.)

[20other%20lines.](https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/office/align-text-left-or-right-center-text-or-justify-text-on-a-page-70da744d-0f4d-472e-916d-1c42d94dc33f#:~:text=When%20you%20justify%20text%20in,shorter%20than%20the%20other%20lines.)

Appendix A: Research Misconduct

(From the **Federal Register** / Vol. 65, No. 235 / Wednesday, December 6, 2000 / Notices, pages 76262-76264.)

Federal Policy on Research Misconduct ²

I. Research³ Misconduct Defined

Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

- Fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.⁴
- Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
- Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

II. Findings of Research Misconduct

A finding of research misconduct requires that:

- There be a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community; and
- The misconduct be committed intentionally, or knowingly, or recklessly; and
- The allegation be proven by a preponderance of evidence.

III. Responsibilities of Federal Agencies and Research Institutions⁵

Agencies and research institutions are partners who share responsibility for the research process. Federal agencies have ultimate oversight authority for Federally funded research, but research institutions bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct and for the inquiry, investigation, and adjudication of research misconduct alleged to have occurred in association with their own institution.

- *Agency Policies and Procedures.* Agency policies and procedures with regard to intramural as well as extramural programs must conform to the policy described in this document.

² No rights, privileges, benefits or obligations are created or abridged by issuance of this policy alone. The creation or abridgment of rights, privileges, benefits or obligations, if any, shall occur only upon implementation of this policy by the Federal agencies.

³ Research, as used herein, includes all basic, applied, and demonstration research in all fields of science, engineering, and mathematics. This includes, but is not limited to, research in economics, education, linguistics, medicine, psychology, social sciences, statistics, and research involving human subjects or animals.

⁴ The research record is the record of data or results that embody the facts resulting from scientific inquiry, and includes, but is not limited to, research proposals, laboratory records, both physical and electronic, progress reports, abstracts, theses, oral presentations, internal reports, and journal articles.

⁵ The term "research institutions" is defined to include all organizations using Federal funds for research, including, for example, colleges and universities, intramural Federal research laboratories, Federally funded research and development centers, national user facilities, industrial laboratories, or other research institutes. Independent researchers and small research institutions are covered by this policy.

- *Agency Referral to Research Institution.* In most cases, agencies will rely on the researcher's home institution to make the initial response to allegations of research misconduct. Agencies will usually refer allegations of research misconduct made directly to them to the appropriate research institution. However, at any time, the Federal agency may proceed with its own inquiry or investigation. Circumstances in which agencies may elect not to defer to the research institution include, but are not limited to, the following: the agency determines the institution is not prepared to handle the allegation in a manner consistent with this policy; agency involvement is needed to protect the public interest, including public health and safety; the allegation involves an entity of sufficiently small size (or an individual) that it cannot reasonably conduct the investigation itself.
- *Multiple Phases of the Response to an Allegation of Research Misconduct.* A response to an allegation of research misconduct will usually consist of several phases, including: (1) an *inquiry*—the assessment of whether the allegation has substance and if an investigation is warranted; (2) an *investigation*—the formal development of a factual record, and the examination of that record leading to dismissal of the case or to a recommendation for a finding of research misconduct or other appropriate remedies; (3) *adjudication*— during which recommendations are reviewed and appropriate corrective actions determined.
- *Agency Follow-up to Institutional Action.* After reviewing the record of the investigation, the institution's recommendations to the institution's adjudicating official, and any corrective actions taken by the research institution, the agency will take additional oversight or investigative steps if necessary. Upon completion of its review, the agency will take appropriate administrative action in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, or policies. When the agency has made a final determination, it will notify the subject of the allegation of the outcome and inform the institution regarding its disposition of the case. The agency finding of research misconduct and agency administrative actions can be appealed pursuant to the agency's applicable procedures.
- *Separation of Phases.* Adjudication is separated organizationally from inquiry and investigation. Likewise, appeals are separated organizationally from inquiry and investigation.
- *Institutional Notification of the Agency.* Research institutions will notify the funding agency (or agencies in some cases) of an allegation of research misconduct if (1) the allegation involves Federally funded research (or an application for Federal funding) and meets the Federal definition of research misconduct given above, and (2) if the institution's inquiry into the allegation determines there is sufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation. When an investigation is complete, the research institution will forward to the agency a copy of the evidentiary record, the investigative report, recommendations made to the institution's adjudicating official, and the subject's written response to the recommendations (if any). When a research institution completes the adjudication phase, it will forward the adjudicating official's decision and notify the agency of

