

# THESIS & PROJECT GUIDE

Published by  
California State University, Dominguez Hills  
Office of Graduate Studies and Research

**August 2019**

THESIS AND PROJECT GUIDE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION  
AND SUBMISSION OF GRADUATE  
THESES AND PROJECTS

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY DOMINGUEZ HILLS  
GRADUATE COUNCIL  
AND  
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

2019

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION TO WRITING A THESIS OR PROJECT.....	1
Steps in Writing and Submitting a Thesis or Project.....	2
Deadlines.....	4
Adequate Planning.....	5
Selecting a Faculty Committee.....	5
Responsibilities of the Faculty Committee.....	5
Responsibilities of the Graduate Dean.....	6
Selecting a Topic.....	7
The Research Proposal.....	7
Human Subjects Clearance.....	8
Animal Subjects Clearance.....	9
Plagairism.....	9
Use of Copyrighted Material.....	10
Collaborative Theses or Projects.....	11
Use of This Guide.....	11
Language Requirements.....	12
Use of the Designated Style Manual.....	12
Most Common Format and Writing Errors.....	13
Use of Foreign Quotations.....	15
Registering Your Intent to Submit a Thesis or Project.....	15
Securing Faculty Approval.....	15
Submission and Review Process.....	16
Final Approval and Publication.....	16
Copyrighting a Thesis or Project.....	17
2. WRITING A THEIS OR PROJECT.....	18
Determining Whether your Work is a Thesis or Project.....	18
Writing a Thesis.....	19
Writing a Project.....	22
3. FORMAT REQUIREMENTS.....	27
Font.....	27
Margins.....	28
Pagination and Order of Pages.....	28
Preliminary Pages.....	29
Body of Text.....	34
Bullet Points and Numbered Listings.....	34
Chapter Titles.....	35
First-Level Subheadings.....	35

Second-Level Subheadings .....	36
Third-Level Subheadings .....	36
Epigraphs .....	36
Tables .....	37
Figures.....	38
Photographs.....	39
Documentation .....	39
Endnotes.....	39
Footnotes.....	40
References or Works Cited .....	40
Appendices.....	40

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO WRITING A THESIS OR PROJECT

Submission of the master's thesis or project is one of the last steps of graduate study and is a serious, scholarly, and formal undertaking by graduate students to demonstrate their ability to investigate, develop, and synthesize materials pertaining to a topic in their field of study. The thesis or project that is submitted not only reflects the student's scholarship, but becomes a permanent example of scholarship at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Future scholars throughout the United States may read the thesis or project and judge both the writer and the university on that reading. Hence, it is assumed that a student will produce a work of the highest possible quality.

Before submitting a thesis or project, students must have met all requirements for Advancement to Candidacy, as specified in the California State University Dominguez Hills Catalogue, and all course work must either be completed or concurrent in the semester that the thesis or project is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. The difference between a thesis and a project is defined in more detail in Chapter 2, but in a general sense, a thesis usually describes the process and results of using a recognized research methodology to answer a significant question, while the project is typically a product, either in the creative arts or an applied field.

It should be emphasized that the decision as to whether a given piece of work is a thesis or a project is the prerogative of the student's faculty committee, based on the guidelines developed by the Graduate Council and specified in this manual. It must be further emphasized

that any creative project is not sufficient in itself to meet the requirement of a project and must be accompanied by a scholarly document.

### Steps in Writing and Submitting a Thesis or Project

The following steps provide an outline for writing and securing approval for the thesis or project. Because of the deadlines for approval, it is recommended that students allow a full academic year to complete the thesis or project. *The need for adequate planning cannot be overemphasized.* To ensure timely completion, students should:

- Meet with a thesis or project advisor to discuss the topic and the selection of faculty committee members.
- Establish a timeline with the faculty committee chair and follow it carefully to ensure meeting committee and university deadlines.
- Obtain thesis or project proposal approval from committee chair.
- Read carefully and follow exactly the format requirements in the *Thesis and Project Guide* and the style manual (APA, MLA, or other) required by the department.
- Follow the outlines presented in Chapter 2 to determine whether your work is a thesis or project and ensure that it meets the scholarship requirements established by the university.
- Register your intent to submit a thesis/project with the Office of Graduate Studies and Research by submitting the Intent to Submit Thesis/Project form. Deadlines for this form can be found on the GRS website at <https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/graduate-studies/thesis/deadlines/> and on page 4 of this guide. The Intent to Submit Thesis/Project form should be submitted by the deadline stated for the semester in which you intend to graduate and will have your thesis complete.
- Submit preliminary drafts to the faculty committee chair and committee members for feedback and make necessary revisions. Several revisions may be necessary before the submission of a final draft to the Graduate Studies and Research Office.
- Submit the final draft to committee members for final approval.

- Obtain faculty approval of your manuscript a week before the Graduate Studies and Research submission deadline. See “Securing Faculty Approval” on page 15 for more information.
- Submit the final draft to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. Work submitted to Graduate Studies with multiple errors, either in format, written quality, or scholarship that does not meet university standards will be required to go through a revision process.

## Deadlines

The deadlines for submission to the Graduate Studies and Research Office for final approval are as follows:

<b>INTENT TO SUBMIT A THESIS/PROJECT FORM DEADLINE</b>	
FALL	On or before September 10
SPRING	On or before February 10
SUMMER	On or before May 20

<b>COMMITTEE APPROVAL DEADLINE</b>		
FALL	External Degree Programs	On Campus Programs
	October 3	October 25
SPRING	March 3	March 25
SUMMER	June 3	June 3

<b>GRADUATE STUDIES SUBMISSION DEADLINE</b>		
FALL	External Degree Programs	On Campus Programs
	October 10	November 1
SPRING	March 10	April 1
SUMMER	June 10	June 10

*Note.* If a deadline date falls on a weekend or campus holiday (including Spring Break), the deadline shall be the first workday following the deadline. **LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED, NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.**

### Adequate Planning

It is the desire of everyone involved that the approval of the thesis or project go as smoothly as possible. To minimize problems in the approval process, it is recommended that students:

- Maintain close communication with faculty committee chair;
- Make certain the manuscript has been carefully edited for standard English correctness, format, and style manual requirements;
- Ascertain how much time the faculty committee members will need to review drafts, and submit the thesis or project to them well in advance of the Graduate Studies Office deadline date;
- Allow sufficient time for revising drafts based on faculty committee feedback.

