Library Theses and Dissertations Format Checklist

Date:

Student:

Check Number: 1

The example sections listed are in the 6th edition of the "Standards for preparing theses and dissertations". This is the link to the online Standards:
http://library.msstate.edu/content/templates/level2-dept-otd/docs/standards_6th_ed.pdf

GENERAL

____ Before resubmitting, update all page number references. (Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures)

Page Size and Margins (see 5.1.1)

____ All Theses and Dissertations should be on standard letter size pages (8.5” by 11”).

____ The required margins are: Top/Bottom: 1” Left/Right: 1.25”

Type Font and Print Quality (see 5.1.2)

____ Font size must be twelve points and a professional type.

Exceptions: Text inside tables and figures (not the titles) as well as notes for tables and figures may have any size text.

Superscripts and subscripts may use smaller text.

Equations may use any size text.

Footnotes and endnotes may use smaller text.

____ Symbols used in paragraphs must be actual font characters (when possible), not images inserted in the line.

____ Paragraphs may have text that is bold, italicized, underlined, in dark colors (on white background), or some combination of the previous and must be easily distinguishable from headings using similar formatting

Paragraphs (see 5.1.4)

____ The left and indents of paragraphs must be 0”, i.e. the paragraph must align with the page margins. Lists and block quotes are exempt from this.

____ The first lines of all paragraphs must be indented consistently; the indent must be either 0.25” or 0.5”.
____ All paragraphs must be either left-aligned or fully justified, consistently. If a paragraph is fully justified, use line breaks to avoid awkward spaces in lines.

____ Paragraphs must be double-spaced (having only 1 blank line separating lines of text) and be separated from other paragraphs by 1 blank line. Excess space above or below a paragraph is not allowed unless otherwise stated in the Standards.

____ Do not leave only one line of a paragraph at the top or bottom of a page (unless the paragraph only has one line). In Word, this can be avoided by turning on the “Widow/Orphan Control” setting.

____ Symbols in paragraphs must be actual font characters (when possible), not images inserted in the line.

____ Scientific names and other discipline-specific terms may be formatted as required by the department. For example, scientific names may be italicized.

Pagination (see 5.1.5)

____ Every page must have a page number except the title page, copyright page, approval page, and abstract pages.

____ Small Roman numerals are used for the preliminary pages, which should be arranged in the following order: dedication; acknowledgements; table of contents; and the lists of tables, figures, plates, symbols, abbreviations, and/or nomenclature. Although the title page is assigned Roman numeral i, that number does not appear on the page. The copyright, approval, and abstract pages are neither counted nor numbered.

____ Arabic numerals are used for paginating the remainder of the document, including the text and reference material. Pages are numbered consecutively beginning with 1 and continuing to the end of the document.

____ All page numbers are placed at the bottom center position allowing 1 inch of white space from the numeral to the page bottom.

Excess Blank Space (see 5.1.7)

____ avoid any blank space not specifically required for the Standards. The following exceptions apply:

Moving a table or figure to the beginning of a new page to avoid splitting is allowed.

If excess space is caused by preventing a heading from sitting at the bottom of a page, it is allowed.

If only three or fewer lines of a paragraph fit below a table or figure, it is allowed if the author begins that paragraph on a new page.

Blank pages required by the department are allowed if a notification is added: “[This page left blank intentionally]”

Submission in PDF Format for Review (see 5.1.8)
All submissions for review must be a single PDF file. (Do not scan documents as PDFs)

Text must be selectable.

Images should be actual image types (jpeg, ping, bitmap, etc) and not objects (such as drawing tools, sigma plots, etc.).

All landscaped pages must be rotated into portrait pages.

Fonts must be embedded to ensure cross platform fidelity of the text.

The filename should not include any special characters or spaces.

PRELIMINARY PAGES

Title Page (see 5.2.1)

No page number should appear on this page.

All text on this page must be centered horizontally.

Note: The following describes the requirements from the bottom of the page to the top

Include Month and Year of Graduation (not defense; see academic calendar) with no commas (for example, “August 2011”) directly above the bottom margin.

The location must be written as “Mississippi State, Mississippi”, leaving only one blank line between the location and the graduation date below.

