

Master's Thesis Handbook and Writer's Guidelines

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BRIDGEWATER

STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Preface	iv
Chapter 1. Thesis: Purpose and Characteristics	1
<i>Thesis or non-thesis option</i>	2
Chapter 2. Thesis: Elements of the Process.....	3
<i>How to select a thesis topic</i>	4
<i>How to select a thesis advisor</i>	4
<i>How to select a thesis committee</i>	5
<i>Resource considerations: Time, costs, and support</i>	5
Chapter 3. Thesis: University Research Policies and Procedures	6
<i>Academic integrity</i>	6
<i>Human subjects and Institutional Review Board requirements</i>	6
<i>Research incentive payment policy and procedures</i>	6
CHAPTER 4. Thesis: Required Forms and Procedures	7
<i>Thesis proposal and approval form</i>	7
<i>Thesis course registration</i>	7
<i>Thesis course grades</i>	8
<i>Thesis defense process and presentation</i>	8
<i>Oral defense result options and thesis approval process</i>	9
<i>Approved thesis submission to CoGS and Maxwell Library</i>	9
<i>Author and University rights</i>	10
Chapter 5. Thesis: Manuscript Requirements	11
<i>General Rules</i>	11
<i>Format</i>	11
<i>Margins</i>	11
<i>Type and font</i>	11
<i>Placement of page numbers</i>	11
<i>Style</i>	12
<i>Using copyrighted material in your manuscript</i>	12
<i>Reproduction quality</i>	12

<i>Preliminary Pages</i>	12
<i>Thesis signature approval page</i>	12
<i>Thesis title page</i>	13
<i>Copyright page</i>	13
<i>Abstract page</i>	13
<i>Dedication page</i>	13
<i>Acknowledgements page</i>	13
<i>Preface page</i>	13
<i>List of tables and figures</i>	14
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	14
<i>List of symbols</i>	14
<i>Table of Contents</i>	14
<i>Body of the Thesis</i>	14
<i>How to present figures</i>	15
<i>How to present tables</i>	15
<i>Supplemental Pages</i>	15
<i>Endnotes</i>	15
<i>References</i>	15
<i>Appendices</i>	16
<i>Final note: Your thesis format checklist</i>	16
Appendix A. Suggested Two Semester Thesis Process	18
Appendix B. Graduate Thesis Proposal Approval Form.....	19
Appendix D. Exit Requirement Request Form	21
Appendix E. Thesis Approval Signature Page	22
Appendix F. Thesis Title Page.....	23
Appendix G. Approved Graduate Thesis Submission and Binding Payment Form	24

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If there are any corrections or suggestions for improving this document, please feel free to submit them to the Office of Graduate Student Services at graduatestudies@bridgew.edu. Thank you!

Preface

This handbook serves as a guide and support for all graduate students working on a master's thesis in BSU's College of Graduate Studies. It is intended to help them create and complete their thesis in a timely manner. This handbook also serves as a resource for graduate faculty serving as thesis advisors and thesis committee members in support of these students.

This document is to be used in conjunction with other university policies and practices which are published in their degree program documents and the current and official BSU graduate catalog found at <http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=1192>

Please confer with your thesis advisor to ensure that you have all pertinent information of your program's thesis standards to ensure that you meet all requirements for graduation.

Chapter 1. Thesis: Purpose and Characteristics

(This section is reprinted with permission from Central Connecticut State University's *Master's Thesis Handbook and Writer's Guidelines for Graduate Students*).

Preparing a master's thesis is a time-honored tradition in academe, yet many students who are about to undertake such a project have only the vaguest notion of what is involved in writing a thesis.

Students also may perceive the thesis as a formidable process; yet it does not need to be the case. All theses should be based on the compilation of knowledge and skills acquired throughout the student's graduate program.

However, no single definition of a thesis exists. What constitutes an appropriate thesis varies considerably between disciplines and even between faculty members within a discipline. Given this lack of uniformity regarding what a thesis is (and the resulting anxiety it invokes in students!), how can we describe a thesis? Here are four common characteristics.

First, a thesis is **an exercise in research**. You are asked to demonstrate your skills in using the methodologies of your field to examine a topic of interest to your discipline.

Research methodology varies widely across disciplines. For example, in the physical sciences, research often (but not always) involves the use of experimental procedures in a laboratory setting; in the humanities, research may involve a descriptive or interpretative analysis of some piece of literature; and in the social sciences, research may involve surveys or field studies.

A topic of interest to your discipline means an area of research that is generally viewed as fruitful by other researchers in the field. Within any discipline there are typically many sub-fields of interest. Research activities, such as a thesis, usually focus on a limited area, exploring a very specific issue or question.

A second characteristic of a thesis is that, no matter what the topic or methodology used, the intent of the research is to **contribute to the field**. A contribution is any "new" information that you can give to your discipline. This can take many forms: a test of a new theory, a reinterpretation of a published literary work, or an evaluation of a curriculum.

The list is endless, but the common element is this: an addition to the knowledge base of your field requires you to have an in-depth understanding of a particular area of your discipline. And, you must know the current literature or "state of the art" if you are to add to it.

In this regard, a thesis represents the capstone activity of your graduate degree program. To complete it successfully, you must demonstrate mastery over both a specific content area AND the methodology of your discipline. Indeed, the master's degree has traditionally identified one as both an intelligent consumer of information and as a contributor to the field of study.

Third, a thesis represents **an opportunity to work closely with one or more faculty members in your field**. One characteristic of sound graduate education is the opportunity for faculty and students to

work together in a close relationship characterized as academic mentoring. While much of the content of any field can be taught in traditional classes, there is always some art to any discipline. These nuances are best conveyed in the context of a close working relationship. Working on a thesis under the tutelage and supervision of faculty provides an opportunity for learning that is not always found in other graduate school activities.