any corrective actions taken or planned.

- *Other Reasons to Notify the Agency.* At any time during an inquiry or investigation, the institution will immediately notify the Federal agency if public health or safety is at risk; if agency resources or interests are threatened; if research activities should be suspended; if there is reasonable indication of possible violations of civil or criminal law; if Federal action is required to protect the interests of those involved in the investigation; if the research institution believes the inquiry or investigation may be made public prematurely so that appropriate steps can be taken to safeguard evidence and protect the rights of those involved; or if the research community or public should be informed.
- *When More Than One Agency is Involved.* A lead agency should be designated to coordinate responses to allegations of research misconduct when more than one agency is involved in funding activities relevant to the allegation. Each agency may implement administrative actions in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, or contractual procedures.

IV. Guidelines for Fair and Timely Procedures

The following guidelines are provided to assist agencies and research institutions in developing fair and timely procedures for responding to allegations of research misconduct. They are designed to provide safeguards for subjects of allegations as well as for informants. Fair and timely procedures include the following:

- *Safeguards for Informants.* Safeguards for informants give individuals the confidence that they can bring allegations of research misconduct made in good faith to the attention of appropriate authorities or serve as informants to an inquiry or an investigation without suffering retribution. Safeguards include protection against retaliation for informants who make good faith allegations, fair and objective procedures for the examination and resolution of allegations of research misconduct, and diligence in protecting the positions and reputations of those persons who make allegations of research misconduct in good faith.
 - *Safeguards for Subjects of Allegations.* Safeguards for subjects give individuals the confidence that their rights are protected and that the mere filing of an allegation of research misconduct against them will not bring their research to a halt or be the basis for other disciplinary or adverse action absent other compelling reasons. Other safeguards include timely written notification of subjects regarding substantive allegations made against them; a description of all such allegations; reasonable access to the data and other evidence supporting the allegations; and the opportunity to respond to allegations, the supporting evidence and the proposed findings of research misconduct (if any).
- Objectivity and Expertise.* The selection of individuals to review allegations and conduct investigations who have appropriate expertise and have no unresolved conflicts of interests help to ensure fairness throughout all phases of the process.

- *Timeliness.* Reasonable time limits for the conduct of the inquiry, investigation, adjudication, and appeal phases (if any), with allowances for extensions where appropriate, provide confidence that the process will be well managed.
- *Confidentiality During the Inquiry, Investigation, and Decision-Making Processes.* To the extent possible consistent with a fair and thorough investigation and as allowed by law, knowledge about the identity of subjects and informants is limited to those who need to know. Records maintained by the agency during the course of responding to an allegation of research misconduct are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act to the extent permitted by law and regulation.

V. Agency Administrative Actions

- *Seriousness of the Misconduct.* In deciding what administrative actions are appropriate, the agency should consider the seriousness of the misconduct, including, but not limited to, the degree to which the misconduct was knowing, intentional, or reckless; was an isolated event or part of a pattern; or had significant impact on the research record, research subjects, other researchers, institutions, or the public welfare.
- *Possible Administrative Actions.* Administrative actions available include, but are not limited to, appropriate steps to correct the research record; letters of reprimand; the imposition of special certification or assurance requirements to ensure compliance with applicable regulations or terms of an award; suspension or termination of an active award; or suspension and debarment in accordance with applicable governmentwide rules on suspension and debarment. In the event of suspension or debarment, the information is made publicly available through the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration. With respect to administrative actions imposed upon government employees, the agencies must comply with all relevant federal personnel policies and laws.
- *In Case of Criminal or Civil Fraud Violations.* If the funding agency believes that criminal or civil fraud violations may have occurred, the agency shall promptly refer the matter to the Department of Justice, the Inspector General for the agency, or other appropriate investigative body.

