



# Honors Thesis Formatting Guidelines

University of Maine, Orono  
Honors College

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## Troubleshooting the Thesis Template

We strongly recommend\* writing your thesis using the [Thesis Template](#) as opposed to writing it in a separate document afterwards, as this could disturb the formatting. However, if you do choose to go with the cut and paste approach, here are ways to fix some of the formatting in the Thesis Formatting if it gets disrupted.

\*Using this template will save time and energy at the end of this process when your final thesis is submitted for review by the Honors College. The College reviews the final document and if it is not properly formatted, it will be returned to you with edits you will be required to make before the thesis will be published on the Digital Commons. The College will not edit your thesis; you are solely responsible for making the required corrections and resubmitting them by the deadline. Only properly formatted theses will be posted on the Digital Commons.

### **How do I get rid of extra blank pages?**

If you are having trouble deleting extra pages in the template that you do not plan to use, please try the following steps:

1. Click 'Paragraph' on the function ribbon at the top of the document, and click the '¶' symbol.
2. Move the cursor to the beginning of the 'Section Break' on the page you wish you delete, then click 'fn' + 'Delete', simultaneously.
3. If the page is still not deleted, reach out to [honors.thesis@maine.edu](mailto:honors.thesis@maine.edu) and ask for assistance.

### **What do I do if my page numbers won't fit in the appropriate column in my Table of Contents?**

If the column isn't wide enough to fit your page numbers, adjust the column width by moving the left-most column line with your cursor.

The Table of Contents will not auto-populate the correct page numbers for each of your chapters, and neither will the List of Figures/Tables. You will need to manually enter the proper page numbers for both the Table of Contents and List of Figures/Tables.

## **What do I do if the body of my text is triple-space, along with my headers?**

Only your primary headers should be triple-spaced. To ensure the body of your text remains double-spaced, if you are copying and pasting from a previous document you've written your thesis manuscript into, copy and paste into the line *below* the primary header.

Should you have any other questions, and need additional assistance with formatting your thesis, please reach out to [honors.thesis@maine.edu](mailto:honors.thesis@maine.edu) as soon as possible. We will help as much as we can, but in the end it is your responsibility to produce and submit a properly formatted thesis. Again, posting your thesis on the Digital Commons is contingent upon you submitting a properly formatted thesis that has been approved by the Honors College by the deadline stipulated.

## Thesis Chapters & Organization

Welcome! We recommend watching this [Honors Thesis Formatting Workshop \(Part 1\)](#) that addresses the importance of consistent formatting, basic formatting requirements that are outlined in this handbook, and the organization of your Honors thesis. The [Honors Thesis Formatting Workshop \(Part 2\)](#) addresses specific formatting of the margins, pagination, and is also linked on pages 5, 6, and 9 in this handbook. We have also created a Thesis Template for your thesis, which can be found on the [Honors College website](#) under the “Thesis Template” tile.

If you will be pursuing a **creative thesis**, please see the **Creative Thesis Guidance** after this chapter. Bear in mind that the same Technical Formatting Guidelines will also apply to creative theses! We have also created a Creative Thesis Template for your thesis, which can be found on the [Honors College website](#) under the “Creative Thesis Template” tile.

You will only have **one opportunity** to make revisions to your final Honors Thesis manuscript, after it has been reviewed by the Honors College. If your thesis does not meet formatting standards after implementing the Honors College’s edits and recommendations, it will **not** be posted onto the Digital Commons. It is your responsibility to ensure that your manuscript is in accordance with the formatting guidelines that have been created and laid out in this document.

### Title page:

This page is **required** - please fill in the following information on the template:

- Thesis title
- First & last name
- Major(s):
  - If you have multiple majors, separate them with a comma on your title page.
- Graduation month & year
- Advisory committee:
  - Name:
  - Title:
    - Your advisor should be listed first, and have “Advisor” listed after their title. If you have co-advisors, each co-advisor should have “Co-Advisor” listed after their title.
    - Remaining committee members must be listed in alphabetical order by last name following the advisor. Consult your committee members

to determine how they would like their titles to be listed on your thesis.

