# School of Graduate Studies, Nipissing University

**Formatting guidelines for theses, and dissertations**

This guide is designed to provide general guidelines for students creating their theses, or dissertations. The guide and accompanying templates provide general formatting standards so that the students will produce consistently formatted documents, while allowing for disciplinary-specific and student-specific inclusions or omissions of sections that may or may not apply to their project.

In consultation with their supervisor and committee members, students can tailor the sections of their document to suit their project. However, the broader formatting guidelines should remain consistent across theses.

**Choosing a template**

Students are provided with two templates as options for their final written document. Students should select the template in consultation with their supervisor and with consideration of the standard practices within their field of study.

**Chapter format:** The chapter-based thesis is a traditional format that presents a systematic account of the student's research activities. Each chapter logically progresses upon the previous one to present the purpose for the study and the findings of the research activities. The chapter-based thesis format allows for an in-depth description of the literature, methods, and discussion of the implications of the research.

**Publication format:** The publication format of a thesis is intended to provide the reader with a broad introduction to the topic and a general discussion of the findings of the project which sandwich one or more manuscripts that are formatted for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Students completing theses with this format benefit from working on a single document that will be used for both their degree requirements and as an academic output. If the student has produced one or more manuscripts for publication based on their present research, then they are highly encouraged to use the publication format for their thesis document. In comparison, students who use the chapter template may need to significantly convert their thesis document into another format when the student goes to submit their works for publication.

Typically, the thesis document would contain disclosure pages immediately prior to the manuscript pages which details the student's involvement in the project and indicates where the manuscript may be submitted or accepted for publication. A copy-right clearance from a publisher may be required if the manuscript is accepted for publication. Students should be listed as the sole author or major contributing author (a.k.a., the senior author) of the manuscript(s). The publication format promotes a clear and concise final document.

The publication format thesis may also be known as the integrated thesis, paper-based thesis, sandwich thesis, or manuscript style thesis.

**Formatting the document**

**General guidelines:** Formatting within the document should consistently conform to a single standardised publication guideline such as the most recent version of the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines (e.g., 7th), MLA style, Chicago Style, Vancouver Style, Harvard, IEEE, MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association), CSIRO, etc... Students should not switch between guideline styles within their document.

Where possible, students should make every effort to follow best practices in creating a document that is accessible and inclusive of as many individuals as possible by following formatting recommendations for individuals with conditions such as colour vision deficiency or dyslexia.

**Font:** Students should use a 12-point font in either Times New Roman or Arial typeface.

**Margins:** Since the final publication version of the documents are now primarily in an electronic format, margins can be 1.9 cm from each side.

**Figures, Tables, Images and Photos:** Figures and tables should be located on separate pages from the main text-body and images should of sufficient size to allow for visual interpretation and clear reproduction of the content. The formatting of figure captions, legends, lines, bars, and marker-faces should consistently conform to the selected publication style (e.g., APA) used in the remainder of the document. It may be necessary to seek permission to reproduce and include figures, tables, images, and photos. Refer to your selected citation style manual or contact the Harris Learning Library for guidance with copyright.

**Referencing**

Referencing within the document and the reference list should consistently conform to a single standardised publication guideline such as the most recent version of the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines (e.g., 7th), MLA style, Chicago Style, Vancouver Style, Harvard, IEEE, MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association), CSIRO, etc... Students should not switch between styles within their document. The style of referencing should strictly adhere to the most recent version of their selected style.