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INTRODUCTION

Please read this Thesis/Dissertation guide carefully before preparing your thesis or dissertation. Staff members in the School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences are available to assist you in preparing and submitting your thesis or dissertation. You are encouraged to visit the Graduate School website and contact Graduate School staff if you have any questions about these guidelines.

For assistance in formatting your Document in Microsoft Word, visit the Microsoft Office support site and search online for various elements, such as customized table of contents and section breaks. Please note that the Graduate School does not offer technical support for Microsoft Word or other word processing programs that students may use. It is each student’s responsibility to ensure that their document has been formatted appropriately according to the requirements set forth in this guide.

The Graduate School will not review your thesis or dissertation for proofreading and editing purposes. Therefore, pay careful attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar in your document as your work will be available for others to access online. **It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is formatted correctly before you submit it to the Graduate School.**

**General Overview**

A written thesis may be required for the degree of Master of Science (MS) and a written dissertation is required for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The purpose of this requirement is multifold. Most importantly, the student must demonstrate the ability to collect, interpret, integrate, and communicate research findings. The thesis/dissertation is a permanent repository for research results and intellectual concepts that may not be published elsewhere. Finally, the thesis/dissertation should stand as a solid description of an independent research study that enlarges the body of knowledge in that field. Preparation of the thesis/dissertation is expected to be a scholarly endeavor in its own right.
The doctoral dissertation is the written record of the candidate’s individual, original research. The topic must be appropriate to and significant in the academic field, require a mastery and exhaustive exercise of research techniques, and demonstrate critical thought and facility of expression. The dissertation must, in the professional opinion of the graduate faculty, make an original contribution, and it must demonstrate the candidate’s fitness to continue the advancement of knowledge in the student’s competency.

The Manuscript-style format of a dissertation is available to doctoral students whose final, completed dissertation will consist of two or more manuscripts or articles. This may include articles already published, submitted, or to be submitted to peer-reviewed journals but should contain at least one accepted manuscript relevant to the dissertation research. If not, approval must be obtained by the Graduate School Dean.

The student is responsible for all aspects of the preparation of the thesis/dissertation, including the following:

1. subject matter and content
2. organization and format
3. editorial, linguistic and bibliographical quality and accuracy
4. quality of text and illustrations
5. IRB/IACUC guidelines and requirements

Advisory Committee is responsible for evaluating the research and the thesis/dissertation to ensure that:

1. the subject matter and methodology are appropriate
2. the organization, content and format of the thesis/dissertation are of professional quality which includes writing quality, technical correctness, and professional competency
3. the student has fulfilled the requirements of the degree for which he/she is a candidate
**Prior to the Thesis/Dissertation Defense**

Prepare the thesis/dissertation in an approved format.

Schedule the thesis/dissertation defense, which consists of a public presentation and an oral examination. This examination must be completed by the date indicated in the current academic calendar. **Do not wait until the last minute to defend your thesis/dissertation if you intend to graduate.**

**Two weeks prior to the defense date,** a representative of the student’s program should send a written notice of the defense to the Graduate School office. The date, time, place, preferred photo and title of the thesis/dissertation should be included in the notification. Graduate School administration will make sure the defense notification is placed on the scroll. The following statement will always be included on the UMMC intranet under the featured events section unless otherwise instructed not to include due to size of room, etc.: All UMMC faculty, staff and students are invited.

**A minimum of two weeks prior to the defense date** (some programs may require more time), the student must submit a first draft copy of the manuscript to ProQuest in PDF format. The Graduate School will review the PDF and suggest first round edits to the student before the Dissertation Defense. All submissions of edited versions of the manuscript will be submitted through ProQuest.

Complete the Thesis Defense Form or Dissertation Defense Form and deliver it to the chairperson of the advisory committee to collect signatures after the defense.

**After the Thesis/Dissertation Defense**

Following a successful thesis/dissertation defense, the student completes any editing mandates or suggestions made by the Advisory Committee. The student also addresses formatting changes suggested by the Graduate School. The student then submits a final draft of the thesis/dissertation to ProQuest **no later than two weeks after the thesis/dissertation defense.**

Once the Graduate School accepts the finalized version of the manuscript through ProQuest, the student must give the original signed Signature Page of the thesis/dissertation to the Graduate School office.
THESIS/DISSERTATION GUIDE

Order and Components
Please see the sample thesis/dissertation pages throughout and at the end of this document for illustrations. The following order is **required** for components of your theses/dissertation:

