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INTRODUCTION

The thesis or dissertation represents the culmination of your academic program. It is a major achievement, reflecting your development as a professional in your chosen field. It provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your intellectual capabilities through the production of an original piece of research. While you will have the assistance of many others in completing this project, including faculty and fellow graduate students, the finished thesis or dissertation reflects your work, your effort, and your intellectual development. You should exercise great care in preparing your thesis or dissertation in order to produce a study of which you and Valdosta State University can be proud.

This manual will assist you throughout the process of writing your thesis or dissertation. It contains the thesis and dissertation procedures and guidelines developed by the Graduate School, as well as some advice on how to complete your research project successfully. Following the guidelines and procedures outlined in this manual and heeding the advice contained in it cannot guarantee your success in writing and defending your thesis or dissertation; failing to follow the procedures and guidelines can guarantee your failure.

The Thesis

A thesis is an extended work of original research that investigates a new topic or replicates a previous study. It is guided by a faculty committee, but the student conducts the research as an independent scholar. Most masters' programs at Valdosta State University either require a thesis or offer a thesis option. The individual departments will determine the total number of thesis credit hours required for the degree. **Students must be enrolled in the thesis course in the semester in which they graduate.** All thesis courses are graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

The comments provided below concerning the dissertation also apply to the thesis at Valdosta State University. The thesis differs from the dissertation primarily in the depth of research and complexity, not in spirit.

The Dissertation

A dissertation is a highly structured, comprehensive investigation of a topic deemed important to the field. A faculty committee guides the research, but the student functions as an independent scholar. As a regional university within the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University is charged with conducting research that benefits its service area. Thus the dissertation at VSU is to be an applied study that not only meets the definition provided by the Council of Graduate Schools, but also is of direct benefit to the VSU service area. The Council of Graduate Schools provides the following description of the dissertation:

The doctoral dissertation should (1) reveal the student's ability to analyze, interpret, and synthesize information; (2) demonstrate the student's knowledge of the literature relating to the project or at least acknowledge prior scholarship on which the dissertation is built; (3) describe the methods and procedures used; (4) present results in a sequential and logical manner; and (5) display the student's ability to discuss fully and coherently the meaning of the results.¹

Students enrolled in a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) program must complete a dissertation. All students must register for dissertation credit each semester in which they are actively working on their dissertation. A minimum of 9 semester hours of dissertation credit is required for the degree. Students must be enrolled in the dissertation course in the semester in which they graduate. All dissertation courses are graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

¹Council of Graduate Schools. (1991). The role and nature of the doctoral dissertation. Washington, D.C.: Council of Graduate Schools, p.3.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Always do right; this will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

—Mark Twain

The work you do on your thesis or dissertation reflects upon yourself and upon VSU. As a master's or doctoral student conducting independent research, you have the right to expect VSU to support your work adequately, including providing library resources, computer facilities, and other support services needed to complete an excellent project. Above all, you have the right to expect support, advice, and honest criticism from your committee members. The final responsibility for your progress and for your finished product, however, rests with you. You are expected to maintain a high standard of scholarship throughout the process of researching and writing your project, and you alone are responsible for maintaining academic integrity throughout the process. This guide provides some basic information you need to know, but it is not meant to be a complete statement of student rights and responsibilities.

Copyright Registration and Responsibilities

Your thesis or dissertation is your original work, and you are entitled to ownership. Copyright laws protect your rights in this regard, and you need to be aware of the basic elements of these laws. Many people believe that a plethora of forms must be submitted to the Federal Government in order to copyright a work. This is not the case. You do not have to make any notification of copyright to be protected under the law; however, if you do follow the simple procedures involved in registering your copyright, you will be provided with additional protection.

The Copyright Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-553) automatically provides copyright privileges for your work from the moment it is "fixed in a tangible form of expression" without requiring you to provide any notification. Copyright for a thesis or dissertation extends from the moment of creation, through the life of the author, and for an additional 50 years after the author's death. Whether you decide to register your copyright or not, you should indicate that you have copyrighted your work by providing a copyright page (see Appendix C).

The Graduate School strongly recommends that you register your copyright. To register your copyright you must submit Form TX: Application for Copyright Registration for a Nondramatic Literary Work, along with two copies of your thesis or dissertation, to Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20559. There is a small fee. Appropriate forms may be obtained from the following website: <http://www.loc.gov/copyright/forms>.

You may also copyright your thesis or dissertation by using the services of University Microforms International (UMI). The Graduate School strongly encourages you to submit your thesis or dissertation to UMI. UMI will register your copyright for you for an additional fee, will copy your thesis or dissertation onto microform, include a citation in the paper, on-line, and CD-ROM indexes it publishes, and will make your work available in either microform or print copy to interested parties upon request. Master's theses are listed in Master's Abstracts, and dissertations are listed in Dissertation Abstracts International. UMI will have exclusive rights for microform distribution of your work, but you are not prevented from publishing your document in print at a later time.

Scholarly Conduct

No man was ever endowed with a right without being at the same time saddled with responsibility.

—Gerald W. Johnson

VSU expects all students to meet high standards of academic conduct, and this is particularly true of graduate students. You have, after all, been through the experience of completing your undergraduate degree program, and you should be familiar with the expected standards of conduct within academe. Some of the key principles relating to these standards are discussed below.

Acknowledgment of Sources

This could be considered the “Golden Rule” of writing. You would not want someone to take credit for your ideas, your concepts, your hard work; you should extend similar consideration to others. You must credit all sources and you must not use too much of another’s work without permission, even if you do give them full credit.

Valdosta State University recognizes the importance of the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) and prohibits copying or use of copyrighted material not specifically permitted or exempted by law. Further, the University places liability for willful infringement upon the person making or requesting the copy, or using the material. Any copyright questions should be directed to the Copyright Committee or the University Librarian (1997 VSU Faculty Handbook, p. 116).

Federal law allows you to use material developed by others under strict conditions. You may use short quotes from another’s works for the purpose of argument, agreement, or review; you may not, however, quote a substantial portion of another’s work without permission. A general guideline for prose quotations is that up to 500 words may be directly quoted without requesting permission. If you are quoting from a short story or article 300 to 500 words may constitute “extensive” use requiring permission. Obtain permission anytime you are in doubt. You may not use any tables, figures, photographs, or other illustrations without permission.

Some academic journals give blanket permission to quote extensively or even to reproduce an entire article for educational use. Even if this is done, it is a good idea to get permission. Governmental documents are generally considered in the public domain, and permission is not required to quote extensively from these unless otherwise noted.

If you wish to use an extensive quotation from someone’s work and permission has not already been given, you must obtain permission. You should send a letter, in duplicate, to the individual or organization that holds the copyright. Letters to individuals may be sent to their publishers. Include complete information on what you wish to quote, including page numbers, a starting and ending point, and any additional information needed to identify clearly the portion of work you wish to use.

Students are encouraged to become familiar with VSU’s policy on intellectual property, available in the *Faculty Handbook* (1997). Additional information regarding copyright and Educational Fair Use is available on the University System of Georgia web site (www.peachnet.edu) or through GALILEO.

Plagiarism

All material taken from any source—books, monographs, articles, newspapers, other student papers, class lectures, etc.—must be properly cited, and all sources identified. This subject is covered in more detail in Appendix A.