The degree statement must be single-spaced, accurate as of the graduate date, and worded exactly as follows (including capitalization and line breaks):

A [Thesis|Dissertation]
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of [Degree–Ask Department]
in [Program or Concentration–Ask Department]
in the [Department/College Awarding Degree–Ask Department]

Leave two or three blank lines between the degree statement and the location below.

The author’s name must match that in MSU’s academic records.

Leave 1.5 inches (eight blank lines is close enough) between the author’s name and the degree statement below.

Leave one blank line between the word “By” (capitalized) and the author’s name below.

If the title is more than one line, it must be double-spaced and each line of the title shorter than the line above it.

The title must be not be in bold font. Capitalize only the first letter of the first word in the title and words normally capitalized in English (proper nouns, acronyms, etc.).
The title must not have equations or symbols (type out symbol names and equations). Exceptions may be allowed at the discretion of the Office of TD Review.

Leave 1 inch (five blank lines is close enough) between the title and the word “By” below.

Copyright Page (Optional) (see 5.2.2)

No page number should appear on this page.

All text on this page is centered horizontally and vertically.

The text must be double-spaced and must include the following:

- Copyright notice, e.g., “Copyright by” or “©”
- Author’s name, matching that on the title page.
- Year of graduation

Approval Page (see 5.2.3)

The title is placed just below the top margin. Format and wording of the title must exactly match the title on the title page.

There must be 2 or 3 blank lines between the title and the word “By” below.

The word “By” is centered on its own line, then followed by one blank line and the author’s name (centered and matching the name on the title page).

The author’s name is followed by one blank line, then the word “Approved:” is left-aligned.

Below “Approved:” are placed two equally-spaced columns of signature lines.

Lines are required for:

- the thesis/dissertation director(s)
- the committee members
- the graduate coordinator
- the dean of the college granting the degree

Each signature line requires (the following must be single-spaced and left-aligned with the left edge of the signature line):

- Enough space above the line for a signature
- The individual’s name without honorifics (like “Dr.”) or degree designations (like “Ph.D.”). This must match the name found in the faculty directory in the Catalog.
• The individual’s academic title and department/program as given in the Catalog (for example, “Associate Professor of Forestry”)

• Exception to above: If the individual is not faculty at MSU at the time of defense, provide academic/professional title and organization (for example, “Research Engineer, NASA”)

• In parentheses, the role(s) of the individual, for example, “(Dissertation Director)” or “(Graduate Coordinator)” or “(Committee Member/Graduate Coordinator)”. NOTE: The Dean’s title is his or her role; do not have anything in parentheses.

Signature lines are ordered left to right, then top to bottom. The first signature line must be the Thesis/Dissertation Director(s), followed by committee members, then the graduate coordinator, and finally the dean.

All of this must fit on one page. There is no page number on this page.

Note, if a committee member fulfills multiple roles (example: Director of Dissertation and Graduate Coordinator), then each role should be listed under a single entry, that is, do not list the same individual twice-just add an additional line with the extra role.

Abstract (see 5.2.4)

There are no page numbers on these pages.

Starting at the top of the page, the following entries must all be included. Each entry is single-spaced with a blank line following.

• Name:” followed by the author’s name as found on the title page.

• “Date of Degree:” followed by the date of graduation formatted as “Month Day, Year”. For example, “August 9, 2011”

• “Institution: Mississippi State University”

• “Major Field:” followed by the program/concentration as found on the title page.

• “Major Professor:” followed by the major professor’s name. If there are co-major professors, then the second professor’s name follows immediately after the first with a comma separating.

• (If the dissertation director is not the major professor) “Dissertation Director:” followed by the dissertation director’s name. If there are co-directors, then the second director’s name follows immediately after the first with a comma separating.

• “Title of Study:” followed by the title as worded on the title page.

• “Pages in Study:” followed by the page number of the last numbered page of the document. This is counting the appendices.

• “Candidate for the Degree of ” followed by the degree as found in the title page.
If the entry is more than one line long (this is likely to happen only with the title), the second and following lines of the entry must be aligned with the first word after the entry colon. For example:

Title of Study: The use of neural networks in the combining of time series forecasts with differential penalty costs

The “Candidate for...” entry is followed by 2 or 3 blank lines, then the abstract body.

