



**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

## **THESIS FORMATTING GUIDELINES**

It is the responsibility of the student and the supervisor to ensure that the thesis complies in all respects to these guidelines

Updated June 13, 2018

# Table of Contents

<b>Section 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Manuscript-Based Thesis vs. Traditional Thesis .....	4
<b>Section 2: General Style Recommendations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Page Size .....	5
Margins .....	5
Justification.....	5
Line Spacing .....	5
Font.....	6
Colour .....	6
Page Numbers .....	6
Headers.....	6
Citation .....	6
<b>Section 3: Formatting Your Thesis.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Section 4: Thesis Components .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Title Page .....	8
Abstract .....	9
Preface.....	9
Acknowledgments .....	9
Dedication.....	10
Table of Contents .....	10
Epigraph.....	10
Endnotes (or Footnotes).....	11
Bibliography/References .....	11
Appendices .....	12
<b>Section 5: Permissions .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Section 6: Useful Resources .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Sample Title Page .....	15

## Section 1: Introduction

There are many things to consider when preparing your thesis, one of which is formatting. While taking the time to properly format your thesis comes with some work, it's important to do so for two main reasons:

- 1) The University of Calgary has minimum formatting and structure requirements for all theses submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). This means that only those theses that meet these requirements will be accepted.
- 2) Your completed thesis is a published and archived document that will be a reflection of you and your work at the university. Given that your thesis will be publically available for years to come, it's important for it to be both presentable and professional. Once you have submitted your thesis, you cannot make changes to it.

### Other Reasons Why Formatting is Important

- **It saves you time and energy later:** Waiting until the end to format your thesis can be a lengthy and stressful process. If you properly format your thesis from the start, it'll be much less work for you down the road.
- **It increases the readability of your thesis:** When your thesis is written in a standard format it's easier to follow, meaning that people will be more likely to read it.
- **It could mean fewer revisions:** Paying attention to formatting upfront might save you from having to go back and make revisions after the review process (remember that once you submit your thesis, you can't make any more changes).

To make things easier, we've outlined here everything you'll need to know about formatting your thesis. Note that these requirements are the same for both a master's and doctoral thesis.

Remember that the thesis is your work and it's the responsibility of both you and your supervisor to make sure it fulfills all of the requirements outlined in this document and **any other requirements that are specific to your degree program.**

### Did you know...?

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While your thesis must meet the requirements outlined here, your degree program may also have additional requirements of its own. Note that both form and style will differ from discipline to discipline. Be sure to check with your program about a **style guide** and **citation format** that they recommend for their students.

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## Manuscript-Based Thesis vs. Traditional Thesis

While there is no prescribed format for a thesis at the University of Calgary, most take the form of a “traditional” thesis, a “manuscript-based” thesis, or hybrid of the two. While both formats need introduction and conclusion chapters, the body of the text will vary. The main differences between each have been outlined below. Whether you choose a manuscript-based thesis or a traditional thesis, it’s important that your document is **consistent in both form and style**.

Manuscript-Based Thesis	Traditional Thesis
Requires permission from supervisor/supervisory committee	
A collection of papers submitted or accepted for publication, or previously published by the student	A monograph that includes original, unpublished work by the student
Includes full chapters of previously published work	Can include information from previously published work as the student sees fit
Presents a cohesive, unitary report of a single area of research based on one or more related manuscripts	Presents the study of a single area of research based on one manuscript
Student can author or co-author the paper/chapter, but must have (a) done the majority of the writing and, (b) co-authors permission	Student is the author

Note that your thesis can include elements of both the manuscript-based and traditional thesis (e.g., a thesis that includes one co-authored chapter). If you choose to do this, all manuscript-based elements must follow the additional rules outlined on page 12. In some disciplines, it’s also common to write a “non-traditional” or “creative” thesis. In these cases, a thesis may contain a creative work as an innovative element (e.g., a business plan). Be sure to consult with your supervisor and graduate program about your options for writing a non-traditional thesis.