Falsification or Fabrication of Data

You must clearly and accurately present your findings. One candidate for a position at a major state university spoke on her research, covering her recently completed dissertation. She indicated that she had found an interesting pattern in her data, but that when she applied the appropriate statistical controls to that data, it failed to show significance at the .05—or even the .15—level. She then stated that her committee members told her to just leave the statistical controls out of her dissertation and discuss her findings as if they had met a test of significance. This is an example of falsification of data: the deliberate misrepresentation of the outcome of experimentation or other methods of data gathering. Remember, finding no significance can be just as powerful.

A noted medical researcher in Great Britain was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in recognition of his outstanding contributions to his specialized field of research. When some of his colleagues attempted to replicate his research, however, they found it impossible. It turned out that he had never actually done the research; he had just published non-existent findings based upon non-existent research in order to promote his career. In other words, he had fabricated his data. You can get marvelous results this way—but don't do it.

Paid and Unpaid Assistance

As indicated earlier, writing your thesis or dissertation provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your intellectual capabilities through the production of an original project. It must be your work. Yet no thesis or dissertation is completely the work of any individual; each is, to some extent, a collaborative effort. You will receive extensive assistance from your committee, you may obtain valuable feedback on drafts from fellow students, and you may get many ideas from a spouse or “relevant other.” This is fine, as long as the intellectual ownership of the work is yours, and yours alone.

All programs allow you to obtain certain types of assistance in preparing your thesis or dissertation. This would include engaging a typist, getting help with the physical format of your document, and so forth. Specific types of assistance may be permitted by a given degree program, but you must ascertain this, and you must not go beyond permissible assistance. For example, some programs may allow you to pay someone to run data for you using SPSS, SAS, or some other statistical program, as long as you interpret the data; other programs may require you to know the program and to run your own data.

You should work closely with your committee in determining which types of assistance are appropriate and which are not. You must disclose and briefly describe all assistance given, in writing, in the acknowledgement section of your thesis or dissertation.

Federal Regulations

You are responsible for complying with Federal regulations concerning the use of human and/or animal subjects, radioactive or other hazardous materials, legend drugs, and recombinant DNA in research, study, and experimentation. VSU has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that monitors and subsequently approves any research involving human subjects. If you are considering research that involves any interaction with humans or live animals, you must contact the Graduate School and obtain the IRB application packet. You must receive approval prior to engaging in your research. General IRB application procedures and guidelines are available on the VSU Website or in Appendix E in this document.

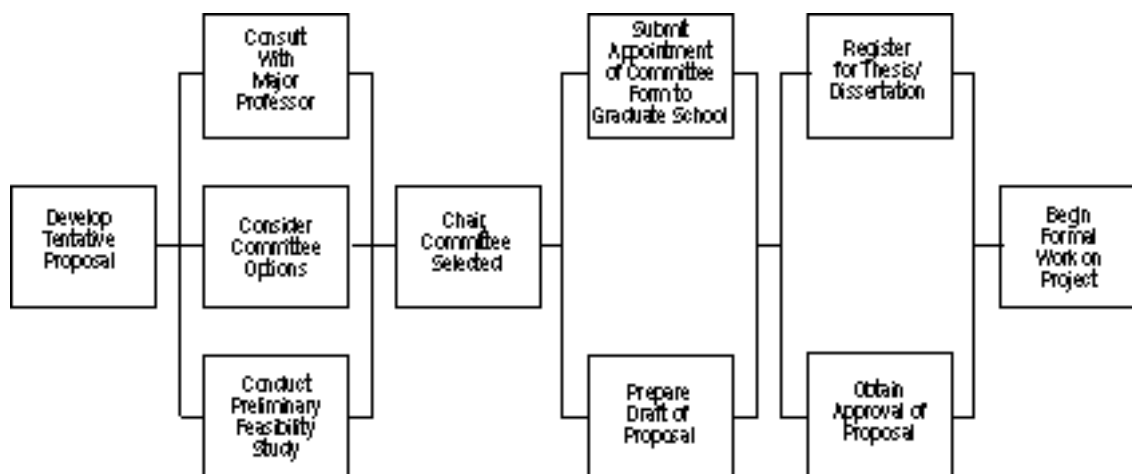
PROCEDURAL ISSUES

You must follow set procedures in completing your thesis or dissertation. These procedures are designed to ensure that the process goes as smoothly as it can for you. You must be aware of this process when beginning your thesis or dissertation, in order to plan your time properly.

Getting Started

It is never too early to begin planning your thesis or dissertation. You might want to be thinking about your project from the moment that you begin your graduate program. The process is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Starting Your Project



Keep in mind that you must register for thesis or dissertation credit for any semester in which you receive assistance from any member of your committee.

Develop Tentative Proposal

You should be thinking about your project as soon as you begin your program. As you approach the point in your program where you start your thesis, you will develop a tentative proposal prior to a discussion of your project with your major professor. You should have an idea of what you want to do, when you want to do it, where you want to do it, and how you will do it.

Consult with Major Professor

Once you have your tentative proposal, you should meet with your major professor, who will serve as the chair of your committee, to start the process of getting the committee in place and formalizing your research project.

Select Committee

When you and your major professor agree that you have a project that both meets the needs of the degree and is feasible, you should form your committee. Procedures for this vary from program to program. You should have an idea of the committee composition you would feel comfortable with, but you need to discuss this with your major professor. Faculty members are limited in the number of thesis or dissertation committees they can chair and upon which they can serve. Your major professor may be aware of other factors that would make the selection of an individual inappropriate for your project. You need to consult your major professor for this and most other decisions pertaining to your research project.

A thesis committee must have a minimum of three members, with the major professor and at least one additional professor drawn from the department in which the student is majoring. One member of the committee must be from a department outside the student's area of specialization. All members of the committee must be members of the VSU graduate faculty or be approved by exception by the dean of the Graduate School.

The dissertation committee will be composed of a maximum of five members and should be named no earlier than the semester in which the Comprehensive Examinations are scheduled to be taken. All of the committee members must be members of the VSU graduate faculty, or have been approved by exception by the dean of the Graduate School. One member must be a member of the faculty in the student's departmental major; this person may serve as the chair of the committee. One member of the committee must be from a department outside the College of Education supporting the core courses. One member of the committee must be from a department within the College of Education, but outside the student's department of specialization. One member must be a member of the VSU research faculty.

Conduct Preliminary Feasibility Study

You should conduct a preliminary feasibility study of your proposal while you are in the process of consulting with your major professor and while you are attempting to come up with a committee. Many times a project looks interesting, worthwhile, and doable when you first consider it, but becomes less so upon closer examination. There may be a number of constraints that make your research project unworkable. Finding these constraints should not disqualify the project, but you must find a way of dealing with the constraint. If it becomes clear that there are too many obstacles that would negatively affect your study, you need to consider a different topic.

Submit Form to the Graduate School

Once you have determined the composition of your committee and the individual members have agreed to serve on the committee, you must obtain their signatures on the Appointment of Committee form and submit that form to the Graduate School, which retains the right of final approval of your committee. There are different forms for master's theses and doctoral dissertation committees. A copy of the thesis committee form is contained in Appendix D. Doctoral students should use forms in their *Faculty & Doctoral Student Handbook*.

Prepare Draft of Proposal

At this point, you will prepare a formal proposal for your committee to approve. A sample proposal format is included in Appendix F. When submitting your formal proposal and, indeed, when submitting any element of your project, you must make sure that the document is formatted properly, typed, free of grammatical and spelling errors, and well organized. Your committee is there to assist your intellectual growth, not to serve as basic proof readers or as editors of your work.

The purpose of the proposal is to offer your committee evidence of the significance and rationale of the proposed study, the philosophical or theoretical knowledge base within which the topic is developed, the methodology or procedures to be employed, and the anticipated implications of the findings or conclusions. The proposal is an indication of the student's readiness to conduct the research (Georgia State University, 1989).

