



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

The Graduate School

FORMATTING GUIDE FOR THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

Policies, Procedures, and Requirements

Graduate School
University of South Carolina
Close-Hipp Suite 552
1705 College Street
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: 803-777-4243
Email: gradapp@mailbox.sc.edu

UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	1
ETD Coordinator Contact Information	4
Deadlines	4
How to Submit Your ETD for the Format Check	5
ProQuest ETD Administrator	5
Creating Your Account: Important Reminders	5
Resubmitting Your Work.....	6
Format Check Process.....	7
After You Pass the Format Check.....	7
Where Your Work Will Be Published	8
Embargoes.....	9
Embargo Process	9
Embargo Renewals	9
CUI (Controlled Unclassified Information) Thesis and Dissertation Procedures	10
Definition of CUI	10
CUI Thesis and Dissertation Process.....	10
After Your Work is Cleared for Public Release	11
Permanent Embargo.....	13
Templates	13
Word Template.....	13
LaTeX Template	14
ETD Frequently Asked questions	15
General Formatting Requirements	17
Margins.....	17
Page Numbers.....	18
Line Spacing.....	19

Paragraphs.....	19
Fonts	19
Widows and Orphans.....	21
Headings and Subheadings	21
Tables.....	22
Figures.....	23
Endnotes and Footnotes	24
Accessibility and Your Thesis or Dissertation.....	25
USC’s Commitment to Digital Accessibility	25
What Does This Mean for Me?.....	25
How to Make Your ETD Accessible	25
Key Steps for All ETDs	25
Use Correct Heading Hierarchy	25
Best Resources to Ensure Accessibility	30
Microsoft Word and Accessibility.....	30
LaTeX and Accessibility.....	30
Document Organization.....	30
Order of Major Sections	30
Title Page	32
Sample Master’s Thesis Title Page	35
Sample Doctoral Dissertation Title Page.....	36
Copyright Page	37
Dedication and Acknowledgments.....	37
Abstract.....	38
Preface	38
Table of Contents (Formatting)	39
List of Tables and List of Figures	42
List of Symbols	43
List of Abbreviations	43
Chapters.....	44
Bibliography	45

Appendix and Appendices	45
Supplemental Files	46
Manuscript Style: Using Published Material.....	47
Overview.....	47
Authorship	47
References/Bibliography and Citation Style	47
Copyright Release	48
Overall Document Structure.....	48
Chapters.....	49
Tables and Figures.....	49
Cover Page.....	49
Sample Manuscript Style Cover Page	50
Additional Resources	51
Graduate School Website	51
University Writing Center.....	51
University Registrar and Graduate School Forms Library.....	51
ProQuest’s ETD Administrator Help	51
Copyright and Intellectual Property Resources	51
Scholar Commons.....	51
Digital Accessibility at USC	51

ETD COORDINATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

ETD Coordinator: Laura Kotti Walsh

Email: kotti@mailbox.sc.edu

Phone: 803-777-4244

Appointments: Please visit [Mrs. Kotti Walsh's Calendly account](#) to set up an appointment with her.

Workshops: Visit the Graduate School's [Thesis & Dissertation Calendar](#) to register.

DEADLINES

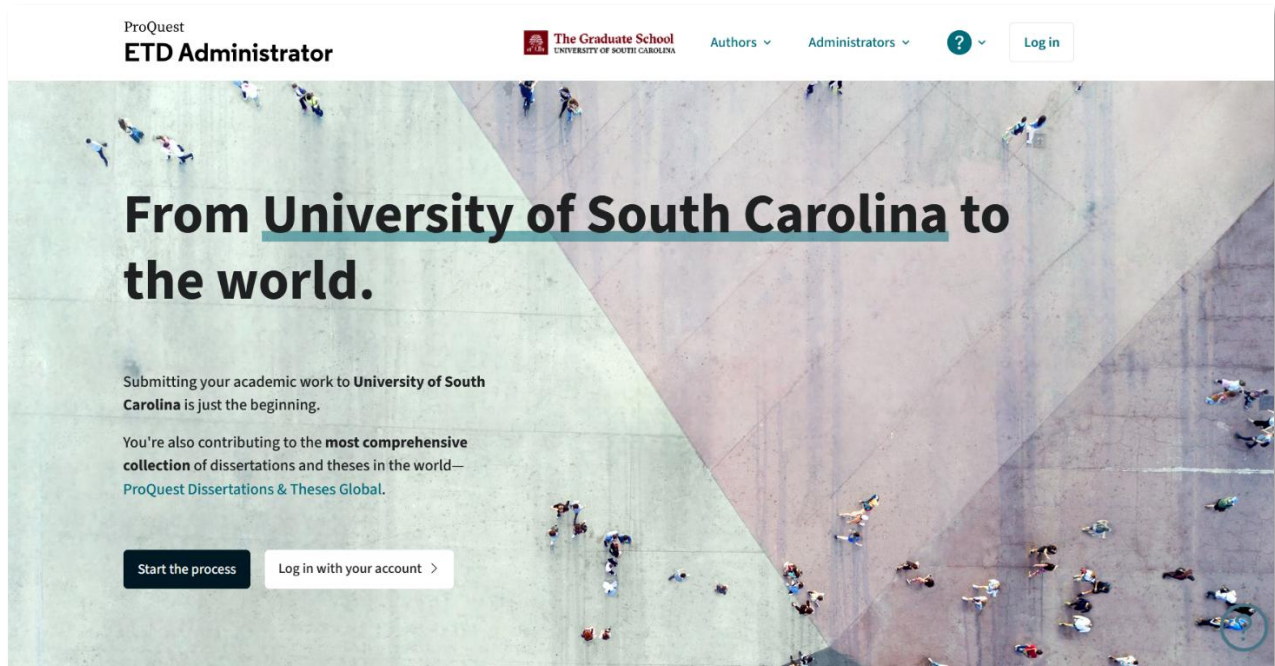
Deadline	Description	Date(s)
Format Check Deadline (a.k.a., "Preliminary Format Check")	First deadline you must meet. This is the date by which you must submit your work <i>for the first time</i> . Your work does not have to be finalized, and you CAN change the content and formatting after this date. This deadline is required. You can view a sample of an acceptable preliminary format check submission on the our website .	Early in the semester. Fall: early October Spring: early March Summer: early July
Defense Deadline	This is the date by which you must defend your thesis or dissertation. This deadline is required.	In between the format check and final submission deadlines. Fall: late October or early November Spring: mid to late March Summer: mid-July
Final Submission Deadline	The deadline by which you must submit your final, committee-approved, most perfectly formatted version. You CANNOT change the content after this date. This deadline is required.	Late in the semester. Fall: mid-November Spring: early April Summer: late July

Note: You will use **one** account and **one** submission ID for *all uploads, including your final one*. To learn how to resubmit your document correctly, [visit our website](#) or view the [instructional video](#) on resubmitting your document through ProQuest.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ETD FOR THE FORMAT CHECK

ProQuest ETD Administrator

You will create an account in [ProQuest ETD Administrator](#), and you will use this same account and same submission ID for all uploads, including the final one. Here is an image of the page you should see; you can also click on this image to visit the site.



To begin, click on the button that reads, “Start the Process.” You can also visit the “Resources & Guidelines” tab to access the many resources provided by the Graduate School and ProQuest.

Additionally, make sure the landing page features the Graduate School’s logo and says, “From University of South Carolina to the world.” This way, you will ensure you are submitting your document to the correct university.

Creating Your Account: Important Reminders

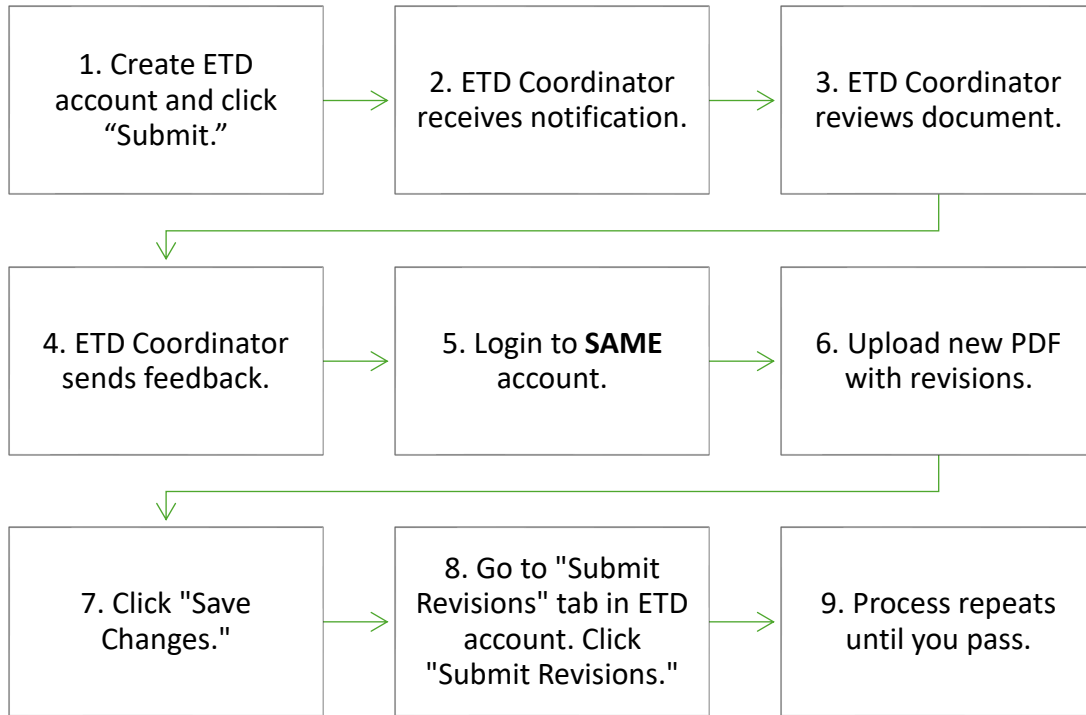
Tip	Reminders
Copyright and Hard Copies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copyright and hard copy orders are optional.• Copyright: You CANNOT request ProQuest files for copyright on your behalf after you make your account. ProQuest does not allow this.

Tip	Reminders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anything you pay for will be applied at the end to your final version that passes the format check. Do not worry if you are uploading an incomplete version. You can order hard copies after you graduate, but the copyright option is only available when you first create your account. You can always file for copyright as an individual with the U.S. Copyright Office later. See the Copyright section.
Email addresses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required to use two email addresses: USC email and personal (Gmail, Yahoo, etc.). USC email is for format check communication. Personal email is for post-graduation communication.
Graduation Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May, August, or December only. Do not put any other graduation month. Graduation date and year of manuscript completion must be the same.
ETD and Student Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All information in your ETD account must match university records and title page information. Your name must be the same as your name in university records. If you need to change your name for any reason, visit the Registrar’s website to access their name change form.
One Account for ALL submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use only one account <i>and one submission ID</i> for all submissions. Do not create new submissions or accounts as you revise your ETD.