### Did you know...?

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If your program allows, you can **hire an editor to copyedit your thesis**. Since the FGS doesn’t proofread theses or check for stylistic errors in your formatting and citations, an editor can help you be sure your thesis is ready for submission. The editor will review your thesis for things like grammar, spelling, punctuation, and general style. Check your program’s regulations in the FGS calendar to see if this is an option for you.

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#### Before Hiring a Copyeditor

- **Get the OK from your supervisor:** Your supervisor must approve your decision to hire a copyeditor and sign an agreement in advance that states what the editor will do.
- **Write a disclosure statement:** Include a sentence in the preface or acknowledgment of your thesis that says your thesis has been professionally edited.
- **Know the boundaries:** A copyeditor can’t alter the content, structure, or contribution of your thesis. If you have questions about this, talk to your supervisor.

## Section 2: General Style Recommendations

Your thesis is a professional document and should reflect the hard work you've put into it. Listed below are small style tips that'll make a big difference in helping your thesis look its best. While many of these are required, keep in mind how you want to showcase your work and think about both **content and audience**.

Because the FGS no longer requires a printed copy of your thesis, consider whether you want to format your thesis in a way that presents well on screen and/or on paper. We've included some tips for printing just in case you want a bound copy (or your program requires one), but always keep in mind how your work will look on a screen and adjust your format accordingly.

### Page Size

- Standard page size is 8.5 inches x 11 inches (North American Letter size)
- Oversized pages can be used for things like large maps or charts (Note: if your thesis is printed and bound, your oversized pages can be printed as foldouts)

Consult with the bindery before printing oversized pages.

### Margins

- Recommended margins for all pages are at least 1 inch (2.54cm) on each side
- If binding your thesis, you might need to use a wider left margin (e.g., 1.5 inches).

### Justification

- Choose either a full justification (i.e., even left- and right-hand margins) or left justification (i.e., ragged right-hand margins)

Regardless of what style you choose, be sure to justify your thesis in the same way throughout.

### Line Spacing

- All pages must be double or one-and-one-half spaced (Note: this includes your Abstract, Acknowledgments, Dedications, etc.)

You can use single-line spacing if you have a long Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures, or for long quotes in the body of your thesis).

*"The purpose of academic writing is to communicate. Your writing is a window into your thoughts, with a clearly written [thesis] letting the thought show through."*

– University of Sunderland

## Font

- Font should be at least 10 points
- Smaller font can be used for footnotes, subscripts and superscripts, tables, figures, or images taken from other sources

Keep in mind that your font should be easy to read on a screen. We recommend Times New Roman, Arial, or Verdana.

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## Colour

- Stay away from multi-coloured fonts in your thesis (black is recommended)
- If you have hyperlinks in your thesis they can be blue

Other font colours may be acceptable if your thesis calls for it. Be sure to check with your supervisor about whether using colour is appropriate.

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## Page Numbers

- Number all of your pages except the title page
- Page numbers should appear in the same place throughout

### Preliminary pages:

- Must be numbered with lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.)
- Your Abstract will be numbered “ii”

### Body of thesis:

- Must be numbered with lower case Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.)
- All pages including your bibliographies, appendices, and index will be numbered

While these are standard requirements, you may format and number the pages differently if your thesis calls for it (e.g., if it includes original artistic work).

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## Headers

- You do not have to use running headers for your thesis
- Different page headers must be used for each chapter, and cannot be a version of your thesis title or your name

If you include a running header, add a line underneath that runs across the entire page to separate it from the body of your text.

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## Citations

- Consult your program and be sure to follow their recommended citation style guide

The library offers free workshops on how to use citation programs. Try to attend one of these sessions early on in your thesis writing to help you get organized. For a list of workshops visit <https://workrooms.ucalgary.ca/calendar/lcr-workshops>.

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## Section 3: Formatting Your Thesis

### What To Include

Now that you know the general style recommendations for your thesis, it's time to start thinking about how you should write it. While every thesis can look different, the basic format and components will remain the same. Listed below are the key components that will be included in your thesis, many of which have been described in more detail below.

While the way you structure your sections may look different depending on the type of thesis you write, each component is required unless otherwise noted. For examples of how each section can be structured, check out existing theses that have been published to The Vault.