### Selecting a Faculty Committee

The chair of the faculty committee will be selected from the faculty of the department or program reviewing and approving the thesis. The full committee, selected in consultation with the committee chair, should include three persons, all of whom are to be full-time CSUDH faculty members or Emeritus faculty, unless an exception has been granted by the Graduate Dean in consultation with the Graduate Council. The student may select one of the three committee members from another CSUDH department or program in order to secure special expertise relevant to the thesis topic. Approval of requests for additional committee members should be obtained from the committee chair.

### Responsibilities of the Faculty Committee

The faculty committee is expected to guide and counsel the student during the preparation of the thesis or project. Committee members will suggest specific improvements in organization, form, and content. The committee also has the responsibility for certifying that the

student is competent in the subject area contained in the thesis or project and is able to communicate their scholarly or creative efforts to others with a high degree of skill. Approval by the faculty committee is required prior to submission to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. The committee's approval certifies that the student's thesis or project:

- represents scholarly work worthy of the master's degree;
- gives a clear and accurate description of the work performed;
- incorporates suggestions for improvements made by the faculty committee;
- is free of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors and conforms to accepted standards of graduate writing;
- follows the style manual prescribed by the department.

Faculty committee members indicate their approval via email to [thesis@csudh.edu](mailto:thesis@csudh.edu) from their Dominguez Hills email address. Approval emails should include the following statement, with the student's information filled into the bracketed text:

I certify that the [**thesis/project**] titled "[**Title**]," of [**Student Name**] meets the required standards of scholarship of the university and the student's graduate degree program and is ready to be reviewed. In approving this [**thesis/project**], I agree that the student named above has incorporated into the document all additions and/or corrections required by this member of their committee, that the document has been proofread and edited, and that it follows a documentation style appropriate to the student's discipline.

#### Responsibilities of the Graduate Dean

The Graduate Dean is responsible for assuring that the thesis or project has met the standards established by the Graduate Council of the University. The Graduate Dean or their designee is responsible for checking the features of completed theses or projects specified in this manual, and reserves the right to refuse any manuscript that does not meet those standards. In addition, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research is available to assist students with special problems pertaining to thesis or project production. The signature of the Dean, or their designee,

certifies that the thesis or project meets the scholarly standards of the University, and thus has met the culminating activity requirement for graduation.

### Selecting a Topic

The graduate student and their faculty committee will agree on the research topic for the thesis or the nature of the project. To garner ideas, the student may consult with faculty members in the department.

The thesis or project topic should:

- add to the body of knowledge or work in the field;
- be clearly defined in terms of the context of existing work in the field;
- be feasible in scope and design;
- demonstrate original thinking or original creative work.

One reason for the publication of studies in professional journals is so that they can be repeated by other researchers to test the studies' validity. Therefore, while complete originality is not required, care should be taken not to duplicate existing research; in such a case, plagiarism may be involved.

### The Research Proposal

The research proposal is a conceptual statement of a problem that warrants significant study. The graduate student should work with the faculty committee in developing a research proposal and receive approval from the faculty committee before research begins. Detailed information on the content, style, and format of the thesis and project is contained in later chapters and in the appendices of this guide, and reflects the requirements of the University and the format of typical professional publications in the field of endeavor.

## Human Subjects Clearance

If the research or creative project involves human subjects, the student must secure approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) **before** beginning any research or data collection. Human subjects research includes any research that involves humans, human tissue, or records gathered on humans. In addition to direct intervention or manipulation, it includes such activities as surveys, interviews, and videotaping. There are several review categories, depending upon the level of risk to the subjects and the nature of the subject population. The IRB will determine the appropriate level of review, and **only** the IRB can determine clearance or exemption. **A thesis or project that should have IRB approval, and does not, will be rejected by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research and cannot be resubmitted.**

Points to remember:

- Submission of a completion certificate in the protection of human subjects is required prior to Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of all research protocols;
- All theses and projects that include the use of human subjects must be cleared through the IRB;
- Clearance must be obtained **before** research or data collection begins, as approval cannot be granted retroactively;
- *Exempt* Research means *exempt* from Full Board Review. The IRB is the university's body charged with reviewing studies involving human subjects, and thus determines how and what types of research qualify for exempt status according to the Department of Health and Human Services regulations and the guidance of the Office for Human Research Protections;
- Allow time for the IRB to review a protocol; the faculty committee that conducts this review meets only once each month;
- Upload a copy of the IRB approval to the Graduate Studies Thesis and Project Reviewer with submission of the thesis or project.

The IRB meets only once each month, so proposals should be submitted well ahead of the date research is commenced. Forms and instructions are available from the Office of Graduate Studies and Research at <https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/research/research-compliance/irb/>.

### Animal Subjects Clearance

If the research or creative project involves animal subjects with vertebrae, the student must secure approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before beginning any research or data collection. For more information, visit <https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/research/research-compliance/iacuc/>.

### Plagiarism

At the heart of any university are its efforts to encourage critical thinking skills, effective communication, and above all, intellectual honesty among its students. Thus, all academic work submitted by a student as their own should be in their own unique style, words, and form. When work is submitted that purports to be original but actually is not, the student has committed plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined by California State University, Dominguez Hills as follows:

Plagiarism is considered a gross violation of the university's academic and disciplinary standards. Plagiarism includes the following: copying of one person's work by another and claiming it as his or her own, false presentation of oneself as the author or creator of a work, falsely taking credit for another person's unique method of treatment or expression, falsely representing oneself as the source of ideas or expression, or the presentation of someone else's language, ideas, or works without giving that person due credit. It is not limited to written works. For example, one can plagiarize musical

compositions, photographs, works of art, choreography, computer programs, or any other unique creative effort.

