INTRODUCTION

A dissertation or thesis demonstrates that students can do original research in the area of their specialty. The Duquesne University School of Education considers research a form of learning: formal, documented study that results in new knowledge for the author, but also for others. The publication of a dissertation permits the sharing of the results of that research with others. The doctoral programs in the Duquesne University School of Education have therefore established the following style and format standards for final approval of a dissertation for graduation. Format requirements for Masters theses are the same as for dissertations except where specified. While style and format are secondary in importance to substance, they are important because they facilitate readers’ understanding, as well as present a professional document. Dissertation and thesis committees certify final approval of the substance of the research in the process of the defense and subsequent approval. The Gumberg Library certifies compliance with format requirements for final approval for graduation.

Dissertations must first and foremost conform to basic guidelines required by the Duquesne University Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines (http://www.library.duq.edu/etd/guidelines.htm). These Style and Format Guidelines provide specific formatting requirements that supersede the university requirements.

In addition to the university guidelines, the most current version of the APA manual serves as the primary reference for style and format. Therefore, bibliographic entries and citations should conform to the current version of the APA manual. Note that the APA manual’s general format requirements are primarily intended for manuscripts submitted to journals and sometimes do not apply to dissertations. However, the APA Manual includes a chapter specifically addressing style and format issues for dissertations and theses. Dissertation and thesis authors may find the format requirements specified in this portion of the APA manual useful, but they do not supersede the Duquesne University Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines these Style and Format Guidelines. For matters of format, where these APA guidelines or the Duquesne University Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines are silent or not appropriate for dissertations, information in this document will apply.
Standard manuals of style and usage, as well as dictionaries, should be consulted. The dissertation or thesis should be written in clear, grammatically correct English. Standard spelling, word division, and punctuation should be used. Tone should be consistent with research goals and methods. Candidates may choose to work with an editor at the final stage of preparing their documents to insure their dissertation is written in conventional and readable style. Caution is urged in using another dissertation as a model because requirements change over time and can be different from school to school.

Responsibility for the Dissertation or Thesis

The process and responsibilities for submitting the dissertation or thesis is documented in the Duquesne University Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines.

The dissertation or thesis author bears ultimate responsibility for meeting all of the Program and dissertation/thesis requirements. The author must pay all graduation fees, notify the registrar of intent to graduate, schedule a defense, obtain faculty signatures, and meet deadlines for submission of drafts and final manuscript. These Style and Format Guidelines contain format requirements for preparation of the dissertation document and are meant to be used in conjunction with the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines, APA Manual and each Program’s substantive requirements.

It is the responsibility of the author to obtain written permission for use of copyrighted material in the dissertation beyond the definition of “fair use” in the Copyright Act of 1976. Use of a copyrighted work for scholarship and research is not an infringement of copyright. Use of copyrighted work for profit, or quotation of extensive portions of a work, or over-reliance on copyrighted work for one’s own work is not considered “fair use” and requires written permission.

Additional Requirements

Program guidelines. These Style and Format Guidelines pertain only to procedures to be followed for preparing the dissertation or thesis manuscript. Consult the program-specific dissertation guidelines from your program for the specifics of committee formation, proposal review and approval, and dissertation defense procedures.

Human subjects. Duquesne students must receive approval for the use of any human subjects in their research, even if the subjects are students in their own classes. This requirement is part of the University's policy on ethics in research. It also provides legal assurance for the commitment that the University has made to the federal government regarding the protection of human subjects. Neither advisers nor thesis committees can approve the use of human subjects. Approval must be obtained through the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB). Directions for application are available on the Office of Research website. The Duquesne University IRB does not review proposals that have not been approved by the committee. This is to prevent multiple reviews of the same study.
The Proposal

The School of Education Dissertation Guidelines for Doctoral Candidates describe recommendations for proposals. Students should also consult their individual Program office for any special requirements. Students should prepare the proposal in a format that matches both the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines and these Style and Format Guidelines, since the final version of the dissertation must conform to them.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Note: These requirements supersede the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines. Otherwise follow the direction of the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines.

Paper. The final copy of the thesis or dissertation must be submitted on high-quality, white paper of at least 20-pound weight. Do not use erasable paper.

Page layout. Begin each section of front and back matter and each chapter on a new page.

Approval/Signature Page: The approval page is prepared by the respective Program office according to approved format for the School of Education.


References. Use APA style for preparing the references in the Reference Section. Supersedes 2.9 and Figure A1.11 of the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines.

Appendices. See APA Manual for appropriate material to include in an appendix.