1. Title Page
2. Signature Page (optional)
3. Abstract
4. Dedication (optional)
5. Acknowledgements (optional)
6. Table of Contents
7. List of Tables
8. List of Figures
9. List of Abbreviations
10. Body of Text, including:
   a. Chapter 1: Introduction and Review of Literature, Literature Cited, Tables, Figure Legends, Figures
   b. Subsequent Chapters with Title Pages, Statements of Permission, Abstracts, Introductions, etc.
   c. Summary and Discussion
   d. Appendix

Please consult the sample pages to compare your document to the requirements. A Checklist is provided to assist you in ensuring your thesis/dissertation meets all formatting guidelines.
Title Page (Required)
A title page of a thesis/dissertation must include the following information:

1. The title of the dissertation must be capitalized appropriately, with word substitutes used for Greek letters and abbreviated terms spelled out, centered 2” below the top of the page.

2. Your name, centered below the title, styled as “First MI Last, Ph.D.” No other titles previously earned should be mentioned. The name on the title page must match the name under which the student is registered at UMMC.

3. The following statement, centered, 1” below your name: “A dissertation submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences of the University of Mississippi Medical Center in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy in [Graduate Program Name].”

4. The date used on the title page must be the month and year of defense.

5. The Title Page is not numbered but considered page “i”.
Signature Page (Required Form, Optional in Dissertation)
The student must submit at least one Signature Page with original signatures from the Advisory Committee (the Graduate School will obtain the Dean’s signature):

1. The attestation is aligned with the left margin at the top of the page, single-spaced.

2. The Advisory Committee signature lines follow, with the “First MI Last” name of the member listed below the line, followed by the member’s title and program affiliation. If the committee member is located outside of UMMC, please also list their affiliated university/hospital.

3. The signature line for the Dean and their title and program must be included at the bottom of the page.

You may include a copy of the signed Signature page in your document if you wish but this is no longer a required section in your written work.
Abstract Page (Required)
Include an Abstract Page with the following:

1. The title of your dissertation in all-caps, followed by your “First MI Last, Ph.D.” name format, the full name of the Graduate School, UMMC and the month and date of your defense.

2. Skip one single-spaced line and begin your abstract. The body text of your abstract is to be single-spaced as well.

3. The Abstract Page is numbered as “iii”, unless a Signature page is included.

The abstract’s purpose is to present the most important findings and methods of the research. Abstracts usually consist of a statement of the problem, procedures or methods, results, and conclusions. The abstract may not contain graphs, tables or illustrations.
Dedication and/or Acknowledgements Pages (Optional)

You have an option to include a Dedication Page and an Acknowledgements Page. If you choose to include any or all of these elements, give each its own page(s).

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and my God, for without their love and support none of this would be made possible. To my father, for your continuous words of wisdom to take solid steps every day and that each day is a new day. To my mother, for your love and advice that only a mother can give. To my sister, for our inside jokes we share and the joy that comes with remembering them. To my wife, love of my life, best friend and inamorata, words cannot express all that you do for me and how truly amazing you have made

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I thank Dr. Jennifer M. Sasser, my mentor and advisor, your unwavering support, expertise, and love of research allowed me to pursue this journey. A special thank you to Dr. Michael R. Garrett, my (unofficial/second) mentor, the enthusiasm for your research and high standards forge the epitome of scientist. To the members on my advisory committee, thank you for your generous support, knowledge, patience, and precious time. To Dr. Kurtis C. Showmaker, for being a great friend and my bioinformatics mentor, thank you for introducing me into the R coding language and for all the many times you

Acknowledgements are the author’s statement of gratitude to and recognition of the people and institutions that helped the author’s research and writing. The Acknowledgements page must be written in complete sentences. Avoid direct and informal address.

Both titles should be bolded and begin at the top margin, with a single-spaced line between the title and the body text.
1. Include the heading “TABLE OF CONTENTS” bolded and centered at the top of the page.

2. Include one double-spaced line between the title and the entries.

3. The Table of Contents must include listings for the pages that precede it, but the Table of Contents page itself is not listed.

4. All main components of the dissertation must be listed in all capital letters. Subsections may also be listed with normal capitalization.

5. Entries must align with the document’s left margin. Page numbers must be located inside the right page margin with leaders (line of periods) between the end of entry and the page number. The last digit of each number must line up on the right margin. Be sure to update page numbers as you edit, as page numbers may change.
6. Information included in the Table of Contents must match the sections, major subsections and numbering used in the body of the dissertation.