Plagiarism is cause for formal university discipline and is justification for an instructor to assign a lower grade or a failing grade in the course in which the plagiarism is committed. In addition, the university may impose its own disciplinary measures.

### Use of Copyrighted Material

The U.S. Copyright Law (Ph 94-533) provides federal copyright protection for both published and unpublished works. Therefore, authors who wish to include quotations, illustrations, charts, graphs, musical arrangements, and so forth in their theses or projects should make every effort to be sure that reproduction of the copyrighted material does not exceed the doctrine of “fair use,” which considers both the purpose and character of the use of copyrighted material. Unpublished works, as well as works published without valid copyright notice, are eligible for protection. Absence of a c-world (©) does not necessarily mean that a work is in the public domain. Tabular arrangements and compilations are specifically covered under copyright law. Permission to reprint or adapt charts, tables, graphs, tabular arrangements, musical arrangements, and so forth must be sought from the copyright holder.

### Fair Use

If a work is protected by copyright, permission must be acquired prior to incorporation of that work into a new document. Extracts and quotations may be used to a limited extent for purposes of illustration and criticism without permission. Material that is in the public domain, such as legal codes, historical documents, and government publications are usually not subject to copyright restrictions.

### Securing Permission

Efforts to obtain permission to use material from other sources should begin well in advance of the final draft. The student is expected to acquire written permission to use the material, and evidence of such permission must be provided with the final copy of the thesis or project and may be incorporated as an appendix. A statement of permission must appear in a caption or some other obvious location in the thesis or project. The owner of the copyright may request that specific words or phrases be used to indicate that permission was granted. Requests for permission should be directed to the copyright holder, requesting a “one-time non-profit educational use.”

### Collaborative Theses or Projects

In special circumstances, when approved by all members of the faculty committee, students may collaborate on research or a creative activity, but must submit an independently written thesis or project that reflects the student’s own thinking and scholarship. There must be a clear statement in both the abstract and the introduction that notes there was collaboration and describes specifically the contributions of each collaborator. All other instructions regarding the preparation and filing of theses or projects remain the same.

### Use of This Guide

It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with this guide and the designated style manual and to see that all requirements are satisfactorily met. Please do not attempt to follow the format of previously completed theses, as the guidelines may have changed. The schools and departments of the university, in conjunction with the Graduate Council, have

established criteria for master's theses and projects. The style and format requirements serve the following purposes:

- to assist the graduate student in organizing and presenting scholarly knowledge in a standard academic format;
- to provide a uniform and thus more easily evaluated form of graduate achievement;
- to provide permanent evidence of the scholastic achievement of each master's degree candidate.

### Language Requirements

All theses and projects must be written in Standard English, be error free upon submission to the Graduate Studies Office, and meet all standards of graduate-level writing. To assist candidates in meeting these basic requirements, separate sections of this guide fully explain specific requirements of the University. Language requirements of a department's specified style manual must be strictly adhered to.

### Use of the Designated Style Manual

Each graduate program has specified a particular style manual that is to be used in conjunction with this guide. The most current edition of the designated style manual should be used.

One of the following style manuals is usually designated:

- APA, Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
- MLA, the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers
- CSE, Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers

The designated style manual is to be used for the formatting of the body of your thesis or project. The Thesis and Project Guide will outline the formatting requirements for the preliminary pages only.

The style manuals designated by the various graduate programs at CSUDH are:

Designated Department Style Manual

MA	Behavioral Science	APA
MS	Biology	CSE
MA	Business Administration	APA
MS	Clinical Sciences	AMA
MS	Computer Science	APA
MA	Education	APA
MA	English	MLA
MA	English: TESL	APA
MA	Humanities	MLA
MA	Mathematics	APA
MS	Nursing	APA
MA	Psychology	APA
MA	Public Administration	APA
MS	Quality Assurance	APA
MA	Social Work	APA
MA	Sociology	APA
MA	Special Education	APA

### Most Common Format and Writing Errors

It is expected that all theses and projects submitted for final approval will adhere strictly to format requirements and meet the standards of graduate-level writing.

The following are guidelines that will aid in avoiding most common errors:

- Follow all the format requirements of this manual exactly;
- Follow the specific designated style manual (e.g., APA, MLA, CSE) exactly for:
  - subheadings;
  - citations within the text;
  - endnotes or footnotes, works cited, and references;

- labeling and citing tables and figures;
  - quotations;
  - any other element not prescribed in this guide.
- Do not attempt to use a previously submitted thesis or project as an example, as formatting requirements change from year to year.
  - Put commas and periods inside quotation marks except when a citation immediately follows the quote; put colons and semicolons outside quotation marks.
  - Avoid sentence fragments.
  - Avoid comma splices and run-on sentences. Two main clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb such as however, thus, instead, therefore, etc. must be connected by a semicolon, not a comma.
  - Be sure subjects and verbs agree as to number.
  - Check to see that pronouns have clear antecedents.
  - Do not mix verb tenses in paragraphs; be consistent.
  - Stay in the third person. Reserve the first person for the preface or introduction only and avoid second person altogether.
  - Do not use Latin abbreviations in running text, save those for parenthetical text only.
  - Adhere to the following guidelines for using numbers:
    - In general, spell out a number that consists of one or two words and use figures for larger numbers.
    - Use figures for dates, decimals, fractions, parts of literary works, percentages, prices, scores, statistics, and times.
    - Spell out a number that begins a sentence.
    - Do not use superscripts for ordinal numbers.
  - There should not be any bold text, except in instances where required by the department style guide (APA, CSE, or MLA). The use of bold is acceptable in appendices.
  - Use the same font and 12-point size throughout, with the exception of the optional use of 10-point size within tables and in captions/notes.