The abstract body must not have equations, symbols (type out symbol names and equations), bullets, figures, and tables. Exceptions may be allowed at the discretion of the Office of TD Review.

The maximum size of a thesis’s abstract body is 150 words. The maximum size of a dissertation’s abstract body is 350 words.

If the discipline requires key words, 2 or 3 blank lines are left between the abstract body and the key words. The key words are single-spaced and indented like an abstract entry. They are written “Key words:” followed by a comma-separated list of key words.

The page after the last page of the abstract is page “ii”.

Dedication (Optional) (see 5.2.5)

There must be 2” of blank space between the top of the first page of the Dedication and the top of “DEDICATION”.

“DEDICATION” must be centered, in all caps, and not bold.

Keep 2 or 3 blank lines between “DEDICATION” and the first line of the Dedication text.

If the Dedication has not been omitted, the first of the Dedication is page “ii” (lower-case Roman numeral)

Acknowledgements (Optional) (see 5.2.6)

There must be 2” of blank space between the top of the first page of the Acknowledgements and the top of “ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS”.

“ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS” must be centered, in all caps, and not bold.

Keep 2 or 3 blank lines between “ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS” and the first line of the Acknowledgements text.

The Acknowledgements text must be in paragraphs formatted as described in the “GENERAL” section.

Table of Contents (see 5.2.7)

There must be 2” of blank space between the top of the first page of the Table of Contents and the top of “TABLE OF CONTENTS”.

“TABLE OF CONTENTS” must be centered, in all caps, and not bold.
___ Keep 2 or 3 blank lines between “TABLE OF CONTENTS” and the first entry of the Table of Contents.

___ All entries should have a dot leader extending from the last word of the entry title to the entry page number (which is right-aligned with the right margin). In Word, this should be done with a right tab stop at 6” with leader style 2 (do NOT use periods).

___ The right edge all lines of the entry title cannot extend past the left edge of the entry page number. In Word, a right indent of 0.5” will ensure this.

___ All entries of the same level must align with each other. For example, all chapter entries are of the same level; thus, their chapter numbers must align with each other and the first words of their titles must align. Similarly, all entries for headings must align with the other entries for headings of the same level.

___ Capitalization and spelling of all entries must match that of the entire corresponding item. In Word, copy and paste will ensure this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page or entry number</th>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
<th>Main body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

___ Entries must be normal text save for discipline-specific formatting, e.g., italicizing scientific names, bolded chemical numbers. NOTE: Superscripts and subscripts must be preserved.

For documents with un-numbered headings:

___ Any lines of the entry title after the first are indented 0.5” to the right of the first letter of the entry title (not the chapter number).

___ First-level-heading entries are aligned with the titles of chapter entries.

___ Lower-level-heading entries are aligned 0.25” to the right of the entries one level higher, e.g. second-level entries are 0.25” to the right of first-level entries, and third-level entries are 0.25” to the right of second-level entries.

For documents with numbered headings:

___ Any lines of the entry title after the first are aligned with the first letter of the entry title (not the chapter or section number). This is called “block alignment”

___ First-level-heading entries consist of:

- A section number, left-aligned with the first letter of the chapter entry titles.

- A section title. The space separating the number from the title should be enough to distinguish the two, but not exceeding 0.5”

___ Lower-level-heading entries are aligned 0.25” to the right of the entries one level higher, e.g. second-level entries are 0.25” to the right of first-level entries, and third-level entries are 0.25” to the right of second-level entries. NOTE: As section numbers get longer at lower levels, those section titles will move more than 0.25” to the right of the previous level’s titles. Keep these titles aligned with other titles of the same level.
There must be preliminary section entries for (if these sections are in your document) the Dedication, Acknowledgements, List of Tables, List of Figures, and any additional preliminary sections placed after the List of Figures. No entry is added for the Table of Contents.

Preliminary section entries must be fully left aligned and single-spaced with one blank line below them.

After the blank line following the last preliminary section entry, add the word “CHAPTER” (all caps, normal text, left-aligned, no dot leader or page number following) with one blank line below it, followed by the entry for Chapter I.