Preliminary Pages	Body of Thesis	Closing Pages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Title page</li><li>2. Abstract</li><li>3. Preface</li><li>4. Acknowledgments <sup>1</sup></li><li>5. Dedication <sup>1</sup></li><li>6. Table of Contents</li><li>7. List of Tables <sup>2</sup></li><li>8. List of Illustrations, Figures, &amp; Graphics <sup>2</sup></li><li>9. List of Symbols, Abbreviations, &amp; Nomenclature <sup>1,2</sup></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Epigraph <sup>1</sup></li><li>2. Introductory chapter</li><li>3. Research chapters</li><li>4. Concluding chapter</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Endnotes (or Footnotes) <sup>2</sup></li><li>2. Bibliography (or References)</li><li>3. Appendices <sup>2</sup></li></ol>

All appendices in your thesis should also be included in your Table of Contents, even if added as a separate file (see page 12 for more information). Copyright permissions (with signatures removed) should also be listed as an Appendix, if applicable.

### What Not to Include Within Your E-Thesis

After being published to The Vault, your thesis is added to the national thesis collection by the Theses Canada program (part of Library and Archives Canada). To be included in this collection, the following information cannot appear in your thesis:

- Student numbers
- Signatures
- Emails
- Mailing addresses
- Ethics confirmation page
- Signed Library and Archives Canada page
- Please also remove the following from the Copyright information page:
  - Phone numbers
  - Signed thesis approval
  - All personally identifiable information

<sup>1</sup> Optional thesis component

<sup>2</sup> Only required when applicable

## Section 4: Thesis Components

### Preliminary Pages

#### Title Page

**What is it?** A page at the beginning of your thesis (also known as a cover page)

**Why is it important?** Gives the reader important information about you and your thesis

**What does it need to include?**

- All items are centered within the margins
- All items are at least double-spaced (including the title)
- The name of the university is in uppercase letters
- The title of your thesis is identical to the one on the Thesis Approval Form and on the Report of Final Oral Examination (including capitalization and punctuation)
- The title of your thesis is in upper- and lowercase letters with keywords capitalized
- The full thesis title is no more than 240 characters (including spaces)
- The word “by” is written in lowercase letters
- Your name is written in upper- and lowercase letters and identical in both places on the title page (i.e., under the title and in the copyright area)
  - The name used is your legal name as it appears in University of Calgary records
- The full name of your degree is written out
  - For interdisciplinary degrees, the home graduate program is listed first, followed by the word “and,” then the other graduate program is listed
- The full, official name of the graduate program is written out
- There is a comma between CALGARY and ALBERTA
- There is a comma between the name of the month and the year
  - The date listed is when the final copy of your thesis will be submitted to the FGS
- The universal copyright symbol (©) appears to the left of your name
- There is no comma between your name and the year

**Example:** See page 15

#### Terminology

- **The Vault:** A digital archive of theses submitted by graduate students from the University of Calgary after Spring 2012
- **Theses Canada:** A collaborative project between Library and Archives Canada and nearly 70 accredited Canadian universities that preserves theses from participating universities

## Abstract

**What is it?** A concise and accurate summary of the research contained in your thesis

**Why is it important?** Gives the reader a snapshot of your research by highlighting key points

**What does it need to include?**

- The problem, method of study, and general conclusion
- Relevant key words that will help people find your research
- No longer than 350 words (Note: hyphenated words or words separated by a slash are counted as two words)
- Must be double-spaced or one-half spaced
- Does not contain graphs, tables, or illustrations

## Preface

**What is it?** A statement of where the information included in your thesis came from

**Why is it important?** Gives credit to the authors who informed your work

**What does it need to include?**

- Manuscript-based thesis: An explanation of which parts of your thesis were already published and details of the publication
  - Example 1:** Chapter 1. Portions of the introductory text are used with permission from Smith et al. (2015) of which I am an author. Table 1.1 is modified from Supplementary Table 3 in Smith et al. (2014).
  - Example 2:** Chapter 3 of this thesis has been published as J. Smith and J. Doe, “Title of Article”. Journal Name, vol. 1, issue 1.
- Traditional thesis (requiring ethics approval): The name of the board that approved the research project, the title of the project, and the number of the approval certificate
  - Example:** This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, J. Koi. The experiments reported in Chapters 2-4 were covered by Ethics Certificate number 007, issued by the University of Calgary Conjoint Health Ethics Board for the project “Project Title” on December 15, 2016.
- Traditional thesis (no ethics approval required):
  - Example:** This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, J. Koi.