The fourth and final characteristic of a thesis is more personal in nature: **a thesis is an exercise in self-discipline.** Completing a thesis requires sustained initiative and focus for an extended time. Unlike classes, there are no fixed times or specific deadlines imposed by the instructor. YOU provide the structure. The choice of topic and faculty as your thesis advisor and thesis committee members is largely yours. Indeed, faculty will generally look to you to be the initiator of your thesis work. A master's degree acknowledges you as a professional in your field. The mark of a professional is the ability to be self-motivated and self-directed.

To recap, a thesis is a substantive written document that entails independent research activity undertaken to explore some question, problem or topic of interest to the field which can be defended in an oral presentation before their professional peers. The goal of this activity is to add new knowledge to the discipline and to demonstrate competency and worthiness of an advanced degree in the field.

Thesis or non-thesis option

Now that you understand what a thesis project entails, you have an important decision: Should I pursue the thesis or non-thesis option for my exit requirement? All programs that have a thesis option also offer other exit requirement options. You should discuss these options with your graduate advisor before making the decision.

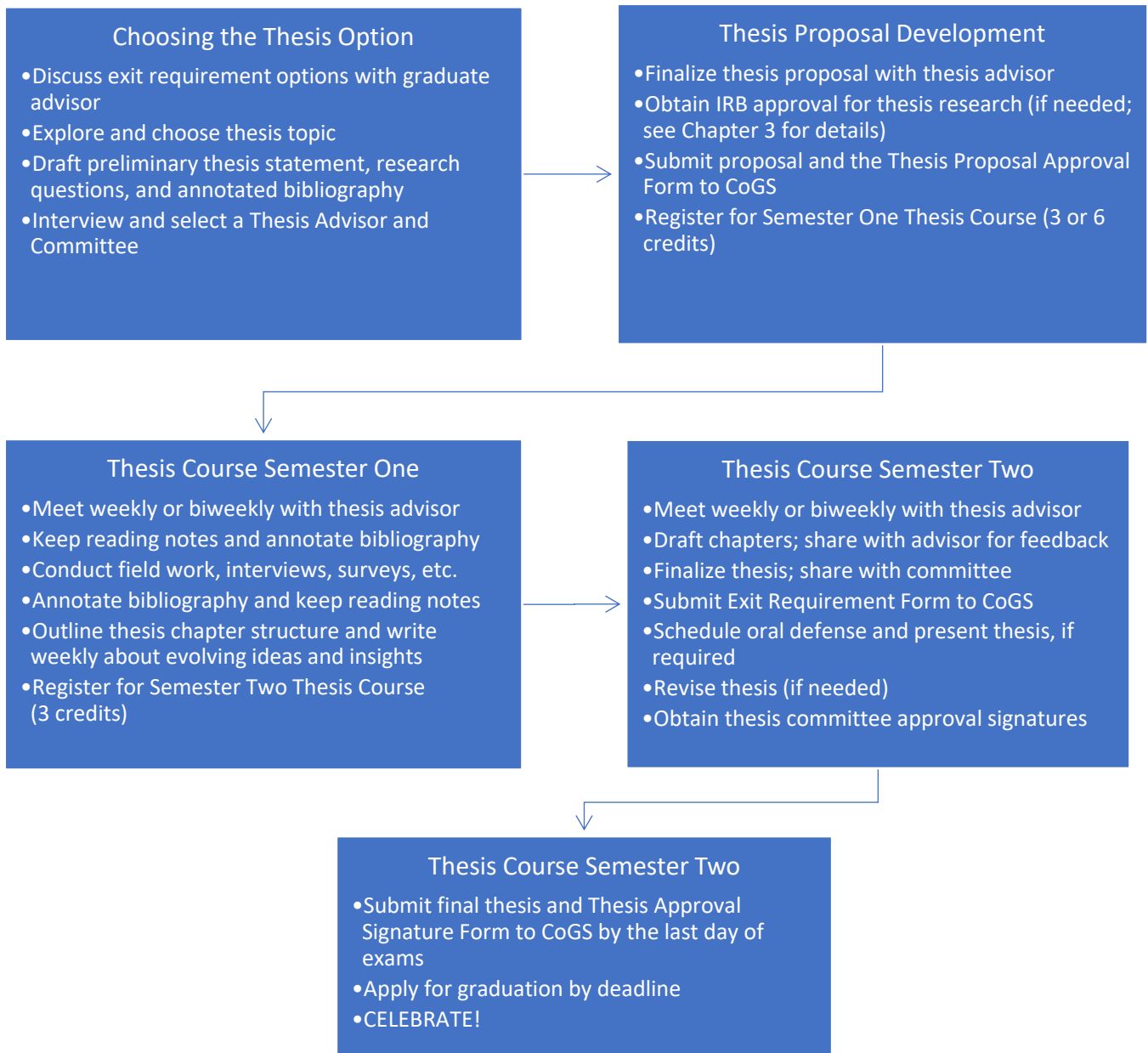
Writing a graduate thesis will build numerous skills—in writing, research, critical thinking, creativity, and organization—and will add an important credential to your résumé that demonstrates your ability to envision and complete a long-term project under a deadline. The mentoring that you receive from a thesis advisor (who may be someone else instead of your graduate advisor) is a key benefit of the thesis experience. Your thesis advisor can help you become a more accomplished writer and researcher, aid you in locating professional opportunities to share or publish your research or creative work, and provide detailed letters of recommendation for jobs, awards, or applications for advanced degrees such as the PhD, MFA, JD, or MD.

If you are interested in pursuing work in a non-academic, non-profit, government, or business workplace, then you may find a non-thesis option more appealing and the best choice. Non-thesis options vary by department and may include additional coursework, a comprehensive examination, portfolio, or special project.

Although writing a master's thesis is not an easy task, students invariably find it to be one of the most rewarding experiences of their graduate program. Therefore, be sure to confirm your program's exit requirements and options when making this important decision. You will find this information at <http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=1248>

Chapter 2. Thesis: Elements of the Process

Now that you have decided to complete a master's thesis, the question arises: How do I get started? The following diagram and descriptive sections present what is required to initiate and complete a master's thesis in two semesters. **NOTE:** If your graduate program's exit requirement option allows for a 3-credit thesis or you wish to complete a thesis in one semester, then discuss this diagram and gain the approval of your thesis advisor before accelerating the process outlined below.