Resubmitting Your Work

You will return to your account and look for the entry with the submission ID you originally used. There should be a box you can click on that says “Revise.” Go there and upload your new PDF. To learn more, you can view a [video detailing the exact steps to take](#) when resubmitting. It is most important to follow these steps to avoid accidentally creating a new account or submitting your document incorrectly—both of which can derail your graduation eligibility. The submission ID must be the same for all submissions.

Format Check Process



After You Pass the Format Check

What happens after you pass the format check depends on where we are in the semester. The following charts show what happens if you pass the format check before the final submission deadline and after the final submission deadline.

Pass **BEFORE** Final Submission Deadline

- ETD Coordinator will add a note to your ProQuest account saying your document met the formatting requirements.
- ETD Coordinator will send you a preliminary confirmation email asking if this version is indeed the final, committee-approved version.
- The chart below shows what happens next, depending on your answer to the confirmation email.

Yes, this is My Final Version	No, this is Not My Final Version
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator assigned to ETD account. • Final confirmation email. • Can still make changes if something happens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditional confirmation email sent to you. • Resubmit final version later.

After Final Submission Approval

If you pass the format check after the final submission deadline, the following steps will happen:

- ✓ ETD Coordinator will send you the final confirmation email.
- ✓ ETD Coordinator will add a note to your ProQuest account.
- ✓ Your Program Coordinator will be assigned to your account.
- ✓ You're done!
- ✓ **CANNOT MAKE CHANGES AFTER THIS POINT.**

A Note on Account Status

Your coordinator will process your graduation paperwork in its entirety, which can take several weeks. Your ETD account may still say "in review," but that does not mean your ETD has not been approved. If you ever have questions about your graduation status after you have received final submission approval, you can [contact your coordinator](#).

Where Your Work Will Be Published

You will have publishing agreements with two separate entities: ProQuest and USC's Scholar Commons. Your work will appear in both entities' databases after you graduate.

ProQuest

ProQuest, which operates the [ETD Administrator site](#) you use for submissions, is an information and data provider that works in partnership with universities and libraries around the world. Offering a vast collection of technologies and databases, ProQuest provides students, researchers, and librarians with access to a variety of information resources, including theses and dissertations. The University of South Carolina works in partnership with ProQuest to ensure your thesis or dissertation is accessible to a wide audience. After you graduate, your thesis or dissertation will be published in [ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global](#).

Scholar Commons

As a public institution, the University of South Carolina is committed to providing digital open access to its theses and dissertations, which allows for a broader dissemination of information throughout the world. To honor this commitment, the university created an institutional repository through Thomas Cooper Library called "[Scholar Commons](#)." All theses and dissertations submitted electronically since 2008 are available in an open access format in this repository. By using Scholar Commons, the university can provide free access as well as maintain control and responsibility for its own records. Your work will be published in Scholar Commons, in addition to ProQuest, after you graduate.

EMBARGOES

If you wish to restrict access to your thesis or dissertation, you can request an embargo. This option ensures that the public will not be able to view or download your document for a specific amount of time. As a public institution, USC can keep your work under embargo for up to 10 years, with periodic renewals.

Embargo Process

To request an embargo, complete these steps:

- 1. Choose the “Delayed Release” Option in Your ETD Account**
 - Under the “Delaying Release in ProQuest” option in the “PQ Publishing Options” tab of your ETD account, the site will ask you if you want your work to be available in ProQuest as soon as it is published. Select “No.”
 - Select the embargo length of your choice:
 - 6 months
 - 1 year
 - 2 years
- 2. Complete the Thesis Signature Form (G-TSF) or Dissertation Signature form (G-DSF)**
 - Indicate your desired embargo length on the required signature form in the section labeled “Delayed Release (embargo)” on either the:
 - [Thesis Signature Form \(G-TSF\)](#) for Master’s students; or
 - [Dissertation Signature Form \(G-DSF\)](#) for doctoral students.
- 3. Submit the Embargo Memo Form**
 - Download the [Embargo Memo Form](#) from the Graduate School’s website.
 - Submit the completed form to [your coordinator at the Graduate School](#).

Embargo Renewals

At the end of your embargo period, you can request a renewal of your embargo in increments of 6 months, 1 year, or 2 years. You are not required to use the same embargo length you previously requested. Altogether, you can keep your work under embargo for a total of 10 years with periodic renewals.

To request a renewal:

1. Complete a new embargo memo and submit it to the Graduate School’s ETD Coordinator.
2. Submit the renewal request at least **30 days** prior to your current embargo’s expiration date.
3. Contact ProQuest directly to renew your embargo in their databases. You can reach them at [+1-800-521-0600](tel:+1-800-521-0600) or by [visiting their website](#).

You have two separate publishing agreements for your thesis or dissertation: one with ProQuest and one with the University of South Carolina. These two agreements do not impact one another. To ensure your work remains under embargo with both entities, [contact ProQuest](#) and the [USC Graduate School](#).

CUI (CONTROLLED UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION) THESIS AND DISSERTATION

If your thesis or dissertation contains controlled unclassified information (CUI), it must meet federal security requirements and cannot be handled, stored, or disseminated by university systems. For proper protocol, please follow these steps.

Definition of CUI

Controlled unclassified information (CUI) is a category of sensitive information that is not classified but must be protected to ensure national security. These documents require safeguarding, access, and dissemination controls. Adhering to these security protocols is a legal requirement and necessary for cybersecurity. Some examples of CUI content include:

- Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
- Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information (SPII)
- Proprietary Business Information (PBI)
- Unclassified Controlled Technical Information (UCTI)
- Sensitive but Unclassified (SBU) information
- Law Enforcement Sensitive (LES) information
- Statistical information or census data
- Federal projects subject to export compliance regulations
- For more examples, please visit the [CUI Registry's Categories List](#).

The federal government restricts the dissemination of CUI data by law, regulation, and/or government-wide policy; and the United States Government either owns or creates the data. The [National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](#) is the authority on CUI and standardizes how it is marked, and they maintain the [CUI Registry](#).

CUI Thesis and Dissertation Process

1. **Notify the Graduate School**

Your advisor or major professor should [contact the Graduate School](#) to inform them of your dissertation's CUI status. To ensure proper handling, submit notifications to the ETD Coordinator and [your coordinator at the Graduate School](#) no later than the *Format Check Deadline*.

2. **Create ProQuest ETD Administrator Account (Non-CUI Information)**

You are required to create an account in [ProQuest ETD Administrator](#) using a **non-USC email address**. Only input *non-CUI information*.

3. **Upload Placeholder Document to ProQuest Account**

Download the **CUI Placeholder** document from the Graduate School's website (see "CUI Thesis and Dissertation Process" on the [Thesis and Dissertation page](#)). The document will have a title page for you to complete and a placeholder page for your thesis or dissertation. Complete the title page,

leave the placeholder page as it is, save the document as a PDF, and upload it to your ProQuest account.

4. Continue Graduation Process

The Graduate School will process your documents for graduation clearance. Unless your CUI is cleared for public release by the government sponsor, your ProQuest ETD Administrator account will remain unpublished. The Graduate School will access your ProQuest ETD account and use your placeholder document for graduation clearance purposes.

After Your Work is Cleared for Public Release

If your work becomes cleared for public release by the government sponsor, you will need to submit your thesis or dissertation in full to the Graduate School. You will [follow the instructions in this guide](#) for resubmission to replace your placeholder document. If the government sponsor does *not* clear your work for public release, you will *not* have to submit your full thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School due to security restrictions, and your account will not be published. Below are the steps you will follow after the government sponsor clears your work for public release.

1. Graduate School Formatting

The Graduate School has specific requirements for formatting theses and dissertations. In addition to many other resources, the Graduate School offers templates in LaTeX and Microsoft Word, which you can download from the [Thesis and Dissertation page](#). You **cannot submit your full thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School** until your document's CUI is cleared for public release by the government sponsor.

2. Defense

The defense for CUI theses and dissertations must be closed. The department will submit a [G-DSF](#) or [G-TSF](#) to the Graduate School.

3. PI and Storage

Primary Investigators

Students are not allowed to be listed or serve as Primary Investigators (PI) on any controlled research project, including theses and dissertations. The involved faculty member, director of thesis, or major professor must be responsible for the project and be listed as the PI.

The PI must notify the department's [program coordinator at the Graduate School](#) as soon as they are aware CUI restrictions are applicable to a student's thesis or dissertation, but no later than the format check deadline for the semester in which the student will graduate. This notification ensures graduation clearance can proceed in a timely manner.

Storage

Legally, the university's institutional repository [Scholar Commons](#) and the Graduate School cannot store CUI theses and dissertations while they are under security restrictions. The department or school is responsible for ensuring any CUI documents are stored securely. Please contact the [Carolina Enclave for Secure Research \(CESR\)](#) for further information and assistance.

4. CUI Marking

There are federal requirements for marking documents that meet CUI definitions. Consult the [CUI Registry](#) for marking specifications. If you have any concerns about marking your document correctly, talk to your thesis or dissertation advisor.

5. Publication

If the thesis or dissertation is cleared for public release, the department or program must notify the Graduate School and submit the thesis or dissertation in PDF form with all CUI markings removed in addition to providing the student's ProQuest account information that was previously restricted (e.g., the abstract, title, etc.). The Graduate School will then deliver the completed ETD account and the cleared PDF to ProQuest for publication on the student's behalf. At this time, the document will become available via the university's institutional repository ([Scholar Commons](#)) and in ProQuest's databases, including [ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global](#).

PERMANENT EMBARGO

In special cases, the Graduate School offers permanent embargoes for theses and dissertations that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Contains [Export Administration Regulations \(EAR\)](#), [International Traffic in Arms Regulations \(ITAR\)](#), [Nuclear Regulatory Commission \(NRC\)](#), [Department of Energy \(DOE\)](#), and/or [CUI](#) information;
- Political situation pertaining to the thesis or dissertation; or
- MFA or creative writing project.

As with all embargo requests, each request is subject to approval by the Graduate School. To request a permanent embargo:

1. Choose the “CUI (Controlled Unclassified Information)” embargo length on the [Embargo Memo Form](#). You must include justification for this choice in the form. Submit the form to your coordinator at the Graduate School.
2. In your ETD account, choose “Other” for your embargo length. In “Notes to Administrator,” write that you are requesting a permanent embargo. Provide 1-2 sentences of justification.
3. Notify the Graduate School that your thesis or dissertation contains sensitive or CUI information. See the [CUI Thesis and Dissertation Process](#) for more information.