## Acknowledgments

**What is it?** A place for you to thank/recognize academics or organizations that supported you (remember you cannot make changes once your thesis is submitted, so be thoughtful!)

**When should this be included?** When you want to acknowledge people who may or may not be formally recognized in your thesis elsewhere

**What does it need to include?**

- People usually mentioned in the acknowledgments include: your supervisor and committee, grant support, helpful fellow students, lab mates, or family members
- Must be added to your Table of Contents if included

## Dedication

**What is it?** A personal message to a person(s) who you wish to offer your work to

**When should this be included?** When you want to express some of the personal meaning behind your thesis work to your readers

**What does it need to include?**

- Often includes the name of who you're dedicating your work to and your reasons for the dedication (however, what's written in this section is up to you)
- Must be added to your Table of Contents if included

## Table of Contents

**What is it?** A list of all the items in your thesis in the order that they appear

**Why is it important?** Gives the reader an overview of your thesis and organizes it so the reader can easily find what they're looking for

**What does it need to include?**

- A list of all components of your thesis (see page 7) with page numbers except for the title page (Note: The Table of Contents itself should also be included in this list)
- Headings and subheadings are written the same as in the body of your text (including capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviations used in the Lists of Tables and/or Figures)
- If headings are shortened to fit space requirements the wording is similar enough that the reader knows they refer to the same thing

## Body of Thesis

### Epigraph

**What is it?** A fitting quotation that comes before the text of a chapter or book

**When should this be included?** When it would be relevant to give the reader context to your thesis, set the mood for your chapter, or introduce a theme to your work

**What does it need to include?**

- The author and title of the source are cited below the quotation
- Quotation marks are not included
- Additional bibliographical information is included for well known authors and works (Note: This can also be included in a footnote or endnote)

**Example:** The last years of the eighteenth century are broken by a discontinuity similar to that which destroyed Renaissance thought at the beginning of the seventeenth.

Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*

## Closing Pages

### Endnotes (or Footnotes)

**What is it?** Additional information added at either the foot of the page (i.e., Footnotes), grouped at the end of a chapter (i.e., Notes), or grouped at the end of your thesis before the bibliography/references (i.e., Endnotes) depending on your citation style

**When should this be included?** When you need to give more detail or information about an important topic that wouldn't be suitable to include in your actual thesis

**What does it need to include?**

- A superscript in the body of your thesis that matches the one in your note to show the reader where in your thesis this additional information belongs
- Anywhere you have included a Notes or Endnotes section must have a heading at the top of the page and be added to the Table of Contents with a title and page numbers
- Check for any departmental requirements about placement
- May appear in a font smaller than the text of your thesis

### Bibliography/References

**What is it?** A list of all the sources you have used in the process of completing your thesis

**Why is it important?** Allows you to credit the authors of source materials

**What does it need to include?**

- A list of all the relevant material you drew upon to write your thesis
- Any approved format can be used, but it must be used consistently throughout (check with your department or supervisor about what style they recommend)
- Your bibliography/references should be written as follows:
  - Published work by a single author should be listed before work by the same author that was published with multiple authors
  - When more than one publication by the same author is included, list either chronologically or reverse chronologically in order of publication
  - List items in alphabetical order first, then in chronological order within the alphabetization
- Any non-textual work in your thesis (e.g., works of art) must be listed as "References" and cannot appear as part of a "Bibliography"

### Did you know...?

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Any digital files or artwork digital models that are part of your thesis should be included in your appendices. Here are some ways you might want to present this information in the appendix:

- Submit a flash drive and provide instructions on how to access the files
- Include direct links to where the content can be found online

Your appendix should also include a description of the digital files and the relevance to your research.

It's important to also keep your original files in an external repository so that you don't risk losing your data.

