Graduate Education
Thesis & Dissertation Writing Workshop
Spring 2021
Maribeth Price, Dean of Graduate Education

Part II: Finishing your thesis or dissertation
The Office of Graduate Education

- Maribeth Price
  - Dean of Graduate Education
- Rachel Howard
  - Admissions, applications, assistantships
- Stephen Detlefs
  - Student progress, POS processing, degree audits, thesis/dissertation processing
Steps

• Define a topic area and establish committee
• Review the literature
• Develop and refine research question
• Develop and refine methods
• Collect and analyze data
• Write up the results
• Get approval of document from advisor
• Get approval from committee
• Defend
• Final edits

You’re getting close!

Process is not as linear as it appears!
Manuscript preparation

- Two style options
  - Traditional Thesis/Dissertation
  - Compilation of Journal Articles
The required components of an M.S. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation include the following. ALL components MUST be available for committee review prior to the defense.

- Title Page,
- Abstract,
- Acknowledgements,
- Table of Contents,
- List of Tables,
- List of Figures,
- Introduction
- Theory and/or Literature Search
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions
- Bibliography,
- Appendices,
- Vita.

Chapter titles and organization are flexible to accommodate differences in disciplines, but these components should be present and recognizable.
Journal Articles Style

- Title Page,
- Abstract,
- Acknowledgements,
- Table of Contents,
- List* of Tables,
- List* of Figures,
- **Introduction** to the full body of work represented by the articles
- **One or more journal articles**,  
- **Conclusions** including a summary of conclusions from the articles and implications from the work as a whole
- Bibliography for references not in the articles,
- Appendices (include documentation for permission to reproduce published/copyrighted articles),
- Vita.

Chapter titles and organization are flexible to accommodate differences in disciplines, but these components should be present and recognizable.
• What if I publish a paper before it is included in my thesis/dissertation?
  • Publishers usually assert copyright ownership of papers they publish.
  • Most readily give permission for the paper to be reprinted in a thesis/dissertation, but it takes time.
  • Documentation of permission must be included in the first appendix of your thesis/dissertation

• Applies to accepted or published papers, not submitted ones

- Updated annually
- Use the current version!
  - Do not copy from old thesis/dissertation
  - Do not use an online source
- LaTeX template available
- Separate title page template
Thesis/Dissertation Format Checklist

Global formatting requirements

Page layout
- Pages are standard letter size (8.5 by 11 inches) in portrait orientation
- All pages are one-sided
- The body text is double-spaced
- Paragraphs are indented

Margins
- 1.5-inch margin on the left, including the title page
- 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and right
- Landscape and double-size pages have the same margins as portrait pages

Fonts
- Body text font is in 12-pt. Times New Roman or similar serif font
- The same body text font is consistently used throughout
- Figure/table captions are distinctive from the body text but at least 10 pt.
- No text is smaller than 10 pt.
- Headings clearly indicate the hierarchy

Page numbers
- Numbers appear in the upper right corner, $\frac{3}{4}''$ from the top and right side.
- The title page and copyright page are not numbered
- The front matter (starts with Abstract) is numbered using lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii...)
- The rest (starting with Chapter 1) is continuously numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3...)

Figures and tables

Table/figure layout
- Centered on portrait pages with caption immediately above (tables) or below (figures)
- One number or caption bottom-just or numbered following portrait page
The Title Page

- Separate document
- Use the template on the Forms web site
  - One for MS
  - One for PhD (room for more signatures)
- Update font, if needed, to match your thesis
- Add more signature lines if needed but must be one page!
- Triple-check spelling, formatting, etc.
Who owns a thesis/dissertation?

• The ownership rights to theses and dissertations created by students is governed by SD BOR Policy 4:34 and the SD Mines policy IX-2.

• Students with questions regarding intellectual property, patents, and inventions are advised to review these policies and contact the SD Mines Office of Research Affairs with questions.
Copyright

• Students are encouraged to place a copyright notice in every thesis or dissertation.