Copyright page:

This page is **optional** - if you choose to include it, fill in the following information on the template:

- Copyright symbol, copyright year & last name
  - Consult your advisor about whether or not you need to/are able to hold a copyright for your thesis. Please see the following [link](#) for more information on copyright.
  - Here is the link to the [U.S. Copyright's Office web portal](#), where you are able to register your work for copyright.

Abstract page:

This page is **required** - please fill in the following information on the template:

- A 100-300 word descriptive summary of your completed thesis that addresses the purpose, scope, methodology, and results of your project.

Dedication page:

This page is **optional**.

Acknowledgements page:

This page is **optional** ;however, it is **highly recommended**. It is good form to acknowledge those who have assisted and supported you in the production of this document.

Preface/Foreword page:

This page is **optional**.

Table of Contents page:

This page is **required** - the table of contents will list all major chapters or sections of your thesis, excluding pages with Roman numerals. The Table of Contents must include the following:

- All chapter headings/titles (i.e. "Introduction", "Methods", etc.)

- First-level subheadings (second/third-level subheadings may be included at the author's discretion)
- Bibliography
- Appendices (if applicable)
- Author's Biography

Here is a [tutorial](#) with Table of Contents formatting instructions (see 9:57 - 19:34).

#### List of Tables/Figures/Definitions page:

This page is **required** if your thesis includes any figures and/or tables. You are able to do any of the following:

- Create separate "List of Tables" and "List of Figures" lists.
- Combine your lists and tables into a "List of Tables & Figures".

Please complete the following formatting instructions:

- Fill in figures, tables, and their page numbers, as appropriate, if necessary.
- Remove the table borders, or change them to white.

Including a List of Definitions is **optional**, but recommended for theses with obscure language. Formatting should include:

- Entries that are double-spaced and unbolded

Here is a [tutorial](#) with Table of Contents formatting instructions (see 19:35 - 22:16).

#### Introduction/Chapter 1:

Your thesis does not need to use the heading titles listed in these guidelines (i.e. "Introduction" or "Chapter 1"). Consult with your advisor and committee about how best to organize your thesis manuscript into chapters and sections, with titles that are most appropriate for your research. You are also not limited to a certain number of chapters/sections.

#### Methods/Chapter 2:

Your thesis does not need to use the heading titles listed in these guidelines (i.e. "Introduction" or "Chapter 1"). Consult with your advisor and committee about how best to organize your thesis manuscript into chapters and sections, with titles that are most appropriate for your research. You are also not limited to a certain number of chapters/sections.



### Results/Chapter 3:

Your thesis does not need to use the heading titles listed in these guidelines (i.e. “Introduction” or “Chapter 1”). Consult with your advisor and committee about how best to organize your thesis manuscript into chapters and sections, with titles that are most appropriate for your research. You are also not limited to a certain number of chapters/sections.

### Discussion/Chapter 4:

Your thesis does not need to use the heading titles listed in these guidelines (i.e. “Introduction” or “Chapter 1”). Consult with your advisor and committee about how best to organize your thesis manuscript into chapters and sections, with titles that are most appropriate for your research. You are also not limited to a certain number of chapters/sections.

### Conclusion/Chapter 5:

Your thesis does not need to use the heading titles listed in these guidelines (i.e. “Introduction” or “Chapter 1”). Consult with your advisor and committee about how best to organize your thesis manuscript into chapters and sections, with titles that are most appropriate for your research. You are also not limited to a certain number of chapters/sections.

### Bibliography/Works Cited/List of References:

Entries in this section should follow the citation style appropriate to your discipline; however, it is the preference of the Honor’s College to use a citation style that includes the titles of the works.