This diagram is also listed in Appendix A and can be used as a review sheet during your thesis process.

How to select a thesis topic

A thesis topic can grow out of topics or lessons learned in a previous course or research project, or it can be independent of any prior coursework. A refined topic can be a long-standing personal interest or ignited by reading current books, articles, or other media in your field. It may even come from work or volunteer experiences in organizations that focus on a specific issue or problem. With the aim to make an original or creative contribution to the discipline, a master's thesis should present a persuasive argument that adds to or extends the current scholarly conversations about the topic.

For a scholarly research thesis, the first step is to articulate subfields or methods, topics, research questions, and/or possible texts or authors that interest you. Feel free to brainstorm multiple topics with prospective thesis advisors. If a topic is too broad or general at first, conversations with potential thesis advisors can help you bring your research question, goals, and methodology into focus.

Remember: a thesis is a project that will require a long-term commitment of one to two semesters (no more than 12 months) to complete. Therefore, you should choose an idea that will keep you motivated and interested. It does not have to be the final word on any topic in your discipline, but it should be doable and contribute to the advancement of your field.

How to select a thesis advisor

It is important to distinguish between your graduate advisor who you met at the start of your graduate education at BSU and your thesis advisor. Your thesis advisor is the person who will help you navigate the thesis process and will serve as your thesis committee chairperson. Your thesis advisor may be your graduate advisor, or they may be another faculty member in your graduate program.

Choosing a thesis advisor involves many considerations. Most students gravitate towards a faculty member with whom they have taken a prior course, since their scholarly interests may already be aligned. However, it may be advisable to find the faculty member whose research best suits your topic, even if you have never worked together before. One way to find your thesis advisor would be to consult your program's Website or speak with your graduate program coordinator (also known as your program's DGCE Chair) to see your program's graduate faculty list and their research specializations.

Once you have identified a prospective thesis advisor, contact them in person or send an email requesting a meeting to discuss your interest in pursuing a thesis project. Be sure to emphasize the semester(s) in which you plan to research and write the thesis to ensure that they will be available to advise and mentor you through the thesis experience. It would be helpful to your discussion if you include any preliminary thesis proposal or outline you may have written. If that faculty member is interested and available, be sure to discuss the mentoring style and timing that you might need to complete this requirement. This information will be helpful in determining if you are suited to working together.

If you do not know it already, ask the thesis advisor to share your program's standards for manuscript style and form used in your department and discipline. Your thesis advisor may also recommend your reviewing recently completed theses in your program to see examples of good writing and presentation.

How to select a thesis committee

As stated earlier, your thesis advisor serves as the chairperson of your thesis committee and needs to be from your graduate program. The other committee members – i.e., a minimum of two graduate faculty members – will serve as your thesis readers. These members may also be from your program or they may be from another academic discipline at BSU relevant to your thesis. If desired, one of these committee members may be a graduate faculty member working at another college or university.

Be sure to consult with your thesis advisor before choosing your thesis committee members. As you did in selecting your thesis advisor, be sure to contact them in person or send an email requesting a meeting to discuss your interest in pursuing a thesis project. Inform them of the semester(s) in which you plan to research and write the thesis as well as include any preliminary thesis proposal or outline you may have written. It is important to confirm their interest and availability to serve on your thesis committee in the semester you intend to complete your thesis.

Resource considerations: Time, costs, and support

Every thesis requires resources from the student and/or graduate department or university. Be sure to consider the following questions with your thesis advisor and answer them to create your thesis proposal:

- How long will it take to complete the thesis?
- Will the thesis require out-of-pocket expenses (e.g., travel, research materials or incentives)? If so, are there any financial support resources available (e.g., graduate program or external grants)? If you need financial support to conduct your thesis research, be sure to discuss options with your thesis advisor and review the [BSU Graduate Funding Opportunities Website](#). You can also check your discipline's professional organizations for other possible graduate student support options.

NOTE: If incentives are involved, then you will need to follow the BSU Research Incentive Policy and Procedures as described in the next chapter.

- Will the thesis require access to special materials (e.g., library archives, agency records)? If so, are there any financial requirements (e.g., travel) to gain such access?
- Will the thesis require people to participate in the research (e.g., through interviews, surveys, clinical observations)? If so, then students are required to have their thesis advisor apply for BSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) consideration and approval as noted in the next chapter.

NOTE: If the research involves people that are affiliated with another institution (e.g., a hospital or school), then you will need to determine if these institutions require their IRB's review and approval. Again, IRB approval is required from all involved institutions ***before*** the start of any thesis data collection.

Chapter 3. Thesis: University Research Policies and Procedures

Academic integrity

As students at Bridgewater State University, you are encouraged to value personal integrity and have it as the foundation of leading an ethical and honest life.

Academic integrity means you are consistently doing the right thing — i.e., your thesis research work is your own and not a friend's or copied from books or the internet without citing it properly. If all grades are fairly earned in the classroom, the value of your degree increases, and employers can then be confident that the BSU graduates they hire are knowledgeable and have strong foundations in their fields. Details about this policy and resources for avoiding plagiarism are provided at <https://www.bridgew.edu/academics/academic-integrity/students>

Human subjects and Institutional Review Board requirements

Some thesis projects involve research with human subjects. If you intend to do research with human subjects--such as interviews, surveys, field research, data collection from records, or quoting of participants in site visits--then you must obtain approval from BSU's Institutional Review Board before conducting the research.

Please review the [BSU IRB Purposes and Principles](#) and the [BSU IRB Guidelines for Investigators](#) to learn more about your responsibilities as a researcher. Be sure to complete the [BSU IRB Training](#) before completing the IRB application. (These links are only accessible on the BSU Intranet.)