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Figures ....................................................................................................................... 30

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**List of Tables Page (Required)**

The List of Tables page should include all tables within the dissertation and their page numbers connected with leaders. The title of each table should be unique and all titles must be entered in the list exactly as they appear in the manuscript.

```
LIST OF TABLES
Table 1. Name................................................................. 42
Table 2. Name................................................................. 50
Table 3. Name................................................................. 85
```

“LIST OF TABLES” title should be bolded, in all-caps and centered at the top of the page.

A page number should be supplied for each table listed – **be sure to updated page numbers that you edit, as listings may change**.

The tables are numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals. Important words of the Table titles should be capitalized.

The remaining preliminary pages should continue to be numbered consecutively.
**List of Figures Page (Required)**

If any illustrative or graphic materials are used, a List of Figures should immediately follow the List of Tables and appear in the same form.

The same rules for the List of Tables page apply to the List of Figures page. Every Figure title must be unique; important words should be capitalized. A page number should be supplied for every figure listed, and the page numbers must be connected to the Figures with leaders.
List of Abbreviations Page (Required)

If abbreviations are used within your dissertation, you must include a List of Abbreviations and their corresponding definitions. The entries must be alphabetized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Cajal body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChIP</td>
<td>Chromatin immunoprecipitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPSF</td>
<td>Cleavage and polyadenylation specificity factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Dyskeratosis congenita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dsDNA</td>
<td>Double-stranded DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hTR</td>
<td>Human telomerase RNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qPCR</td>
<td>Quantitative real-time PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qRT-PCR</td>
<td>Quantitative real-time reverse transcriptase PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mRNA</td>
<td>Messenger RNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNA-IP</td>
<td>RNA immunoprecipitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNP</td>
<td>Ribonucleoprotein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rRNA</td>
<td>Ribosomal RNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scaRNA</td>
<td>Small Cajal body specific RNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMA</td>
<td>Spinal Muscular Atrophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMN</td>
<td>Survival of motor neuron protein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snorNP</td>
<td>Small nuclear ribonucleoprotein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snRNA</td>
<td>Small nuclear ribonucleic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snRNP</td>
<td>Small nuclear ribonucleoprotein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ssDNA</td>
<td>Single-stranded DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ssRNA</td>
<td>Single-stranded RNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERC</td>
<td>Telomerase RNA component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERT</td>
<td>Telomerase reverse transcriptase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRAP53</td>
<td>WD40 encoding RNA antisense to p53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The abbreviations and their definitions are separated by commas. If Greek letters are used as abbreviations, be sure to alphabetize them in accordance with the A-Z order of the Latin alphabet.
Body of Text (Required)

From the Introduction title page to the end of the document, all pages are numbered with Arabic numerals centered at the bottom of the page.

Start a new chapter or major section on a fresh page. A numbered half title page must be used preceding the text of each major section, in all caps and centered vertically and horizontally (i.e., INTRODUCTION, REVIEW OF LITERATURE, etc.) Each chapter must contain a complete manuscript.

Headings and subheadings must be formatted identically in font size, typeface, placement and style of capitalization.

This section of the manuscript should include:

1. Chapter 1: Introduction and Review of Literature, Literature Cited, Tables, Figure Legends, Figures
2. Subsequent Chapters with Title Pages, Statements of Permission, Abstracts, Introductions, etc.
3. Summary and Discussion
4. Appendix

Chapter 1 will describe the overall hypothesis or question, the studies and sub-hypotheses or questions, and their significance. It will contain an extensive review of relevant background literature to describe the broader context and introduce main concepts and hypotheses or research questions.

In the overall Summary and Discussion, the student will describe how the studies fit together and test the overall hypothesis or address the overall question. Future directions and unanswered questions should be identified.
Literature Cited or Bibliography (Required)
This section is a vital part of every dissertation/thesis. Every source should be properly documented.

The preferred format for listing reference in the bibliography section is alphabetical order by the author’s last name. In the text, the format of citations must be consistent and uniform and adhere to the “name and year” system.

1. Each reference should include the complete title of the reference and all the data necessary to locate the reference in the library system.

2. Other styles may be used if approved by the Advisory Committee.

3. Do not allow a reference to break in half between the bottom of one page and the top of the next.

Single-space all entries and double-space between each entry.

Page numbering must continue throughout your references section.
Appendix (Required)
The Appendix must include: 1) a form stating that all permissions for the use of any copyrighted materials have been received, and if applicable 2) a statement of contributions of authors and coauthors. Your Advisor must sign the statement of permission page. See provided examples.

If the document contains previously published material, letters of permission to reprint copyrighted material may appear here. It is the student’s responsibility to procure reprint permission from journals.

---

**TITLE OF DISSERTATION/THESIS**

First M. Last, Ph.D.
School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences
University of Mississippi Medical Center
Month of Defense Year of Defense

Statement of Permissions:

— All permissions have been received for the use of copyrighted materials.