### Appendices:

Original data and supplementary materials (charts, tables, photographs, etc.) that the author chose not to include in the text of the thesis may be included in the appendices. Be sure that each separate Appendix section (A, B, C, etc.) is started on a new, separate page from the appendix prior. If IRB or IACUC approval was obtained for your thesis, the cover page that displays the approval **must** be included in your thesis as an appendix.

- **Institutional Review Board (IRB):** Any University of Maine Honors College student whose research involves the use of human subjects must submit their research

protocol to the University of Maine Institutional Review Board (IRB) and receive written approval prior to starting any activities related to human subjects. More information can be found on the [IRB website](#).

- **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):** Any University of Maine Honors College student whose research involves the use of vertebrate animals must submit their research protocol to the University of Maine Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and receive written approval prior to starting any activities related to vertebrate animals. More information can be found on the [IACUC website](#).

#### Author's Biography:

This page is **required** - this section provides an opportunity to tell readers more about yourself. Guidelines for this section include the following:

- Usually no more than 2 paragraphs
- Written in the third person
- Common things to mention:
  - Where you are from
  - Hobbies or interests
  - Student activities or campus involvement
  - Future plans

# Creative Thesis Guidance:

## Creative Theses Chapters & Organization:

The structure of the creative thesis differs from more traditional theses in that their sections organize the content differently, as outlined on the [Honors College website](#). The format is designed to enable the student to write about their thesis in a way that gives them the freedom to express their work most effectively. Creative theses contain 2 major components:

- **Disquisition:** The disquisition is the written component of the creative thesis where you will discuss questions driving your research, the inspiration behind your research, external influences on your work, your creative process, and an analysis of and reflection on your work. The disquisition should begin after your Table of Contents, and before your Bibliography/Works Cited/List of References, and the Author's Biography.

The following subsections of your disquisition are **not required**, but have been implemented by many previous creative theses (some questions have been included, that address some points to consider while writing):

- **Background/Discussion:**
  - What motivated you to choose a creative thesis?
  - What inspired you to select this topic/pursue this thesis, specifically?
  - What were you seeking to explore or discover through this medium or genre?
  - What questions compelled you in this work?
- **Project/Artist Intent or Statement of Purpose**
  - What was the anticipated or desired outcome of this work?
  - What do you hope to gain from completing this work?
  - What do you hope others gain from interacting with your work?
- **Literature/Media Review**
  - What other similar/different works exist in the area you are working in?
  - What is the context of your subject matter?
  - What previous works have informed your understanding of your own work, and your approach(es)?

- What other creators or work influenced the choices you made in your approach to your creative project?
  - **Creative Process**
    - What were the steps involved in your creative process?
    - How did you develop your work?
    - What challenges did you face and how did you manage them?
  - **Critical Analysis/Reflection**
    - What is the meaning behind your work?
    - What have you learned in this process?
    - How does it compare to other works of the same topic?
    - How successful were you in answering the question(s) compelling your effort?
      - Be sure you return to the motivations behind your work and discuss them in the context of the finished product, including what went well, what didn't, and why.
- **Creative work:** This is the component of the creative thesis where the student will incorporate their work (a dance, documentary, photographs, artwork, poetry, short story, novel, script, etc.). You can either incorporate your creative work throughout your disquisition as you discuss it, or, include it at the end of your manuscript, as a separate, individual chapter.

**\*\*You must still include** the following chapters of your thesis, even if you choose to pursue a creative thesis (for more guidance on the content of these sections, please see the “Thesis Chapters & Organization” chapter of the Thesis Manuscript Formatting Guidelines):

- Title page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments (not required, though **highly** recommended)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables/Figures/Definitions (**if used**)
- Bibliography/Works Cited/List of References
- Author’s Biography

## Technical Formatting Guidelines:

### Font(s):

- All text must be **Times New Roman** font.
  - *Exception:* Text in any figures or appendices that are from an outside source, may be in another font.\*

\*If you have created a table, chart, figure, graph, etc., the text must be in Times New Roman font, black, and size 12.