• The student must, as a condition of a degree award, grant royalty-free permission to the South Dakota Mines to reproduce, use, and publicly distribute copies of the thesis or dissertation.
Submission and reproduction

• All revisions, edits, and proofreading are done electronically.¹
• You submit a final PDF copy to the Library.
• The Library determines printing and binding costs and sends you an invoice for payment.

¹ Unless you have a committee member who prefers paper.
² For items larger than 11x17”, like maps, you must provide enough copies.
Copyng and Binding

• You may contact the Devereaux Library for an appointment to estimate costs.
• Budget $200-$300+ depending on:
  • document length
  • number of color pages
  • number of copies
• The Library retains:
  • One unbound manuscript
  • 1 bound copy
  • 1 cd copy (in PDF format)
• Additional bound copies may be required for:
  • Department
  • Major Professor
  • Industrial partners or funding agencies
Timelines and Steps
Process overview

- Schedule target defense date with committee
- Major professor approves document
- Committee approves document
- Schedule defense with Grad Office
- Defend
- Revise document as committee requires
- Committee signs title page to approve revisions
- Dean reviews the abstract and does a proofreading check
- You make final corrections
- You upload the final digital file(s) and pay for printing/binding
## Spring 2021 Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Due date/ deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give draft to your major professor for review and approval</td>
<td>March 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give draft to your committee for review and approval to defend, and</td>
<td>March 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the Grad Office for the format check</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn in your Defense Scheduling and Approval form with your</td>
<td>April 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>committee’s signatures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend</td>
<td>April 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete requested revisions from committee and submit to Grad</td>
<td>April 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office for the Final Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload documents to Library, pay for reproduction, and submit</td>
<td>May 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkout Sheet</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tips on Committee Scheduling

- Contact your committee early in your final semester to check their availability.
- Set a target date weeks ahead of time, even if your document is not done yet.
- Be mindful of holidays and term start/end dates.
- Don’t overload your committee with members.
- Deadlines are minimums! Try to allow extra time.
Getting approvals

• Allow two weeks for reviewers to do their work
• Your draft should be as good as you can make it
  • It MUST be complete. No missing chapters, abstracts, references, etc.
  • Review Grad Office formatting requirements
  • Proofread and edit; get help if you need it
• Major professor must approve it before you send to the committee/Grad Office
• Committee must approve it as defensible before you can formally schedule the defense with the Grad Office
  • Check preferred review format for each member (paper, Word, PDF)
Avoid the trap

- Typically 1/3 of students who apply to graduate do not finish in the same semester.
  - Writing not finished in time
  - More substantial revisions than anticipated
- Allow 8-10 weeks from final draft to completion
  - Fall: give to major prof by mid-October
  - Spring: give to major prof by spring break
- Committees will NOT permit the defense to go forward unless the document is complete and the work sound
Be smart…and realistic

• If you do not complete the requirements, you must pay for at least 2 credits the next semester.

• **Set realistic deadlines** and submit the thesis or dissertation ________ (when?)
  - A first draft is rarely ready for the committee. Plan extra time if your major professor has not already reviewed substantial portions of your work.
  - The committee is **NOT** obligated to perform high-speed reviews because you are pushing the deadlines.
  - The committee should **NEVER** agree to review or hold a defense with a partial document!!

*Hope is not a strategy*
Grad Office format check

• This review is a courtesy to find formatting errors you might have missed
• It ensures the title page is ready and free of errors
• It is NOT instructions on how to format—those are already provided to you
• Check your own document carefully using the format checklist BEFORE submitting
Scheduling the defense

- Schedule room and time
  - If using Zoom, ask your advisor to set up a session and email the link to Grad Office
- Declare whether thesis is restricted
- Get committee approval

Form is due to the Grad Office at least 5 business days prior to defense!
Declaring a restricted thesis

- A thesis is a public document unless declared otherwise.
- Allow extra time if you need to meet with Research Affairs and get their approval for the restriction.