Register for Thesis/Dissertation Credit

You must register for thesis or dissertation credit once any member of your committee actually begins working with you on your research project, and you must be registered for the appropriate credit during any semester in which your committee is providing assistance to you. Your committee will not consider your formal proposal unless you have registered for thesis or dissertation credit. **Students must be registered for thesis hours the semester they graduate.**

Obtain Approval of Proposal

Your committee must approve your proposal prior to your beginning formal work on your project. Committee members may suggest or require that changes be made to your proposal prior to their approval. It is possible that you may get conflicting requirements from different members of your committee. If this happens, it is your responsibility to try to clarify and work out the differences. If this cannot be done, you should go to your committee chair and follow his or her advice. Your chair will serve as a mediator on your behalf with the committee.

As part of the proposal process, remember to obtain IRB approval for any research that involves human subjects BEFORE beginning the actual project.

Begin Formal Work on Your Project

You are now ready to work with your committee on your project. If you have taken care with each of the steps listed above, your formal work should proceed with relative smoothness.

Working With Your Committee

Your committee's cooperation is essential for the successful completion of your research project, and obtaining that cooperation can at times seem difficult and frustrating. Keep in mind that you are working with a number of busy people, and that your project is just one of many things that they have on their minds. You must give the members of your committee adequate time to read and review your work. Check with the various members of your committee to see if there are any time conflicts of which you need to be aware. Try to plan your own schedule so that you have work to do while your committee is reviewing a given chapter. You might be revising chapter one, for example, while your committee is reading chapter two.

The committee needs to be involved in the review of all completed work. The committee members will establish a procedure that you should follow, and it may vary from person to person. It is your responsibility to determine the role each member of your committee wishes to play and adjust your plans accordingly.

In consultation with your committee, the chair will determine when the document is ready to be defended. Before the defense is scheduled, all committee members should have read the document, have had opportunities for input, and should have indicated that the document is ready for final action. Keeping your committee fully engaged in the final revision process will avoid excessive re-writing after the defense.

Your committee chair is your key advisor on your project. Work very closely with this individual.

Library Use in an Electronic Age

The Odum Library will be your main source of the information needed to put your project in perspective. Technology has given the library access to nationwide and global information through Galileo (Georgia Library Learning Online). As a statewide initiative to improve information access for higher education in the state of Georgia, Galileo allows you to access every library in the university system, as well as about 400 full text periodicals. Galileo has a number of other useful features that may be useful to you; familiarize yourself with it and the other resources available early in the thesis or dissertation process.

The Abstract

Once you have completed your project, you will prepare a one-page abstract. This should tell the reader what your topic was, how it was researched, and what were the major findings. Copies of the abstract will be distributed at the defense of the thesis or dissertation, and will be bound in the finished document. Refer to Appendix B for style and format of the abstract.

The Defense

Your committee chair will inform you when the committee members consider your project ready for a defense. The defense should be scheduled at least two weeks prior to midterm of the semester in which you expect to graduate. You must notify the Graduate School of the date, location, and time of your defense at least two weeks in advance. Notification must include your name, your degree program, the title of your project, and a short description of the project. You may submit a copy of your abstract for this purpose.

The defense is usually an oral discussion/presentation of your project and is open to the academic community and invited guests.

Submission of the Thesis or Dissertation

The approved final draft of the thesis or dissertation must be submitted to the members of your committee no later than midterm of the semester in which you expect to graduate. The committee shall certify to the dean of the Graduate School that the student has successfully defended the thesis or dissertation at an announced meeting. One copy of the approved thesis or dissertation along with all the signature pages, must be submitted to the Graduate School not less than two weeks prior to the scheduled graduation date for that semester. Two copies of the thesis or dissertation signed by the major professor, members of the committee, and the dean of the Graduate School, shall be submitted to the library not less than five days before the scheduled date of graduation. You may submit the original and one copy, or two copies. One copy must be submitted on 20 pound weight acid-free paper. Keep in mind that each official copy must have an original signature page. Additional copies may be required by your department or by your committee.

Checklist

- Consult advisor for program-specific requirements
- Develop tentative proposal
- Consult with major professor/committee chair
- Consider committee options
- Conduct preliminary feasibility study
- Select committee
- Submit Appointment of Committee form
- Draft proposal
- Register for credit
- Begin research and writing
- Make changes suggested by committee
- Prepare defense draft
- Write abstract
- Receive approval for defense
- Schedule defense
- Perform defense
- Make changes from defense
- Prepare final version
- Proofread final version
- Obtain committee signatures
- Pay binding fees
- Submit final copies, fee receipt to Graduate School
- Celebrate with family and friends

FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements have been established by the Graduate School and apply to the final print copies of your thesis or dissertation. These requirements are designed to ensure that your document can be successfully bound, that it will remain well preserved, and that it will have a professional and attractive appearance. Format requirements in this Guide take precedence over any conflicting requirements in other style manuals.

All theses or dissertations must be written in English.

Required Components

The following components must be included in your thesis or dissertation, in the order shown:

1. Title page
2. Signature page
For each member of the committee, indicate their full name and academic degree (Ed.D., Ph.D., Ed.S., etc.) and their proper rank (Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor) in the appropriate department.
Ernestine H. Clark, Ed.D.
Professor, Educational Leadership
3. Fair Use and Duplication Release Forms
4. Abstract
Includes the basics of what you did, why you did it, how you did it, and what results were found.
5. Table of Contents
6. Body of text
Usually presented in the form of chapters. APA suggests the following as chapter topics: Introduction (including a review of related literature), Method, Results, and Discussion. Some variation in this format is permitted, i.e., there may be a separate chapter on related literature, but if you are using APA style, this is the proper format for the body of your thesis or dissertation. Chapters should be titled, but do not need to be designated with numerals. In MLA style, the chapters should reflect the topics presented in each chapter.
7. Endnotes/Footnotes/Text References
Follow the appropriate style manual guidelines for these important features. Be sure you are consistent with your reference format.
8. Bibliography/Reference List
APA format requires the use of a Reference List that reflects all the citations mentioned in your document. A bibliography cites all works that were consulted, including those that were used as background, and these may or may not be included in your literature review.

Additional components, including those discussed in this guide, may be included at the discretion of your supervisory committee.

Paper

The copy for the Library Archives must be bound and printed or photocopied onto archival quality white paper. The paper must be 20 pound weight, acid-free, and of standard 8½ by 11 inch size. Acid-free paper deteriorates less over time and is thus required for the archives. Also known as “thesis paper,” it is available at a variety of local sources. Other copies may be on good quality xerographic paper.

Margins

The following minimum margins must be observed:

top: 1 inch (including page numbers & headers) except first page of each chapter — 2 inch top
bottom: 1 inch
left: 1½ inch (justified; this allows for proper binding.)
right: 1 inch (unjustified)

All printed matter, including page numbers, tables, appendices, and running heads, must be contained within the margins.

Page Numbering

The title page is counted as the first page, but is not numbered.

The next page, usually the copyright page (or blank if not copyrighted) is not counted and is not numbered.

The next page, usually the fair use and duplication page, is not counted and not numbered.

All preliminary pages that follow are counted and numbered with lower case Roman numerals (iii, iv, v, etc.).

Page 1 is the first page of the Introduction and is numbered “1” at the bottom center of this page. The remainder of the document is numbered with Arabic numerals. All subsequent major sections, such as first pages of chapters or appendices, are numbered with the centered number at the bottom. Numbering is consecutive through references and appendices.