- All text must be in the color **black** (remove blue hyperlinks, any other color text, etc.).
  - *Exception:* Text in any figures or appendices that are from an outside source, may be in another color.
- All text must be **size 12** font.
  - *Exception:* Figure/table captions and footnotes/endnotes can be size 10 or 12 font (author's choice).

### Spacing:

- The body of text for all of your thesis sections should be **double-spaced**.
  - *Exception:* If including an excerpt or quotation that is 4 lines or longer, leave single-spaced and indent. Figure captions, footnotes, individual references in bibliography, lengthy descriptions in appendices, and data within tables must be single-spaced.
- Do not** incorporate extra spacing before/after paragraphs.
- The **margins** must be of the following **widths**:
  - Left: 1.5"
  - Right: 1"
  - Top: 1"
  - Bottom: 1"

Here is a [tutorial](#) that discusses margin formatting instructions (see 0:00 - 1:00).

- Avoid widowed and orphaned lines:
  - **Widowed line:** A paragraph-ending line that falls by itself at the beginning of the following page.
  - **Orphaned lined:** A paragraph-opening line that appears by itself at the bottom of a page.

#### Headings:

- Chapter headings (e.g. “Abstract”, “Dedication”, “Introduction”, “Acknowledgements”, “Table of Contents”, etc.) must be **triple-spaced, centered, and entirely capitalized**. Each new chapter heading must begin on a new page.
- First-level subheadings (headings following chapter headings) must be **double-spaced, centered, and underlined**.
- Second-level subheadings can be used at the author’s discretion, and must be **left-aligned and underlined**.
- Third-level subheadings can be used at the author’s discretion, and must be **left-aligned, indented, underlined**, and followed with a **period** (period should not be underlined). Text should follow on the same line as the heading.

#### Pagination:

- The following pages must be enumerated using **Roman numerals**:
  - Title page (**not** typed on page)
  - Copyright page (if included - **not** typed on page)
  - Abstract page (**not** typed on page)
  - Dedication page (if included)
  - Acknowledgements page (if included)
  - Preface/foreword page (if included)
  - Table of contents page
  - List of figures/tables/definitions page (if applicable)

If any section runs over one page, the pagination/page count on the Word formatting template will adjust accordingly automatically.

- All pages following the List of Figures/Tables/Definitions page must be numbered using **Arabic numerals**, and begin with '1'.
- Page numbers must be **bottom centered** as **footers**.

Here is a [tutorial](#) that discusses pagination formatting instructions (see 1:00 - 9:57).

#### Footnotes/Endnotes/Chapter Notes:

- Footnotes and/or endnotes must adhere to the following formatting guidelines:
  - Must be single-spaced, 10 point font, Times New Roman, and adhere to margin requirements.
- The Honors College **prefers footnotes** to endnotes.
  - Footnotes: Placed at the bottom of the page where they appear.
  - Endnotes: Placed at the end of the thesis, or at the end of the chapter (chapter notes). If endnotes are used, they must appear before the Bibliography page, and entered in the Table of Contents. If chapter notes are used, they must start on a new page.

#### Charts, Graphs, Tables, Figures, and Photographs:

- Illustrative materials may be interspersed throughout the thesis **or** contained in an appendix, but must adhere to the following formatting guidelines:
  - Must be reader-friendly
  - Must adhere to the margin and font specifications
  - Must use color conservatively
  - Must be scanned and inserted into manuscript electronically, if illustrative material must be hand-drawn or hand-lettered
  - Must fit on one page:
    - If a table is unable to fit on one page, it can span on multiple pages if the header columns are repeated on each page and it is made clear on each page that it is a continuation of the table.

- If the figure/illustrative material doesn't fit horizontally on a page, the figure can be rotated, with the bottom of the figure towards the right side of the page.