Chapter entries consist of

- The chapter number (in Roman numerals or Arabic, depending on the format in the body) followed by a decimal point. The decimal must be aligned under the “P” in the word “CHAPTER” above Chapter I’s entry. In Word, this is measured 0.43” from the left margin.

- The chapter title, single-spaced. The space separating the number from the title should be enough to distinguish the two, but not exceeding 0.5”

- One blank line between the chapter entry and the next entry.

Section entries are single-spaced, with no blank lines below them (unless it is the last entry in the chapter, in which case one blank line is placed between it and the following entry).

If bibliographic sections are placed at the end of each chapter, then the reference section entries are formatted as first-level-heading entries. If there is one (or more) bibliographic section for the entire document, then the corresponding entry is formatted like that of a preliminary section (including the one blank line following).

For documents with one or more appendices:

Appendix entries are placed at the end of the Table of Contents

Add the word “APPENDIX” (all caps, normal text, left-aligned, no dot leader or page number following) with one blank line below it, followed by the entry for Appendix A.

Appendix entries are formatted the same as chapter entries, save that the chapter number is replaced by an appendix letter.

Section entries in the appendices are formatting the same as section entries in the body.

List of Tables (see 5.2.8)

There must be 2” of blank space between the top of the first page of the List of Tables and the top of “LIST OF TABLES”.

“LIST OF TABLES” must be centered, in all caps, and not bold.
Keep 2 or 3 blank lines between “LIST OF TABLES” and the first entry of the List of Tables.

All entries should have a dot leader extending from the last word of the entry title to the entry page number (which is right-aligned with the right margin). In Word, this should be done with a right tab stop at 6” with leader style 2 (do NOT use periods).

The right edge all lines of the entry title cannot extend past the left edge of the entry page number. In Word, a right indent of 0.5” will ensure this.

Capitalization and spelling of all entries must match that of the entire corresponding item. In Word, copy and paste will ensure this.

Entries must be normal text save for discipline-specific formatting, e.g., italicizing scientific names, bolded chemical numbers. NOTE: Superscripts and subscripts must be preserved.

Each table entry is single-spaced and consists of:

- The table number. If tables are numbered sequentially, the entry numbers are right aligned with each other. If tables are numbered by chapter/appendix, the entry numbers are aligned by the period in the middle of the number.

- The table title. The space separating the number from the title should be enough to distinguish the two, but not exceeding 0.5”

- One blank line between this entry and the next one

For documents with un-numbered headings in the Table of Contents:

Any lines of the entry title after the first are indented 0.5” to the right of the first letter of the entry title (not the entry number).

For documents with numbered headings in the Table of Contents:

Entry titles are block aligned.

List of Figures (see 5.2.9)

There must be 2” of blank space between the top of the first page of the List of Figures and the top of “LIST OF FIGURES”.

“LIST OF FIGURES” must be centered, in all caps, and not bold.

Keep 2 or 3 blank lines between “LIST OF FIGURES” and the first entry of the List of Figures.

All entries should have a dot leader extending from the last word of the entry title to the entry page number (which is right-aligned with the right margin). In Word, this should be done with a right tab stop at 6” with leader style 2 (do NOT use periods).
The right edge all lines of the entry title cannot extend past the left edge of the entry page number. In Word, a right indent of 0.5” will ensure this.

Capitalization and spelling of all entries must match that of the entire corresponding item. In Word, copy and paste will ensure this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page or entry number</th>
<th>List of Figures</th>
<th>Main body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Entries must be normal text save for discipline-specific formatting, e.g., italicizing scientific names, bolded chemical numbers. NOTE: Superscripts and subscripts must be preserved.

Each figure entry is single-spaced and consists of:

- The figure number. If figures are numbered sequentially, the entry numbers are right aligned with each other. If figures are numbered by chapter/appendix, the entry numbers are aligned by the period in the middle of the number.

- The figure title. The space separating the number from the title should be enough to distinguish the two, but not exceeding 0.5”

- One blank line between this entry and the next one

For documents with un-numbered headings in the Table of Contents:

- Any lines of the entry title after the first are indented 0.5” to the right of the first letter of the entry title (not the entry number).

For documents with numbered headings in the Table of Contents:

- Entry titles are block aligned.