Headings

The best advice is to follow the style manual selected for your discipline. English uses MLA, History uses Chicago/Turabian, and Education uses APA. The templates found in Appendix C are for APA, with one exception. The VSU *Guide* asks for a full-capped title for each chapter. APA does not. If students prefer to use both a title and a chapter number, the formats found on pages 46–48 should be used for APA. Few dissertations or theses use more than four headings, but you must actually HAVE that many headings in order to use the four heading format. Remember—the first page of each chapter has a 2 inch top margin. See samples in Appendix C.

Word Processing

See APA Style Manual, MLA Style Manual, or Turabian as appropriate for examples of acceptable type style. The font should be at least 10 point with 12 point being preferred for readability.

Dot matrix print, script, or other nonstandard typefaces are acceptable in the appendices of the final manuscript only. All other portions must be in a standard font or typeface.

If pen work (drawing) is needed, use black permanent drawing ink. Any freehand material must look professional—consider hiring a specialist to do this.

Consistency

Be sure that your paper looks the same from section to section. Different margins, different heading formats, and different fonts are very apparent and detract from the presentation of your work (and are not acceptable). Take the time to look over the paper from beginning to end and notice things that don't match or line up. As mentioned in the capitalization section, be consistent in your use of upper case letters and abbreviations. There may be several correct ways to refer to the title or place or item, but once you select one, use it throughout your paper.

Redundancy

The nature of a research document at this level requires a certain level of restatement of your purpose, problem, and method. However, try to paraphrase enough to avoid making the redundancy an exact duplicate of previously presented material. Some duplication is OK — but after the third exact restatement, the reader might begin thinking you are incapable of explaining your research in meaningful ways.

Proofreading

It is recommended that you have a professional editor read and edit your final draft. This does not come cheaply, but the results have been impressive. If this is not feasible, find someone who knows nothing about your project (and is not your spouse unless he or she happens to be a professional editor) who you know is an accomplished writer. This person will be able to find the format inconsistencies, typos, verb agreement problems, etc., that your committee may not have time to work on. Ultimately, your committee chair will determine which corrections will be made, and it is appropriate to consider this person the final authority on composition and structure. Correct format per your style manual is not negotiable.

Capitalization

Unfortunately, there are no absolute hard and fast rules on this. Each *Style* has slightly different requirements. The most important aspect of this is to be consistent. If you capitalize something once, continue to do so. If you use lower case, continue that. Changing in the middle will be noticed.

- Use title capitalization where appropriate.
- While we see “South Georgia” in the *Valdosta Daily Times* and other publications, this is a regional practice and is technically incorrect. Use lower case “s” for south. If the term is used in a proper name or title, i.e., South Georgia Medical Center, then it is correct to capitalize the “s.”
- Make sure you capitalize and spell exactly like the original when you insert a quote. If it bothers you that something is incorrect, or if you want to be sure the error is not attributed to you, use [sic] to indicate that the original author wrote or said it this way.

. . . in the promise [sic] land . . . promised is the usual form

- Capitalization of the names of organizations, reports, and titles

Organizations: Just like they do it — if you want to use it as an acronym, type in the full name and insert the abbreviation in parentheses immediately after the last word of the title. For the Georgia Department of Education, you could use Georgia DOE or GA DOE or DOE. Any is probably acceptable — be consistent and be sure no confusion could arise.

Valdosta State University (VSU)
Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) or other variation

Reports: Depends on the style, but should have title capitalization. Other punctuation related to this may vary.

Titles: If the term is used collectively, i.e., the deans, the teams, the directors, use lower case. If the term refers to a specific dean, team, or director, capitalize the first letter of the title: the Dean confirmed, Team 4 won, the Director said. If the term refers to a specific office, capitalize as appropriate: Office of Student Affairs, Division of Fund Raising, Graduate School. If you want to refer to that particular organization, it is acceptable to use Office, the Division, etc., as long as the reference is completely clear.

Hyphens

- If two words that do not stand alone modify a third, the first two are hyphenated.

Second grade	second-grade text
Work skills	work-related skills
Programs oriented toward careers	career-oriented programs

- If two words are combined that cannot stand alone in context, they should be hyphenated.

Readiness for work	work-readiness
Children at high risk	high-risk children
Career programs for middle grades	middle-grades career-oriented programs

Verb/Subject Agreement and Tense

- Past tense is appropriate and preferred to describe what you did and/or what others did and found. Present tense is appropriate for describing what is happening now or is ongoing.

Incorrect

Jones (1998) finds
 (at the beginning) This chapter presented
 (in Chapter 3) Chapters 1 and 2 present
 The subject's scores was not
 The data was

Correct

Jones (1998) found
 This chapter presents
 Chapters 1 and 2 presented
 The subject's scores were not
 The data were

- Be sure the verb agrees with the full subject. Sometimes compound subjects or lengthy clauses cause confusion in this area.

The first test *and* the second test were

The first test *or* the second test was

The *importance* of the procedures that allowed the subjects to succeed *was*

Printing

The original final copy must be printed, one-sided, directly onto the appropriate paper by a typewriter, laser-quality printer, or laser printer. Ink jet printers must be set on the highest quality. Dot matrix printing is not acceptable. Additional required copies may be produced in the same manner as the original, or they must be professionally photocopied onto the appropriate paper. All copies must be crisp, clear, and free of smudges, erasures, or corrections.

Line Spacing

The body of the text must be double-spaced. Additional line spaces may be used to set off headings.

Long quotations, formulas, endnotes, etc. are to follow the spacing indicated in the style manual approved by your program. For APA, this rule also refers to the reference list. Quotations of more than 40 words should be indented five spaces from the left and five spaces from the right and single-spaced.

Tables, Graphs, Photographs, and Figures

Illustrative materials may add a great deal to your thesis or dissertation if properly used. These should be placed in your text as closely following your first reference to them as possible. An illustration may share a page with text, as long as it does not take up more than half the page. Photographs are always placed on their own page. Tables, figures, graphs, and photographs should be numbered under separate numbering systems, and a list for each should be provided if you have three or more of one type of graphic. Always refer to a graphic in the text by number. Never write, “As seen in the following figure;” rather state, “As seen in Figure 4. . .”

All illustrative materials should be incorporated into the text. Appendices should be reserved for explanatory material (non-essential data), samples of documents, IRB approval, etc. Tables, charts, graphs and the like should all appear with some text included on these pages.

If you need to reduce the table or figure, make sure the page number appears in the proper place on the page, e.g. like all the other pages. Also, the title of the chart or graph should appear in the regular size font being used for the rest of the document.

Consistent with APA style, no materials may be pasted into the document. If you have such items, paste each into place and then photocopy the page. This rule applies to photographs. If you need to include photographs, prepare them in black and white half-tone exposure and photocopy the item into the text. Documents that contain pasted items will not be accepted.

Pockets can be used for oversize maps or drawings. Fold and insert in appendices. If possible, reducing these to standard 8.5 x 11 inches and including them in the text is preferred.

Some style manuals allow you to place graphics in an appendix rather than in the text. Refer to the manual approved by your program, and check with your committee before you assume that this is appropriate.

Ink Color

The text must be printed in black ink. Colored ink is permissible for graphics and illustrations. All graphics, illustrations, and tables must also be provided in black and white, and placed in a pocket inside the back cover of your document. Colored ink deteriorates over time; it is also difficult to copy and thus, not recommended.

All signatures on the signature page are to be in indelible blue ink.