— No copyright permissions were needed for the preparation of this thesis/dissertation.

______________________________
Committee Chair
The Appendix may include all materials that are not critical for inclusion in the main text, such as surveys, questionnaires, extra relevant material such as tables, figures, computer data, etc.
FORMATTING GUIDELINES

Margins
All copies of a thesis/dissertation must have the following uniform margins throughout the entire document:

- Left: 1” (or 1.5” to ensure sufficient room for binding the work on a page with a horizontal table or figure)
- Right: 1”
- Bottom: 1”
- Top: 1”

Page numbers must appear at the bottom of a page, centered, and .5” from the bottom edge of the page, but do not need to appear within the margins.

Font Type and Size
The same font must be used in all elements of the document. This includes all text, page numbers, table and figure legends, main headings, etc.

**Italics may be used only for scientific terms, foreign words and phrases, special emphasis, and in citing titles of published works, but are not acceptable for subheadings or other textual elements.**

The following fonts and font points are recommended:

- Arial 10pt
- Courier New 10pt
- Georgia 11pt
- Times New Roman 12pt
- Trebuchet MS 10pt
- Veranda 10pt

Headings/subheadings may be in a larger font size, but the font style must be the same that is used throughout the document. **Consistency is an absolute requirement – all subheadings/headings must look the same throughout the dissertation.**
Spacing and Indentation

The text must appear in a single column on each page and should have 1.5 spacing throughout the document. Single spacing may be used for long tables, block quotations, subheadings and chapter titles, figure legends, appendix material and all bibliographic entries.

New paragraphs must be indicated by a consistent tab indentation throughout the entire document.

It is not permissible to leave a single line of a paragraph or heading at the bottom of a page (known as an “orphan” heading/line).

The last word on a page should not be hyphenated.

Pagination

Every page within the manuscript must be numbered with the exception of the Title Page.

The Signature Page, if included, is the first numbered page to appear in the document. This page is assigned and shows the Roman numeral iii. If there is no Signature page, the Abstract page is considered “iii”.

Lower case Roman numerals (iii, iv, v, vi, etc.) must be used to number the preliminary pages.

Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) must be used to number the body of the text. The first page of the text, usually the Introduction title page, must be numbered “1”. The remaining pages must be numbered sequentially.

Do not divide words at the bottom of the page and carry them over to the next page – a sentence ending in a paragraph should not end as a partial line at the top of the next page.
Tables and Figures
The Advisory Committee must approve the quality of the tables and figures.

Each table and figure must be referenced in the text prior to its placement within the document.

The name and number of the table/figure is placed above the image. Captions are placed below the table/figure and should be single-spaced.

Placement of the table or figure may be handled in one of the following ways:

1. Inserted in the text following the first mention of the table or figure in the text.
2. Tables and figures may be grouped at the end of each section in which they are mentioned.

Wide tables or figures may be done in landscape form (i.e., lengthwise on the page), with the top of the table or figure at the binding (left) edge. The title and caption are also landscaped in this circumstance. The page number must remain at the bottom center of the page to remain consistent with the rest of the text.
DISTRIBUTION

Internet Distribution
ProQuest provides authors with options to make dissertations and theses available via search engines. For example, if you wish your work to be available to the largest potential amount of interested readers, you would choose “Publishing with Immediate Release” and not restrict access from Google and other search engines.

You should not choose this option if considerations such as those described in the “Embargoes” section applies to your work.

Please note that search engines are likely to find your work through other access points, especially through the UMMC library repository.

Open Access
Open access publishing is a shift in publication, especially of scholarly works, to make information widely available to researchers and the public at no cost. This practice is in contrast to traditional publishing, where the public must pay to access scholarly publications.

The Open Access publishing option on ProQuest costs $95, due when the student submits the first draft to ProQuest before their oral defense date. The Traditional publishing option is free.

If you are interested in choosing Open Access versus Traditional publishing, please contact the Graduate School.

Embargoes
An embargo is a delayed release voluntarily placed by the student on their dissertation. There are three embargo lengths available to students on ProQuest: 6 months, 1 year and 2 years.

An embargo may be a good consideration if a student’s dissertation includes:

- Patентable rights in the work or other issues in which disclosure might be detrimental to the rights/interest of the author
- An ethical need to prevent disclosure of sensitive or classified information about persons, institutions, technologies, etc.
- The interest of a publishing house in acquiring the rights to publish your document as a book
- Content that is likely to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal

Please contact the Graduate School for more guidance on embargoes.