- No widow or orphan lines (a single line at the top or the bottom of a page).

#### Use of Foreign Quotations

If quotations are in a language other than English, a translation or a paraphrase that adequately renders the meaning of the passage must immediately follow the quote. If the student chooses to use a translation other than their own, the source must be cited. Epigraphs and short phrases do not need to be translated.

#### Registering your Intent to Submit a Thesis or Project

Students must register their intent to submit a thesis or project. To do so, they must fill out the Intent to Submit Thesis/Project Form by the stated deadline for the semester they plan to graduate. This form may be mailed, emailed, or hand-delivered to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. To send your form to Graduate Studies via email, please send it to [thesis@csudh.edu](mailto:thesis@csudh.edu). The form is on the Office of Graduate Studies and Research website at: <https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/graduate-studies/thesis/forms/>

#### Securing Faculty Approval

Please note the Graduate Studies and Research review process cannot begin until all committee members have approved the thesis or project. Plan ahead and secure committee approval **seven (7) days before** the submission deadline. The student is responsible for ensuring their chair and committee members have sent approval, per the instructions below.

Your committee members should email their approval to [thesis@csudh.edu](mailto:thesis@csudh.edu) from their Dominguez Hills email address. Approval emails should include the following statement, with the student's information filled into the bracketed text:

I certify that the [thesis/project] titled “[TITLE],” of [STUDENT NAME] meets the required standards of scholarship of the university and the student's graduate degree program and is ready to be reviewed. In approving this [thesis/project], I agree that the student named above has incorporated into the document all additions and/or corrections required by this member of their committee, that the document has been proofread and edited, and that it follows a documentation style appropriate to the student's discipline.

Once the thesis or project is completed and approved by the committee, the final copy is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, via Blackboard, for final approval. At this point, the graduate faculty committee has approved the content, therefore, no content changes are allowed once the thesis or project has been submitted for final approval.

#### Submission and Review Process

Once Graduate Studies and Research has received all three (3) committee member approvals, the student will be notified via email that a personal review folio has been created for them in Blackboard. The email will contain the “Graduate Studies and Research Thesis/Project Revision Procedure” handout, with instructions for how to upload your approved thesis/project to the folio and commence review.

#### Final Approval and Publication

After submission, the Thesis and Project Reviewer, acting as the Graduate Dean’s designee, reviews the thesis or project for correctness and quality. After any revisions required by the Graduate Studies and Research Office have been made, the Thesis and Project Reviewer will notify the student and Graduate Dean. Once the thesis/project has been approved, students may begin the publication process.

Beginning Spring 2016, California State University, Dominguez Hills will upload student theses/projects to ScholarWorks, an open-access, online repository provided by the Chancellor’s Office. To complete the thesis/project process, the student must fill out the ScholarWorks

Publication form and Non-Exclusive Distribution License. Once these documents are received, a memo will be sent to Admissions and Records stating that the culminating activity requirement has been met and the student is cleared for graduation.

### Copyrighting a Thesis or Project

Copyrighting the thesis or project with the United States Copyright Office is optional. Copyrighting protects the thesis from unauthorized copying. Any student who wishes to copyright should prepare a Copyright Page following the example in the Thesis and Project Template. In addition to preparing the copyright page, the necessary fees for the copyright must be paid to the United States Copyright Office.

## CHAPTER 2

### WRITING A THESIS OR PROJECT

#### Determining Whether Your Work is a Thesis or Project

The California State University Education Code (Title V, Section 40510, p. 473) defines a thesis as:

the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished [product] evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation.

In some departments, graduate students have the option of producing a project instead of the traditional research thesis. The California State University Education Code (Title 5, Section 40510, p. 473) defines a project as:

a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation.

Whereas a thesis is entirely a research or archival-based study, a project is more creative or applied in nature.

## Writing a Thesis

The California State University Education Code requires certain elements to be included in a thesis:

- introduction to the study;
- a review of the literature;
- methodology;
- results and discussion;
- summary;
- recommendations for further research.

*Note.* In some fields, the work may not be formatted in terms of distinct chapters, but, if so desired, may appear instead as a single narrative. In such instances, it is assumed that the applicable elements described above are integrated into the body of the text. The committee chair should be consulted about which elements should be included and the organization thereof before the commencement of the writing of the thesis or project.

### Introduction to the Study

The primary function of the introduction is to give an overview of the study or project.

The following components, either presented as separate sections with subheadings or integrated into one narrative, can be included in the Introduction:

- **Background:** The beginning of the chapter should serve as a carefully organized lead-in to the subject matter under investigation. This section may include an overview of the historical context, the current status, and the projected future dimensions of the subject matter.
- **Statement of the Problem:** The Statement of the Problem presents the focal point(s) of the research. It introduces the “what” of the present investigation (i.e., clearly states what the study will examine or investigate). This section states the specific major question(s) or hypothesis(es) to be studied or tested and makes a precise statement of all minor questions to be explored.
- **Purpose of the Study:** The Purpose of the Study justifies the study. This section explains the significance of the present study and the ways in which it supports other studies, differs from previous studies, extends present knowledge or examines new issues.

- **Theoretical Bases and Organization:** The Theoretical Bases and Organization discusses how the present research corresponds to other studies and the underlying theoretical bases upon which the study is constructed. One or more hypotheses should create the solid foundation upon which the conceptual framework is built.
- **Limitations of the Study:** The Limitations of the Study discusses both content and methodological limitations of the investigation and how the research works within or around these confines.
- **Definition of Terms:** The Definition of Terms should appear at the end of the Introduction and defines any special terms used in the study and establishes abbreviations that will be used throughout the text.

### Review of the Literature

A thesis must always be put in the context of existing work relevant to the topic.

