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*(Updated 5/2012)*

## **RESEARCH GUIDE FOR WRITERS OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS**

### **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The completion of a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation is a major requirement for many graduate degrees at Boston University. A thesis or dissertation is a scholarly work that must be approved by a committee of readers in the candidate's department of study. In order to preserve a record of the achievement of Boston University scholars, and to share the benefits of their research with others, the University requires that two identical copies of each thesis or dissertation be submitted to Mugar Memorial Library. The first copy is for use by patrons within the library while the second copy, excepting copyright or similar issues, is available for circulation. In addition, the library sends all dissertations to ProQuest Information and Learning (formerly Bell & Howell Information and Learning; formerly University Microfilms International, or UMI) where they are microfilmed and scanned, thereby making them available not only in our Microforms Department, but also for worldwide distribution.

With the possible exception of copyrighted materials that the author may have included in the manuscript, dissertations are microfilmed and scanned at ProQuest exactly as they are received from the University. They are neither edited nor retyped. Therefore, the manuscript should be error free when submitted. Negative microfilm and electronic versions of each dissertation will remain at ProQuest so that other scholars may order positive microfilm, microfiche, or paper copies from them, or download PDF versions directly from the ProQuest website.

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Master's theses are not yet sent to ProQuest for microfilming and scanning, but thesis writers are required to follow most of the same guidelines. Exceptions for master's theses will be noted in the text where they apply.

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

There are no deadlines at Mugar Memorial Library for submitting theses or dissertations. Your individual school will have deadlines, so you should refer to your graduate school office for those dates. Do not submit your manuscript to the library until you have completed **all** of your other requirements. Submitting your thesis or dissertation should be the last requirement you fulfill at the University before you graduate and are awarded your degree. The only exceptions to this rule are: doctoral candidates working towards a dual M.D./Ph.D. degree, and some students in Sargent College and the Psychology Dept. who do an internship or residency after completing their manuscript. Students in the dual M.D./Ph.D. program must turn in their dissertation to the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences no later than 60 days after passing the final oral examination for the Ph.D.

## PREPARING THE MANUSCRIPT

The purpose of this Research Guide is to inform graduate students of certain standards and formats established by Mugar Memorial Library and ProQuest. This guide does not provide directions on how to research or write a thesis or dissertation. Nor does this guide set major stylistic or bibliographic rules for the author. Your advisors or department may suggest or require you to follow a specific journal or other style for your work. Where a departmental style requirement conflicts with a specific requirement in this Guide, however, the Guide takes precedence. Some sources on thesis/dissertation styles include *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian (7th ed., 2007), *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, by Joseph Gibaldi (3rd ed., 2008), *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, (6th ed., 2010), and the *Chicago Manual of Style*, (16th ed., 2010). A bibliography of sources that may be helpful to you, including those mentioned above, is provided starting on page 13.

**Titling Your Thesis/Dissertation:** A thesis or dissertation can be a valuable source for other scholars, but only if it can be located with relative ease. Modern electronic retrieval systems often use words or short phrases in the title, the abstract, and perhaps a few more keywords to locate a dissertation. Therefore, it is essential that the title be a short, meaningful description of the contents of the work. Try to avoid making oblique or obscure references. ProQuest cannot reproduce such characters as mathematical formulae, non-alphabetical symbols, superscripts, subscripts, or other, non-Roman scripts such as Greek. The use of acronyms is also discouraged, but not prohibited. If you are using any item described above or something similar in your title, you must substitute its English equivalent. Diacriticals, or accent marks, are acceptable.

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Neutral kaon and lambda production in electron-positron annihilation at 29 GeV and the Z boson resonance.

Chromosomal localization of the alpha- and beta-globulin of the chicken, *Gallus domesticus*

Sample title pages for both theses and dissertations are the file of Sample Pages to show the author how that page should be presented and formatted. Please note, only include the year in which you are graduating officially, not the month, and do not include the discipline from which you are graduating (e.g., Doctor of Philosophy in Biology; Master of Science in Engineering); in these cases, simply say Doctor of Philosophy or Master of Science. The only exception to this last requirement is for students from Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences who are entered in the two-year MSOT Program. Those students may enter Master of Science in Occupational Therapy at the bottom of the title page.

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**Abstract Page(s):** All authors must include an abstract with their work. Only master's candidates in the Creative Writing Program of the Department of English are exempt from this requirement. Authors who are writing their work in a foreign language must write their abstract in English.

The abstract for a dissertation should be prepared carefully, as it will be published in ProQuest's *Digital Dissertations/Dissertation Abstracts International*. The abstract should contain a clear and brief statement of the problem, the procedure(s) and/or method(s) followed, the results, and the conclusions. It should be a succinct account of the thesis or dissertation so that a reader can decide whether or not they want to read the complete work. Sample abstract pages for both theses and dissertations are provided in the file of Sample Pages. They show how the title, author, and other information should be formatted at the head of the abstract.

