

## Thesis components, formatting, and submission

adapted from UGS thesis formatting

(<https://graduate.indiana.edu/thesis-dissertation/formatting/masters.html> )

**Thesis components. Optional components are shown in italic font. Note that theses that do not meet formatting requirements will be returned for reformatting.**

**Title page** – follow formatting template **on the last page of this document**. The title page only acknowledges the MSES, even for MPA-MSES students, because other coursework satisfies the concentration requirement for the MPA.

**Acceptance (signature) page** – use the form provided on the Current Student Portal forms page, modifying it as little as possible. You may, for example, need to add a signature line for an additional faculty member or subtract one. But otherwise, please use the form as it is provided. Print the acceptance page and take it to your defense. If your committee agrees to sign off on the thesis at the defense, collect signatures then (try to remember – it's really hard to remember amidst the congratulations of a successful defense). If the committee, or some members, want to see the revisions before signing, then wait to collect signatures until the revisions have been approved. Then scan the signed signature page and put it in the appropriate position in the thesis document, immediately behind the title page, as page ii.

**Copyright page** - The copyright page should be a separate page and no longer than one page. All content on this page should be centered.

Copyright © [year]

[Student's Name]

**Dedication** – the format of a dedication is up to the student, but would typically be in regular sentence or paragraph form, left-justified.

**Acknowledgements** – the acknowledgements section provides an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of faculty, assistants, funding agencies and others who have made the work possible. As a matter of courtesy, you would ordinarily mention the members of your committee here, as well as institutions that provided funding or anyone else who helped.

**Abstract** – a standard technical abstract. Length is left to the judgement of the student and major advisor, but 350 words is standard for theses at IU. The abstract should be on its own page. If desired, the word **Abstract** may be centered at the top of the page before the left-justified text of the abstract.

**Table of Contents** – include the components listed on this page, as well as lists of tables and figures.

**Thesis sections**, however labeled. Standard sections include Introduction, Study Area, Methods, Results, Discussion, Recommendations, Literature Cited, tables, figures. Students and their faculty will dictate the format of the thesis, and the table of contents should reflect the sections of the final document.

**Supplemental Material** – any additional material deemed useful to include in the thesis. Often, such material is organized in an appendix or appendices. If there is more than one part to the supplemental material, list the component parts in the table of contents.

## Thesis formats

**Font** – Times-Roman 12-pt font, left-justified except for headers. This includes font for captions of tables and figures. Text within tables and figures may vary – robust sans-serif fonts (Arial, Tahoma) may be more readable at small sizes.

**Spacing** – within paragraphs, single-space the text at standard spacing for 12-pt type. Blank spaces between paragraphs and between headers and paragraphs are fine. Avoid orphaned headers that are left at the bottom of the page when their following text is on the following page. In Word, the Keep with Next option, if applied to the header and the following blank space, will keep the header with the material that follows.

**Justification** – Left-justify all text except headers and text on title and acceptance pages, as indicated in instructions.

**Margins** – use 1” margins. In Word, use the Layout tab on the Page Setup screen in the main Word Layout menu to set a 0.3” distance from the page number to the bottom margin. Do not use running headers.

**Headers, footers, page numbers** – use a 0.3” gutter in the bottom margin that carries the page number. Do not use running headers or other headers. Do not use footers other than the centered page number, which should be in 10-pt Times-Roman font.

**Footnotes** – if you and your major professor decide that you should use footnotes, maintain the usual margins and the bottom-of-page gutter.

**Numbering pages** – Center your page number in the footer using Times-Roman 10-pt type. The pages before the first page of regular thesis text should be numbered using lower-case Roman numbers. The title page is not numbered. Numbering begins with the acceptance page, which should be numbered ii . Roman numbers continue through the table of contents. Arabic numbers start after the table of contents, where the thesis itself begins, and continue through the end of the supplemental material.

**Literature cited** – The format of your literature-cited section is up to you and your major professor, but it must be internally consistent. Be careful with format of authors’ names (are you using full names, initials, last-name-first, first-name-first . . .) and titles (single initial capital, all initial capitals, different capitalization for different media ...) Web-site citations, if any, should include the date on which you last visited the site. Try to keep web-site citations consistent with other citations – provide an author or authoring organization, a date for dated material or n.d. for undated material, a title, a publishing organization (often the same as the authoring organization), and, if appropriate, a location for the authoring organization.

If you are preparing a manuscript for publication, by all means, use the required literature format for the relevant journal as your guide for preparing the thesis Literature Cited section.

Generally, the Literature Cited section will include only authoritative sources (peer-reviewed articles and books, government documents, agency reports). When you need to substantiate descriptions of recent events, responses of the public, etc., you may need to reference blogs, newspaper articles, and similar sources; use these sources only when necessary.

## **Submitting the thesis**

Prepare the thesis in Word, or convert it to Word when you have it finalized in some other form. When it is in final form, with all the necessary ingredients in the appropriate formats, provide your major professor with a copy. Ask your major professor to transmit it to the MSES program director (currently Vicky Meretsky), the recorder's office ([oneillrc@indiana.edu](mailto:oneillrc@indiana.edu)) and the head librarian for the Business-SPEA library commons using the thesis transmissal form show below **on this page**. The transmissal of your finalized thesis serves two purposes – it delivers the thesis to the library system so that it can be catalogued into the IU Libraries system and shared with ProQuest thesis and dissertation service, and it notifies the O'Neill Records Office that your independent-study/research courses are successfully completed, so the courses can count in your degree requirements.

The program director and/or the O'Neill librarian will perform a format check on the thesis and may return it for corrections if necessary. The thesis is not accepted, and the degree is not finally conferred, until the final, accepted thesis copy is delivered.

**Title page:**

The title page should be a separate page and no longer than one page. All content on this page should be centered horizontally. Use the layout below, starting the title about 3" from the physical top of the page.

TITLE IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

Author's Name

Submitted to the faculty of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science in Environmental Science

Indiana University

Month Year

Note that the month and year show the date when all requirements have been completed for the awarding of your master's degree by SPEA. This is not necessarily the month in which you submit your thesis