VI. Roles of Other Organizations

This Federal policy does not limit the authority of research institutions, or other entities, to promulgate additional research misconduct policies or guidelines or more specific ethical guidance.

Appendix B: Common Errors Checklist

This list of common errors serves as a guide for making corrections *before* you submit your thesis or dissertation to the School of Graduate Studies. From time to time, another common error appears, and we update the list. For detailed information on the correct grammatical detail or stylistic nuance, consult the manual of style that you have chosen to guide your work. According to our Handbook, the style choice must be the style guidelines of the major journal in your field.

Use as Checklist:

- Fonts: Page number fonts must be the same as the text font.
- Avoid combinations of font styles and sizes.
- Only use one type of alignment (i.e. left, center, right, or justify).
- Improper emphasis: Avoid using boldface, italics, capital letters, underlining, or scare quotes to emphasize words, phrases, or sentences *unless* your style manual allows for such emphasis (i.e. quotation marks should only be used for directly cited text).
- Incorrect page numbering: Neither the Declaration of Authorship nor the abstract are not numbered. Pagination starts on the approval page as “ii”. The pagination for Chapter 1 is page 1 and should be continuous to the end of the document.
- Margins: 1.5” for left margin and 1” for top, bottom, and right margins throughout the entire document.
- Landscape pages must have page numbers in the same place as the rest of the manuscript.
- Incorrect ellipses: “...” should be “. . .” (three spaced dots).
- Incorrect “et al.”: etSPACEalPERIOD
- Misuse of dashes: Dashes are not colons, and the em-dash “—” is different from an en-dash “-.”
- Appendices must be properly labeled.
- Style guides are very specific regarding the reference style. Please review the submission with great care.
- The serial comma (the comma before the “and” in “x, y, and z”) is required.
- The standard indentation for paragraphs is one-half inch.
- Remove the trailing extra spaces between paragraphs. APA and MLA require double spacing throughout.
- When quoting directly, the periods and commas are *inside* the quotation marks. If a reference follows, periods and commas are placed *after* the closed parenthesis.
- Back-to-back parentheses are not allowed by APA.
- The title page must bear the month and year of graduation.
- The signature page must bear the month and year of the defense date.
- IRB approving documents cannot be included in the manuscript or Appendix.
- Inconsistency: In general, and based on the standards of your respective style manual, avoid switching back and forth from active voice (Alice Walker wrote *The Color Purple*) to passive voice (*The Color Purple* was written by Alice Walker). Active voice is preferred in academic writing.

Appendix C: Thesis and Dissertation Committee Policy

Thesis and Dissertation Committees

A thesis or dissertation committee is a group of terminal degree holders, preferably professors in the student's field of interest. The committee supervises and guides the student in selecting a thesis or dissertation topic, conceptualizing the research problem and research questions, executing the research design and data analysis, and organizing and presenting the ideas that shape the thesis or dissertation.

The thesis or dissertation committee may comprise of three (3), but no more than five (5), members, including the chairperson. The student can also select outside persons (that is, persons who are not affiliated with Morgan State University) to be on the committee, at the discretion of the program. A majority of the committee must be comprised of full-time faculty from the program or department. Any exceptions to committee composition must be approved by the program director, department chair, and the dean of the school or college.

Thesis or Dissertation Chairperson

A key person on the student's committee is the thesis or dissertation chairperson. The thesis or dissertation chairperson must be a full-time faculty member at Morgan State University.