NOTE: Your thesis advisor must be listed as the Principal Investigator on your IRB review application. You are listed as a Co-Investigator since you will conduct the research. It is your responsibility to complete the IRB application form with all required signatures before submitting it with your thesis proposal to your thesis advisor. **Only faculty can submit IRB applications;** therefore, your thesis advisor must submit the application and proposal on your behalf. For more details, please see the [IRB Website](#) located on the BSU Intranet.

Research incentive payment policy and procedures

Some researchers need to provide incentives (i.e., payment or small gifts) to human subjects to obtain sufficient participation. BSU has established a policy and procedures for these efforts which must be followed should such resources be available to graduate thesis research. For further details, please refer to the BSU Office of Finance's [Research Incentive Payment Policy and Procedures](#) document located on BSU Intranet.

CHAPTER 4. Thesis: Required Forms and Procedures

Thesis proposal and approval form

All students must prepare a detailed proposal before the start of any writing or research for their thesis. You may wish to review any available thesis development resources in your program as well as one or both of the following:

1. Harvard College Writing Center's *Developing a Thesis*:
<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/developing-thesis>
2. George Mason University (VA) Writing Center's *How to Write a Research Question*:
<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/how-to-write-a-research-question>

Be sure to write your proposal in consultation with your thesis advisor in the semester or summer prior to beginning your research efforts on this important project.

Your proposal should include:

- A title page
- An abstract that summarizes the proposal
- A statement of purpose and brief project description
- A bibliography of primary and secondary sources
- A timeline with an estimated completion date

Your thesis proposal must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Student Services (OGSS) in Maxwell 021 before the semester add/drop deadline (usually 7 days after classes begin). It must be attached to a completed [Thesis Proposal Approval Form](#) (see example in Appendix B). The form requires the approval signatures of your thesis advisor, all other thesis committee members, and your graduate program's DGCE Chair. Once received in OGSS, the dean will review your proposal and application form for final approval. You will be notified in a timely manner of the dean's final decision. You will also receive a copy of your approved proposal which should be kept for your records.

NOTE: If a thesis committee member needs to be replaced for any reason, you will need to complete and submit a new *Graduate Thesis Proposal Approval Form* identifying the new committee member. This change must be approved by the program's DGCE Chair and CoGS dean.

Thesis course registration

Students who choose the thesis exit requirement option must register for a **total of six credits** of their program's thesis course (i.e., typically, 3-credits in one semester and 3-credit in the following semester) unless your program allows for a 3-credit thesis option. Registering for thesis credit hours ensures that you will receive graduate degree credit for your work, and that this work will appear on your graduate transcript.

The [Thesis Course Registration Form - Graduate](#) requires the approval signatures of your thesis advisor, graduate advisor, the DGCE Chair of your graduate program, and the CoGS dean (see

example in Appendix C). It must be completed and submitted to the OGSS staff in Maxwell Library, room 021, no later than the last day of the drop/add period for each semester you work on your thesis after your thesis proposal has been approved. Once approved by the dean, you will be notified of the decision. The OGSS staff will send the form directly to the Registrar's Office to complete the registration process.

The course will appear on your class schedule in InfoBear. **Be sure to check to confirm that the Registrar has entered the correct number of credits (3 or 6) for the semester.**

Thesis course grades

For each semester in which you are registered for your thesis course, your thesis advisor will enter a letter grade (or pass/no pass for POLI 588) to evaluate your research and writing. A grade of incomplete may be submitted to afford the thesis writer additional time for revision to achieve approval of all committee members. The grade of incomplete is only given at the discretion of the thesis advisor.

Thesis defense process and presentation

Once the thesis has been written, many programs require students to present and defend their project efforts. (Please confer with your thesis advisor to confirm if you are required to defend your thesis.)

The word "defend" conjures an image of a battle, but in this instance, the word means to present and explain your efforts to a committee and others in attendance who have the right to ask questions about your work and discuss your conclusions. This process could include a scholarly debate when appropriate. Above all, this process gives you the opportunity to share your new research with the educational community as well as provide evidence that you can present your knowledge and skills in both written and oral formats. It is in this process that you move from being a student to joining the professional conversation as a peer and colleague.

To initiate the defense process, you need to complete the [Exit Requirement Request Form](#) (see example in Appendix C). This form requires the approval signatures of your graduate advisor and your program's DGCE Chair. The oral defense also incurs a \$60.00 payment (which will be processed through Student Accounts). The form must be completed and submitted to the OGSS staff in Maxwell Library, room 021, **no later than October 1** for a defense in the fall semester or **no later than February 1** for a defense in the spring semester.

This form notifies your program and academic department that a thesis defense needs to be scheduled. Be sure to work with your thesis advisor and committee members to determine the date, time, and location of the defense. It is also open to the public and may be announced through the standard communication channels on campus (e.g., department emails, flyers).

Many students wonder: What happens during the defense process? Typically, the student presents the rationale for the project, the methodology, results and conclusions to their thesis advisor and committee as well as any others who wish to attend. An open discussion then occurs with questions about the project and/or conclusions. At the end of the discussion, the student and all attendees will be excused so that the thesis committee can discuss their respective viewpoints about the thesis and

defense presentation. Once they make their final decision about the thesis project, the student and all remaining attendees will be recalled to the room to learn of their decision. You should discuss your program's oral defense process with your thesis advisor to confirm if this description is applicable.

Oral defense result options and thesis approval process

The possible results of a thesis oral defense are:

- Pass with no revisions
- Pass with minor revisions (e.g., correction of grammatical, spelling, or pagination errors)
- No pass

If the student passes (either with no revisions or with minor revisions), then the thesis committee signs a *Thesis Approval Signature Page* (see example in Appendix E). Their signatures indicate that the thesis meets the standards of master's level research and writing and follows the university's academic integrity standards. This page must precede the *Thesis Title Page* in the final thesis document. An example of the correct formatting for the *Thesis Title Page* (without signatures) can be found in Appendix F.

If the student did not pass because of significant concerns about the thesis and/or the defense presentation, then the thesis advisor is to meet as soon as possible with the student to discuss the committee's decision further and explore options.

