



STOCKTON
U N I V E R S I T Y

Thesis Manual

Thesis Guidelines and Requirements

Revised 8/7/2025

THESIS GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

Originally developed by the Office of Graduate Studies, this *Thesis Manual* serves to aid the student and Thesis Committee in the presentation of the work in a format that is acceptable as a scholarly publication of the University. This is a consensus document. As such, these guidelines are designed to provide enough flexibility to meet the needs of each of the disciplines of the University while maintaining a style that is consistent for all theses developed at the University.

The word “thesis” used in this document refers to the formal research and investigation of an approved topic. This scholarly work becomes a permanent record of the student and the fulfillment of a requirement for an academic degree awarded by Stockton University. It requires an oral defense and a written paper that is evaluated by an academic committee convened for such a purpose. Its appearance and the quality of this document are a reflection of the student, committee and the University. It is the responsibility of the Office of Graduate and Continuing Studies to authorize that what goes on public display in the Richard E. Bjork Library is of the highest of standard.

Thesis Committee Structure

Students should select their committee members early in their research. Selection guidelines can be found in individual [Program Handbooks](#). In general, each thesis committee shall consist of at least three persons: a Chair, who is a member of the student’s discipline faculty (full-time faculty member at Stockton University), and two other committee members. One of these two committee members must be another full-time Stockton faculty member. The third person can be another faculty member, a Stockton faculty member from another program, a faculty member at another college/university, or a practitioner with extensive knowledge of the student’s thesis topic. The student is responsible for approaching committee members and asking them to participate. If the student wishes for the third committee member to be a non-Stockton faculty member, the student must obtain approval from the committee chair.

Registration and Final Submission Procedure

To Register for Your Thesis Course:

1. Upon establishing a Thesis Committee,* the student will complete a [Thesis Committee Form](#) and work with their thesis advisor to complete the [Independent Study Form](#). Both forms, once signed by their faculty member and program chair, should be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Continuing Studies for the Dean’s approval.
2. Once approved by the Dean, the Office of Graduate and Continuing Studies will contact the student’s school to confirm the student is ready to move forward with their graduate thesis and to request the thesis course be added to the student’s schedule for the appropriate term.**

Once You've Completed Your Thesis & Final Submission Requirements:

Step #1: Thesis Defense & Grading

1. Once the student completes the written portion of their graduate thesis, students should work with their thesis advisor and program chair to schedule an oral defense.
2. The Thesis Committee will agree on a grade for the thesis credits only after the student's oral defense and satisfactory completion of all necessary revisions. Students must earn a grade of B or better or the equivalent on the thesis in order to graduate, provided that the student has successfully completed all other graduation requirements.

Step #2: Submission for Publication through ProQuest

1. Once revisions are made and the final grade is agreed upon and approved by the Thesis Committee, students must submit their graduate thesis to ProQuest. Submission through ProQuest will allow a student's thesis to be accessible through the Stockton University Richard E. Bjork Library. Please access [ProQuest](#) to submit. A [Step-by-Step submission guide](#) is available to assist students.
 - a. When submitting the thesis, please be sure to include a signed thesis cover page or your submission will be returned (see example in Appendix II).
2. Once the thesis is submitted, the ProQuest Administrator will assign the submission to a program administrator. Typically, the program administrator is the student's graduate program chair.
3. The program administrator will review the submission, approve/accept, and then send to ProQuest for publication.

*Thesis students who decide to change a member(s) of the Thesis Committee may do so at any time prior to one calendar month before the oral defense by completing and executing an updated Thesis Committee Form with the Graduate Program Chair and the Office of Graduate and Continuing Studies.

**Depending on the program in which a student is enrolled, it is suggested that students register for this class during either their last semester or second-to-last semester of study. If the student does not complete and orally defend the thesis during that semester, a grade of "IP" (in progress) will be assigned. The student will have the next semester to complete the project. Students who complete all their course credits but need an additional semester to work on the thesis should complete a [Maintenance of Matriculation form](#).

Defense Guidelines

An oral defense of the thesis is required and is an event that should be open to the entire campus community. Students will work under the supervision of their Thesis Committee as they write their thesis. When the draft is completed, the student will provide copies to the committee in a timely manner. There are likely to be requests for revisions and modifications. When all members of the thesis committee grant their approval, the student, through the Committee Chair or the Graduate Program Chair, will ask the Thesis Committee to post an oral defense announcement (see example in Appendix I). The announcement will consist of the date, time, and location of the defense (to be approved of by all committee members), and the thesis abstract. Students should post their defense announcement at least two weeks prior to their

defense date. The Office of Graduate and Continuing Studies will assist the student with room reservations and advertisements if necessary.

Moderator

The thesis Chair will act as the moderator at the oral defense. The Chair should be familiar with the procedures of the oral defense and has the authority to suspend proceedings should a situation arise that would not be conducive to a fair examination. The student will open the oral defense with a brief presentation of their findings, approximately 30-40 minutes in length, or according to your program requirements. Then, members of the Thesis Committee will question the candidate in an order determined by the Chair. Questions dealing with the substance, meaning and usefulness of the research in the thesis are of greatest priority. Inquiries or comments dealing with punctuation, grammatical minutiae, spelling, etc., should be written out and privately submitted to the student. When the Thesis Committee has had an adequate opportunity to question the student, the Chair may open the examination to non-committee members. If, in the opinion of the Chair, it is deemed desirable to discontinue the oral defense, the Chair may recess the oral defense until a time mutually agreeable to the Thesis Committee. When the questioning has run its course, the Chair will excuse everyone except members of the thesis committee.