Your work will remain under a permanent embargo unless you are otherwise notified. If your circumstances change, please [contact the Graduate School’s ETD Coordinator](#).

TEMPLATES

The Graduate School has templates in two different forms that you can download to simplify the process. The first is in Microsoft Word, and the second is in LaTeX. You can download both of these templates from the [Graduate School’s Thesis and Dissertation page](#).

Word Template

There is a new Word template available, and you can download the .zip file from the Graduate School’s website. This .zip file contains the full Word template, individual templates, and a user guide. When you download this .zip folder, the files will be saved on your computer as .dotx files, meaning they are considered templates in Word; you can create as many documents from these files as you wish.

Features

The new Word template features include:

- Automatic table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures;
- Heading styles;
- Major heading styles with the top margin built-in;
- Instructional boxes;
- Drop menus to select correct information on the title page.

LaTeX Template

The LaTeX template is best suited for dissertations in science, engineering, and math, but any student is welcome to use it. You will also download a .zip folder containing the files and guides. Note that you will need both a distributor and an editor to work with LaTeX—and you must download the distributor first to ensure the editor works properly:

- [MikTeX](#): a distributor that comes with its own editor, [TeXLive](#).
- [TexMaker](#): editor that is user-friendly for beginners.
- [Overleaf](#): an entirely online TeX distributor and editor that has a robust support guide.
- [The LaTeX Project at Github](#): support site for LaTeX.
- [Comprehensive TeX Archive Network \(CTAN\)](#): resource site for LaTeX.

If you have questions about how to use the LaTeX template for your thesis or dissertation, please contact your department or program directly.

ETD FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>I PASSED THE FORMAT CHECK. WHY DOES MY ACCOUNT STILL SAY, “SUBMISSION IN REVIEW”?</p>	<p>The graduation clearance process takes several weeks. Your status simply reflects the fact that your coordinator at the Graduate School is hard at work on processing all of your graduation documents, including your dissertation. Rest assured: if you have received a confirmation email from the ETD Coordinator, then you have passed the format check.</p>
<p>I ORIGINALLY DIDN'T WANT TO ORDER COPYRIGHT, BUT NOW I DO. CAN I JUST DELETE MY ACCOUNT AND START OVER? IF NOT, WHAT CAN I DO?</p>	<p>No, you cannot delete your account and start a new one. Doing so will erase your submission records and jeopardize your graduation eligibility. ProQuest does not let students retroactively request the copyright option; however, you can still file for copyright as an individual with the U.S. Copyright Office at https://www.copyright.gov/.</p>
<p>HOW CAN I ORDER A HARD COPY?</p>	<p>If you wait until after you create your account or after you graduate to order hard copies, you have two options. You can contact ProQuest directly and order one through their site. Your other option is to order a copy through USC's printing services.</p>
<p>IS THE FORMAT CHECK DEADLINE OPTIONAL?</p>	<p>No, the format check deadline (also called a “preliminary format check”) is required. You must meet both the format check deadline and the final submission deadline to qualify for graduation.</p>
<p>DO I HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER I HAVE DEFENDED TO SUBMIT MY DOCUMENT FOR THE FORMAT CHECK?</p>	<p>No, you do not have to wait until after you have defended. You may submit your document for the format check prior to your defense. In fact, the earlier you submit, the sooner you will receive feedback from the ETD Coordinator.</p>
<p>HOW DO I SUBMIT MY DOCUMENT FOR THE FORMAT CHECK? MAY I EMAIL MY WORD DOCUMENT TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL?</p>	<p>The Graduate School does not accept submissions via email. To submit your document for the format check, you must use ProQuest's ETD Administrator. Please review the instructions on our website or the How to Submit Your ETD for the Format Check section of this guide.</p>
<p>DOES MY DOCUMENT NEED TO BE COMPLETED AND DO I NEED TO PASS THE FORMAT CHECK</p>	<p>No, your document only needs to be submitted <i>for the first time</i> by the format check deadline. You must pass the format check and have all content finalized and approved by</p>

QUESTION	ANSWER
BY THE FORMAT CHECK DEADLINE?	the final submission deadline, which is later in the semester.
CAN I MAKE CHANGES TO MY DOCUMENT AFTER THE FORMAT CHECK DEADLINE?	Yes. The initial version you submit will not be considered the final version, and you have until the final submission deadline to resubmit.
HOW EARLY CAN I SUBMIT FOR THE FORMAT CHECK? IS A YEAR IN ADVANCE TOO EARLY?	Try to submit during the semester in which you intend to graduate.
CAN I MAKE CHANGES TO MY DOCUMENT AFTER THE FINAL SUBMISSION HAS BEEN ACCEPTED?	No. You cannot make any changes whatsoever to your document after it has been accepted. This rule applies to both content changes and format changes. If you must make a change after the final submission deadline, then you will be ineligible to graduate in the current semester, and the earliest you can be eligible to graduate will be the following semester.
I PASSED THE FORMAT CHECK. DO I NEED TO SUBMIT MY DOCUMENT OFFICIALLY TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL? IS THERE A SEPARATE SYSTEM TO SUBMIT FOR THE GRADUATE SCHOOL?	No. By submitting your document through ProQuest, you have already submitted your document to the Graduate School. After you pass the format check, you do not need to resubmit your document at all. You are all set.
I'M WRITING A 3-MANUSCRIPT DISSERTATION. DO I REALLY NEED A FULL BIBLIOGRAPHY AT THE END OF MY DISSERTATION?	Yes, you are required to have a full bibliography regardless of whether you have manuscript chapters. Please see the Manuscript Style section for more information.
AM I REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A BOUND COPY?	No, you are only required to submit the electronic version as a PDF through the ETD Administrator system. The university does not accept or preserve bound copies.

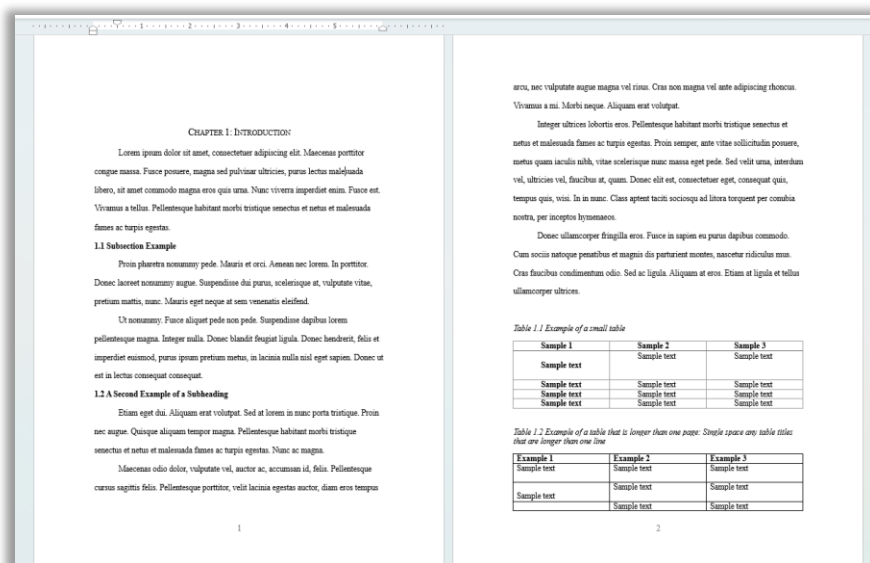
GENERAL FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

Margins

Every page of your ETD must be printable on standard 8.5” x 11” paper. Do **not** include borders on your document, and do **not** have any kind of running head or header. Your final document must follow these requirements for margins:

Portrait Orientation

1. Left and right margins must be set at 1.25” on every page, including pages containing footnotes, appendices, charts, graphs, tables, figures, etc.
2. Top margins must be 2” for all pages with a major heading (see the list of major headings below) and for the first page of each chapter.
3. After the first page of a major section, all other pages must have 1” top margins.
4. Bottom margins must be set at 1” throughout.
5. All content on every page must fit within these margins, including tables, figures, footnotes, etc.



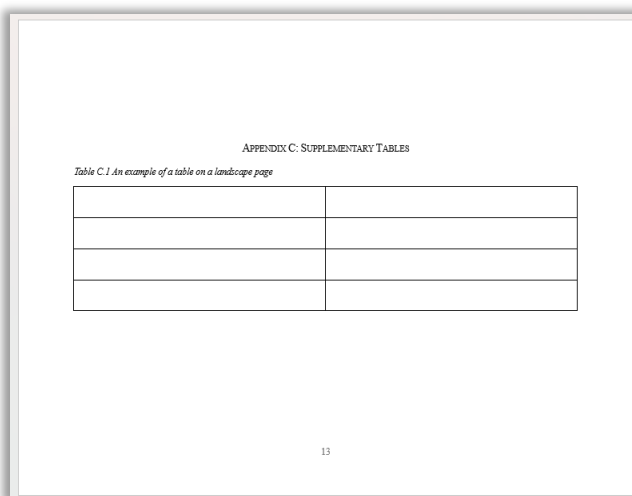
In the example above, you can see the first page has 2 inches of blank space above the major heading, and the second page has a 1-inch top margin.

NOTE: If you are using the Word template, then the margins do NOT need to be changed. The major headings style has an invisible paragraph built in that will automatically adjust the top margins' appearance. See the accompanying guide included in the template .zip folder for more information.

Landscape Orientation

Landscape orientation is only used for tables and figures that are too large to fit on a portrait-oriented page. Here are the margin requirements:

1. Top and bottom margins (long sides) must be 1.25”.
2. Left and right margins (short sides) must be 1”.
3. All content on the landscape page must fit within these margins.
4. The page number should be centered along the bottom, long edge.



The image shows a sample landscape page. At the top center, it reads "APPENDIX C: SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES". Below that, a caption reads "Table C.1. An example of a table on a landscape page". The table itself is a simple 2x4 grid. At the bottom center of the page, the number "13" is printed.

Only wide tables and figures should be placed on landscape pages; no paragraphs should be included on a landscape page. You may find an example of a correctly formatted landscape page in the sample dissertation on the [Graduate School’s website](#).

Page Numbers

Page numbers must be centered 0.5” from the bottom of the page (i.e., in the “footer” of the page). This placement applies to both landscape and portrait pages. There will be two pagination sequences in your document:

1. A lowercase Roman numeral sequence; and
2. An Arabic numeral sequence.

You must follow these requirements when numbering your pages:

- a) The title page should **not** display a number, but it still “counts” in the pagination sequence.
- b) Use lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.) to number your front matter pages (Acknowledgements, Dedication, Abstract, etc.).
- c) Beginning with the foreword/introduction or the first page of your first chapter, use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) to number all remaining pages of your document, including the bibliography and any appendices.