**List of Symbols, Abbreviations, Special Nomenclature, and Other Preliminary Pages (see 5.2.10)**

- There must be 2” of blank space between the top of the first page of the preliminary section and its title.

- The title must be centered, in all caps, and not bold.

- Keep 2 or 3 blank lines between the title and the rest of the preliminary section.

- Keep the vertical alignment of entries within this section consistent.

- If the entries consist of item numbers followed by items titles, follow the same rules as the List of Tables and List of Figures.

**MAIN BODY**

**First Page of Each Chapter (see 5.3.1)**

- There must be 2” of blank space between the top of the first page of the chapter and the top of the word “CHAPTER” and the chapter number.
The word “CHAPTER” is followed by one space and the chapter number. The chapter number may be a Roman numeral (preferred) or an Arabic numeral, but must be the same style for all chapters.

The word “CHAPTER” and the chapter number must be centered, in all caps, and not bold.

Leave one blank line between the word “CHAPTER” and the chapter title.

The chapter title must be centered, in all caps, and not bold. If the title is more than one line, it must be double-spaced and each line of the title shorter than the line above it.

Leave two or three blank lines below the chapter title.

The first page of chapter I must be numbered “1”.

Headings (see 5.3.2)

There must be one blank line between a heading and the paragraph below.

All headings must have 2 or 3 blank lines above them. The only exception: If a heading is followed by another heading, you may have one blank line between them. If you take this exception, be consistent.

Do not place punctuation at the end of a heading.

Do not leave a heading at the bottom of a page; such headings should be moved to the top of the next page. In Word, this is fixed by turning on the “Keep with next” option in the paragraph settings for each heading.

If sections are numbered:

- Section numbers must align with the left margin.
- Numbers must be Arabic and start with the chapter number followed by a decimal and then the current heading number. For lower level headings include the previous heading number and add a decimal and start the new level numbering.
- Headings (including section numbers) are bold and block aligned.

If sections are not numbered:

- Each level of heading has its own unique, consistent formatting. For example, all first-level headings are formatted the same. All second-level headings are formatted the same, and this formatting must be different than that of the first-level headings, and so on.
- Headings are left- or center-aligned (no indents) and are formatted with any combination of the following: bold, italic, underlined. Do not use normal text for a heading. Do not use all caps or small caps for a heading.
- If you use italicized terms (like scientific names) in your headings, do not use italics for any level of heading formatting. The same goes for bold terms and bold headings. Exceptions may be allowed at the discretion of the Office of TD Review.
- Multiple line headings must be single or double-spaced. If such headings are centered, they each subsequent line must be short than the previous line.

**Tables (see 5.3.5)**

- Tables may not be placed in the middle of a paragraph, even if the paragraph is split between two pages.
- The table title must have 2 or 3 blank lines above it.
- Do not place table titles in a row of the table.
- Choose one of the two styles of table title:
  - Centered style: The word “Table”, one space, and the table number, centered. Below that, one blank line, then the table title, single-spaced, centered, with every line smaller than the line above. Below that, one blank line, then the table itself, centered.
  - Block style: The word “Table”, one space, then the table number, aligned with the left margin. The space separating the number from the title should be enough to distinguish the two, but not exceeding 0.5”. Then, the table title, single-spaced and block aligned. Below that, a blank line, then the table, left-aligned or centered (be consistent for all tables).
- Table numbering must be consistent within the entire document and either numbered sequentially or by chapter. Note: If headings are numbered by chapter then tables must also be numbered by chapter.
- The table itself is formatted according to the author’s need. Any size font, any style text is allowed, as long as the table is legible and meets departmental standards.
- The table gridlines may not extend into the margins. Word tends to get this wrong automatically. Setting the cell margins to 0” will fix this.
- Table must be in line with text (no text wrapping).
- Notes go below the table (not inside it). There may be zero or one blank line separating table from notes. Notes must be left-aligned and the same font size as the paragraph text.
- Keep two or three blank lines below the table (or the notes, if present).
- If a table is more than one page in size (note: if a table can be placed on one page, it must be. Do not break small tables over two pages), then the table title is placed above the first page. Above the following pages of the table, place the word “Table”, a space, the table number, a space, then “(continued)”, followed by one blank line, then the piece of table for that page. Notes for a table appear below the last part of the table.