The student should be evaluated upon both:

- (1) the overall quality and significance of their thesis, and
- (2) the oral defense of research findings.

Additional Research Approvals

Federal regulations require that any research that involves the use of either human subjects or animals must be approved by the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#). The regulations are all-inclusive surveys, interviews, pre-existing data and human tissues obtained for non-research purposes require review by the IRB Board before the research can be done. If the work is completed without IRB approval, it cannot be published, even as a thesis. Copies of these approvals must be included in the appendix of the final draft of the thesis submitted for review through ProQuest. Keep in mind such approvals may take time. For more information, contact the [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs](#) at 609-652-4844.

Academic Honesty

All students are responsible for adhering to the University's academic honesty policies. The graduate thesis is to be an original piece of the student's work. Students committing acts of academic dishonesty are subject to penalties, as outlined in the [University Bulletin](#) and [Program Handbook](#).

Style Guidelines

The style guide for the thesis must be approved by the Thesis Committee prior to the preparation of the document. The style may depend on your degree program. Students are expected to adhere

to all guidelines and standards of the style manual, including citation for electronic and online sources. Consult with your Thesis Committee Chair for specific information and expectations.

FINAL MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

Formatting Suggestions

The thesis must be free of typing errors, smudges, and the type must be clear and black throughout, including figures, tables, charts, and illustrations.

Font

- Times New Roman 12 point font is required for the body of the report (typeface in any appendices may vary, as needed, for the content).
- Arial font should be used for charts and figures.
- Chapter titles should not be larger than 14 pt.

Margins

- On all pages, the left margin is 1.5 inches. All other margins are 1 inch except for chapter headings, which should be 1.75 or 2 inches. Material placed lengthwise (landscape) on the page is printed so that its width is the length of the page. It should be placed in the manuscript so that the top line of the type is 1 inch from the bound edge of the page.

Spacing

- Double space the general text.
- Single space: Table of Contents, Tables (except short tables that may be double spaced to improve appearance), long quotations, footnotes, figure legends.
- Appendices may be either single or double spaced.
- Other accepted disciplinary practices may be used.

Abstract: 200-word maximum

The length of the abstract should be limited to a maximum of 200 words. The abstract heading should be single spaced. Abstract content should be double spaced.

The content of the abstract should include the following:

- Statement of purpose of study
- Brief description of major aspects of methodology
- Subject sample (size, pertinent characteristics)
- Description of procedure (questionnaire, interview, tests, etc.)
- Major method of data analysis (correlations, tests of significance, percentages, etc.)
- Brief description of major findings or conclusions of the study

Sequence of Thesis Elements and Pagination

All page numbers (Arabic) should be placed at the bottom center of the page.

<u>Sequence</u>	<u>Pagination</u>
Title page (see sample – Appendix II)	not numbered
Abstract	not numbered
Acknowledgments (optional)	begin with lower case Roman numeral ii
Table of Contents	lower case Roman numeral iii & consecutive pages
List of Figures (if applicable)	continue consecutive Roman numerals
List of Tables and Charts (if applicable)	continue consecutive Roman numerals
List of Illustrations (if applicable)	continue consecutive Roman numerals
Body of text	begin with Arabic page 1
References	continue consecutive Arabic numerals
Appendices (if applicable)	continue consecutive Arabic numerals

Give each Appendix a letter (as in Appendix A) and title, as in the Tables and Charts

Final Printing and Submission

If your program requires a paper version (and additional copies) of the final thesis, paper to be used should be white, 8 ½ x 11 inches, 20 - 24 pound weight, acid free and archival quality of consistent brand, quality, color, and texture. Please refer to your Preceptor, Graduate Program Chair, or Committee Chair for specific instructions regarding how to submit your final thesis for grading and archiving within your Graduate Program.

Once the thesis is complete and a final grade has been given, the Graduate Program Chair should direct students to submit their thesis to ProQuest for publication. Please refer to the ProQuest submission guidelines or contact the William T. Daly School of General Studies for assistance.

[Sample of an Oral Defense Announcement]

The Masters in [Program Name] invites you to the following

Master's Thesis Defense

Title

Presented By

Name of Student

Abstract:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Graduate Program:

Thesis Committee:

Members:

Professor A

Professor B

Professor C

[Sample of a Thesis Cover Page]

Thesis Title

Name of Student

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of _____ in _____.

Stockton University

Written under the direction of

(Name of Thesis Chair)

And approved by:

_____, Chair
(Type Name of Thesis Committee Chair)

_____, Committee Member
(Type Name of Thesis Committee Member)

_____, Committee Member
(Type Name of Thesis Committee Member)

_____, Dean, Office of Graduate and Continuing Studies
(Type Name of the Dean of Program's School)

(DATE)