- d) This new sequence begins at “1”; do not continue the sequence from your front matter. You should not start a new numbering sequence for each chapter or section, but instead continue the same sequence for the remainder of the thesis/dissertation.
- e) Page numbers on landscape-oriented pages must also be centered 0.5” from the bottom of the page (i.e., the “footer” of the page).
- f) Use the same font for the page numbers as you use for all other text in your document.

Line Spacing

Paragraphs in the front matter sections and in the chapters of your document must be **double-spaced**. Refer to your style manual (e.g., APA, MLA, Turabian, etc.) when determining how to space things such as block quotes, bibliographic entries, endnotes and footnotes, and so forth.

Paragraphs

The first line of each new paragraph must be indented; however, you have the option not to indent the very first paragraph of a chapter or section.

Either left-justification or full-justification is acceptable for text in the body of your document; however, you should choose one method and use it consistently.

There should be no skipped lines or added space between paragraphs, above headings, or between sections. The text must run continuously from paragraph to paragraph without large blank spaces on the pages.

Fonts

Style

You may choose **one** of these fonts for **all text** in your document:

- Aptos
- Arial
- Calibri
- Courier New
- Palatino Linotype
- Tahoma
- Times New Roman

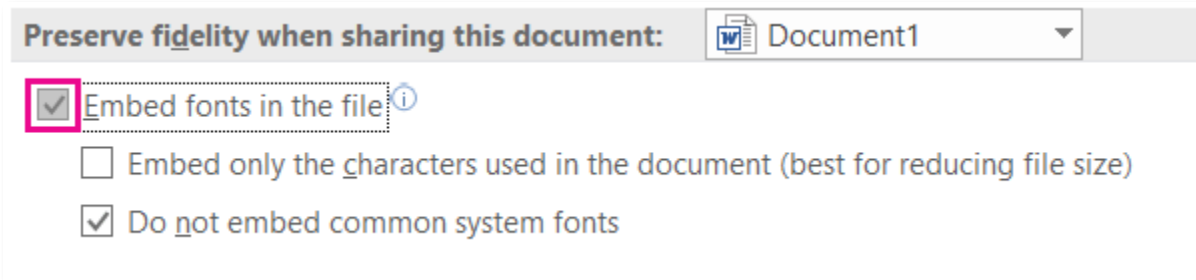
You can only use **one** of these fonts for **all text** in your entire document. This includes text/content, page numbers, footnotes, endnotes, figures, tables, entries in the table of contents and other front matter, table titles, figure captions. Do not switch back and forth between different fonts.

Do not use any color besides black. The use of color in illustrations, figures, graphs, etc. is permitted, but not for text. Hyperlinks are acceptable.

Embed Fonts

ProQuest/UMI requires that all fonts used in your document must be embedded in the final PDF you submit. To embed fonts in Microsoft Word,

1. Click on the **File** tab, then click **Options** (it's near the bottom left corner of the window).
2. In the left column, select the **Save** tab.
3. At the bottom, under **Preserve fidelity when sharing this document**, select the **Embed fonts in the file** box.



You will see two checkboxes: Embed only the characters used in the document and Do not embed common system fonts.

Selecting **Embed only the characters used in the document** reduces the file size but limits editing of the file using the same font. This checkbox is common for both Word and PowerPoint.

In Word, selecting **Do not embed common system fonts** may increase the file size, but it is best for allowing others to edit the document and keep the same font.

4. Click **Ok**.

Size

For text in the body of your document, you must use size 12 font only. This requirement pertains to text on the title page, front matter, page numbers, chapters, appendices, figure captions, and table titles.

For headings, you have the option to use either 12- or 14-point font. Either choice is acceptable, but you must be consistent. Footnotes and endnotes may be size 10-12.

For writing and data within your tables, you have the option use sizes between 10- and 12-point font. Your tables will need to fit within the required margins, so keep this in mind as you format your tables. Your table *titles*, however, must be in size 12. Figure numbers and captions should also be in size 12. Visit the [Tables](#) and [Figures](#) sections of the format guide to learn more.

Widows and Orphans

The first or last line of a paragraph, a heading, or a subheading must not be isolated by a page break. Such isolated lines are called “widows” or “orphans,” and most word processors can be set to prevent them. If you have a heading appear at the bottom of a page, simply move the heading to the top of the following page to avoid this situation.

Headings and Subheadings

Major Headings

Major headings are the “titles” at the top of the first page of a chapter or major section. Here is a list of all major headings:

- Dedication
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract
- Preface
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- List of Figures
- List of Symbols
- List of Abbreviations
- Foreword or Introduction
- Chapter titles (e.g., “Chapter 1: Introduction”)
- References (or bibliography, works cited, etc.)
- Appendix titles (e.g., “Appendix A: Permission to Reprint”)

The Graduate School only has three requirements for formatting your major headings:

1. *Placement*: all major headings must be **centered**;
2. *Size*: major headings may only be size 12- or 14-point font; and
3. *Consistency*: all major headings must use the same style you create consistently in terms of size, italics or bold, capitalization, etc.

Students should refer to the standards set by their departments’ choice of style manuals. Regardless of which style you use, all heading and subheading formatting must be consistent throughout your document. Example: if you decide to center some major headings in size 14 bold font, then all major headings must be centered in size 14 bold font.

Subheadings

“Subheadings” refers to the headings you use *within* a chapter. The only requirements the Graduate School has for subheadings are:

1. *Size*: 12- or 14-point font; and
2. *Consistency*: You must apply whatever style you use consistently in every chapter. This applies to numbering, bold, italics, etc.

You can have as many levels of subheadings in your document as you wish; however, in the table of contents you can only *display* one level of subdivision. You can read more about this requirement in the [Table of Contents](#) section.

Tables

Placement

You may **choose one** of the following options when inserting tables or figures into your document:



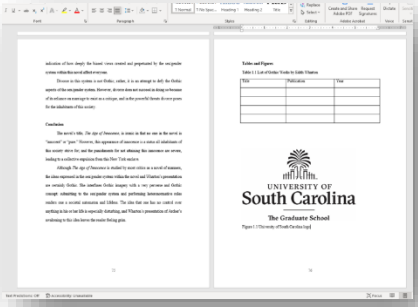
Option	Description	Example
<p>Option 1: Embed the table or figure in the text.</p>	<p>Do not use text wrapping around the sides of the item. Text should only appear above and/or below the item.</p>	
<p>Option 2: Place the table or figure on a separate page immediately following the page where it is first cited.</p>	<p>Do not leave any extra space at the bottom of the preceding page. The text should run continuously.</p>	
<p>Option 3: Insert all tables and figures at the end of each chapter.</p>	<p>All of the tables & figures should be placed on consecutive pages, followed by figures. Place the items in the same order to which they are referred in the text. If your chapter is in manuscript style and has references, place the tables and figures after the references.</p>	

Table Requirements

- Titles should begin with the word “Table”, followed by the number of the chapter, a period, and the number of the table. E.g., Table 1.1, Table 1.2, Table 1.3, etc. *Do not use a dash.*
- Table numbering should restart for each chapter: Table 1.1, Table 2.1, Table 3.1, Table 3.2, Table 3.3, etc.
- If a table occurs in an appendix, the table number should include the letter assigned to the appendix as well as a number: Table A.1, Table B.1, Table C.1, Table C.2, etc.
- Every table must have a descriptive title. Titles of tables should appear **above** the table, and there should be 1 blank between the title and the top of the table. Example:

Table 3.1 A List of Shakespeare Plays Assigned by Grade Level

Play	Grade Level
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	9 th grade
<i>King Lear</i>	10 th grade
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	11 th grade
<i>Hamlet</i>	12 th grade

- A table title may not consist of more than one sentence or phrase.
- Tables and their corresponding titles can be either centered or left-aligned.
- Table titles must be in size 12 font. For data and/or text within the tables, you can use sizes 10-12 font (in the same font as all other text in your document).
- Tables must fit within the required margins set out previously in this guide.
- Note: do not include typesetting notations in your document (such as “Insert Table 3.4 here”).

Figures

Placement

Figures can be placed in the same positions as tables. See the [Placement chart](#) under the Tables section for more information.

Figure Requirements

- Figure captions should begin with the word “Figure”, followed by the number of the chapter, a period, and the number of the figure. E.g., Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2, Figure 1.3, etc.
- Figure numbering should restart for each chapter: Figure 1.1, Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2, etc.

- If a figure occurs in an appendix to the document, the figure number should include the letter assigned to the appendix: Figure A.1, Figure B.1, Figure B.2, etc.
- Figure captions should appear **below** figures. There should be 1 blank line between the figure and its caption.

Example:



Figure 1.1 University of South Carolina
Graduate School

- Figures and their corresponding figure captions can be left-aligned or centered.
- Figures must fit within the required margins stated earlier in this guide.
- Do not include typesetting notations in your document (such as “Insert Figure 1.2 here”).
- Figure titles and numbers must be in size 12 font (in the same font as all other text in your document).

Endnotes and Footnotes

You may use either endnotes or footnotes throughout your document, *but not both*. If you decide to use endnotes or footnotes, you should use your word processing software’s automatic function for doing so. *Do not insert endnotes or footnotes manually.*

Endnotes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placed at end of chapter or end of document. • Must be consecutively numbered throughout the document.
Footnotes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placed at bottom or in footer of same page where reference is made. • Footnote numbering may be <i>either</i> consecutive throughout the document or restart with each chapter. Either is acceptable.

Please refer to a style manual appropriate to your department or discipline for answers to specific style questions not addressed in this guide, such as whether to single-space or double-space your endnotes and footnotes. The Graduate School does not have requirements for the size of your font, nor whether to put endnotes/footnotes into single space or double space. Those choices will depend on what your approved style manual dictates (e.g., MLA, APA, etc.)

ACCESSIBILITY AND YOUR THESIS OR DISSERTATION

USC's Commitment to Digital Accessibility

Everyone who creates, manages, and purchases our digital assets at USC can help make our commitment to digital accessibility a reality. We strive to provide equitable access to our digital content for everyone in our community with various visual, hearing, cognitive, and other disabilities. USC commits to making all digital content accessible by April 2026. You can go to [Digital Accessibility at USC website](#) to know more about this important initiative.

What Does This Mean for Me?

What this means for you is that you need to follow [best practices](#) for making your document accessible. Rest assured, this process is very simple, and the Graduate School has many resources to assist you in this endeavor. The following section will guide you through the simple steps you can take to make your document accessible.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR ETD ACCESSIBLE

To ensure readers of all abilities can access your hard work, you can follow these simple steps outlined below to render your thesis or dissertation digitally accessible. These steps will show you how to tag your document correctly and how to add important accessibility features, such as alt text. This way, you will not only help USC achieve its commitment to digital accessibility, but you will also guarantee that as many users as possible can appreciate and learn from your research and writing.