Binding

All official copies of the thesis or dissertation—those placed in the library or kept by a department—must be bound. It is also a normal courtesy to ask all members of the committee if they would like a bound copy and to provide a copy for each member who desires one. Binding is done by the Odum Library with the student being responsible for all binding fees. The library will get two copies.

Before preparing the final copies for binding, make sure you have obtained the dean of the Graduate School's signature which indicates final approval of your thesis or dissertation.

COMPONENTS

Examples of required components can be found in Appendix B. Examples of additional components pre-approved by the Graduate School can be found in Appendix C. Your format must conform to these samples. Some general comments concerning each are provided below. Each component is discussed in the order it appears in your document.

Title Page

The title should reflect the actual content of the study by using key words that represent major areas of your investigation. Avoid using symbols, formulae, and numerals in the title. You should also avoid "jargon" in the title, wherever possible, and avoid being "cute."

Copyright Page

You are strongly encouraged to copyright your thesis or dissertation. The copyright page immediately follows the title page and consists of the following statement, modified only by the correct year and your name as shown on the title page, centered in the page.

© Copyright 1998 Mary Jane Doe

All Rights Reserved

Most word processing packages contain the copyright symbol "©." The copyright statement must be double-spaced.

Signature Page

You must have a signature page with original signatures for each official copy of your dissertation. Each signature must be in blue ink. It is a good idea to have adequate copies of the signature page and an appropriate pen with you when you defend. Assuming your defense is successful, you can get signatures while your committee is together. (If changes must be made, you may still be able to get signatures from each member of your committee except your major professor, who will sign only after verifying that the changes have been properly made.) These pages must all be produced on the 20 pound weight acid-free paper used for your archival copy.

Fair Use and Duplication Release Form

This form must follow your signature page. It states whether or not appropriate personnel in the Odum Library have your permission to act as your agent to release copies of your document if they are requested. The form also lets the reader know that your document is protected under the laws of copyright.

Abstract

The abstract should tell the reader your topic, research methods, and major findings. The abstract is double-spaced and should not exceed one page in length. It is useful to keep within the guidelines established by University Microforms International, which limits an abstract to 350 words.

Table of Contents

Only material following the table of contents is listed in the table of contents. Follow the instructions in the style manual approved by your program in formatting your table of contents. Chapter headings, sub-headings, etc. must be listed exactly as they appear in the body of the text. Be sure to check page numbers as corrections are made that may require renumbering.

List of Tables, Figures, or Illustrations

Number and title all tables, figures, photographs, and illustrations. If you have three or more figures and/or illustrations, you should present a list, showing their location, after your table of contents.

Preface, Introduction, and Foreword

The preface, introduction, and foreword may be included in an introductory section of a manuscript. The preface is preliminary to and separate from the main text and explains the purpose, plan, or preparation of the work. A preface is not necessary for most theses or dissertations but may be included if the author believes it serves a useful purpose, and his or her committee agrees. If a preface is included, it normally contains acknowledgments. An introduction provides the reader with a quick overview of the text and may be provided as a separate section or as a section of your first chapter. You should provide an introduction. A foreword is a short preface written by a third party and is not normally part of a thesis or dissertation.

Acknowledgments

While your thesis or dissertation must be your intellectual property, you could not have written it without the assistance of a number of individuals and institutions. The acknowledgments page provides you with the opportunity to thank those who provided that assistance. You may include as many individuals as you desire. This is also the appropriate place to list permission to quote copyrighted material. Single space text.

Dedication

A dedication is not required but may be included if desired. A dedication should be short and to the point. Single space text.

Body of Text

Your text should be arranged in a logical order, divided into appropriate chapters. Refer to the style manual approved by your department in this regard.

Footnotes, Endnotes, and In-Text References

Footnotes, endnotes, or in-text references (short explanations in parentheses in the text) are acceptable to the Graduate School. You must consult the style manual approved by your department and use its recommended format consistently in your thesis or dissertation.

Bibliography

In APA style, a bibliography includes all sources consulted that relate to your research project. A Reference List is used to compile all the sources actually cited in your manuscript. If you are not using APA, consult the appropriate style manual for the proper format preferred by your department.

Appendices

Supplemental material should be placed in appendices. You need a separate appendix for each type of material presented. Some style manuals allow you to place tables, figures, and other graphical representations in an appendix, rather than dispersed throughout your text. Each appendix should have a cover page that identifies it. A copy of your approved IRB proposal **must** be included here.

Autobiographical Statement

If you wish to provide an autobiographical statement, it should appear as the final component of your document. It should include basic vita information such as schools attended, degrees received, positions held, titles of publications, and honors received. It should not include your address or telephone number, as your thesis or dissertation is a public document.

Component Checklist

- Title Page
- *Copyright Page
- Signature Page
- Fair Use and Duplication Release Form
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- *List of Figures or Illustrations
- *List of Tables
- *Preface
- *Acknowledgments
- *Dedication
- Body of Text and Nontext Elements
- Endnotes/Footnotes/Text References
- Bibliography/Reference List
- *Appendix/Appendices
- *Autobiographical Statement

Placement for all components of a thesis or dissertation. Items with asterisks (*) are optional.

STYLE

A man's style is his mind's voice. Wooden minds, wooden voices.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Style is used in both a literary and a technical sense, and you are expected to exhibit reasonable competence in both. In a literary sense, style refers to your use of language, your ability to communicate in a manner that both informs and holds the interest of the reader. In a technical sense, style refers to such mundane things as proper punctuation, page layout, and format.

Consistency is an essential element of style. If you are to produce a professional document, one in which you and VSU can take pride, you must maintain consistency of style. Not only does this add to the document's appearance, it makes your document more functional. It removes potential distractions from the mind of the reader and allows him or her to focus upon the message you are presenting.

Check with your program coordinator to determine which style manual is required for your project and use it. The most commonly used manuals are listed below.

NOTE: Rules stated in the Format Requirements section of this document, along with any additional requirements specific to your program, take precedence over guidelines in any other manual of style.²

Technical Style Manuals (Consult more recent editions)

American Chemical Society. (1986). *ACS style guide: A manual for authors and editors* (2nd ed.). Washington: American Chemical Society.

American Mathematical Society. (1990). *A manual for authors of mathematical papers* (8th ed., Revised). Providence: American Mathematical Society.

American Psychological Association. (1994). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.). Washington: American Psychological Association.

American Institute of Physics. (1990). *AIP style manual* (4th ed.). New York: American Institute of Physics.

Bates, R., Buchanan, R., & Adkins-Heljeson, M. (1992). *Geowriting: A guide to writing, editing, and printing in earth science* (5th ed.). Alexandria: American Geological Institute.

Campbell, W. G. (1994). *Form and style: Research papers, reports, theses* (9th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Columbia Law Review. (1991). *A uniform system of citation* (15th ed.). Cambridge: Harvard Law Review.

Gibaldi, J., & Achtert, W. S. (1988). *MLA handbook for writers of research papers* (3rd ed.). New York: Modern Language Association of America.

Linguistic Society of America. "LSA style sheet." Published annually in the December issue of the LSA Bulletin.

Turabian, K. L. (1987). *A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations* (5th ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²Style manuals are listed using APA style. Do not use the format in this list as your style guide; use the guide specified by your department.

Page and Text Format

The body of the text may be presented fully justified, with left and right margins even, or left justified, with the right margin ragged. Use the justification style specified in your style manual or by your program.