COPYRIGHTING

Registering Copyright
When submitting your first draft of your manuscript in ProQuest, you will register for a copyright of your manuscript. ProQuest will file the copyright on your behalf with the U.S. Copyright Office at the Library of Congress. **All students must register for a copyright in order for their ProQuest submission to be valid with the Graduate School.**

It is important to note that though certain parts of the manuscript may have been published in journals or magazines, the dissertation as a whole is a unique work in and of itself. Therefore, the dissertation needs a copyright, as it is a standalone document.

The copyright fee is $75 (subject to change) and is due when the student submits the first draft to ProQuest before their oral defense date.

Using Copyrighted Materials
Any copyrighted materials used in your work may be used only with the written permission of the copyright owner. Journal publishers normally hold the copyright for all materials they publish. **Even if you are the sole or one of several authors of material in a published journal, you must obtain written permission from the copyright holder if you are including this material in your dissertation.**

Use of Your Own Previously Published Material
If you wish to include articles or other materials that you have previously published, or articles that have been accepted, submitted or under review, the following guidelines apply:

1. If the material is co-authored, your academic program must approve its inclusion in your thesis/dissertation.
2. If the material is copyrighted, you must fulfil the conditions specified in the section above on using copyrighted materials.
3. The material, if included in the body of the text, must conform to all formatting guidelines outlined in this Guide.

SUBMISSION
A Checklist is provided in this Guide for your benefit. To expedite the submission process, please ensure that your first draft conforms to the guidelines before you submit your document electronically.

You are encouraged to submit your document as early as possible to provide ample time for necessary revisions.

The time between initial submission and final approval by the Graduate School may vary due to factors such as proximity to deadlines and your projected graduation date. You will be contacted once the Graduate School has reviewed your dissertation, and you are expected to submit required revisions in a timely manner.

When you submit your first draft in ProQuest, you must pay the $75 copyright fee and a $90 fee for three bound copies of your dissertation that will be supplied to the library, your mentor and your graduate program. The $90 fee for three copies will be automatically added to your cart. You can order bound copies for yourself or others at any time during or after the submission process. The total minimum amount that will be due at the time of initial submission is $165 and is subject to change.

Submission Steps
To access ProQuest, follow this link.

1. Create an account on the ProQuest submission site. Be sure to use an email address that you check regularly.
2. Read and review the information on the ProQuest Instructions page.
3. Convert your document into a PDF file. If converted properly, the conversion to PDF format should not affect the quality or formatting of the original document – however, be sure to review the PDF file to ensure the formatting transferred correctly before submission.
4. Select your type of publishing and choose whether you wish to delay release.
5. Provide the requested contact information and dissertation details.
7. Submit your dissertation and pay copyright and printing fees.

CHECKLIST
Click here to access a checklist for content and formatting elements.
APPENDIX

Dissertation Timeline Flowchart

Two Weeks Prior to Defense Date
- Send a written notice of defense to Graduate School with: date, time, place, title of defense and photo of student

Min. Two Weeks Prior to Defense Date
- Submit a first draft copy of the dissertation to ProQuest in PDF format and complete Dissertation Defense Form

Two Weeks After Diss. Defense
- Once finalized dissertation is accepted, student turns in original signed Signature Page to Graduate School
- After successful public defense, student completes remaining edits and submits final draft of dissertation
- Graduate School will begin the review/editing process of dissertation through ProQuest

ProQuest Submission Flowchart

Begin this submission process no later than two weeks prior to defense date

Create your account and begin your submission in ProQuest
ProQuest Link: https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home?siteld=875

During the initial submission, complete all three sections and required fields/tabs:
- Publishing information
- About my dissertation/thesis
- Submission & payment

Submission & payment step cont.
1) Select the number of bound copies you wish to order in addition to the three standard copies required by the Graduate School (provided to your mentor, program, and library)
2) Lastly, enter your payment information then finalize this process by submitting

Submission & payment step
1) Select "no" to the question regarding previous copyrights being filed
2) Select "yes" to request ProQuest to file for copyright on your behalf (PLEASE DO NOT MISS THIS STEP AS IT IS DIFFICULT TO CORRECT IF NOT SELECTED DURING INITIAL SUBMISSION)

About my dissertation/thesis step
1) Input details of your work along with committee information
2) Upload your dissertation/thesis file
   You will select "no" to the copyright permissions document since this information will be included in your appendix if applicable

Your dissertation/thesis is a stand-alone work and even if elements of it have been copyrighted, your dissertation/thesis as a whole has not yet been copyrighted

Please remember this is the 1st draft of your thesis or dissertation – not the finalized version