Key Steps for All ETDs

Follow these steps to make your document accessible:

1. [Use correct heading hierarchy.](#)
2. [Add alt text to figures.](#)
3. [Repeat header row for tables that are longer than one line.](#)
4. [Save your PDF with bookmarks.](#)

1. Use Correct Heading Hierarchy

Headings break up your content into digestible, readable sections. Using headings and following the correct hierarchy not only render your content readable for people with cognitive disabilities, but they also make your document navigable by creating **bookmarks**. The expression “heading hierarchy” refers to the correct, nested order of headings that is accessible.

The way to insert headings into your document in Word is to use **Heading Styles**. The Word template already has an established heading hierarchy. You can find these options by navigating to the **Home** tab in Word, then clicking on the styles menu. See the examples below:

Windows Version of Heading Styles Menu in Word



Mac Version of Heading Styles Menu in Word



Generally speaking, you should follow this protocol as per the [Digital Accessibility Best Practice](#) website:

- **Use Heading 1 for the document title:** Assistive technology does *not* recognize the “title” style in MS Word; therefore, you need to use Heading 1 for the title so that all users can read and identify your document title.
- **Use Heading 2 for all major headings:** Assistive technology such as screen readers will recognize text written in Heading 2 as first-level headings. This means that major headings in your thesis or dissertation, such as “Abstract” or “Chapter 1: Introduction” should be written in Heading 2. Remember that you are also required to follow the formatting requirements for [headings](#) as discussed earlier in this guide. Use Heading 3, etc. for subsequent headings. The Word template already has the heading hierarchy and formatting established.
- **Do not skip heading levels:** Skipping heading levels, such as going from Heading 2 to Heading 5, will confuse assistive technology and your readers. That being said, you can go from Heading 3 then back to Heading 2; what you cannot do is skip ahead in the hierarchy.

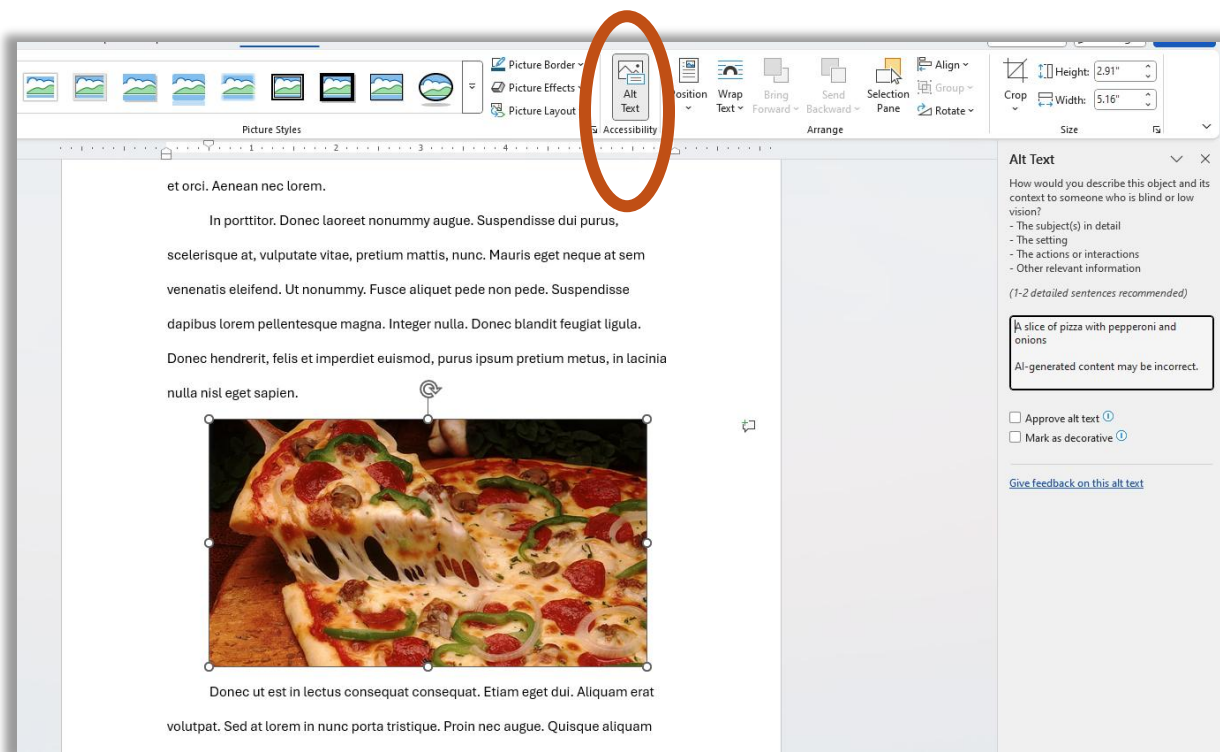
2. Add Alt Text to Figures

Alt text is a powerful tool you can use to guarantee users with disabilities can read your work. It is essentially 1-2 detailed sentences that describe the image or figure. Screen readers—a tool used by people with disabilities—are then able to read this description, ensuring all users can understand and access your images.

Simple Alt Text

When using MS Word, you can add alt text by clicking on the image and then going to the **Picture Format** menu. From there, click on **Alt Text**.

In the picture below, you can see the alt text menu. *Beware: sometimes, Word will add auto-generated alt text, which is often an incorrect description of your image. You must manually write the alt text yourself to ensure it correctly describes your figures.*



You can write your short description in the alt text box. For instance, the picture inserted in the example above is of someone cutting a slice of pizza; appropriate alt text for that image would be “A slice of pizza with pepperoni, peppers, and onions being cut from a large pizza.” A person who is blind or who has low vision would then be able to access this image, thanks to your alt text and the screen reader. When you have added your own alt text, the MS Word Accessibility Assistant should display your accessibility as “Good to go.” To learn more, visit the Digital Accessibility Toolbox about [alt text in Word](#).

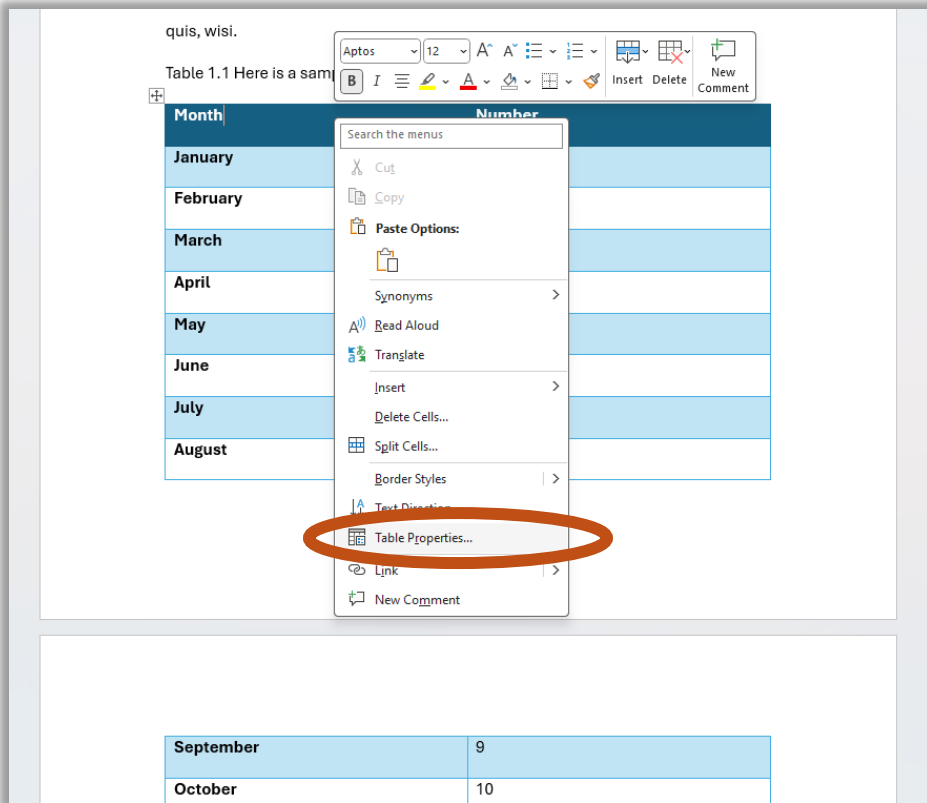
Complex Alt Text

If your document contains intricate, complex figures that cannot be easily described in 1-2 sentences, then you need to follow [best practices](#) for writing complex alt text. Please visit the Digital Accessibility Toolbox about [alt text in Word](#).

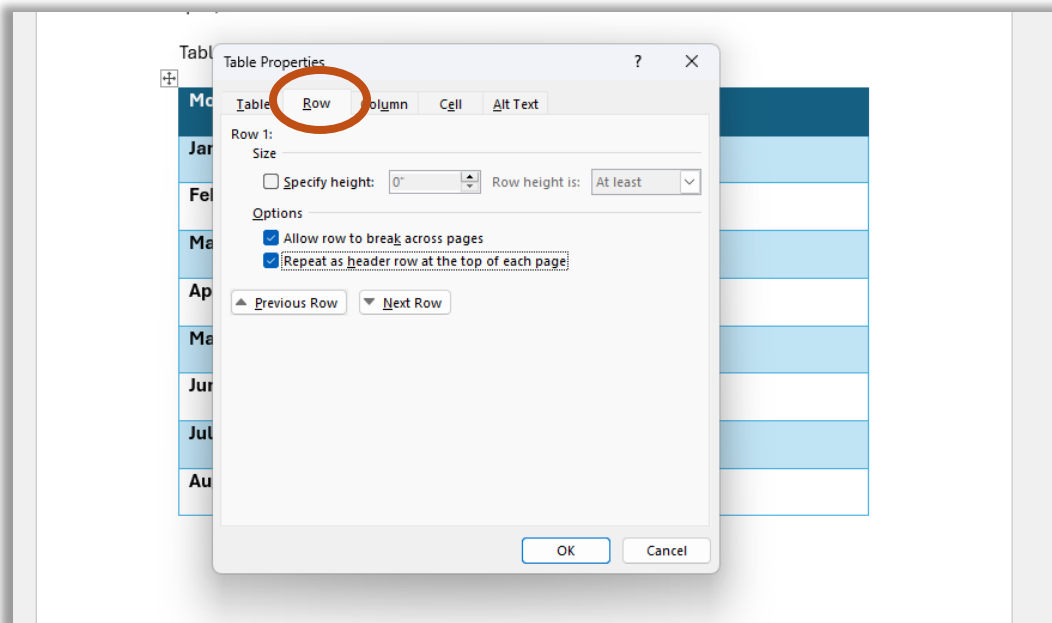
3. Repeat Header Rows for Tables Longer Than One Line

You have the option to add tables to your thesis or dissertation, and it is acceptable for tables to be longer than one line. However, if your table is longer than one line, you are required to repeat the header row to make the table accessible. The Digital Accessibility Toolbox has a thorough section on [tables in Word](#) that you can visit to learn more.