Graphs, charts, tables, and illustrations should not be included in the abstract. Symbols and foreign words or phrases should be printed clearly and accurately. Relevant place names, full personal names, and other proper nouns should be included as they are useful in automated retrieval. Include all accents and/or diacritical marks.

A dissertation abstract is limited to 350 words, or approximately 2,450 characters. ProQuest suggests counting the number of characters, including spaces and punctuation marks, in one line of average length, and multiplying by the number of lines. Many modern word-processing applications also automatically count the number of words or characters in a given file. Any abstract that exceeds 350 words will be shortened by editors at ProQuest for publication in Dissertation Abstracts. Since theses are not submitted to ProQuest there is no length restriction for their abstract, but authors should still be brief and to the point.

Students who are working towards dual M.D./Ph.D. degrees must include in the heading of their abstract the following lines exactly as they appear below:

Ph.D. degree requirements completed in 201x

(the date is the year of the next graduation date after submission of the manuscript)

Dual M.D./Ph.D. degrees expected in 201x

(the date is the year in which the degrees are expected to be awarded officially)

**Printing:** Your thesis or dissertation must be printed single sided and face in one direction only. If you have a figure caption on a separate page, you cannot arrange the caption so that it is facing the figure. All textual material and preliminary pages must be double-spaced. This includes your Table of Contents. Footnotes, figure and table captions, and long quotations may be single-spaced if need be. Your bibliography may be single-spaced, with one extra space between each citation. Use 12-point type for your main text, all headings and subheadings. (This guide is printed in 12-point Times). Type of 11pt or 10pt may be used for footnotes, long quotes, and tables that cannot fit comfortably within the required margins. Do not use type smaller than 10pt. Titles or major headings may be in all upper case letters, bold, italics, or underlined, but they cannot be larger than 12 point. Use standard fonts such as Arial, Times, Palatino, Bookman, etc. Please try to avoid using Times Roman at sizes smaller than 12pt, since it prints out nearly illegibly. Avoid using Calibri, the default typeface for MS-Word. Dot matrix is not acceptable. Font type and point sizes must be used consistently throughout the work for both text and page numbers. All print must be dark, unbroken, and legible, including material copied from other sources. Please use a laser printer if possible, since type from ink-jet printers can run or smear. If you have access only to an ink-jet printer, then print out a master copy and have a copy center make two copies from the master. No erasures, crossed-out, or whited-out marks should appear on the final copy.

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**Quality of Paper:** 8.5" x 11" white paper should be used for final copies. As a minimum, 20lb-weight paper with 25% cotton or rag content is required. Avoid using 24lb paper for manuscripts over 400 pages in length. Do not use any paper heavier than 24lb. Acid-free, non-yellowing

paper is recommended, since it is of archival quality, but it is not required. Plain copier paper is not acceptable since it does not last as long as the cotton paper. Hole-punched paper may not be used because it cannot be bound properly. Students from the Music Division of the College of Fine Arts may use paper larger than 8.5" x 11" if they are composing a score or similar musical piece.

**Margins:** Top Margin: 1.5 inches to first line of text or heading.  
Left Margin: 1.5 inches.  
Right Margin: 1 inch. You may choose to justify the right margin (see below).  
Bottom Margin: at least 1 inch from the bottom of the page.

These margins must be used **at all times** and apply not just to your text, but to all of your footnotes, figures, tables, illustrations, etc. The only print that can be outside of the margins is the page number, which is subject to its own margin rules (see section below). Running headers or footers are not allowed. Extra wide margins are not acceptable. If a chart, graph, table, footnote, or figure exceeds any margin, it must be reset or reduced to fit within the given space. As mentioned above, the author may choose to justify the right margin. This does not mean that you may exceed the one-inch right margin if you feel you have a good reason. It means that each line will end at the one-inch margin. This paragraph is right justified.

If the author has a table or figure that is too wide to fit within the left and right margins, they may rotate the page 90 degrees (i.e., print the page in landscape format). If this is done the margins and page numbers do not move along with the figure. In rare cases, if a table or figure cannot fit onto 8.5" x 11" paper, a larger size of paper may be used. Use of larger paper should be approved prior to final submission either in your graduate school or with the thesis/dissertation coordinator at Mugar Library.

**Pagination:** Every page in a dissertation or thesis must be assigned a number, starting with the title page and ending with the last page of the vita. Numbering must be sequential. The use of letter suffixes (e.g., 10a) for inserting extra pages is not allowed, nor can appendices be paginated as A-1, A-2 etc. Any and all appendices should continue the same sequential numbering from the last page of your last chapter. Transparent overlays are not counted as separate pages. Check the manuscript for pagination errors before the final copies are submitted to Mugar. You will be required to revise and resubmit two new copies if you omit a page number or assign the same number to two or more different pages. Also, avoid leaving blank, numbered pages in the text (e.g., between chapters), or you will have to repaginate the work from that page to the very end.