Approved thesis submission to CoGS and Maxwell Library

Students who complete a thesis must submit the final copy which has been approved by their thesis committee to the OGSS staff in Maxwell Library, room 021, on or before the last day of final exams for the semester. (Be sure to consult the Academic Calendar and final exams schedule on the [Registrar's website](#) to note the last day of final exams).

The approved thesis and completed thesis submission form are required before you are cleared for graduation. **NOTE: No revisions or edits will be allowed for any final thesis submissions.**

Your submission should include:

- A completed [Graduate Thesis Submission and Payment Form](#) (see example in Appendix F).
- One single-sided print copy of the thesis including the *Thesis Approval Signature Page* with original signatures of all thesis committee members.
- This copy will be bound by the Maxwell Library which acts as the official archive for all graduate theses written to fulfill the exit requirement of a graduate degree program at Bridgewater State University.
- One digital copy must also be submitted on a USB flash drive. This copy will include an unsigned *Thesis Approval Signature Page* as it will be used for digital storage. Access will be

given on the university's online repository, the [Virtual Commons](#). It can also be accessed at <https://vc.bridgew.edu/>. See below for further information about author's rights to restrict access, if needed.

- If you want additional bound copies of your thesis, please submit single-sided copies of your thesis for each copy ordered. These copies will include a copy of your signed Thesis Approval Signature Page. A fee per copy will be assessed.
- Bound copies may be picked up at the Maxwell Library Circulation Desk or mailed to the student. A flat fee of \$5.00 for domestic mailing or \$20.00 for international mailing will be assessed.

Author and University rights

Your graduate program and department has the right to require that you provide them with a copy of your thesis and that certain original records and materials be retained as the property of the University.

NOTE: Publication rights to your completed thesis are reserved to you as the author. In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, you have legal protection of your intellectual property (i.e., your thesis) as soon as it is created. Your copyright gives you the exclusive right to print, reprint, copy, and sell your work. It also protects you from other's infringement of these rights. (See the section, *Copyright Page*, in the next chapter for more detail on how to protect your copyrights.)

If needed, you may submit a request to restrict access to the Virtual Commons' copy of your thesis for a limited time. This request, articulating the reason(s) for the request, must be sent via email to OGSS at graduatestudies@bridgew.edu and include support from your thesis advisor. The request will be reviewed by the dean and the director of library administration. If approved, a digital thesis surrogate will be created in Virtual Commons – i.e., a landing page describing the thesis without a download link to the digital copy. The thesis content will be restricted for a period of no more than two years. At the end of the two-year embargo, the thesis content will be made available on Virtual Commons.

You may also wish to register your thesis manuscript with the U.S. Library of Congress Copyright Office for a nominal fee. If you are interested in doing so, be sure to discuss this option with your thesis advisor. For details on how to register your thesis, please visit their Website at <https://www.copyright.gov/registration/>.

Chapter 5. Thesis: Manuscript Requirements

Students creating thesis manuscripts are to follow the general rules listed below. Please confer with your thesis advisor to ensure that you have all pertinent information of your program's thesis standards to meet all requirements.

The structure of the manuscript is generally divided into three sections which are described in more detail below: Preliminary Pages, Body of the Thesis, and Supplemental Pages.

General Rules

Format

All pages of your manuscript must be in 'Letter Size', 8 ½ X 11-inch format. Your manuscript should be double-spaced and single-sided. (**NOTE:** One and a half spaces can be used if approved by your thesis advisor).

References may be single-spaced with a double space between each reference.

Block quotations (40 or more words) may be single-spaced or double-spaced, depending on the editorial style being followed (e.g., APA, MLA, AMA, Chicago).

Running titles may be used, depending upon the editorial style being followed.

Margins

The left margin of each page must be 1 ½ inches, and the top, right, and bottom margins 1 inch.

Exceptions: Top, right and bottom margins may vary in the Appendix pages, but the left margin must be 1.5 inches throughout the ENTIRE manuscript (including Preliminary Pages, the Body of the Thesis, and Supplemental Pages). Page numbers in the Appendices must also appear consistently as in the rest of the manuscript.

Type and font

Use a professional quality font (e.g., Arial, Times Roman, Courier, or Helvetica). Font size for your text should be 12 point; headings may be up to 14 point. Fonts for tables, figures, and appendices may range from 8 to 12 point.

Placement of page numbers

There are only two ways to paginate your manuscript: upper right corner or bottom center. If your page numbers are at the bottom, leave two blank line spaces between the last line of text and the line on which the page number is placed.

Whether they are at the top or the bottom, page numbers should appear just outside the 1-inch margins (i.e., 0.5 to 0.8 inches from the top or bottom edge of the page).

Your chosen method of pagination must be followed consistently. Use lower-case Roman numerals (i.e., beginning with "i") for the preliminary pages. These pages include the table of contents and any

other optional pages before the body of your manuscript. Following your preliminary pages, create a section break and change your page number choice to Arabic numerals (i.e., begin with page "1") for the remainder of the manuscript, including all text, illustrations, references, and appendices.

Style

The style of your thesis needs to follow the manuscript style guide preferred by your academic discipline, graduate program, and academic department. Again, check with your thesis advisor for the guide to follow and make sure your manuscript consistently follows it.

Using copyrighted material in your manuscript

Copyrights are legally protected under the United States Copyright Law of 1976 and subsequent amendments (U.S. Copyright Office, 2019). This law protects the rights of authors who have created original work in some tangible form or expression. Legal use without permission is typically limited to "fair use" for educational purposes. However, educational and research use in master's thesis are not always "fair use" as they may be published and made available for others to read and use in the public domain. Therefore, you may wish to acquire written permission to use the work with the copyright owner – beyond brief excerpts which should be correctly cited in your thesis – at the start of your thesis research. If you want further information, see ProQuest's Website which includes a sample permission letter at https://media2.proquest.com/documents/UMI_CopyrightGuide.pdf

The Websites listed below also contain information that may be helpful to you:

- The Copyright Clearance Center: <http://www.copyright.com/>
- U.S. Copyright Office Home Page: <http://www.copyright.gov/>
- ProQuest's Copyright and Your Dissertation or Thesis - Ownership, Fair Use, and Your Rights and Responsibilities:
http://media2.proquest.com/documents/copyright_dissthesis_ownership.pdf
- The University of Texas at Austin Copyright Crash Course: <http://copyright.lib.utexas.edu/>
- UNM Office of University Counsel: <http://www.unm.edu/%7ecounsel/general/copyright.htm>
- Boston College Information on Copyright: <http://libguides.bc.edu/copyright>

Reproduction quality

The hard copies of your manuscript must be clean, unshaded, and free of spots and smudges. Faint, streaked, or uneven copies are unacceptable.