Do any of the following pertain to this thesis/dissertation: (1) it contains patentable content; (2) it is subject to export control under ITAF or EAR; or (3) it is covered under an existing proprietary or non-disclosure agreement? If you are unsure, please discuss with your major professor before answering.  

Yes  No

If you answered Yes, the Office of Research Affairs (OH 102) must complete the Restricted Thesis/Dissertation Declaration below. A restricted defense is not announced to the campus community, and the thesis/dissertation documents will be held in the library until the specified release date.

Restricted Thesis/Dissertation Declaration (to be completed by the Office of Research Affairs)

This □ is □ is not a restricted thesis/dissertation.  Release date if restricted: __________________________

Signature of designated official  (Print Name)  Date
Committee approvals

- Committee must have time to review the document and declare it defensible before you can schedule.

**Committee approvals:**
I have reviewed this thesis/dissertation and verified that it appears to be an acceptable manuscript in terms of technical quality and proper expression and usage in American Standard English. (You are encouraged to provide written comments to the student immediately following your review, so that the student may work on revisions prior to the defense.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Professor Signature</th>
<th>(Print Name)</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Representative Signature</td>
<td>(Print Name)</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Member Signature</td>
<td>(Print Name)</td>
<td>Date</td>
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committee signatures should match program of study
Defend

• The defense is the final exam of your degree
• Typically a 30-60 minute presentation, open to the public,
• Followed by an oral examination by your committee in private
• A defense report is sent to the Grad Office by your committee.
# How your defense is evaluated

**Part I.** The undersigned have conducted the defense examination for the above-named candidate for the degree specified and have judged that the [ ] has [ ] has not demonstrated competence in the discipline. Checking “has not” requires that the candidate must repeat the oral examination in addition to any revisions indicated in Part II.

**Part II.** In addition, the undersigned have reviewed the thesis or dissertation and determined that (select one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The work is accepted with minor corrections and requires no further review.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The work is accepted with revisions that require review by the committee.</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The work requires substantial revisions and all or part of the defense must be repeated.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If this option is checked, the committee can immediately sign the title page to indicate acceptance of the document, with the understanding that the student will complete any minor style and grammatical corrections indicated by the committee before the document is submitted to the Graduate Office for final checkout.*

The revisions may affect the grammar, style, format, structure, or organization of the work but do not fundamentally alter the data collected, the interpretation of the results, or the conclusions. They may include addressing frequent issues with grammar or style, re-writing or expanding existing sections, creating new tables/figures, or revising existing tables/figures. The committee believes that the revisions could reasonably be completed within 3 weeks of full-time effort. After revisions are completed, committee members sign the thesis or dissertation title/signature page as certification that the revisions have been done to their satisfaction.

Substantial revisions fundamentally alter the organization, structure, data, methods, interpretation, or conclusions of the work, or involve extensive revisions expected to take more than 3 weeks of full-time effort. They include adding new chapters or long sections, collecting additional data, reanalyzing data, reinterpreting results, or rewriting more than ~20% of the work. The committee has the latitude to determine the length and format of the re-defense appropriate to the type and scope of the revisions, from a simple committee meeting to a full re-defense. Regardless of format, however, the re-defense must be scheduled with the Graduate Office.
Post-defense steps

• Complete revisions set by your committee and make sure they approve of the final document
  • Grad Office will obtain title page signatures from your committee with DocuSign
• Upload the document for a final review by the dean
• Make any last corrections and upload the PDF to Library Submission folder
• Complete Graduate Student Checkout Sheet

Be sure to return keys and schedule a lab walkthrough before you leave campus.
Final review by the Grad Office

- Abstract review
  - Full review for style, readability, grammar, etc.

- Proofreading check
  - 2-3 randomly selected pages will be proofread
  - Document will be returned for corrections if more than 4-6 errors are found in the check
  - Correct the entire document and resubmit
  - If the check is failed a second time (different random pages), you will need your advisor’s consent to complete checkout
Thesis/dissertation approval

• Committee signatures on the title page indicates approval and acceptance of the final copy.