**Page Number Placement:** Page numbers should be placed no more and no less than one inch from the top of the page or .75 inches from the bottom of the page. The default settings in MS-Word for PC are half an inch (0.5") for both top and bottom. To change them, go to Page Layout in the pulldown menus and click on Margins. Go to Custom Margins and click on the tab for Layout. You will see boxes that say From Edge, which contains the settings for the Header and the Footer (H/F) that can be reset to one inch and .75 inches, respectively. You can also double click on the top and bottom of a page, which will open the H/F. The From Edge settings should appear in the tool bar at the top of the window. After resetting the H/F, check to make sure that an extra line has not been added to either of them, pushing the page number further up or down on the page than desired. If extra space has been added, delete it. If the H/F is double spaced,

make it single spaced.

The preliminary pages must have lower case Roman numerals (e.g., iii, iv, xii) placed at the bottom center of the page. The main text will have Arabic numerals (e.g., 1, 2, 3) which may be placed at the bottom center, top center, or top right of the page. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences requires that Arabic numerals be placed at the top center or top right of the page only. No page number should be placed on the left-hand side of the page either in regular or landscape format. The title page, copyright page (if any), and approval page will have page numbers assigned to them, but these numbers should not be printed on the pages themselves. Below is the order in which your preliminary pages should appear:

<b><u>Preliminary Pages</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
Title Page**	i (counted, not printed)
Copyright Page (if applicable)	ii (counted, not printed)
Reader's Approval Page**	iii (counted, not printed)
Dedication Page (optional)	iv
Acknowledgments (optional)	v
Abstract**	vi
Preface (optional)	vii
Table of Contents**	viii
List of Tables (required if you have any)	ix
List of Figures (required if you have any)	x
List of Illustrations or Schemes (req'd if any)	xi
List of Abbreviations (in alphabetical order)	xii
Glossary (if applicable)	xiii
<b><u>First page of text</u></b>	<b>1</b>

\*\* Required

Each section of the preliminary pages, starting with the Acknowledgments, can be more than one page in length if necessary. If you do not include one section, do not skip over that page number. Simply continue the pagination to the next section. The Table of Contents must include the page numbers where each entry occurs. The List of Tables, Figures etc. must include the page number on which each respective table, figure, etc. falls. If you include a List of Abbreviations, it must be arranged alphabetically, not by order of appearance of the abbreviation in the text.

Following the preliminary pages is the text of the dissertation or thesis, which begins with **Arabic numeral 1**. Following the conclusion of the dissertation are, in the following order:

Appendices (if applicable)  
Bibliography (required)  
Vita (required, the last numbered page(s))

**Numbering of Tables and Figures:** can be done either sequentially (e.g., 1, 2, 3) or by chapter or appendix (e.g., 3.1, 3.2, 3.3; A.1, A.2). Do **not** repeatedly use the same numbers with each new chapter (i.e., each new chapter should **not** begin with figure 1 or table 1).

**Appendices:** should precede the bibliography. Rare exceptions are allowed at the discretion of your major advisor. If you are using copied materials from another source, make sure the print is clear, dark, and legible. Also be sure to check that you have permission if you are reproducing copyrighted materials in your work. A guide from ProQuest titled “Copyright Law & Graduate Research” is available for students who have questions regarding copyrighted materials at [http://www.proquest.com/assets/downloads/products/UMI\\_CopyrightGuide.pdf](http://www.proquest.com/assets/downloads/products/UMI_CopyrightGuide.pdf)

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List of Abbreviated Journal Titles

BMJ	BMJ: British Medical Journal
EMBO J.	EMBO Journal
FASEB J.	FASEB Journal
FEBS Lett.	FEBS Letters
IEEE J. Oceanic Eng.	IEEE Journal of Oceanic Engineering
JAMA	JAMA: the Journal of the American Medical Association
Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. USA	Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America

Many electronic indexes now include a function that can provide you with the complete title of a journal if you enter its abbreviation. In Medline/PubMed it's referred to as “Journals in NCBI Databases” and is located on the right side of the top page. Consult the database relative to your field or ask a reference librarian for assistance in determining the complete titles. Writing down what you believe to be the complete title without verifying it is an unwise method.