The chairperson is a designated committee member who takes the lead in guiding the student through the thesis or dissertation process and coordinates the efforts of the committee. They are the person with whom the student works the closest. The chairperson convenes members of the committee when indicated by programmatic expectations. All decisions regarding the student's thesis or dissertation must be approved by the chairperson; thus, students must consistently consult the chairperson throughout the thesis or dissertation process.

Once students have identified a dissertation chairperson and other committee members, and have received verbal approval from each to serve on their committee, they must provide written confirmation of this approval to the program. If students want to change chair or committee members, they are free to do so as long as someone else is willing to serve in the vacant role. The student is responsible to notify the existing committee chairperson and the program of all changes to the committee upon completion of the process.

It is the responsibility of the program coordinator to ensure that all students have a thesis/dissertation committee chair. Committee chairs are encouraged to reach out to their program coordinators and to use the coaching services available from the School of Graduate Studies in advance of the form and style review.

Appendix D: Alphabetical List of Website Links

2022-2024 School of Graduate Studies Catalog
Belmont Report, The
Call For Papers (CFP) List
Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)
Copyleaks
Earl S. Richardson Library
Entity Information
Federal Policy
Grad ETD Email Address
Graduate Studies Catalog, Section V: Responsible Academic Conduct and Ethical Research
How Do I Order a Dissertation?
Morgan State moves up research classification rankings
Morgan State University Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research
Morgan State University School of Graduate Studies
Morgan State University Writing Center
Office of Human Research Protections
Office of Research Administration Research Compliance
Office of the Bursar
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Appendix E: Manuscript Page Setup

Page Setup ? X

Margins Paper Layout

Margins

Top: 1" Bottom: 1"

Left: 1.5" Right: 1"

Gutter: 0" Gutter position: Left

Orientation

☒ Portrait ☐ Landscape

Pages

Multiple pages: Normal

Preview

Apply to: Whole document

Set As Default OK Cancel

Appendix F: Required Declaration of Authorship Example

Declaration of Authorship

I, [Student Name as it appears in official University records], certify that I am the sole author of this dissertation in its entirety and that this dissertation represents my own work except where otherwise indicated. All statements that were taken from other publications and printed sources have been properly documented. I acknowledge that I have not used artificial intelligence (AI) powered productivity tools to assist me in editing this dissertation. I further declare that I conducted the research in this dissertation on my own and not with any AI-assisted tools. I also have not used the services of any agency providing model, ghostwritten work, or AI tools, other than those specified, in the writing of this dissertation. I have not submitted this work in the same or a similar form to any other examination authority. By submission, I consent that this work may be checked with third-party software to review authenticity.

Date of Submission to ETD

Appendix G: Required Abstract Page Formatting

ABSTRACT¶

Title of the Dissertation:·· → THE ART OF MANUSCRIPT WRITING:··
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON··
PERFECTING STUDENT SUBMISSIONS··
AT THE NATIONAL TREASURE¶

Single Spaces
↓

¶
¶
Dissertation Chair: → Helpful Professor, Ph.D.¶
¶
¶
¶

→ Your Name Here, Official Degree Earned¶
May 2025 ¶

→ Official Department Name¶

Start here. The first word of the Abstract begins exactly where the “S” in “Start” is currently situated. The Abstract page is not numbered or included in any page count. The abstract should include no abbreviations. The abstract should be only one paragraph. The abstract should contain no citations. The Abstract should not be more than 250 words. The abstract should not have keywords underneath (those will be named during the ETD upload process).¶

Page Break.....¶.....Section Break (Next Page).....