• The Grad Office will collect the signatures in DocuSign and email you when you are cleared to upload your document for the final review.

• The Dean signs when the proofreading check is passed and the abstract needs no or minor edits.
  • The Grad Office will send you the completed title page to include with your upload to the Library.
Checkout

- Certifies that
- Your project is complete
- Your library copy has been submitted
- You have met your responsibilities to ensure proper disposal of hazardous materials
- You have returned your keys OR signed a volunteer form
D2L will lead you through the entire process using a Checklist.

Document and form submissions will be collected in D2L dropboxes.

You should see this course appear in D2L around the 3rd week of the semester—contact Grad Ed if you don’t.
Pre-defense steps

These steps describe what you need to do to schedule and hold your defense.

- Submit your document to the committee
  Due at 4:30 PM on Friday, March 26, 2021
  Your committee must review your document to determine if it is complete and defensible (appears to be a sound technical and well-written document). Your major professor will let you know when you are approved to submit it to your committee. Follow their instructions as to how they would like to receive it. Allow two weeks for the committee to complete its review.

- Submit your document for a format check by the Graduate Office
  Due at 4:30 PM on Friday, March 26, 2021
  Submit your document as a Word (preferred) or PDF document to the Graduate Office for a format check. You should have already used the Thesis/Dissertation Format Checklist and checked that your document is correctly formatted, but we will ensure that you didn't miss anything.
  Open the Format Check Submission Dropbox carefully.

- Prepare and upload your title page
  Due at 4:30 PM on Friday, March 26, 2021
Submitting items to the Grad Office

- Submissions are made in Dropbox folders
- Each folder has detailed instructions
- Some folders are not visible until you have completed certain steps
- Each submission is graded with a rubric so you can see where you are
- D2L is NOT used to submit to your major professor or committee--you must do that on your own
• You can use the Grades page in D2L to keep track of how you are doing.
• When you reach 60/60, you are done!
Do you understand the difference between **deadlines** and **due dates**?

**Graduate Education Deadlines**

![Table showing graduate education deadlines](image-url)
Graduation eligibility

• Defenses may not be held between the defense deadline and the end of finals week

• If you miss the defense deadline, you will NOT be eligible to graduate that semester. No exceptions.

• All revisions and final checkout should be completed by the last day of finals, or you may be required to register for another semester.
Finishing in the summer

- Not recommended because
  - Faculty are not on contract and may be unwilling
  - Faculty are often busy or traveling
  - Getting reviews and signatures is extra challenging
  - Summer deadlines come quickly!
    - Last day to defend comes in early July
    - Last day to submit final copy is mid-July
- A petition is required to defend in summer
  - Helps you avoid unnecessary expense
  - Helps ensure your success
  - Submit by April 9, 2021, the spring defense scheduling date
Graduation and Commencement

Smile, you earned it!
Commencement policy

• Graduation and commencement are different things

• Graduation
  • Student completes all requirements by the deadline
  • Degree is awarded in the semester of completion
  • Student must remain registered until graduation

• Commencement participation
  • Student walks and is listed in the program
  • May occur in a different semester than graduation
  • MS summer grads may petition to walk in May or may walk in December
  • PhD students MUST defend successfully by the deadline to walk and be hooded
To participate in commencement

- You must pass the defense before the defense deadline to participate in commencement
  - Substantial revisions category may not participate
- Summer MS graduates may walk in spring IF they have an approved summer defense petition
  - PhD candidates do not have this option

Your family and friends should not purchase airline tickets to attend graduation until you are SURE that you will be done. If they already bought tickets, make sure you GET DONE.
PhD hooding ceremony

- Hooding is performed by major professor and the Graduate Dean
- Hooding practice at the Civic Center the day before commencement
Questions?

- Grad Ed Policies
- Grad Ed Forms

Graduate Education

Workshop slides and videos are here

Writing manual and forms are here

Apply for Admission
Review our Application Instructions then apply online.

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Rapid City, SD 57701-3995

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