

## Tips for Ensuring a Quick Review of Your Thesis or Dissertation

The review process for theses and dissertations parallels the peer review process for journals, and the goal is an error-free, readable, professional-looking document that you and your advisors can be proud of.

<b>Prepare and submit using the appropriate format</b>	Follow the style required by your discipline/advisor (e.g., APA)
<b>Review for accurate and appropriate content</b>	Your committee, and in particular your committee chairperson, will be reading for content and may have suggestions based on that reading and on your defense.
<b>Review for style and format before publication</b>	The Graduate School has several readers who will check style and format; the readers are NOT responsible for editing a poorly written/formatted document; large amounts of editing needed at this stage can result in graduation being delayed until a later term.

How can you assure a smooth Graduate School review process?

- (1) Read the *Thesis/Dissertation Manual*! Regardless of the style you use, the front matter of the document is standard. A few things that will vary depending on when you finish:
  - The signature page needs to list your committee members, department chairperson, and the Graduate School dean at the time of your defense. *Check to be sure you have the correct spelling of the correct names.* As of 2020-2021, the Dean is “Michael J. McKenzie, Dean, Cratis D. Williams School of Graduate Studies.”
  - The date you will use is the month and year of your graduation, which may not be the same as your defense month. The only months that may be used are May, August, or December. There is no comma between the month and year because you do not list the day.
  - Don’t forget to put a resume, curriculum vitae, or biographical sketch at the end of your document. It is appropriate to mention that you received your Master of Science, Doctor of Education, etc. (as applicable) as though you had completed your degree already. By the time the dissertation is “published” you will have!
- (2) Find out at the very beginning of your literature review what format you need to follow. It is always a good idea to have a current style guide (e.g., *APA Publication Manual*) on hand for help with references and other formatting questions.
- (3) Right from the start when doing your literature review, properly format a reference for **everything** you read according to the required format and put it into a list, which will form the basis for your references list.
- (4) Be careful and consistent! Here is a list of things to check:
  - ✓ Headers and sub-headers are formatted the same way throughout.
  - ✓ Page numbers are in proper order, the page numbers in the table of contents are correct, and page numbers are consistently located on the page.
  - ✓ The table of contents, list of figures, and list of tables have the headers worded the same way as the headers in the text.
  - ✓ The titles for figures or tables are consistently located, all above or all below (per the style manual you are following); figure or table numbers are in the proper order.
  - ✓ The citations are formatted correctly, and all of the cited references are in the reference list/bibliography. The references are formatted according to the required format in the current style manual being used.
  - ✓ Pronoun/Noun and verb pairs match. (Discuss with your advisors the [use of “they” as a gender-neutral pronoun.](#))
  - ✓ Mathematical/statistical variables are in italics; “data” is used as a plural noun (use data set if you want a singular noun). We strongly encourage you to use a mathematical equation formatting tool such as equation editor in MS Word for all math symbols; the software follows the rules for using italics.
  - ✓ Punctuation is appropriate: Periods fall inside closing quotes; all lists of more than two items have a comma before the “and” (or no lists have a comma before the “and” depending on the style manual being followed); quotation marks are used to designate direct quotes;
- (5) Plan ahead! You need to turn in a well formatted, complete, defended copy of your document to the Graduate School approximately one month prior to commencement (check the [Graduate School deadlines](#) page). Allow adequate time between your defense and the deadline to make any modifications suggested by your committee.