**Figures (see 5.3.6)**

- Figures may not be placed in the middle of a paragraph, even if the paragraph is split between two pages.
- The figure must have 2 or 3 blank lines above it.
Do not place figure titles in the figure itself or a text box.

Figures should be inserted as images. If the Office of TD Review sees that a figure is slow in rendering, they will require the figure be replaced with an image.

Choose one of the two styles of figure title:

- Centered style: Below the centered figure, one blank line, then the word “Figure”, one space, and the figure number, centered. Below that, one blank line, then the figure title, single-spaced, centered, with every line smaller than the line above.

- Block style: Below the figure (centered or left-aligned, be consistent), one blank line, then the word “Figure”, one space, then the figure number, aligned with the left margin. The space separating the number from the title should be enough to distinguish the two, but not exceeding 0.5”. Then, the figure title, single-spaced and block aligned.

Figure numbering must be consistent within the entire document and either numbered sequentially or by chapter. Note: If headings are numbered by chapter then figures must also be numbered by chapter.

The figure itself is formatted according to the author’s need as long as it is legible and meets departmental standards.

If the figure has white space at the top or bottom of the image itself, it must be cropped or surrounded with a single-line border, i.e., no shadows, 3-D, etc.

Figures may not extend into the margins

Figures must be inserted in line with text (no text wrapping).

Notes go below the figure title (not inside it). There must be one blank line separating figure title from notes. Notes must be left-aligned and the same font size as the paragraph text.

Keep two or three blank lines below the figure title (or the notes, if present).

If a figure is more than one page in size (note: if a figure can be placed on one page, it must be. Do not break small figures over two pages), then the figure title is placed below the figure portion on the first page. Below the figure portions on the following pages, add a blank line, then place the word “Figure”, a space, the figure number, a space, then “(continued)”. Notes for a figure appear below the last “(continued)” note.

Multiple small figures that are related may be grouped together provided that:

- each figure contains an identifier (“a”, “b”, “c”, or equivalent identifier) inside each image.

- the group of figures is given only 1 collective title

- notes for the figure detail the specifics by referencing the unique labels for each figure.

**Landscape Pages (see 5.3.7)**
In the PDF submission, all landscape pages must be rotated to a portrait orientation. All margin considerations and page number location must conform to the final rotated page layout. Simply, after the landscaped page is rotated in the .pdf, it should be indistinguishable from all other portrait pages.

The tops of text and images on a landscape page should be oriented to the left once rotated.

**Equations (see 5.3.8)**

All equations outside of a paragraph must be numbered in the same method as the tables and figures.

Equation numbers must be aligned with the right margin.

Consistent spacing must be kept above and below equations.

Equations must be aligned in one of two ways: Centered horizontally on the page, or consistently left-aligned with all other equations.

If there are a series of equations for one equation number, the equation must be aligned by the equivalency sign or other major operator, e.g., less-than sign.

Verify the proper output of the equations in the PDF. It may be beneficial to convert equations to images.

**Bibliographic Materials (see 5.3.9)**

For bibliographic sections placed at the end of each chapter:

Start a new page.

Format the section heading as a first-level subheading (do not use all caps), followed by one blank line, then the first bibliographic entry.

For an overall bibliographic section at the end of the document:

Start a new page.

There must be 2” of blank space between the top of the first page of the section and the top of the section title.

The section title must be centered, in all caps, and not bold.

Keep 2 or 3 blank lines between the section and the first bibliographic entry.

For all bibliographic sections:

Bibliographic entries must be single-spaced with a blank line below each entry. All other formatting is to be according to departmental citation standards.

Entries should not be split across a page break.

**Appendices (see 5.4)**
Appendices are lettered A, B, C, etc. If there is only one appendix, it is Appendix A.

Every appendix is preceded by a divider page, which has the following text centered vertically and horizontally on the page:

- The word “APPENDIX”, a space, then the appendix letter
- One blank line
- The appendix title, double-spaced, in all caps, with each line smaller than the line above.
- If the appendix is divided into sections, the section headings must match the format of the headings in the body.