To do so in Word, you will right-click on the header row of the table, then click on **Table Properties**.



Once you are in **Table Properties**, you will navigate to the tab labeled **Row**. You will then click on the box next to the words “Repeat as header row at the top of each page.” Then, click **Ok**.



Your table is now accessible! The header row should repeat at the top of each page now. Follow these steps for any long tables in your document.

A Note about Tables

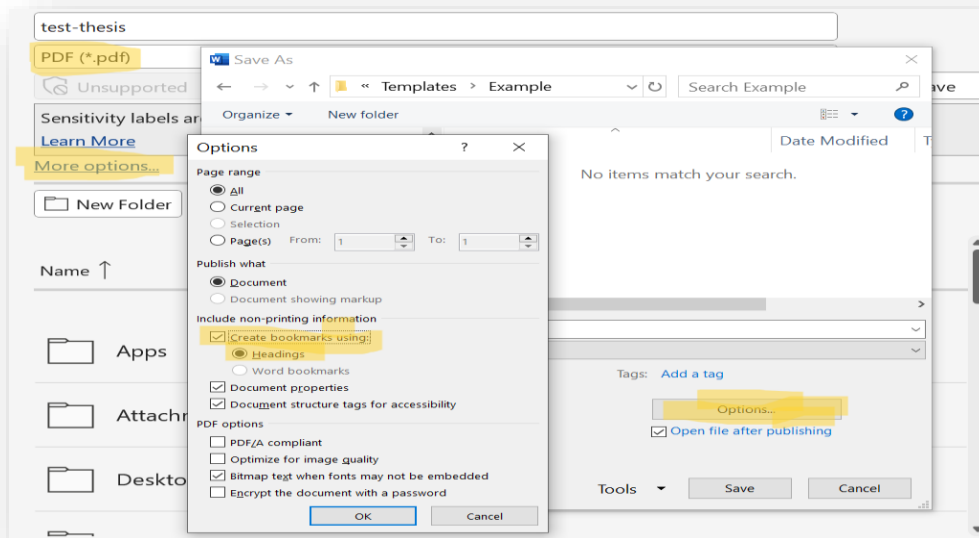
If you are inserting a table into your document that is an image file (e.g., JPEG, PNG, etc.), then you need to write alt text for this table. Follow the [instructions for alt text](#) to make such tables accessible.

4. Save Your PDF with Bookmarks

You are required to submit your thesis or dissertation as a PDF file. To convert your Word document to a PDF, follow the steps based on which operating system you are using.

Windows

1. Click on **File**, then click either **Save As** or **Save a Copy**.
2. Select **PDF** from the “Save As” drop-down list.
3. Click on **More Options** directly under the file type.
4. Click the box labeled **Options** in the popup menu.
5. Click the box next to **Create bookmarks using: Headings**.
6. Make sure the boxes next to **Document properties** and **Document Structure Tags for Accessibility** are also clicked.
7. Click **Ok**, then click **Save**.
8. Now, you’re ready to submit your thesis or dissertation for the format check! Visit [ProQuest’s ETD Administrator](#) to submit your document.



Mac

1. Open the **File** menu and select **Save As...**
2. Choose the **PDF** format from the dropdown.
3. Mac version: select the radio button **Best for electronic distribution and accessibility**.

Best Resources to Ensure Accessibility

The best way to make your document accessible is to use the Graduate School's Microsoft Word template, which you can download [from our website](#).

When using the Word template, take these first steps to ensure your document is accessible:

- ✓ Download the [DESKTOP version](#) of Microsoft Word. (Do NOT use the online version).
- ✓ Download the Graduate School's [Microsoft Word template](#).
- ✓ Use the MS Word Accessibility Assistant to check your document.
- ✓ Refer to [Digital Accessibility at USC's](#) online resources.

Essentially, if you use the Graduate School's Word template correctly, your thesis or dissertation will be accessible. Be sure to visit the [Digital Accessibility Toolbox](#) to learn about best practices and tips.

Microsoft Word and Accessibility

The best way to guarantee that your document is accessible is to download the Graduate School's [Microsoft Word template](#) from our website; you will download the .zip folder, which contains the template itself and a user guide that explains how to use the template. You will also need to download the [DESKTOP version of Word](#); do not rely on the online version, which has fewer features.

LaTeX and Accessibility

If you need to use LaTeX for your thesis or dissertation, please contact your department or program for support on how to make your document accessible.

DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

Order of Major Sections

Required Order of Sections

- 1) Title page
- 2) Copyright page
- 3) Dedication
- 4) Acknowledgements
- 5) Abstract
- 6) Preface
- 7) Table of Contents
- 8) List of Tables
- 9) List of Figures
- 10) List of Symbols

- 11) List of Abbreviations
- 12) Chapter(s)
- 13) Bibliography or References
- 14) Appendix or Appendices (list each appendix individually)

Required vs. Optional Sections and Page Numbering

Section	Required or Optional?	Page Number Style
Title page	REQUIRED	No page number displayed (but still “counts” in pagination sequence)
Copyright page	<i>Optional</i>	Lowercase Roman numerals (starts with “ii”)
Dedication	<i>Optional</i>	Lowercase Roman numeral
Acknowledgements	<i>Optional</i>	Lowercase Roman numeral
Abstract	REQUIRED	Lowercase Roman numeral
Preface	<i>Optional</i>	Lowercase Roman numeral
Table of contents	REQUIRED	Lowercase Roman numerals
List of Tables	REQUIRED if you have 4 or more tables	Lowercase Roman numerals
List of Figures	REQUIRED if you have 4 or more figures	Lowercase Roman numerals
List of Symbols	<i>Optional</i>	Lowercase Roman numerals
List of Abbreviations	<i>Optional</i>	Lowercase Roman numerals
Chapter(s)	REQUIRED	Arabic numbers. Begins with “1” and is continuous for the rest of the document.
Bibliography or References	REQUIRED	Arabic numbers
Appendix or Appendices	REQUIRED if you are using manuscript style and need to provide evidence of permission to reprint	Arabic numbers

Section	Required or Optional?	Page Number Style

Title Page

Your ETD must have a title page. All the content on the title page must be centered on the page, both vertically and horizontally. Do not use any bold on the title page. Also, do not include a page number on the title page; however, you must “count” the title page in your pagination sequence. You must include the following information in this order:

Title

The title of your thesis/dissertation must be the first line of text. If your title is more than one line, single-space the entire title. The title on your title page must be exactly the same as the title in your ETD Administrator account online.

“By”

Directly below the title should be a blank line. On the next line, type the word “by” and insert another blank line below.

Your Name

Next, your name should be on a line by itself. Your name must match across several university platforms so that your document can be attributed to you. This means your name must appear exactly the same across these platforms:

1. Self-Service Carolina
2. University records
3. ETD Administrator account
4. Title page

If, for any reason, you need to change your name, you can submit a [change of name form](#) from the Registrar. Please contact the Graduate School if you have any questions or concerns about your name.

Blank Line

Insert a blank line after your name.

Previous Degrees

Next, you will insert the degree(s) you have previously earned. Write the name of the degree on one line, then the university/institution and graduation year on the next line. The entire entry should be single spaced, but you must double space in between degrees. Example:

Bachelor of Arts
University of Georgia, 2008

Master of Arts
University of South Carolina, 2011

Include each bachelor and higher degree you have previously earned (double-space between degrees), listed in chronological order by date received. Do not include the major with the degree(s), and do not abbreviate the degree(s).

If one of your past degrees was a dual degree, list each degree separately; do not group them into one entry.

Solid Line

Next, insert a solid, horizontal, black line. The line distance should be about half the width of the title page centered. Example:

Current Degree Information

The next group of information should focus on the degree for which you are writing the thesis or dissertation. You must use the following language (double spaced):

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of [insert degree here] in

[insert your major here]

[insert the name of your college (not department)]

University of South Carolina

[year of graduation]

Accepted by:

[your major professor's/thesis director's name], [either Major Professor OR Director of Thesis]

[committee member's/reader's name], [either Committee Member OR Reader]

[committee member's/reader's name], [Committee Member OR Reader]

[committee member's/reader's name], [Committee Member OR Reader]

Ann Vail, Dean of the Graduate School

See the Graduate School website’s [Degree Programs page](#) for information on your degree, college, major, etc. You must use the official language for your degree, and you must spell out the full name of the degree—for example, “Doctor of Philosophy”, not “Ph.D.”

Do not include titles or degrees for your professors’ names (such as “Dr.”, “Prof.”, or “Ph.D.”) or any name on the title page, including your own.

Which Type of ETD	Terms to Use
Master’s Thesis	Director of Thesis Reader
Doctoral Dissertation	Major Professor Committee Member

If you have more than one major professor or more than one director of thesis, simply use the title multiple times. Example:

John E. Smith, Major Professor

Jane F. Doe, Major Professor

William Jones, Committee Member

Lana Douglass, Committee Member

Please review the following pages for sample thesis and sample dissertation title pages.

Sample Master's Thesis Title Page

TITLE OF THESIS

By

Paul Douglas Smith

Bachelor of Science
University of South Carolina, 2021

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science in

Mechanical Engineering

Molinaroli College of Engineering and Computing

University of South Carolina

2026

Accepted by:

John L. Doe, Director of Thesis

Sara P. Smith, Reader

Ann Vail, Dean of the Graduate School

Sample Doctoral Dissertation Title Page

TITLE OF DISSERTATION: SINGLE SPACE THE
TITLE IF IT IS LONGER THAN ONE LINE

By

Jane Elizabeth Doe

Bachelor of Arts
College of Charleston, 2009

Master of Arts
University of South Carolina, 2015

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education in

Educational Practice and Innovation

College of Education

University of South Carolina

2026

Accepted by:

Barbra Streisand, Major Professor

Serena Williams, Committee Member

Roger Federer, Committee Member

Simone Biles, Committee Member

Ann Vail, Dean of the Graduate School

Copyright Page

Although you are not required to do so, the Graduate School recommends that you include a copyright notice with your document. According to U.S. law, your work is protected from the moment it is created in a tangible fixed form (including in an electronic form); you do not have to publish the work, register the work, or pay any fee in order to have copyright protection. Therefore, you may include a copyright notice with your thesis/dissertation even if you have not registered it with the U.S. Copyright Office.

However, there are certain benefits to registration. For more information, visit the [U.S. Copyright Office online](#) or review [this guide's submission instructions](#). If you decide to register, you may opt to have ProQuest/UMI file for copyright registration on your behalf (for a fee) during the electronic submission process, or you may personally register with the U.S. Copyright Office.

If you decide to include a copyright page, it must be in the following format:

1. Approximately 2” from the bottom of the page, include the following language:

© Copyright by [insert your name], [year of graduation]
All Rights Reserved.