Avoid placing a heading or subheading at the bottom of the page. You should have at least two lines of text following a heading or subheading on the page; if this is not possible, cut the page short, and place the heading or subheading at the top of the next page. Avoid widows and orphans. You should not have the first line of a paragraph at the end of a page, nor the final line of a paragraph at the top of a page. Begin the new paragraph on the next page, or carry the last two lines of a paragraph over to the next page. You must follow accepted punctuation rules. While this topic is beyond a guide such as this, there is one point that will be emphasized. Do not end a page with a hyphen. If you have a compound word or a single word that will not completely fit on the page, carry it over to the next page. Table 1 illustrates additional common style and mechanical errors to avoid.

Common Style and Mechanical Errors

Error	Correction and Comment
The results can't be generalized.	The results cannot be generalized. <i>Do not use contractions in formal writing.</i>
But, the results cannot be generalized.	The results, however, cannot be generalized. <i>Do not begin sentences with coordinate conjunctions.</i>
The researchers hopefully will show . . .	The researchers hope to show . . . The researchers intend to show . . . <i>"Hopefully" means "in a hopeful manner." This colloquialism is often misused.</i>
Subjects of the study were 55 men and 56 women. Each subject was measured on his response to the stimulus.	Subjects of the study were 55 men and 56 women. Subjects were measured on their responses to the stimulus. <i>Avoid sex-reference language by using the third-person plural or by reconstructing the sentence. Use she or he, his or her only if necessary. Never use s/he.</i>
Steps in writing a thesis: 1) meet with the committee, 2) select a topic, 3) conduct the research, 4) writing the thesis, and 5) submitting the draft.	Steps in writing a thesis: 1) meet with the committee, 2) select a topic, 3) conduct the research, 4) write the thesis, and 5) submit the draft. <i>Items in a list or outline, chapter or section titles, and subheadings must be of parallel construction. If some items are sentence fragments, all should be fragments. If some are complete sentences (as in the list above), all should be complete sentences and sentence construction should be parallel. Note that each sentence in the example above begins with an imperative. This example also would be parallel if each phrase began with a gerund (i.e., meeting, selecting, conducting, etc.).</i>
The data is presented . . .	The data are presented . . . <i>The word data is plural, as are the words criteria, media, phenomena, strata, and spectra. The singulars of these words are datum, criterion, medium, phenomenon, stratum, and spectrum.</i>

Error	Correction and Comment
Jones et.al's research . . .	The research of Jones et al . . . <i>Et al. is an abbreviation for the Latin words et al (and others). An apostrophe s ('s) cannot be added to make it possessive. The sentence must be reworded.</i>
The achievements were re-stated . . .	The achievements were re-stated . . . <i>Words may be hyphenated only at syllables. Consult a dictionary for proper hyphenation.</i>
In the 1960's . . .	In the 1960s . . . <i>No apostrophe is used unless the year is possessive (e.g., the 1960's dress styles).</i>
U.N.E.S.C.O. is the major organization that . . .	UNESCO is the major organization that . . . <i>Generally, periods are not used after acronyms and capital letter abbreviations.</i>
The number of R.N.'s responding to the questionnaire . . .	The number of RNs responding to the questionnaire . . . <i>The plural of most acronyms and capital letter abbreviations is formed by adding s only, without an apostrophe.</i>
Research shows that this is a common error, however, it is easily rectified.	Research shows that this is a common error; however, it is easily rectified. <i>"However" and "therefore" are adverbs. If either is used to join two complete sentences, the word must be preceded by a semicolon.</i>
The characteristics of the subjects (i.e. height, weight, age) were recorded.	The characteristics of the subjects (i.e., height, weight, age) were recorded. <i>The Latin abbreviations e.g., i.e., and viz. (for example, that is, and namely) are always set off by commas even when the explanation that follows them is only one word.</i>
Billings <u>et al.</u> report . . .	Billings et al. report . . . <i>Common Latin terms and abbreviations and common foreign words such as a priori, et al., etc., per se, and vis-a-vis should not be underlined (italicized) unless specified in the style guide being followed.</i>
At the mid-point the results were non-significant.	At the midpoint the results were nonsignificant. <i>There are few prefixes in the English language that require hyphenation. Prefixes that should be joined to words include anti, bi, co, infra, inter, intra, macro, micro, mid, mini, multi, non, over, post, pre, pro, pseudo, re, semi, socio, sub, super, ultra, un and under unless the new word could be mispronounced (non-native) or misunderstood (re-pair, re-form, un-ionized, re-creation) or if the root word begins with a capital letter (anti-US).</i>
Data indicate "doctoral-level burnout". "Doctoral-level burnout", according to researchers, is increasingly common.	Data indicate "doctoral-level burnout." "Doctoral-level burnout," according to researchers, is increasingly common. <i>Periods and commas are placed inside (before) double quotation marks.</i>

Error	Correction and Comment
The results were summarized by Smith. and Jones	Smith and Jones summarized the results. <i>Use the active voice.</i>
The sample was composed of 167 students, nine of whom had no comment on 5 items on the text.	The sample was composed of 167 students, 9 of whom had no comments on five items on the test.
The two-dimensional image is projected, and later a 2-D cross-section is produced.	<p>The two-dimensional image is projected, and later a two-dimensional cross-section is produced.</p> <p><i>The style guide being followed usually specifies rules for the use of numbers. Internal consistency is of the utmost importance.</i></p> <p><i>In the first example, APA* style requires numerals for all numbers 10 and over and for numbers under 10 if they are grouped for comparison (167 students, 9 students) or represent precise measurements (1 inch, 3 years).</i></p> <p><i>In scientific writing, numbers under two digits (one through nine) are often spelled out and numerals are used for all numbers 10 and over unless the number begins the sentence. Numerals are used for most quantitative expressions (6 cm, 4 g).</i></p> <p><i>In nonscientific writing, numbers under 100 usually are spelled out.</i></p>
There were less students in Brown's study.	<p>There were fewer students in Brown's study.</p> <p><i>Less refers only to quantity (amount) or degree. A general rule is that if the object can be counted (questionnaires, calories, subjects), fewer should be used (e.g., There are fewer calories in this bread because less flour is used in the recipe).</i></p>
Only small amounts of researchers were needed to find the answer.	<p>Only small numbers of researchers were needed to find the answer.</p> <p><i>Number refers to objects that can be counted. Amount refers to mass or quantity that cannot be individually counted (e.g., A large amount of data was used to classify a number of the subjects in the study).</i></p>
The results which were reported in 1985 have been reevaluated.	<p>The results that were reported in 1985 have been reevaluated.</p> <p>The results, which were reported in 1985, have been reevaluated.</p> <p><i>That is a defining or restrictive pronoun. Which is nondefining and nonrestrictive. Proper use of the words is important for sentence clarity.</i></p>
<p>... a total of ten subjects</p> <p>... has been previously found</p> <p>... the reason is because</p> <p>... summarize briefly</p>	<p>... 10 subjects</p> <p>... has been found</p> <p>... summarize</p> <p><i>Avoid wordiness and redundancy*</i></p>

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association

Typefaces

Your typeface or font must be clear and readable. Generally, you should use a typeface with serifs (the small lines projecting from the main strokes of types). Sans serif (without serifs) typefaces may be used for special purposes, where appropriate. Again, consult your style manual for more information. Old English and Script typefaces are not acceptable.

Standard print or font size (10 or 12 point) must be used. Some font sizes in 10 may be too small. You should check with the Graduate School regarding unusually small or large print. Font size must not affect accepted spacing of major headings and subheadings.