Preliminary Pages

The following pages appear at the "front" of your thesis manuscript – i.e., before you present your first chapter of an introduction and/or literature review.

Thesis signature approval page

The *Thesis Signature Approval Page* is the first page of the preliminary pages and the manuscript. Count this page as page "i". Type the names of the committee members on the lines provided at the center of the page. (Appendix D contains an example of a thesis signature approval page.)

Thesis title page

The *Thesis Title Page* contains the title of your manuscript, your name, your previous degrees (including your majors, institutions and years centered on the page). Count this page as page "ii". The graduate degree you will receive at BSU, the month and year of your graduation should be listed toward the bottom of the page. (Be sure to confirm your correct graduation date with the OGSS staff.)

Copyright page

Inclusion of this page offers you, as the author, additional protection against copyright infringement as it eliminates any question of authorship and copyright ownership. You do not need to file for copyright to include this statement in your thesis. However, filing for copyright can offer other protections. (Be sure to review the copyright resources noted above.) Typical copyright notices take one of the following forms: Copyright, 2019, Jane M. Student or © 2019, Jane M. Student. If you use this page, number it in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

Abstract page

The abstract serves as a summary of your thesis. It contains the following elements: (1) a summary of the purpose of the thesis and its hypotheses; (2) a brief statement regarding the methods of investigation; (3) a description of the results, including where and how you obtained them; and (4) the conclusions and/or recommendations, which relate back to the original problem or hypotheses. When writing an abstract, it is important to be exact, concise, and unambiguous. Typically, abstracts are limited to 350 words.

The title, ABSTRACT, must be in capital letters, and centered just below the top margin of the page. Double-space again before beginning the text of your abstract. Use paragraph indentation as appropriate. The text itself should be double-spaced or one and a half spaces if approved by your thesis advisor. This page must be numbered in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

Dedication page

(Optional) This page is to be used if you wish to dedicate your work to a person or organization. The title, DEDICATION, must be in capital letters, centered just below the top margin of the page. The dedication itself may be single- or double-spaced. If you use this page, number it in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

Acknowledgements page

(Optional) This page is to be used if you wish to acknowledge others for their support of your thesis and/or graduate work. The title, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, must be in capital letters, centered just below the top margin of the page. The acknowledgement itself may be single- or double-spaced. If you use this page, number it in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

Preface page

(Optional) A preface serves as your introduction to the manuscript and may contain personal reasons for your choice of thesis topic and research methods as well as how it relates to your background and experiences. The title, PREFACE, must be in capital letters, centered just below the top margin of the

page, and double-spaced. If you use this page, number it in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

List of tables and figures

(If applicable) This list makes it easier for your reader to quickly find the data in your thesis. You do not have to use this page if you have fewer than 5 tables or fewer than 5 figures. More details about how to present tables and figures are provided in the next section.

The title, TABLES AND FIGURES, must be in capital letters, and centered just below the top margin of the page. Double-space again before beginning the list of tables and/or the list of figures which may be single or double-spaced. If you use this page, number it in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

List of abbreviations

(If applicable) This list identifies the full names of any abbreviations that you use extensively throughout your thesis. You do not have to use this page if you have fewer than 5 abbreviations.

The title, ABBREVIATIONS, must be in capital letters, and centered just below the top margin of the page. Double-space again before beginning the list which may be single or double-spaced. If you use this page, number it in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

List of symbols

(If applicable) This list identifies the symbols that you use extensively throughout your thesis. You do not have to use this page if you have fewer than 5 symbols.

The title, SYMBOLS, must be in capital letters, and centered just below the top margin of the page. Double-space again before beginning the list which may be single or double-spaced. If you use this page, number it in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents is the topic outline of your manuscript. Be sure that it accurately reflects the structure of your thesis to ensure correct pagination. You do not have to list any of the preliminary pages in the Table of Contents. Use Microsoft Word and its tool feature, *Table of Contents*, to easily create this page once your manuscript is complete. The title, TABLE OF CONTENTS, must be in capital letters, and centered just below the top margin of the page. This page must be numbered in the appropriate sequence with a lower-case Roman numeral.

Body of the Thesis

The body of your thesis is presented in a series of chapters with consistent subheadings as appropriate. Each chapter should begin on a new page. Subheadings are for use only within chapters and are not to begin on a new page.

The following instructions are important to follow if you wish to include figures and tables in your thesis:

How to present figures

Figures may include diagrams, charts, drawings, schematics, photographs, etc. Your original thesis (which will be submitted to the university) must contain its own original figures, except for photographs which may be high-quality copies either in color or black and white. All other copies of your thesis may have high-quality copies of the figures. Figures should be inserted as near as reasonably possible to the text to which they relate. They should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals as part of the continuing text (e.g., Figure 1).

Figures and their captions must appear on the same page, within the required margins. If captions are more than one line long, they may be single-spaced. They should be placed on paper of the same size and weight as the rest of the manuscript. The caption is used to identify the figure on the Tables and Figure page.

Oversized figures may be presented in one of two ways:

- A horizontal figure that is too wide to fit on a regular manuscript page may be mounted on another piece of paper at the left-hand margin and folded like a fan. The folds must end within the right margin.
- A figure that is both too long and too wide may be folded and inserted into a 6 ½ x 9 " envelope that is mounted on another sheet of paper.