Paragraph ? X

Indents and Spacing Line and Page Breaks

General

Alignment: Left

Outline level: Body Text ☐ Collapsed by default

Indentation

Left: 0" Right: 0"

☐ Mirror indents

Special: Hanging By 3"

Spacing

Before: 0 pt After: 0 pt Line spacing: Double

☐ Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style

Preview

Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph
Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph
Title of the Dissertation: THE ART OF MANUSCRIPT WRITING: AN EMPIRICAL
STUDY ON PERFECTING STUDENT SUBMISSIONS AT
THE NATIONAL TREASURE

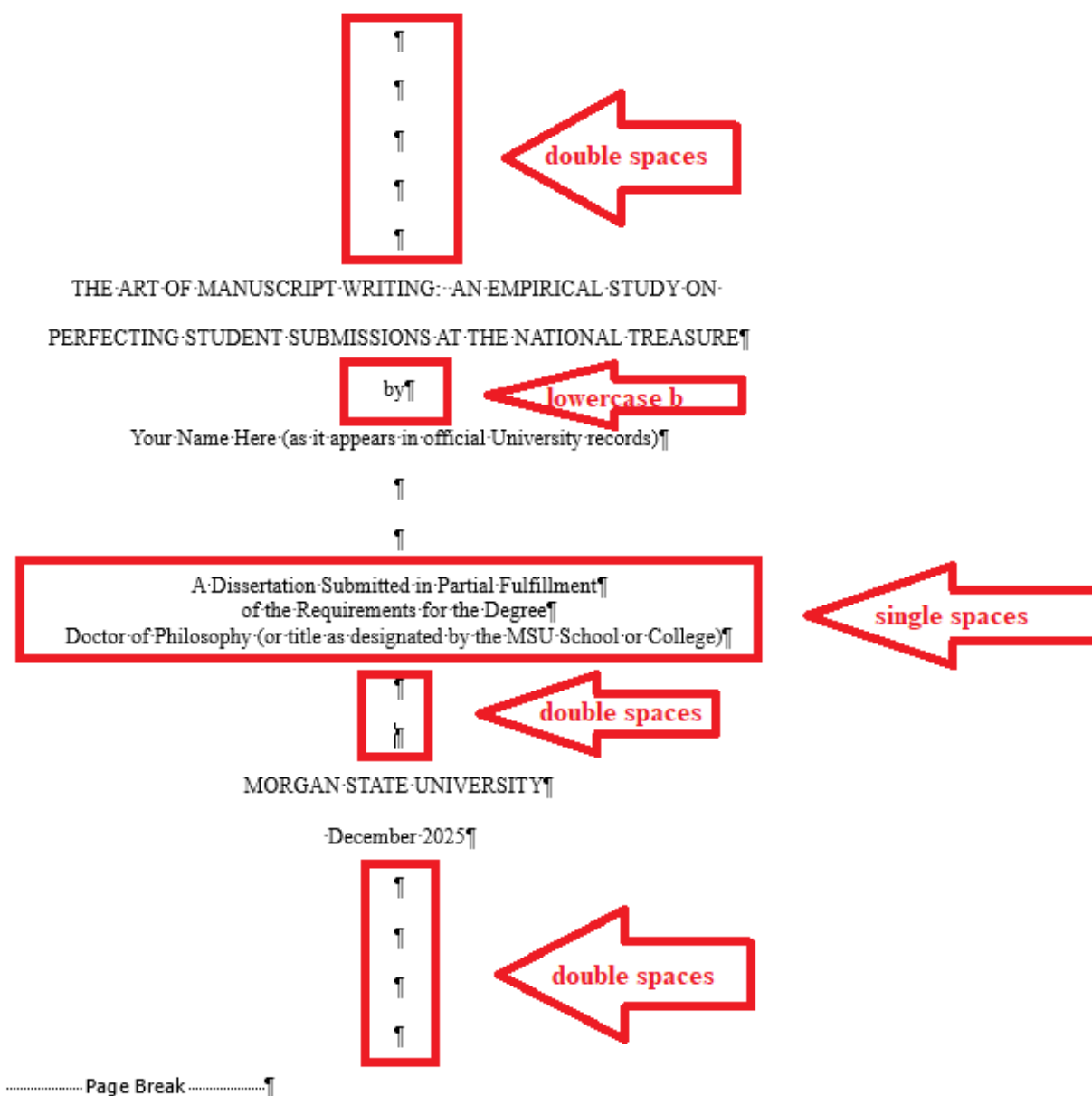
Tab... Set As Default OK Cancel

Appendix H: Required Abstract Page Example**ABSTRACT**

Title of the Dissertation:	THE ART OF MANUSCRIPT WRITING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON PERFECTING STUDENT SUBMISSIONS AT THE NATIONAL TREASURE Your Name Here, Official Degree Earned May 2025
Dissertation Chair:	Helpful Professor, Ph.D. Official Department Name

Start here. The first word of the Abstract begins exactly where the “S” in “Start” is currently situated. The Abstract page is not numbered or included in any page count. The abstract should include no abbreviations. The abstract should be only one paragraph. The abstract should contain no citations. The Abstract should not be more than 250 words. The abstract should not have keywords underneath (those will be named during the ETD upload process).

Appendix I: Required Title Page Formatting



Appendix J: Required Title Page Example

THE ART OF MANUSCRIPT WRITING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON
PERFECTING STUDENT SUBMISSIONS AT THE NATIONAL TREASURE

by

Your Name Here (as it appears in official University records)

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy (or title as designated by the MSU School or College)

MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2025

Appendix K: Required Approval Page Formatting

THE ART OF MANUSCRIPT WRITING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON PERFECTING STUDENT SUBMISSIONS AT THE NATIONAL TREASURE

by [Your Name Here]

Your Name Here (as it appears in official University records)

[Chair name, and highest degree], Chair

[Chair name, and highest degree]

[Committee member: Ada]

[Committee member: Bel]

[Committee member: Zin]

ii

Appendix L: Required Approval Page Example

THE ART OF MANUSCRIPT WRITING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON
PERFECTING STUDENT SUBMISSIONS AT THE NATIONAL TREASURE

by

Your Name Here (as it appears in official University records)

has been approved