This two-line statement should be single-spaced and horizontally centered on the page. There should be no text or content on the page besides this statement.

2. When inserting your name, type it exactly as it appears on the title page. This page should be immediately after the title page.
3. The copyright page should contain the lowercase Roman numeral “ii” in the center of the page, 0.5” from the bottom of the page.
4. If, instead of including an “All Rights Reserved” notice, you would like to release your thesis/dissertation under some less-restrictive type of license, such as a Creative Commons license, you should indicate as much on this page. The format of this page will remain the same, but the language will differ depending on the license you choose.

Dedication and Acknowledgments

You are not required to include either a dedication or any acknowledgements, but if you decide to include either, each must follow these guidelines:

1. For the dedication, make “Dedication” your major heading, placed at the top of the page with a 2” top margin. It should be followed by a blank line.
2. For the acknowledgements, make “Acknowledgements” your major heading, placed at the top of the page with a 2” top margin. It should be followed by a blank line.

3. Next, include the body of your dedication or acknowledgements, double spaced. It should be fully- or left-justified, depending on the alignment you choose for the body of your document.
4. If you included a copyright page, the page number on the dedication page should be lowercase Roman numeral “iii”, centered at 0.5” from the bottom of the page. If you did not include a copyright page, the page number should be “ii”. The acknowledgements page should follow the same sequence.

NOTE: You may *not* combine these two items into one page. The dedication and the acknowledgements are two separate items and must be on separate pages. They are grouped here only because the formatting requirements are identical for both pages.

Abstract

You are **required** to include an abstract and must follow these guidelines:

1. The word “Abstract” should be centered at the top of the page as a heading, followed by a blank line. Remember, all pages with headings must have a 2” top margin, while other pages have only a 1” top margin. Thus, if your abstract continues beyond a single page, the first page will have a 2” top margin, while the remaining pages will have a 1” top margin.
2. Next, include the body of your abstract, double-spaced. The body of your abstract may be left- or fully-justified. Generally, abstracts are approximately 350 words; however, abstract requirements vary among disciplines. Follow the guidance of your committee and approved style manual for abstract length, content, and structure. *Remember that if your abstract is 10+ pages long, then it is not longer an abstract; it is a chapter.*
3. Regarding pagination, the abstract page should follow in the same lowercase Roman numeral sequence as the other front matter. For example, if you included a copyright page, a dedication page, and an acknowledgements page, then “v” should be the page number for your abstract.

Preface

A preface is optional, but if you include one, you must follow these requirements:

1. “Preface” should be centered at the top of the page, followed by a blank line. The top margin on the first page must be 2 inches.
2. Double-space the body of the preface, either left- or fully-justified.
3. The pagination should follow the same lowercase Roman numeral sequence as the previous pages in your document.

Table of Contents (Formatting)

You are **required** to have a table of contents. Here are the guidelines you must follow:

1. The heading “Table of Contents” is to be placed at the top of the page, centered, followed by a blank line. The first page of the table of contents should have a 2” top margin. If your table of contents is more than one page, only include the heading on the first page; the remaining pages should have 1” top margins with no heading.
2. The following items must be included in your table of contents (if present in your document):
 - Dedication
 - Acknowledgements
 - Abstract
 - Preface
 - List of Tables
 - List of Figures
 - List of Symbols
 - List of Abbreviations
 - Each chapter, including the chapter number and descriptive title
 - Bibliography/references
 - Each appendix, including the appendix letter and descriptive title
3. Do not include the title page, the copyright page, or the table of contents as entries in your table of contents.
4. Do not include more than one level of subdivision within a chapter; you may list chapter titles only, or chapter titles and the first level of subheadings, but none below that. The descriptive chapter headings and subheadings within the table of contents should match exactly the language used within the body of your thesis/dissertation itself.
5. The title of each entry listed in the table of contents should be justified to the left of the page, along the left margin. However, subheadings below a chapter heading need to be indented.
6. Page numbers in the table of contents should be along the right margin of the page (remember, the side margins are 1.25” throughout the document). Include a leader (a line of dots) in the space between the entry name and the corresponding page number. You can visit [Microsoft’s support site](#) for instructions on creating leaders manually. Do not simply insert a line of periods with the page number at the end, because that method will not result in all of the page numbers being properly aligned on the margin.
7. Double-space between each entry. If an entry takes up more than one line, split the entry about three-fourths of the way across the page, and place the remaining text on the next line, single-spaced. Only include a leader from the last line. Here is an example: The table of contents page(s) should include a page number in lowercase Roman numerals, in the same sequence as the rest of the front matter.

Using the Table of Contents in the Word Template

Microsoft Word also has an automatic table of contents feature that creates an accessible and easy-to-use table of contents. If you [download](#) the Word template, you will find that the table of contents is already set up for you. You can read more about the steps by consulting the template guide, which is included in the Word template .zip folder.

Sample Table of Contents with Only Chapter Titles – NO Subheadings

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Dedication.....	iii
Abstract	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: “Nothing Will Come of Nothing”: Gender Politics in the Father-Daughter Relationship in Shakespeare’s <i>King Lear</i>	32
Chapter 3: Conclusion	52
References	60
Appendix A: Images from the Globe Theater.....	68
Appendix B: First Folio Display Dates.....	79

v

Sample Table of Contents with Subheadings

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Dedication	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Overview of Thesis	1
1.2 Definition of Terms.....	16
Chapter 2: “Nothing Will Come of Nothing”: Gender Politics in the Father-Daughter Relationship in Shakespeare’s <i>King Lear</i>	32
2.1 Introduction	32
2.2 Discussion	38
Chapter 3: Conclusion.....	52
References	60
Appendix A: Images from the Globe Theater	68
Appendix B: First Folio Display Dates	79

List of Tables and List of Figures

If you have fewer than four tables or four figures in your document, then you do not need to list them. If you have four or more, however, then you are required to have a list of tables and/or list of figures.

Note that the list of tables and the list of figures are two separate sections, and *they cannot be combined*. If you include a list of tables and list of figures, they must be on separate pages.

Here are the requirements, which apply to both the list of figures and list of tables:

1. The phrase “List of Tables” must be at the top of the page, followed by a blank line. Use “List of Figures” for the list of figures.
2. The number and title of each table/figure should be aligned on the left margin of the page. The descriptive title/caption must be included, not just the number.
3. Page numbers in the list should be right-justified. Include a leader between the title of the table/figure and the corresponding page number. If a title is more than one line, single-space the entry, and only include a leader from the last line of the title.
4. Double-space between each entry. If an entry takes up more than one line, split the entry about three-fourths of the way across the page, and place the remaining text on the next line, single-spaced. Only include a leader from the last line.
5. The descriptive titles of tables/figures in the list should match exactly the language used within the body of your thesis/dissertation itself.
6. The page(s) containing the list should include a page number in lowercase Roman numerals, in the same sequence as the rest of the front matter.

Sample List of Tables

LIST OF TABLES	
Table 1.1 Example of a table title	12
Table 2.1 Here is a table title that is longer than one line: Format it the same way you format entries in the table of contents that are longer than one line	30

List of Symbols

A list of symbols is not required, but if you choose to include one, follow these guidelines:

1. Type "List of Symbols" at the top of the page, then insert a blank line.
2. All the symbols should be left-justified along the left margin.
3. After typing the symbol, tab over once, then type the definition or description of the symbol. The beginning of each definition/description should be aligned on the page.
4. Double-space between entries. If a definition/description takes up more than one line, single-space for that entry, and make sure that each line of text is consistently left-aligned.
5. Include the page number in the same lowercase Roman numeral sequence as the other front matter.

Sample List of Symbols

LIST OF SYMBOLS	
J	Resultant total angular momentum quantum number, excluding nuclear spins.
N	Rotational angular momentum quantum number, excluding electron and nuclear spins, in the case where electron spin is present.
K	Projection of J (or N) on the symmetry axis in the limiting prolate or oblate symmetric top.

List of Abbreviations

Including a list of abbreviations is optional. The following requirements must be followed if you decide to include a list of abbreviations:

1. "List of Abbreviations" is to be placed at the top of the page, followed by a blank line.
2. List the abbreviations alphabetically.
3. The abbreviations should be left-justified along the left margin.
4. The definitions of the abbreviations should be right-justified along the right margin. Include a leader between the abbreviation and its definition. In rare instances, a definition may be more than one line; if this occurs, single-space the entry, and right-justify all lines of text.
5. Double-space between entries.
6. Number this page in the same sequence as the other front matter, in lowercase Roman numerals.

Sample List of Abbreviations

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Anti-lock Braking System
DOHC.....	Double Overhead Camshaft
HCCI	Homogeneous Charge Compression Ignition
SOHC	Single Overhead Camshaft
VTEC	Variable Valve Timing and Lift Electronic Control

Chapters

Here are requirements you must fulfill for your chapters:

1. From this point forward, number all remaining pages (including the bibliography and appendices) with Arabic numerals, starting at “1” on the first page of your introduction or first chapter.
2. Every chapter title must begin with the word “Chapter,” then have the number designation, then the descriptive title (e.g., “Chapter 1: Introduction” or “Chapter 2: Literature Review”).
3. All chapter numbers must either be spelled out or written in Arabic numerals, but you *must be consistent* (“Chapter One” or “Chapter 1”). You *cannot* use Roman numerals for chapter numbers. Choose one style and use it for all chapter titles.
4. Begin each new chapter with the chapter title at the top of a new page with a 2” top margin. The remaining pages of the chapter will have 1” top margins. **Note: if you are using the Word template, do NOT adjust the margins; instead, use a section break and the “Heading 2, Major Headings” style to start a new chapter or appendix.**
5. The text of the main body may be either left-justified or fully-justified. Whichever you choose, you must use it consistently throughout the entire document, including with front matter (Dedication, Abstract, etc.).
6. Each chapter title must be an entry in the table of contents.
7. Each new chapter must begin on a new page. Subsections within chapters should not start on a new page unless there is no room on the preceding page (remember to avoid widows/orphans).

Bibliography

You are required to have a bibliography at the end of your document.

If you are using manuscript style and have references at the end of your chapters, you still need to include a full, complete bibliography at the end of your document. Do not insert references at the end of every single chapter. For manuscript style, only insert references at the end of manuscript chapters. See the Manuscript Style's section on [References/Bibliography and Citation Styles](#) for more information on the bibliography in manuscript style.

Here are the requirements for your bibliography:

1. Consult your approved style manual (e.g., APA, MLA, etc.) for specifics on how to structure your reference entries. Use the style manual's requirements consistently.
2. Margins must still adhere to requirements stated previously in this guide.
3. Page numbers will continue to be in order and in Arabic numerals, just like the preceding pages of the body of your document.
4. Select a major heading appropriate to your discipline and style manual (e.g., "Works Cited" for MLA, etc.). Place it at the top of the page, using a 2" top margin.
5. Refer to your style manual to determine whether to single or double space your entries.
6. Avoid widows/orphans even in the bibliography.