How to present tables

Tables that are a half-page or shorter in size may be placed at the top or the bottom of the page, or in the center, with text above and below. Tables may also be placed alone on the page immediately following the page that refers to them. The placement of tables should be consistent throughout the manuscript. Tables continuing more than one page should be labeled [e.g., *Table 1 (cont.)*], and oversized tables should be treated in the same way as oversized figures (see above).

Supplemental Pages

The final section of the thesis consists of supplemental pages which may include endnotes to the text, list of references, and appendices.

Endnotes

(If applicable) Endnotes are an acceptable alternative to footnotes depending upon the academic discipline's writing standards. They appear at the end of each chapter, unlike footnotes that are embedded on the same page as the citation.

The title, ENDNOTES, must be in capital letters, and centered just below the top margin of the page. Double-space again before beginning the text of your endnotes. The text itself should follow the editorial standards of your discipline. This page must be numbered in the appropriate sequence with an Arabic numeral.

References

No thesis is complete without a full listing of the necessary bibliographic information about the sources upon which the research is based. In most cases, only those sources cited in the thesis are

listed. This section may be called "Bibliography", "Works Cited", "List of References" or simply "References".

The chosen title must be in capital letters and centered just below the top margin of the page. Double-space again before beginning the text of your bibliographic information. The text itself should follow the editorial standards of your discipline. This page must be numbered in the appropriate sequence with an Arabic numeral.

Appendices

The appendix (or a series of appendices) usually follows the references and contains material that is useful for a detailed review of the thesis research; however, it is not essential to understanding the text. For example, an appendix is the appropriate section in which to place material such as letters of approval from an IRB, subject recruitment communications, raw data, the results of individual laboratory analyses, or sample forms. **NOTE:** Be sure to refer your reader to each appendix at the appropriate place in your manuscript.

Each appendix should have an appropriate title in capital letters and centered just below the top margin of the page. Double-space again before beginning the text of the appendix. This page must be numbered in the appropriate sequence with an Arabic numeral.

Final note: Your thesis format checklist

The checklist below is offered to help you keep your thesis manuscript in the correct format order.

1. Preliminary pages that use Roman numerals:

- Thesis Signature Approval Page
- Thesis Title Page
- Copyright Page
- Abstract Page
- Dedication Page (*optional*)
- Acknowledgement Page (*optional*)
- Preface Page (*optional*)
- List of Tables and Figures (*optional*)
- List of Abbreviations (*optional*)
- List of Symbols (*optional*)

2. Body of text and supplemental pages that use Arabic numerals:

- Table of Contents
- Chapters (*e.g., Introduction/Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Conclusions and Recommendations*)
- References
- Appendices (*e.g., IRB approval form, informed consent document example, survey or interview questions used*)

References

Bridgewater State University Department of English (2018). *Thesis guidelines, MA in English*.

Retrieved from

<https://my.bridgew.edu/departments/English/SitePages/Grad%20Thesis%20Guidelines.aspx>

Central Connecticut State University School of Graduate Studies (2017). *The master's thesis: A handbook and writer's guide for graduate students*. Retrieved from

http://www.ccsu.edu/grad/resources/files/thesis/THESIS_HANDBOOK_SEPTMBER_2017_REVISIONS.pdf

ProQuest (2019). *Copyright and your dissertation or thesis*. Retrieved from

https://media2.proquest.com/documents/UMI_CopyrightGuide.pdf

U.S. Copyright Office (2019). Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17). Retrieved from March 26, 2019 at <https://www.copyright.gov/title17/>

Appendix A. Suggested Two Semester Thesis Process

1. Choosing the Thesis Option

- Discuss exit requirement options with graduate advisor
- Explore and choose thesis topic
- Draft preliminary thesis statement, research questions, and annotated bibliography
- Interview and select a Thesis Advisor and Committee

2. Thesis Proposal Development

- Finalize thesis proposal with thesis advisor
- Obtain IRB approval for thesis research (if needed; see Chapter 3 for details)
- Submit proposal and the Thesis Proposal Approval Form to CoGS
- Register for Semester One Thesis Course (3 or 6 credits)

3. Thesis Course Semester One

- Meet weekly or biweekly with thesis advisor
- Keep reading notes and annotate bibliography
- Conduct field work, interviews, surveys, etc.
- Annotate bibliography and keep reading notes
- Outline thesis chapter structure and write weekly about evolving ideas and insights
- Register for Semester Two Thesis Course (3 credits)

4. Thesis Course Semester Two

- Meet weekly or biweekly with thesis advisor
- Draft chapters; share with advisor for feedback
- Finalize thesis; share with committee
- Submit Exit Requirement Form to CoGS
- Schedule oral defense and present thesis, if required
- Revise thesis (if needed)
- Obtain thesis committee approval signatures

5. Thesis Course Semester Two

- Submit final thesis and Thesis Approval Signature Form to CoGS by the last day of exams
- Apply for graduation by deadline
- CELEBRATE!

Appendix B. Graduate Thesis Proposal Approval Form

EXAMPLE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

1. Complete Part I of this form.
2. Under Part II, obtain the signatures of your thesis committee chairperson, thesis committee members, and your graduate program's DGCE Chair.
3. Submit the signed form and attachment(s) to the Office of Graduate Student Services, Maxwell Library, Room 021.

PART I: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT (*please print*):

Student Name: _____

Banner ID #: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Program: _____

Degree (circle one): MA MS MPA MEd MAT

Title of Thesis: _____

(Note: The student's proposal should be presented in detail and attached to this form.

The proposal should include a title, abstract, statement of purpose and brief project description. A bibliography of primary and secondary sources and a timeline with an estimated completion date should also be included.)