Use letters (A, B, C, etc.) for appendices, unless there is only one appendix. If so, call it simply “Appendix” (not Appendix A). Use a separate page with the Appendix letter and the appendix title before each appendix. Number these pages, and the pages of the appendices themselves, consecutively with the text (e.g., 175, 176, 177 and so on, not A-1, A-2, A-3).

Appendix material may be single-spaced and may be in a different font from the text. If oversized material does not fit within the margin requirements, reduce it on a photocopier. Supersedes 3.12 of the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines.

The Text

Note: This section augments the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines.

The text of the dissertation or thesis is usually divided into chapters. A typical format for a conventional study in education or psychology is as follows:
CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION. The introduction describes the research problem or research question and lays out the reasoning behind it. This reasoning is sometimes called a theoretical argument. It justifies the study, in terms of a need for the information it will provide, in order to develop or test a theory or to understand, explain, or further describe an educational phenomenon. Refer to the APA manual for additional information about the introduction.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW. This chapter reviews what has already been written in the field on the topic of the research. The literature cited should support the theoretical argument being made and demonstrate that the author has a grasp of the major ideas and findings that pertain to his or her topic. Refer to APA manual for additional information concerning literature reviews.

CHAPTER III – METHOD. The method chapter should give sufficient detail about the methodology used that the study could be replicated. Sections in a Method chapter often include, but are not limited to, the following: participants, instruments, materials, procedure, and analysis. Refer to APA manual for additional information concerning methods sections.

CHAPTER IV – RESULTS. This chapter presents the results of the analyses, usually in order by research question, and any results of further analyses (that is, analyses that were not proposed but which were carried out). Results should be presented without interpretation; interpretation is reserved for the discussion in chapter V. Refer to APA manual for additional information concerning methods sections.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION. Results are interpreted in light of the research questions and discussed in conjunction with other literature. Limitations of interpretation and implications for further research may be presented. Refer to APA manual for additional information concerning methods sections.

An alternative format for the same kind of study is a four-chapter version that more closely approximates the sections of a conventional journal article:

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH QUESTION, AND LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER II – METHOD

CHAPTER III – RESULTS

CHAPTER IV – DISCUSSION

The configuration of the chapters should depend on the contents to be presented. The five- or four-chapter configuration is not a requirement.
Citations. Citations are required in the text whenever you quote or paraphrase an author, reference specific findings from a study, or describe things that are not common knowledge. See APA manual for appropriate citation style. Every citation must have a corresponding entry in the reference list.

Footnotes or endnotes. See APA Manual for footnotes in dissertations. As a general rule of thumb, however, do not use footnotes or endnotes to reference citations. Footnotes or endnotes may be used when explanatory text that is not directly related to the flow of the text is required. More often, however, such material can be included as an appendix and simply referenced in the text: for example, “(see Appendix D)”.

Tables and Figures

Note: This section augments the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines.

Avoid typing a heading near the bottom of a page unless there is room for at least two lines of text following the heading. Avoid beginning a table in the middle of a page unless there is enough room to include the entire table. White space at the end of a page to enhance readability of a section or table is preferable to splitting a table. If a table is too long to fit on one page, it may be continued on the following page(s). Use APA style to title table continuations. Instead of designing very long tables, design sets of shorter tables whenever possible.

A table is a row-and-column arrangement of numbers, letters, or symbols. In general, if it can be typed, it is a table, not a figure. Number tables, including those in the text and in the appendix, consecutively throughout the dissertation. Each table must have a title. Both tables of numbers and tables of words are included in the appendix as examples.

A figure is a graphic illustration such as a chart, graph, diagram, photograph, or map. Figures should be clear and sharp. The final copy of graphs and diagrams must be produced with a computer or hand drafted with professional quality. Number figures, including those in the text and the appendix, consecutively throughout the dissertation. Each figure must have a title. Tables and figures have separate numbering systems. For example, there could be Tables 1 through 15 and Figures 1 through 3 in the same dissertation or thesis.

Titles for tables and figures should be comprehensive enough that a reader could understand what is displayed without finding the discussion of the table or figure in the text. For example, “Means” is too skimpy to be a table title. A better title might be, “Means and standard deviations of demographic variables for the elementary school sample.” See APA manual for additional information concerning table and figure titles.

See APA Manual for placement of tables and figures. Place tables and figures as soon after their first mention in the text as is possible. For clarity, refer to tables and figures by number in the text (e.g., “Table 3 presents...” instead of “The following table presents...”). Tables and figures may be landscaped or photo-reduced to fit on a page, but
the page number must be placed in the same size, location and orientation as for the other pages. Photographs may be originals or high-quality reproductions, but remember that they must be clear enough for photocopying. Color photographs or color-printed figures, although acceptable, will be photocopied in black and white. Make sure that any color-coding is also noted in a form that will show up in black and white.