Discussion of said context is referred to as a review of the literature and may encompass discussion of prevailing theory, existing creative works, historical context, relevant studies, and so on. The list of references should reflect that a thorough examination of existing work related to the focus of the thesis has taken place.

There are several ways in which the review of literature section may be structured: chronologically, categorically, or through related theoretical viewpoints. Emphasis should be placed on the reasons underlying the particular areas, topics, and periods selected for review. The chapter should:

- provide evidence supporting the historical, theoretical, and research background for the study;
- show how the study relates to other research studies in similar areas;
- define how the investigation differs from other studies in the field;
- include theoretical foundations, expert opinion, and actual research findings;
- use primary sources whenever possible.

## Methodology

The methodology section describes the research design or approach in depth. This should be a detailed and clearly written description, which permits a precise replication of the study.

The sections described below apply mainly to a quantitative thesis, but may be appropriate to a non-quantitative thesis as well.

- **Design of the Investigation:** The Design of the Investigation explains how the study was formulated to investigate each question or hypothesis. If appropriate, it identifies all variables and how they are manipulated.
- **Population or Sample:** The Population or Sample describes the principal characteristics of the population selected. If a random sample is used, the general population from which the sample was selected and the sampling procedure should be described.
- **Data Collection:** The Treatment describes the exact sequence followed to collect and tabulate the data. It describes the instrument(s) used to collect the data and establishes the validity of the instrument(s) via studies by other researchers.
- **Data Analysis Procedures:** The Data Analysis Procedures section describes and explains how data were analyzed or statistical treatments were used, including descriptions of tests, formulae, computer programs, and procedures.

*Note.* CSUDH Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required for research that uses surveys, interviews, or any other involvement of human subjects. See “Human Subjects Clearance” on page 6 for more information.

## Results and Discussion

The results of the investigation are presented in narrative form and may be supplemented with graphics. Whenever appropriate, tables and figures are used to present the data. The discussion of the results should be well argued in relation to each question or hypothesis. Inferences, projections, and probable explanations of the results may also be included. Implications of patterns and trends are discussed, including any secondary findings.

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The concluding section should summarize the entire research effort. A sufficiently comprehensive overview should enable the intended audience to understand the entire study. At this point, it is appropriate to reacquaint the reader with the conceptual framework, the design of the investigation, the methodology, and the results of the study. This section should include the significance of the study and its conclusions, the limitations and weaknesses of the study, implications for future research, and recommendations.

### References or Works Cited

References or works cited are compiled according to the designated style manual and must include every source cited in the study, including material adapted for use in tables and figures.

### Appendices

Supplementary or peripheral material may be included in the appendices. Appendices might include such things as questionnaires, raw data, letters of permission to reproduce material, and personal correspondence. Tables and figures which have been introduced in the main body of the thesis and are germane to the discussion are required to be included in the text immediately following their first reference; they should not be placed in the Appendices. All materials placed in the Appendices must adhere to guidelines for margins in the *Thesis and Project Guide*.

## Writing a Project

While requirements for various types of projects will vary, certain elements are common to all projects. As previously stated, a creative or an applied project is not sufficient in itself to meet the requirement of a culminating activity. Although the content and structure are more

flexible for a project than for a thesis, all projects, whether creative or applied, consist of two distinct components: (a) the project itself, and (b) an explanation of the project presented in a scholarly framework. The project itself is generally placed in an appendix. A master's project may be presented in any of a variety of appropriate media, including digital, videocassettes, CDs, audio cassettes, slides, kits, ring binders, and book-type materials. The scholarly framework introduces, justifies, and validates the applied or creative project and discusses the project's relationship to previous scholarly activity in the field. The committee chair should be consulted early in the process of planning the project to ensure that the required elements are included in the scholarly framework.

The following pages present the elements of the scholarly framework that are required for CSUDH master's projects. These can be imbedded in the text and do not necessarily need to be defined sections, but the elements should be evident to all readers.

*Note.* In some fields the work may not be formatted in terms of distinct chapters, but, if so desired, may appear instead as a single narrative. In such instances, it is assumed that the applicable elements described above are integrated into the body of the text. The committee chair should be consulted about which elements should be included and the organization thereof before the commencement of the writing of the thesis.

### Introduction

The primary function of the introduction is to provide a comprehensive overview of the project for the reader. Included is an explanation of why the project was created and identifies interests or professional needs, which the project seeks to satisfy. It also defines what the project is in terms of content and format, including specific information regarding the subject matter, the intended audience, how the project is to be used, and the results or effects expected.

Furthermore, there **MUST** be a clear explanation of the importance of the project in the student's field of study or discipline, and a description of the new dimensions, techniques, concepts, or findings that are presented in the work. Depending on the discipline, this

explanation highlights disciplinary techniques or methods and intended effects in the field of study. If the project is designed to be informational, persuasive, or instructional, the objectives are specified.

Any special terms or abbreviations used in the scholarly framework or project crucial to understanding or interpreting the work should be clearly defined at the end of the Introduction.

### Review of Related Literature

The scholarly framework must contain a review of the related literature, which is complete and thorough enough to establish the current work in the context of what already exists and is relevant to the present study or creative project. This review should contain an evaluation of selected, significant studies of the genre, or related theory, and an explanation of how the student's work fits into this larger body of existing works.

Two examples may help to clarify this requirement. If the project is a creative endeavor that consists of original poems, the review of literature would include a discussion of major theoretical concepts related to the crafting of poetry. It would also include a discussion of how the works of major poets influenced the student's own creative work, thus placing the student's own work into a specific context of poetry in general, and perhaps even a specific genre of poetry such as the sonnet, free verse, etc. Whether the creative project consists of a form of literature (e.g., poetry, screenplay, novel, etc.) or original works of art (e.g., paintings, photography, etc.), the same guidelines apply.