Oversize Elements

Oversize elements are always a problem in a document. The best thing to do about them is to reduce them in size to fit on a normal page. If this is not possible, an oversize element may still be bound, if the vertical page size is eleven inches, the page is folded in accordance with the instructions found in your style manual, and the paper used is the same quality used in the rest of your document. If this cannot be done you may fold the page and place it in a pocket supplement.

SOURCES CONSULTED

American Psychological Association. (1994). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.). Washington: American Psychological Association.

Campbell, W. G. (1994). *Form and style: Research papers, reports, theses* (9th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Gibaldi, J., & Achtert, W. S. (1988). *MLA handbook for writers of research papers* (3rd ed.). New York: Modern Language Association of America.

Hacker, D. (1993). *A pocket style manual*. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press.

National Association of College Stores. (1989). *Questions and answers on copyright for the campus community*. St. Oberlin, Oh.: National Association of College Stores.

Turabian, K. L. (1987). *A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations* (5th ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

University of Arkansas at Little Rock Graduate School. (1995). *Dissertation and thesis guide*. Little Rock: University of Arkansas.

University of Utah Graduate School. (1995). *A handbook for theses and dissertations*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. (1993). *1993-1995 Graduate Policies and Procedures and Course Catalog of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*. Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

APPENDIX A: Plagiarism

Plagiarism

Definition

The Virginia Tech honor system constitution states that “plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off same as one’s own, original work.” The violation, then, consists of both copying and misrepresenting the material in question.

Since the matter of misrepresentation is easier to define and understand, let us consider it first. Generally, when a student places his or her name in any kind of work, whether it is specifically pledged or not, he or she claims responsibility for the originality of the contents except for those parts that are specifically attributed to another or that are considered common knowledge. (The concept of common knowledge posts a problem of definition, and the student should consult the section of this section that addresses that area.) Thus, if a student has consulted any outside source, whether published or not, and has incorporated any of its “language, structure, ideas, and/or thoughts” into his or her work without acknowledging that source, he or she may be guilty of misrepresenting the work’s originality. [Furthermore, in citing a reference, the student must change both the sentence structure and the vocabulary (where possible) in expressing the original material in his or her own words.]

On the other hand, copying includes a whole range of offenses. Everyone is undoubtedly familiar with stories involving students who have “borrowed” or bought a term paper or laboratory report from a so-called research service, a fraternity or sorority file, a fellow student, or another similar source. Such wholesale copying is akin to the lifting of an assignment in its entirety from a book or journal article. In either case, the student in question submits work that is literally copied and transferred from one piece of paper to another; by claiming this work as his or her own, the student is clearly guilty of the most flagrant kind of plagiarism.

Another type of copying that is not as obvious, though equally serious, involves the transmission of the part of a book, article, or other source into different words—paraphrasing. Although the language is not the same because the exact words of the source have been changed, the structure, ideas, and thoughts of the original author have been copied. Thus, the student who submits an assignment that simply paraphrases a source without identifying it may also be guilty of plagiarism.

Similarly, any combination of simple copying and paraphrasing, whether from one source or from many, is also a type of plagiarism, and the offender may be equally guilty as those students described above. Because a person’s ideas can be conveyed in many ways besides the written word, students should be aware that the copying of drawings, designs and photographs, maps, graphs, illustrations, tables, primary data, derived equations, computer programs, verbal communications of information and ideas, and other sources may also constitute plagiarism, unless the source is acknowledged and properly documented. For the purposes of the Virginia Tech Honor System, plagiarism can be broadly defined as appropriating the literary composition, language, structure, ideas, and/or thoughts, drawings, laboratory reports or computer programs or another or parts or passages thereof, and of passing them off as the original product of one’s own mind. To be liable for plagiarism under the university’s honor system, it is not necessary to duplicate another’s literary work exactly; it being sufficient if unfair use of such work is made by lifting of substantial portions of it. Plagiarism is not confined to literal copying, but also includes many of the evasive variations and colorable alterations by which the plagiarist may disguise the source from which the material was copied. On the other hand, even an exact counterpart of another’s work does not constitute plagiarism if such counterpart was arrived at independently.

The next several pages of this section will illustrate the major types of plagiarism, and will also indicate how these offenses can be avoided through proper documentation of sources.

Examples of Correct and Incorrect Uses of Sources

The following four examples provide illustrations of three kinds of plagiarism, as well as the proper use and acknowledgment of sources. The excerpt from Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* is quoted from W.K. Marriott's translation (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1908), p.37. The excerpts from student papers have been written by the committee for the purposes of this handbook.

Flagrant Plagiarism

Excerpt from *The Prince*

Whenever those states which have been acquired as stated have been accustomed to live under their own laws and in freedom, there are three courses for those who wish to hold them: the first is to ruin them, the next is to reside there in person, the third is to permit them to live under their own laws, drawing a tribute, and establishing within it an oligarchy which will keep it friendly to you. Because such a government, being created by the prince, knows that it cannot stand without his friendship and interest, and does its utmost to support him, and therefore he who would keep a city accustomed to freedom will hold it more easily by the means of its own citizens than in any other way.

Excerpt from a student paper

Whenever those nations which have been acquired have been accustomed to living under their own laws and in freedom, then there are three options for those who wish to keep them; the first is to ruin them, second is to reside there in person, and the last is to permit them to live under their own government, drawing a tribute, and establishing within it an oligarchy which will keep it friendly to you. Because such a government, being created by the ruler, knows that it cannot stand without his friendship and interest, and does its utmost to gain his support, and therefore, he who would keep a city accustomed to freedom will hold it more easily by the means of its own citizens than in any other way.

Comments

This student paper is an example of the most obvious form of plagiarism. The writer has copied Machiavelli almost verbatim without any acknowledgment. There have been some minor changes. For example, the italicized words have been changed. "States" becomes "nations", "courses" becomes "options", etc.

Excerpt from *The Prince*

Whenever those states which have been acquired as stated have been accustomed to live under their own laws and in freedom, there are three courses for those who wish to hold them: the first is to ruin them, the next is to reside there in person, the third is to permit them to live under their own laws, drawing a tribute, and establishing within it an oligarchy which will keep it friendly to you. Because such a government, being created by the prince, knows that it cannot stand without his friendship and interest, and does its utmost to support him, and therefore he who would keep a city accustomed to freedom will hold it more easily by the means of its own citizens than in any other way.

Excerpt from a student paper

There are basically three methods to maintain control over nations which formerly enjoyed their independence. First, the nation can be completely destroyed. Second, the king can personally reside in the conquered territory. Finally, the king can permit them to live under their own rules; he would then levy a tax and establish a ruling clique which would be loyal to him. Since this government is created and maintained by the conquering power, the puppet government will do its utmost to support him in order to keep his friendship. In addition, by establishing a puppet government in such a manner, he will gain the allegiance of its citizens.

Comments

By paraphrasing the paragraph taken from Machiavelli, the student attempted to disguise the source of material. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that the sentences of this writer parallel those of the Machiavelli text and are identical in meaning.

Plagiarism of an Idea

Excerpt from *The Prince*

Whenever those states which have been acquired as stated have been accustomed to live under their own laws and in freedom, there are three courses for those who wish to hold them: the first is to ruin them, the next is to reside there in person, the third is to permit them to live under their own laws, drawing a tribute, and establishing within it an oligarchy which will keep it friendly to you. Because such a government, being created by the prince, knows that it cannot stand without his friendship and interest, and does its utmost to support him, and therefore he who would keep a city accustomed to freedom will hold it more easily by the means of its own citizens than in any other way.