Oral Defense Month and Year (i.e. January 2024)

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

[Chair name, and highest degree], Chair

[Chair name, and highest degree], Co-Chair

[Committee member Adams, highest degree]

[Committee member Bell, highest degree]

[Committee member Zinn, highest degree]

Appendix M: Optional Dedication Page Example

Dedication

To bestow gratitude on a special person or people, student authors may decide to include a Dedication page. Dedications are optional, and where present, should be limited to one page. This space is intended to be for the recognition of people who were paid particularly significant during the manuscript process.

The Dedication page is numbered with Roman numerals and always follows the Signature page. Do not center the paragraphs on this page. Text should instead be indented and double spaced. Also, ensure the correct spelling of names by triple checking for accuracy prior to submitting the documents for publication.

Appendix N: Optional Acknowledgments Page Example

Acknowledgments

When present, the Acknowledgments page notes the special contributions of those persons or agencies that assisted or supported the student author in the writing of the dissertation. If the student author wants to recognize someone for providing distinctive assistance or granting unusual permission(s), include an Acknowledgments page.

Acknowledgment pages should not contain personal, familial, or religious testimonies. Most style manuals provide directions for writing acknowledgments appropriate to the discipline. This page is numbered with Roman numerals and always follows the Dedication page (if present).

Do not center the paragraphs on this page. Text should instead be indented and double spaced. Also, ensure the correct spelling of names by triple checking for accuracy prior to submitting the documents for publication.

Appendix O: Required Table of Contents Example

	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	
List of Tables.....	v
List of Figures	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Sub-Headings	2
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	18
Sub-Headings	19
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	69
Sub-Headings	71
Chapter 4: Results	79
Sub-Headings	80
Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions	92
References.....	100
Appendices.....	122

This table of contents is created using the dot-leader tab setting option. An alternative would be to use the automated Table of Contents feature that is enabled when you use the style headings available to you.