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## Appendices

**What is it?** A way to include important information that would otherwise clutter up your thesis

**When should this be included?** When there is additional relevant information that won't fit in the body of your thesis

**What does it need to include?**

- Any Appendix must also be mentioned in the body of your thesis (e.g., "For a full list of interview questions used, please see Appendix A")
- If your thesis only has one appendix, it must be titled "Appendix." If your thesis has more than one appendix, add alphabetized letters, starting with "Appendix A"
- The following are examples of things you might include in appendices:
  - Copyright permissions with signatures removed
  - Additional details of methodology and/or data
  - Diagrams of equipment that you developed
  - Digital files and/or artwork digital models
  - Blank copies of questionnaires or surveys used in your research

### Additional Considerations for Manuscript-Based Theses

- General**
  - Papers with multiple authors can **only be used in one thesis** (i.e., if another student has worked on a paper with you and contributed equally, you both should write traditional theses and identify your own contributions)
- Introduction**
  - Summarize each chapter (i.e., paper) that has been included in your thesis
  - State the general theme(s) of your research and the papers you've included
  - Include a **Statement of Contribution** that outlines the work you and your co-authors contributed to each paper with multiple authors
  - May include literature relevant to your topic that doesn't appear in the chapters
- Conclusion**
  - Integrate findings from each individual chapter into a coherent summary
- Bibliography**
  - Reformat the references in your papers so that **only one citation style is used** throughout your thesis
  - If you choose to leave references at the end of each chapter, there must also be a complete list of references from all chapters included at the end of your thesis
- Copyright**
  - Include a **Letter of Permission** signed from each co-author of any papers included in the thesis (see *Thesis Copyright Guidelines* at <https://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright>)

## Section 5: Permissions

You may have noticed in reading this document there are a number of things that you will require permission to do when writing your thesis. Included here is a list of all the possible scenarios where you would need permission granted and from whom:

- 1) **When writing a non-traditional thesis:** If your thesis is manuscript-based, creative, or presented in any other form considered non-traditional, you must receive permission from your supervisor, and in some cases your department, to write in this format.
- 2) **When hiring a copy-editor:** Before a copyeditor can review your thesis, your supervisor must approve this decision and sign an agreement stating what the editor will do. You will also be required to include a statement in either your preface or acknowledgments explaining that your thesis was professionally edited.
- 3) **When including published work that was co-authored:** You must receive written permission from each co-author of any papers included in your thesis granting you permission to include the work. You will then include a Statement of Contribution in your Introduction that highlights the work of your co-authors.



## Section 6: Useful Resources

[Thesis Forms](#) – Download forms for electronic thesis submission

[Thesis Withhold](#) – Learn what you need to do if you want to request delay in the public release of your thesis and how to fill out a Thesis Withhold Form

[University of Calgary Library – Copyright](#) – Get to know the theses copyright guidelines at the University of Calgary, including information about how to access copyright

[University of Calgary Theses Repository – The Vault](#) – Check out where your thesis will be published once you finish it and read theses of other students who graduated before you

[Library and Archives Canada – Theses Canada](#) – Gain free access to Canadian electronic theses and dissertations from the Theses Canada collection

[Canada Copyright Act](#) – Review all of the copyright laws in Canada using this resource

[How to Apply for Graduation](#) – Find out the steps you need to take to submit an application to graduate and complete your degree

[Office of the Registrar](#) – Find out the details of your convocation, including how and when to apply for graduation

[ProQuest](#) – A repository of journals and databases, professional products and services to help with thesis writing, expert advice, and other resources specifically for graduate students

[Electronic Thesis Submission Manual](#) – General guidelines on how to submit an electronic version of your thesis to the FGS office

[Academic Schedule](#) – A list of important deadlines for students throughout the academic year

Any additional questions can be directed to [thesis@ucalgary.ca](mailto:thesis@ucalgary.ca).

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Title of Thesis (Title Case, double-spaced, no more than 240 characters. No bold font or symbols, except Greek)

by

Student's Full Name

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF SELECT YOUR DEGREE

SELECT YOUR GRADUATE PROGRAM

CALGARY, ALBERTA

MONTH, YEAR

© Student's Full Name YEAR