**Vita:** This is a short description of your professional life up to the point of being awarded your degree. Your vita may be written in either résumé or narrative format. You must include such basic information as your full name, your year of birth (NOT your birthday), and a contact address (e.g., your department) where you can be reached for at least the next 1–2 years. A vita may also include (but is not limited to) your previous education, degrees, awards or honors, professional positions held, and publications. Please try to limit your vita to no more than three or four pages. Both doctoral and master's degree candidates must include a vita in their work, except for master's candidates in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GRS), for whom the vita is optional.

**Multiple Volume Works:** When a manuscript exceeds 2.5 inches in thickness (usually 400–500 pages), a second volume is needed. Each volume must contain a title page duplicating the title page of the first volume. You must identify them further as Volume I of III, Volume II of III, etc. If the material continues from volume to volume, then the pagination will also continue in Arabic numbers. Each and every title page is assigned its own number, although the number is not printed on the title page. If the appendices or illustrations can comprise a separate volume on their own, then the Bibliography and Vita should be placed at the end of Volume I. If your manuscript needs to be divided into two or more volumes, it is highly recommended that you consult Brendan McDermott, Thesis/Dissertation Coordinator at Mugar Library, Bibliographic Services, Tel. 353-9387 ([brendan@bu.edu](mailto:brendan@bu.edu)).

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THE COPYRIGHT BOOK: A PRACTICAL GUIDE, by William S. Strong. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, c1999.

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The student must complete all of their other requirements prior to submitting the thesis or dissertation. After the thesis or dissertation has been approved at the candidate's school, two clean, unbound copies should be placed in separate manila envelopes or boxes of appropriate size. Please do not use binder clips or staples on the final draft. Both copies must be complete and identical.

The candidate must obtain from their graduate school office a multiple-copy, thesis and dissertation approval form signed by that office before coming to the library. This form indicates that all of your other requirements have been fulfilled. Fill out the top section of the form before having it signed. If you have questions about who should sign your form, please contact Brendan McDermott at (617) 353-9387.

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<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezproxy.bu.edu/home.html>

A MANUAL FOR WRITERS OF TERM PAPERS, THESES, AND DISSERTATIONS, by Kate L. Turabian. 7th ed. / revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press editorial staff: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

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BEDFORD HANDBOOK, by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers. [English Writing and Grammar] 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, c2010.

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THE COPYRIGHT BOOK: A PRACTICAL GUIDE, by William S. Strong. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, c1999.

Law Annex KF2994 .S75 1999

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THE DISSERTATION HANDBOOK: A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL DISSERTATIONS, by Eileen T. Nickerson. 2nd ed. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co., 1993.

Education Reference LB2369 .N5 1993

Theology Reference LB2369 .N5 1993

DISSERTATION SKILLS: FOR BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS, by Brian White. London; New York: Continuum, 2003.

Pardee Reference LB2369 .W45 2003

DISSERTATIONS AND THESES FROM START TO FINISH: PSYCHOLOGY AND RELATED FIELDS, by John D. Cone and Sharon L. Foster. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2006.

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ELECTRONIC STYLES: A HANDBOOK FOR CITING ELECTRONIC INFORMATION, by Xia Li and Nancy B. Crane. 2nd ed. Medford, N.J.: Information Today, 1996.

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GUIDE TO THE SUCCESSFUL THESIS AND DISSERTATION: A HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY, by James E. Mauch and Jack W. Birch. 5th ed. New York: M. Dekker, 2003.

Mugar Reference X LB 2369 M377 2003

A HANDBOOK FOR PREPARING GRADUATE PAPERS IN MUSIC, by J. David Boyle, Richard K. Fiese, and Nancy Zavac. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Houston, TX: Halcyon Press, c2004.  
Music Open Reserve ML3797 .B68 2004

THE MIT GUIDE TO SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING COMMUNICATION, by James G. Paradis and Muriel L. Zimmerman. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002.  
Sci/Eng Reference Q223 .P33 2002

MLA STYLE MANUAL AND GUIDE TO SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING, by Joseph Gibaldi. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008.  
Mugar Reference X PN147 .G444 2008

PUBLICATION MANUAL OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.  
Mugar Reference X BF76.7 .P83 2010  
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SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL WRITING: A MANUAL OF STYLE, by Philip Rubens, general editor. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge, 2001.  
Sci/Eng T11 .S378 2001

SCIENTIFIC STYLE AND FORMAT: THE CSE MANUAL FOR AUTHORS, EDITORS, AND PUBLISHERS, by the Style Manual Committee, Council of Science Editors. 7th ed. Reston, VA: Council of Science Editors in cooperation with the Rockefeller University Press, 2006.  
Sci/Eng Reference T11 .S386 2006  
Medical WZ 345 S416 2006

UNITS, SYMBOLS, AND TERMINOLOGY FOR PLANT PHYSIOLOGY: A REFERENCE FOR PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS IN THE PLANT SCIENCES, Frank B. Salisbury, editor. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.  
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