

## EARLY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PREPARING YOUR THESIS OR DISSERTATION

Texas A&M University requires a dissertation or record of study from all doctoral candidates and a thesis from all thesis option master's candidates. The dissertation, record of study or thesis should be presented in a scholarly, well-written, correctly documented manner, reporting the original work done by the student under the supervision of the advisory committee.

Students are reminded that time spent on careful attention to format should not be regarded as wasted time. The thesis is a permanent and public record of research and writing and reflects the student's standards as well as those of Texas A&M University.

To help students prepare their manuscripts, the Thesis Office provides the Thesis Manual, whose primary purpose is to provide guidelines on uniform standards of style and format while allowing enough flexibility to satisfy the acceptable practices of each academic discipline.

### SOME BASICS--PREPARING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

- *Margins:* Set at 1.4" on the left, 1.15" on the right, and 1.25" top and bottom.
- *Type size and style:* Use one typeface and size (10, 11 or 12 point) for all text, including equations (this excludes tables, figure and appendixes, which can vary).
- *Vertical space format:* Make it consistent in text (either double space or space and one-half). Tables, figures, appendixes, vita and dedication are exceptions
- *Chapters generated and saved as separate files:* When creating the format for each chapter, be consistent and use the same margins, type style and size, and vertical spacing throughout the manuscript.
- *Minimum type size:* In figures, tables and appendixes –capital letters and numbers need to be at least 1.5 mm (for readability).
- *Subheadings:* Use styles that clearly show their various levels.
- *Journal model:* Follow the model for placement of figure and table titles (above or below the figure or table) and reference style and format.
- *References:* When researching, keep a complete file. Include in the reference section only the sources actually read. Each reference entry must be cited in the document.
- *Copyrighted material:* Write early to copyright holders for permission. See sample letter and instructions.
- *Word processing:* Choose and learn the software early. If you are thinking of using a typist and/or editor, the Thesis Office can provide a list of names.
- *Consult the Thesis Office* at [thesis@vprmail.tamu.edu](mailto:thesis@vprmail.tamu.edu) if you have specific format concerns or questions that are not addressed in the Thesis Manual.

- *Paragraph indentations* allow for greater legibility and understanding. Prepare the document using indentations with no extra space between paragraphs. Remember to use indents after tables or figures if appropriate (if last line before the figure or table does not extend across the page).

## **A POTPOURRI OF HELPFUL FACTS AND STYLE TIPS**

- *Student's name* needs to be the same on the title page, approval page, abstract, and vita.
- *First mention of tables and figures* must be in numerical order and within 1½-text pages before the figure or table, or the first page of text following their appearance.
- *Continued tables and figures* have the title on the first page and the table or figure number and the word “continued” on subsequent pages. For continued tables, column headings are repeated.
- *A subheading* (1) cannot be the last line of a page (you need at least one line of text below it); (2) if on a line by itself cannot have any punctuation following it; (3) cannot look like a chapter title (all caps, centered)
- *Each chapter* needs to begin on a new page. Chapter titles need to be all caps, centered.
- *Each text page* needs to have at least 4 1/2 inches of text on it (excludes pages with a figure or table on them and last page of a chapter).
- *Capitalization of titles in headings, tables, figures and references*: do not capitalize articles, conjunctions and prepositions fewer than five letters (unless 1<sup>st</sup> or last word or of title).
- *Foreign words and phrases* (et al., in vitro, in situ, etc): check model journal for *italics* and be consistent with journal style in the document.
- *Texas A&M*: do not leave spaces in “A&M.”
- *Et al.*: note there is no period after “et,” but there is one after “al.”