A second example would be an applied project, such as those often produced in the professional fields. The review of literature would include a discussion of major theoretical concepts related to the project and how these concepts informed the project, and a discussion of what products similar to the current project already exist. This places the candidate's work into

the broader context of what already exists in the field and supports the value of the contribution the student's project is making to the existing body of work.

### Methodology

The scope of this section will vary depending on the nature of the project. The methodology section describes in depth how every aspect of the project was conducted, compiled, or created. It should be appropriately detailed and should describe the format and technique used in presenting the material. Any techniques, questionnaires, interviews, study sites, and materials used to accomplish the study should be described here.

### Results and Discussion

There may be a results section, depending on the type of project. Any findings to report should be synthesized for inclusion in this section. Material, such as raw data, too detailed to be included in the body of the text can be presented in the appendices.

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The summary discusses how the final project addresses issues that have been raised. It reacquaints the reader with the conceptual framework and the design of the study. This section summarizes the entire project effort.

Conclusions presented should validate both the need for the project and explain how the present project responded to that need.

Recommendations might include comments regarding content, technique, and the process of creating a master's project of this type, and implications for future research.

### References or Works Cited

References or works cited are compiled according to the designated style manual and must include every source cited in the study, including material adapted for use in tables and figures.

### Appendices

As a general rule, the creative project itself is placed in Appendix A. This will allow more freedom in the format of the work. In addition, supplementary or peripheral material such as questionnaires, raw data, letters of permission to reproduce material, and personal correspondence may be included in the appendices. All materials placed in the appendices must adhere to guidelines for margins in the *Thesis and Project Guide*.

*Note.* For any non-print media accompanying a project, approval concerning format and submission must be obtained as early as possible from the student's department and from the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

## CHAPTER 3

### FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

This chapter specifies format requirements for the thesis or project. Students should read every part of this chapter carefully to ensure approval of their manuscript. Failure to adhere to or any deviation from the required format and style will result in the return of the manuscript to the student. **Except for the specific instances listed below, this manual takes precedence over any designated style manual.** The following exceptions are the same as those noted in Chapter 1 under “Use of the Designated Style Manual”:

- citations within the text;
- tables and figures and their captions;
- subheadings;
- format for quotations;
- endnotes or footnotes;
- lists of works cited or references;
- any other element not prescribed in this guide.

#### Font

Theses or projects should be typed into the Thesis Template, using the default settings: Times New Roman 12 pt, double spaced. The entire manuscript, including preliminary pages, all titles, subtitles, endnotes and reference lists must be set in the same size and style of type. A 10-point font size may be used for tables, graphs, and figures as well as their captions or notes. No parts of the text or preliminary pages may be bolded, including any text that appears in tables or

figures, with the exception of certain subheadings as designated by departmental style guides (e.g., APA style guide requirements). Italics may be used to emphasize a word or phrase in the text.

The following additional guidelines also apply:

- Justified margins will **not** be accepted.
- The placement of numbers for pagination must be consistent with the required university format.
- No widow or orphan lines (a single line at the top or the bottom of a page) in any part of the text.

### Margins

All pages of the thesis or project, including all preliminary pages, the body of the text, and pages of the appendices must conform to the following margin requirements:

- Left margin: 1 inch
- Right margin: 1 inch
- Bottom margin: 1 inch
- Top margin: 1 inch
- Page numbers must be centered, 0.5 inches from the bottom of the page for preliminary pages.
- Page numbers must be right aligned, 0.5 inches from the top of the page for the body of the thesis/project.

### Pagination and Order of Pages

All pages of the thesis or project, from the title page to the last page of the appendices, are counted but not necessarily numbered. Some pages, such as the title page, abstract, and all half-title pages are counted but do not actually bear page numbers. The following guidelines apply to pagination of the thesis or project.

Preliminary pages are placed in the order listed below:

Title Page	– not numbered
Approval Page	– not numbered
Copyright Page	– not numbered
Dedication Page	– not numbered
Acknowledgments	– numbered
Preface	– numbered
Table of Contents	– numbered
List of Tables	– numbered
List of Figures	– numbered
List of Symbols	– numbered
Abstract	– not numbered

- Number the preliminary pages of the thesis with lowercase Roman numerals at the bottom of the page, beginning with the title page as page number i (though the page itself does not bear a page number). Numbers should appear without punctuation or other embellishment.
- Number the pages of the body of the thesis with Arabic numerals in the top right corner of the page, beginning with the first page of the first chapter as page number 1. Numbers should appear without punctuation or other embellishment.
- Endnotes, Reference/Works Cited lists, and Appendices are consecutively numbered, following the body of the text, at the top right of the page.

### Preliminary Pages

Preliminary pages are described below and should appear in the following order:

#### Title Page

The guidelines for preparing the title page are as follows:

- The title page consists of four evenly spaced components.
- Each component is separated from the next by a division line 12 spaces long.
- Each component should be centered both vertically and horizontally within the required margins.

#### Approval Page

The guidelines for preparing the approval page are as follows:

- The thesis or project title and author's name should appear in all caps, left aligned at the top of the page.
- The three committee members should be left aligned on the right half of the page. Note that this page should not include live signatures, just typed names.
- This page is counted, but not numbered.

### Copyright Page

The copyright page is optional. Only include a copyright plan if you wish to pay a fee to protect your thesis/project from unauthorized use. The guidelines for preparing the Copyright page are as follows:

- Text is centered both vertically and horizontally within the required margins.
- Text double spaced.
- This page is counted, but not numbered.

### Dedication Page

The dedication page is optional, names those to whom the work is dedicated, and should be prepared as follows:

- No heading appears on the page.
- Text is centered both horizontally and vertically on the page within the required margins.
- Text is double spaced.
- This page is counted, but not numbered.