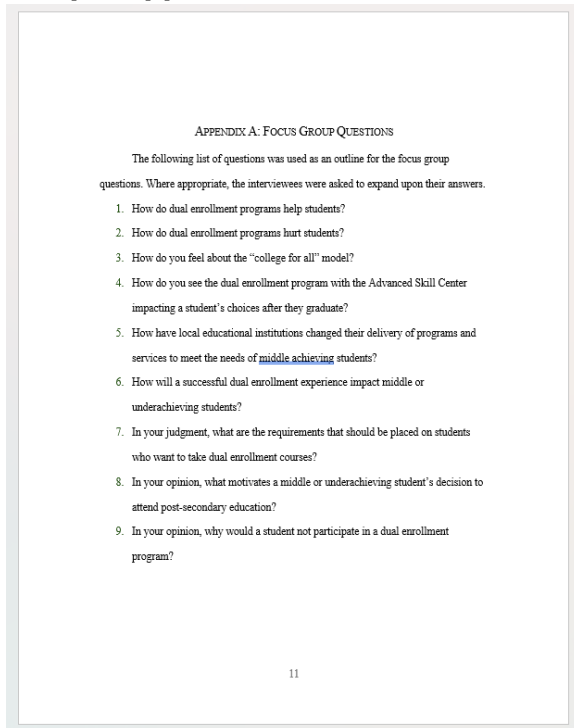
Appendix and Appendices

Appendices are optional in most cases, but students who are writing manuscript dissertations are required to include an appendix that provides evidence of permission to reprint. The purpose of an appendix is to include additional information that does not have an appropriate place in a chapter. Examples of appendix materials include surveys, computer programs, or formulas.

1. Include all appendices after the references section. No appendix should appear directly after a chapter, even if that appendix only pertains to that chapter.
2. Each appendix must have a letter designation and a descriptive title (e.g., "Appendix A: Supplementary Tables" or "Appendix B: Permission to Reprint"). Each appendix title is considered a major heading and must be formatted just like your other major headings.
3. The appendix title must be at the top of the first page with a 2" top margin. All subsequent pages of the appendix must have 1" top margins.
4. Each appendix must be listed in the table of contents, and all page numbers must be in Arabic numerals.
5. If you have figures or tables in an appendix, then the figure or table numbers must match the appendix's letter. Example: "Figure A.1" for a figure in Appendix A; "Figure B.1" for a figure in Appendix B.

6. Remember that each appendix is a separate major section—just as each chapter is a separate major section. Do not lump all of your appendices into an “appendices section.” [Visit the Graduate School’s website](#) to see samples or review the [Table of Contents section](#) of this guide to view how appendices should be listed in a table of contents.

Sample Appendix



Supplemental Files

If you have supporting files or documents to include with your dissertation, such as sound clips or data sets, that will not “fit” into the traditional PDF format of your dissertation, then you can submit this information as “supplementary files” in ProQuest.

These files are not subject to the Graduate School’s formatting requirements. However, you do need to use best practices for accessibility for any audio-visual media. Please visit the [Digital Accessibility at USC](#) site for tips audio descriptions, captioning, and more.

These files will accompany your ETD, but they will not be in the PDF. If you order a hard copy, you will receive a copy of these files as a CD in the back pocket of your book.

You can read more about this option at [ProQuest’s website](#).

MANUSCRIPT STYLE: USING PUBLISHED MATERIAL

Overview

Some departments may allow you to include, as chapters, articles that have been or will be submitted to scholarly journals. This style is also referred to as “manuscript style,” and has been approved by the Graduate School for use by all departments. However, you must have the approval of your department to use the manuscript style for chapters in your document.

The format requirements explained previously also apply to manuscript chapters, regardless of how the manuscript was previously formatted for submission to a publisher. You are not required to change the content of your manuscripts that have been published or prepared for publication, but you are required to change the presentation of that content so that it meets the Graduate School’s format requirements. This section of the format guide details the requirements for using manuscript style. *These requirements apply only to manuscript chapters, in addition to the requirements described in the previous sections of this format guide.*

Authorship

You must be either the sole author or the first co-author of each manuscript submitted as a manuscript chapter.

Manuscript with Multiple Authors

It is acceptable to submit a manuscript that you co-authored with others, but you must be the first/primary author. If you are not listed as the first or primary author, then your advisor must submit a letter to the Graduate School confirming that you are the primary author of all manuscripts you have included in your dissertation. The letter must also state that your dissertation contains only your own original work.

Co-First Authors of Manuscript

If you and a fellow graduate student are *both co-first authors* on a manuscript and wish to use it in your dissertations, then you must seek approval from both of your committees and from the Graduate School. You will need to submit a memo signed by your major professors to the Graduate School confirming that you are both co-first authors of the manuscript and that these manuscripts are indeed your original work. All requests are subject to the Graduate School’s approval.

References/Bibliography and Citation Style

Bibliography Requirements

You have the option to put references at the end of each manuscript chapter; however, you are required to have a complete bibliography at the end of your document regardless of whether you choose to put the references at the end of each chapter.

Citation Style

If you are using a previously published manuscript that used a different citation style from the style approved by your committee for your dissertation, then you are welcome to keep the manuscript chapter in its original citation style; you do not have to change the citation style to match the rest of the document. *This parameter only applies to manuscripts that have been submitted for publication or previously published.* You are still required to include a full bibliography at the end of the document, and the full bibliography must be in the approved citation style for the document, not the manuscript.

Copyright Release

You must include evidence that you have received permission to use articles which have been published or accepted for publication. It is your responsibility to secure copyright releases prior to submitting your document to the Graduate School. There is no specific form the evidence must take; as long as it is clear that you have permission to re-use the content, that will be sufficient.

Common types of permission include:

- a letter or email from the publisher,
- a screenshot of the publisher's website explaining your rights as an author, or
- a printout from the Copyright Clearance Center.

*Your document will **not** be accepted as a final submission until all necessary copyright releases have been received by the Graduate School.*

The evidence of permission to reprint should be included within the dissertation itself, not submitted separately. Insert the evidence as an appendix titled "Appendix A: Permission to Reprint" or something similar.

Overall Document Structure

The same requirements discussed previously for required vs. optional sections also apply to manuscript ETDs. However, there are some additional requirements for manuscript ETDs.

You must include:

- Abstract that describes the dissertation as a whole;
- Introduction or introductory chapter that details the structure of the document;
- Conclusion or concluding chapter that ties together the major results.

Unavoidably, these requirements will duplicate some of the introductory and concluding material in each chapter/article. With these elements, the dissertation will be presented as a unified product, rather than simply a collection of related by separate manuscripts.

Chapters

As stated, manuscript style is for material that is intended for publication. If you have multiple manuscripts in your document, *do not* combine all manuscripts into one chapter. Each manuscript or article must be a separate chapter.

Tables and Figures

Tables and figures in manuscript chapters must also adhere to the Graduate School's formatting requirements. Do not use the same table/figure numbers that you used in preparation for submission to a publisher. Instead, follow the criteria stated in the [Tables](#) and [Figures](#) sections of this guide for numbering tables and figures and for creating captions and titles.

Cover Page

You must include the publication information pertaining to this manuscript, and this information should only be in a footnote. Do not list the teaching history or employment of each author. Please use one of the sample footnotes on the sample page. If you want to include additional information about the authors, then you can add that information to a preface, introduction, or appendix.

Cover Page Contents

What to include on each cover page:

- Chapter number (e.g. "Chapter 3")
- Manuscript title
- Footnote with publishing information:
 - Names of all authors in journal-submitted order
 - Name of the journal/publication
 - Volume number and page numbers (if known)
 - Date of publication (if known)
 - Article status (e.g., "To be submitted" or "Reprinted with permission from the publisher").

See the following page for a sample manuscript chapter cover page. There are four sample footnotes, each showing you the language that you need to include based on whether your article has been published, accepted for publication, submitted, or will be submitted. Place an appropriate footnote on your cover page and follow the citation format in your chosen style manual. You can also visit the [Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation page](#) to view a sample of a manuscript style submission.

Sample Manuscript Style Cover Page

Choose the footnote format that applies to your manuscript's status.

CHAPTER 3:

TITLE OF MANUSCRIPT: INSERT THE TITLE HERE¹

¹ Name, Full Student, Doe, Jane , et. al. To be submitted.

¹ Name, Full Student and Jane Doe. Submitted to *Psychology Today*, 10/13/2025.

¹ Name, F.S. and J. Doe, 2025. *Psychology Today*. 1045:562-603. Reprinted here with permission of the publisher.

¹ Name, F.S. and J. Doe, 2025. *Psychology Today*. 1045:562-603. Reprinted here with permission of the publisher, 10/13/2025.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Graduate School Website

The [Thesis & Dissertation page](#) has plentiful resources about ETDs, including a link to ProQuest's ETD Administrator site. You can view samples, watch videos, register for workshops, learn about the submission process, and even download a copy of this guide from this page. Additionally, here you can download the Microsoft Word and LaTeX templates and read about submission instructions, embargoes, and CUI information.

University Writing Center

If you need some help with grammar, writing, revising, or even proofreading your document, then the Writing Center is a great resource. They offer appointments both in-person and online. You can visit the [Writing Center website](#) to learn more. **(Note: they *cannot* help you with formatting.)**

University Registrar and Graduate School Forms Library

The [Registrar's Office](#) provides many forms you may need, such as the Change of Name Form. Likewise, you can find many useful forms in the Graduate School's [Forms Library](#), including the Dissertation Signature and Approval Form (G-DSF) and the Master's Thesis Signature and Approval Form (G-TSF).

ProQuest's ETD Administrator Help

If you need help with anything specifically related to ProQuest, such as ordering a hard copy or fixing a technical issue with your ETD account, you can [contact ProQuest directly here](#). You can also visit [ProQuest's LibGuide](#) to learn more about theses and dissertations.

Copyright and Intellectual Property Resources

Please consult any of these resources to learn more about copyrighting your thesis or dissertation:

1. ["Why Copyright?"](#)
2. [Copyright and Your Dissertation or Thesis: Ownership, Fair Use, and Your Rights and Responsibilities](#)
3. [Copyright Laws around the World](#)
4. [U.S. Copyright Office](#)

Scholar Commons

[Scholar Commons](#) is the university's own repository, and the USC library system oversees and maintains it. Your ETD will be stored in this database.

Digital Accessibility at USC

The [toolbox](#) on the Digital Accessibility at USC's website is full of cheat sheets, best practices, and plentiful resources to help you make any digital content you create accessible.