Check appropriate box:

- Human subjects are involved in this research (**please attach the IRB approval form**)
- No human subjects are involved in this research

PART II: REQUIRED SIGNATURES

(If the committee is larger than three faculty members, please attach a second form with their signatures)

By our signatures below, we approve the attached thesis proposal:

Graduate Thesis Advisor Type or print name Date

Graduate Thesis Committee Member Type or print name Date

Graduate Thesis Committee Member Type or print name Date

Graduate DGCE Chair Type or print name Date

ACCEPTED BY:

Dean, College of Graduate Studies Type or print name Date

CoGS Office Use Only:

BDMS: _____ Copy to student's folder _____ Student notified date: _____ Initials: _____

Appendix C. Graduate Thesis Course Registration Form

EXAMPLE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

1. Complete Part I of this application.
2. Under Part II, obtain the signatures of your thesis committee chair, your graduate advisor, and your graduate program's DGCE Chair.
3. Submit the signed form and attachment to the Office of Graduate Student Services, Maxwell Library, room 021, no later than the last day of the drop/add period for each semester you register.

PART I: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT (*please print*):

Student Name: _____ Banner ID #: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Program: _____ Degree (circle one): MA MS MPA MEd MAT

Title of Thesis: _____

(See attached signed thesis proposal approval form)

Academic Year: _____ Semester: _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer I _____ Summer II

Course Department Code (ex. CRJU): _____ Course Number (ex. 5XX): _____

Request Credit Hours (3 or 6 credits): _____

Have you previously registered for this requirement? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, when? (Semester/year): _____

PART II: REQUIRED SIGNATURES

By my signature, I approve this student to register for this thesis course.

Graduate Thesis Advisor Type or print name Date

Graduate Advisor Type or print name Date

Graduate DGCE Chair Type or print name Date

Dean, College of Graduate Studies Type or print name Date

CoGS Office Use Only:

Original sent to Registrar's Office (date): _____ BDMS: _____ Student notified date: _____ Initials: _____

Appendix D. Exit Requirement Request Form

EXAMPLE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

- Complete Part I of this form if you are required to take one of the following actions to graduate:
 - Comprehensive Examination* *Thesis Defense*
 - Research or Special Project Defense* *Exit Portfolio Evaluation*
- Under Part II, obtain the signatures of your thesis, research, or project advisor and your graduate program's DGCE Chair.
- Submit the signed form to the College of Graduate Studies Student Services Office, Maxwell Library, Room 021.
- Fee:** Master's Degree = \$60.00 **OR** CAGS = \$75.00
(**Note:** this fee will be billed by Student Accounts. Please do **not** remit payment with the form.)

PART I: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT (please print):

Student Name: _____ Banner ID #: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____ Telephone: _____
Program: _____

Degree or Certificate (circle one): MA MS MPA MEd MAT CAGS

I wish to schedule:

- Comprehensive Examination** _____ Fall (*Oct 1 deadline*) _____ Spring (*February 1 deadline*)
Have you previously applied for this requirement? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, when? (Semester/year): _____
- Thesis Defense** _____ Fall (*Oct 1 deadline*) _____ Spring (*February 1 deadline*)
Have you previously applied for this requirement? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, when? (Semester/year): _____
- Research or Special Project Defense** _____ Fall (*Oct 1 deadline*) _____ Spring (*February 1 deadline*)
Have you previously applied for this requirement? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, when? (Semester/year): _____
- Exit Portfolio Evaluation** _____ Fall (*Oct 1 deadline*) _____ Spring (*February 1 deadline*)
Have you previously applied for this requirement? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, when? (Semester/year): _____

Student Signature

Type or print name

Date

PART II: REQUIRED SIGNATURES

By our signatures below, we approve this request:

Graduate Advisor

Type or print name

Date

Graduate DGCE Chair

Type or print name

Date

Appendix E. Thesis Approval Signature Page

EXAMPLE

Title of Thesis

A Thesis Presented

By

Name
(all caps)

DATE

(Month and year of degree conferred-all caps)

Approved as to style and content by:
(Add other signature lines, if needed)

Signature: _____
Name of Thesis Advisor (please print) Date

Signature: _____
Name of Thesis Committee Member (please print) Date

Signature: _____
Name of Thesis Committee Member (please print) Date

Appendix F. Thesis Title Page

EXAMPLE

Title of Thesis

A Thesis Presented

By

NAME
(all caps)

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies
Bridgewater State University
Bridgewater, Massachusetts

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of

Master of _____

in _____

DATE

(Month and year of degree conferral – all caps)

Appendix G. Approved Graduate Thesis Submission and Binding Payment Form

EXAMPLE

Please Submit to:
 College of Graduate Studies
 Maxwell Library, Room 021
 Phone: 508-531-1100 Fax: 508-531-5100
graduatestudies@bridgew.edu

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

Please provide the College of Graduate Studies with one approved single-sided print copy of the thesis to be bound for the Maxwell Library University Archive. The Thesis Approval Page for this copy must have original signatures. Please provide one approved digital version on a USB flash drive. The Thesis Approval Page for this version should be submitted without signatures. **NOTE:** The student is responsible for verifying all print copies of their thesis are complete and in order. No revised copies will be accepted after submission.

Student name (*print or type*): _____ Banner ID: _____
First Name Last Name

Thesis title: _____

Total number of pages (*from Thesis Signature Approval Page through Appendices*): _____

Graduation Date Semester/Year: _____ Program: _____ Degree: _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Payment Information and Instructions on How to Receive Your Bound Copies:

- Students may purchase personal bound thesis copies. Please submit additional copies of your thesis for each copy ordered.
- Accepted payment forms are: cash, Connect Card, check (made payable to Maxwell Library/BSU)
- Please identify if you will pick up your bound copies at Maxwell Library (*check here*) **or** if you want your bound copies mailed to you (*check here*). If mailing, be sure to pay for the appropriate shipping below.

Description	Price	# of copies	Total
University Archive copy	No charge	X 1	= \$0.00
Personal bound copies	\$16.50 each	X	= \$
Shipping	\$5.00 (U.S. mail) OR \$20.00 (International mail)		\$
Total			\$

Personal email (*for notifications about your bound copies*): _____

Shipping address (*leave blank if not ordering a copy or you will pick up your copies*):

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

For Office Use Only:

Date copies submitted to College of Graduate Studies: _____
 Date fees submitted to Maxwell Library Circulation Desk: _____