### Acknowledgments

The acknowledgments page(s) is optional and is an opportunity for the author to identify those people whom he or she wishes to thank, such as mentors, colleagues, individuals, or institutions that supported the research, and those who granted permission to cite or reproduce works in the text. The guidelines for preparing the Acknowledgements are as follows:

- The heading ACKNOWLEDGMENTS in all capital letters is centered, 1 inch from the top of the page
- There is a triple space between the heading and the text.
- Text is double spaced.
- This page is numbered in lower case Roman numerals at the bottom of the page, centered, half an inch from bottom margin.

### Preface

The preface is optional. Written by the author, it contains brief remarks describing what preceded the undertaking of the work and may be written in first person. It must not be used in lieu of the introduction to the study. The guidelines for preparing the preface are as follows:

- The heading PREFACE in all capital letters is centered, 1 inch from the top of the page.
- There is a triple space between the heading and the text.
- Text is double spaced.
- This page(s) is numbered in lower case Roman numerals at the bottom of the page, centered, half an inch from bottom margin.

### Table of Contents

The guidelines for preparing the Table of Contents are as follows:

- The heading TABLE OF CONTENTS in all capital letters is centered, 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Triple spaced below this and flush with the left-hand margin, preliminary pages are listed in all capital letters, beginning with the Acknowledgments page (if there is one) through the Abstract. Preliminary pages are double spaced on the Table of Contents.
- Leader dots (series of dots) should lead to and end at each page number. Page numbers are aligned on the right margin. (Justify the text so that both the left and right margins are straight.)
- Chapter titles are numbered with Arabic numerals in sequential order.

- Double spaced below chapter titles (chapter headings do not appear on the Table of Contents), all first-level sub-headings are listed in initial capitals, indented half an inch from the left margin, with leader dots and page numbers as described above.
  - There should be a single space between subheadings.
  - There should be a double space between first-level subheadings and the chapter title.
- The pages of the Table of Contents are numbered in lowercase Roman numerals at the bottom of the page, centered, half an inch from the bottom of the page.

### List of Tables

If the thesis or project contains one or more tables, a List of Tables must be prepared. The List of Tables follows the Table of Contents on a new page. The guidelines for preparing the List of Tables are as follows:

- The heading LIST OF TABLES in all capital letters is centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Triple spaced below this and flush with the left margin all table titles are listed in a numbered list format, with a double space between each entry.
- Tables are sequentially numbered with Arabic numerals in the order in which the tables appear in the thesis or project. The word “table” does not appear beside the table number (i.e., the list should appear in the following format: 1. Table Title Goes Beside the Number).
- If a specific title is too long, the carryover line is single spaced.
- Leader dots (series of dots) should lead to and end at each page number. Page numbers are aligned on the right margin. (Justify the text so that both the left and right margins are straight.)
- The List of Tables must contain titles and page numbers identical to those used in the text.
- Second and subsequent pages of the List of Tables (if any) begin 1 inch from the top of the page. There are no headings on second and subsequent pages.
- The pages of the List of Tables are numbered in Roman numerals at the bottom of the page, centered, half an inch from the bottom of the page.

### List of Figures

If the thesis or project contains one or more figures, a List of Figures must be prepared.

The List of Figures follows the List of Tables on a new page. The guidelines are as follows:

- The heading LIST OF FIGURES in all capital letters is centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- The remainder of the instructions pertaining to the List of Figures is identical to those for the List of Tables. *Note.* Do not include resource information for the figures on this list. That information goes in the figure caption.

### List of Symbols

A List of Symbols (sometimes called “Nomenclature”), if desired, follows the List of Figures on a new page and should follow the same format as the Lists of Tables.

### Abstract

The Abstract, the last preliminary page, is required and is placed immediately before the main body of the thesis or project. The Abstract should contain a statement of the problem studied, the research plan, procedures and methods employed, and a summary of the results and conclusions. If the work is a project that includes a product, the Abstract must describe the product and its significance. The guidelines for preparing the Abstract are as follows:

- The heading ABSTRACT is centered in all capital letters 1 inch from the top of the page.
- There is a triple space between the heading and the text.
- Text is double spaced.
- The first line of each paragraph is indented.
- No use of first person.
- No use of future tense (e.g., the abstract does not state what the study will cover, but rather what the study does cover).
- No more than 150 words in text.

- The page is counted, but not numbered.

### Body of Text

The body of the text explains, illustrates, argues for, and in some cases proves, by organizing in a coherent manner, the evidence gathered from various sources. The thesis or project will usually be divided into several chapters, some or all of which may be prescribed by the faculty committee. The text should be clear, accurate, and written in an academic, scholarly style. The presentation of the thesis or project is as important as the research, and time should be taken to edit and proofread the final copy of the manuscript:

Within the body of the text, there are several important requirements:

- All text must be written in standard English and must meet accepted standards of graduate-level scholarship.

### Line Spacing

The line spacing requirements must be followed exactly and are as follows:

- Double spacing in the Abstract and the text or body of the thesis.
- Triple spacing between the chapter heading (CHAPTER 1) and the chapter title (INTRODUCTION). Triple spacing means two full blank lines between the typed lines.<sup>1</sup>
- First lines of all paragraphs indented half an inch.

### Bullet Points and Numbered Listings

All bullet points and numbered listings are indented half an inch with single-spaced carryover lines and a double space between each item. Listings should be preceded by numbers, dashes, bullets, or other embellishments. The bullet points, numbers, and other such

---

<sup>1</sup> Triple spacing has two blank lines in between the lines of text (just as double spacing has one blank line in between lines of text). In order to triple space, type the heading and insert three returns on single spacing or, in the alternative, one return on double spacing and one return on single spacing.

embellishments should begin at the half-inch mark and the text for that listing should begin at .75 inches. Second-level listings (i.e., listings within listings), are indented 1 inch and follow the same format as above.

### Chapter Titles

The following are the directions for chapter titles:

- Each chapter begins on a new page.
- The word CHAPTER in all capitals, followed by the chapter number (in Arabic or Roman numerals), is centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- The chapter title in all capital letters is centered and triple spaced below the chapter heading.
- If the chapter title exceeds 4 inches, additional lines are carried over, single spaced and centered.

### First-Level Subheadings

First-level headings should follow the format shown in the style manual designated by the candidate's department. In instances where the style manual does not specify how to format a first-level heading (i.e., MLA and CSE), use the University style, as described below:

- The first-level heading is centered within the margins,
- not underlined,
- has the first letter of each major word capitalized,
- has triple spacing before the heading and double spacing between the heading and the text.

The length of a heading on any given line should not exceed 4 inches. If the heading is lengthy, subsequent lines are carried over and single spaced.

## Second-Level Subheadings

Second-level headings should follow the format shown in the style manual designated by the candidate's department. In instances where the style manual does not specify how to format a second-level heading (i.e., MLA and CSE), use the University style, as described below:

- The second-level heading is left aligned, flush with the left margin,
- is underlined,
- has the first letter of each major word capitalized,
- has no punctuation,
- has double spacing before and after the heading.

The length of a heading on any given line should not exceed 4 inches. If the heading is lengthy, subsequent lines are carried over and single spaced.

## Third-Level Subheading

Third-level headings should follow the format shown in the style manual designated by the candidate's department. In instances where the style manual does not specify how to format a third-level heading (i.e., MLA and CSE), use the University style, as described below:

- The third-level heading is indented half an inch, and begins the paragraph,
- is underlined,
- has the first letter of each major word capitalized,
- ends with a period,
- has text that immediately follows the heading, on the same line.

## Epigraphs

Used at the head of chapters, epigraphs are:

- There should be a double space between the epigraph and the chapter title, placed within the right half of the page,
- aligned with the right margin,
- single spaced,
- in all italics,
- not enclosed in quotation marks.

The name of the author of the quotation is given below the epigraph, single-spaced and flush right. The source of the quotation should be listed in the References or Works Cited section. There is a double space between the epigraph and the text.

## Tables

### Style Manual Requirement

Numerical results of research are frequently presented in tabular form. All tables must follow the format shown in the style manual designated by the candidate's department, including the format of the table title.

### Placement within Text

Tables must be introduced by their number and title prior to being inserted in the text.

The following are the directions for tables:

- The order in which the tables are mentioned in the text determines their sequential numbering.
- All tables are numbered in Arabic numerals, and all references should be by this number.
- The title for each table appears at the top.
- All source material and notes are placed beneath the table.
- Each table should be placed as close to its first reference as possible.

- There is a triple space both above and below each table unless it begins at the top of a page or ends at the very bottom of a page, in which case there should be no extra space above or below.
- Tables must fill a complete page before continuing to another page. For subsequent pages of a table, include the column headers used on the first page of the table.

## Figures

All figures, illustrations, photographs, maps, diagrams, and the like must be of professional quality and may be created through computer graphics programs.

### Style Manual Requirements

All figures must follow the format shown in the style manual designated by the candidate's department, including the format of the figure caption.

### Placement within Text

Figures, illustrations, graphs, and the like are to be placed in the text, followed by a caption, which appears at the bottom of the figure.

- The order in which the figures are mentioned in the text determines their sequential numbering.
- All figures are numbered in Arabic numerals.
- The caption for each figure appears beneath the figure.
- Each figure should be placed as close to its first reference as possible. If the figure will not fit on the same page, it may be placed on the top of the following page, leaving a large bottom margin on the page containing its reference.
- There is a triple space both above and below each figure unless it begins at the top of a page or ends at the very bottom of a page, in which case there should be no extra space above or below.
- A figure must be complete on one page.

### Photographs

Photographic illustrations may be black and white or color prints. Photographs should be of professional quality. Photographs and captions must be within the required margins. Captions should be placed just under the photograph, following the designated style manual instructions for figure captions.

### Documentation

Documentation refers to the citing of references within the text and also to the list of citations that appears at the end of the text and before the Appendices. It is important to observe all punctuation, spacing, and other elements of the required citation format carefully, as exact conformance to the designated style manual is required.

### Endnotes

The endnotes section should be titled 1 inch from the top of the first page of the endnotes section. There is a triple space between the title and the first entry in the list of endnotes. Pages should be consecutively numbered in the upper right corner. Endnotes are compiled exactly according to the designated style manual and must include every source cited in the study, including material that has been adapted for use in tables and figures. Endnotes come before the Works Cited or References list.

### Footnotes

If used, footnotes must strictly follow the format prescribed in the designated style manual.

### References or Works Cited Section

The title for this section (for example, REFERENCES or WORKS CITED) is determined by the departmental style manual and should be typed in capital letters and centered 1 inch from the top of the first page of the reference section. There is a triple space between the title and the first entry in the list of references. Pages should be consecutively numbered.

References or Works Cited are compiled according to the most recent edition of the designated style manual and must include every source cited in the study, including material that has been adapted for use in tables and figures.

### Appendices

If there is only one Appendix, then the word APPENDIX in all capitals is centered 1 inch from the top of the page. Immediately following the word Appendix is a colon and the Appendix title, on the same line. If there is more than one Appendix, then the word APPENDIX should be followed by a letter, numbered alphabetically (e.g., APPENDIX A), a colon and the Appendix title. Both the Appendix label and appendix title appear in all capital letters. If the title exceeds 4 inches, additional lines are carried over, single-spaced and.

An appendix contains material of interest to the reader that is peripheral and not an integral part of the thesis or project text. Copies of questionnaires, follow-up letters, detailed tables or data, copies of correspondence between the writer and other persons, and so forth, ordinarily are put in an appendix. When diverse materials are included, an appendix should be

created for each group of data (e.g., computer printouts, questionnaires, correspondence, and certain figures). Appendices will vary in format, and a certain degree of freedom is allowed. Spacing, layout, use and style of headings, use of bolded text, and so forth, are determined by the content. Pages should be consecutively numbered. **All pages of the appendices must conform to *Thesis and Project Guide* margin requirements.**