Excerpt from a student paper

When the British established their empire in Asia and Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were faced with the problem of how to govern and control effectively these areas which had formerly lived under their own government. There were essentially three methods of achieving this end: destroying the country; establishing direct rule through governors appointed by the king; and maintaining indirect control through the already established governing structure. The British chose indirect rule. Through indirect rule, the former officials realized that their position was now dependent upon the British. Consequently, their allegiance was assured, and through them the British obtained substantial economic benefits. In addition, the people, seeing their leaders still in power, obediently supported the indirect rule of the British.

Comments

The student has used the ideas of Machiavelli in describing a historical event. Machiavelli lists three methods of governing and controlling a state that had formerly been independent, and then shows the relative advantage of pursuing the last method. The student does not acknowledge the use of the description of the three methods of control nor the advantages of the last method when applying Machiavelli's idea to a specific example.

Correct Use of Paraphrasing and Direct Quotations

Excerpt from *The Prince*

Whenever those states which have been acquired as stated have been accustomed to live under their own laws and in freedom, there are three courses for those who wish to hold them: the first is to ruin them, the next is to reside there in person, the third is to permit them to live under their own laws, drawing a tribute, and establishing within it an oligarchy which will keep it friendly to you. Because such a government, being created by the prince, knows that it cannot stand without his friendship and interest, and does its utmost to support him, and therefore he who would keep a city accustomed to freedom will hold it more easily by the means of its own citizens than in any other way.

Excerpt from a student paper

When the British established their empire in Asia and Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were faced with the problem of how to govern these formerly independent areas effectively. According to Niccolo Machiavelli in *The Prince*, a ruler had three options. He could destroy them, “reside there in person”, or “permit them to live under their own laws, drawing a tribute and establishing within it an oligarchy which will keep it friendly to you.” Machiavelli felt that through this third method the conqueror gained the support of the former leaders and their subjects.

The British seemed to apply this third method through their indirect rule concept. In other words, the British maintained control using the former leaders as figureheads. The former leaders realized that their position was now dependent upon the British. Consequently their allegiance was assured and through them substantial economic benefits were obtained. In addition, the people, seeing their leaders still in power, obediently supported the indirect rule of the British.

Comments

In this instance, the student has correctly footnoted the ideas of Machiavelli, which he has paraphrased and quoted. The writer has then applied Machiavelli's ideas to a more recent historical event.

The Problem of Common Knowledge

The concept of common knowledge is one of the more difficult points to explain in any consideration of plagiarism. How can a student, often a novice in the subject, determine whether an idea or fact included in a paper is so widely known that it is considered common knowledge and requires no documentation? A few general guidelines for solving this dilemma can be suggested, but none is inviolate. Given the seriousness of plagiarism, the prudent writer cites a reference whenever he or she is uncertain.

1. Concepts and facts widely known outside of the specific area of study are generally considered common knowledge. These include undisputed dates (e.g. the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776), scientific principles (e.g. Newton's Laws of Motion), and commonly accepted ideas (e.g. Hamlet's role as a tragic hero). Such data require no specific reference. Students should be aware, however, that the addition of minor informational embellishments might require documentation (e.g. that the Declaration of Independence was unanimously adopted by the American colonies on July 4, 1776, despite the abstention of New York).
2. The fact that material appears in a dictionary, encyclopedia, handbook, or other reference work does not guarantee that it is common knowledge. Such books are written by experts, and most of the information they contain is not widely known.
3. There is no simple test to determine whether information is common knowledge. In case of doubt, the student should consult his or her instructor.

³Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. and intro. W.K. Marriott (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1908) p.37.

⁴Machiavelli, p. 37.

APPENDIX B: Examples Of Required Components

Sample title page for dissertation

Collective Action by Public School Teachers: A Study of
Collective Action as a Method of Enhancing Professional
Status and Autonomy Within Bureaucratic Organizations

A Dissertation submitted
to the Graduate School
Valdosta State University

in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in Educational Leadership

in the Department of Educational Leadership
of the College of Education

June 1999

Mary Jane Doe

MA, University of Utah, 1974
BS, Weber State College, 1972

Sample dissertation signature page

This dissertation, “Collective Action by Public School Teachers: A Study of Collective Action as a Method of Enhancing Professional Status and Autonomy Within Bureaucratic Organizations,” by Mary Jane Doe, is approved by:

**Dissertation
Committee
Chair**

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

**Committee
Member**

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

**Dean of the College
of Education**

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

**Dean of the Graduate
School**

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

[*All signatures must be in indelible blue ink.*]

Sample title page for thesis

Accounting for Tax Expenditures in a State Tax System:
A Feasibility Study

A Thesis submitted
to the Graduate School
Valdosta State University

in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Political Science

in the Department of Political Science
of the College of Arts and Sciences

June 1999

Norman James Allen

BS, Weber State College, 1972

Sample thesis signature page

This thesis, "Accounting for Tax Expenditures in a State Tax System: A Feasibility Study," by Norman James Allen, is approved by:

Major Professor

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

Committee Member

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

Dean of the Graduate School

(Name)
(Academic Rank)

[All signatures must be in indelible blue ink.]

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This (dissertation/thesis) is protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-553, revised in 1976). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgement. Use of the material for financial gain without the author's expressed written permission is not allowed.

Duplication

I authorize the Head of Interlibrary Loan or the Head of Archives at the Odum Library at Valdosta State University to arrange for duplication of this (dissertation/thesis) for educational or scholarly purposes when so requested by a library user. The duplication shall be at the user's expense.

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[The version you create should state dissertation or thesis, as appropriate, and must have exactly the same wording.]

Sample Abstract

ABSTRACT

There is no clear agreement on the need for different levels of certification or different types of preparation for school administrators. If a unique set of skills, practices and behaviors can be identified for the elementary and secondary principal, preparation and certification programs could develop a knowledge base of leadership skills necessary for effective leadership at a specific school level. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to conduct a meta-ethnographic synthesis of leadership activities at the elementary and high school levels to determine if differences existed between the leadership activities of elementary and secondary principals.

A meta-ethnography was completed for each school level using ethnographies, 19 at the elementary level and 19 at the secondary level. Leadership activities revealed in these synthesis were organized into 13 categories for elementary principals and for high school principals. The syntheses of these two meta-ethnographies were validated through structured field interviews with five elementary principals and five high school principals.

This study had numerous findings. Among them are: (a) the basic structure of elementary and high schools remained relatively unchanged during the 20 year time period covered by this study, (b) elementary principals were more visible and accessible to students and teachers than high school principals, (c) elementary principals provided more direct instructional leadership than high school principals, (d) elementary principals focused on classroom innovations and improvements while high school principals focused on school restructuring.

The differences between principals' leadership activities are influenced more by conditions in schools (e.g., size, structure) rather than by the level of the school. Leadership activities are determined by school size, organizational patterns, size of staff, and school issues. Successful principals will be those who are aware that alternatives in school leadership are necessary given the increasing diversity of students and societal influences.

SOURCE: Adapted from "A Qualitative Study of Leadership Activities of Elementary and Secondary School Principals" [1993], a dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Georgia State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Supervision by Albert S. Gibbs. Used by permission.

Sample TOC for non-APA style

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Sample TOC for non-APA style

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SOURCE: “Collective Action by Public School Teachers: A Study of Collective Action as a Method of Enhancing Professional Status and Autonomy Within Bureaucratic Organizations” [1977], a dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Johns Hopkins University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science by Nolan James Argyle. Used by permission.

Sample TOC for APA style

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Sample copyright page

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SOURCE: "Collective Action by Public School Teachers: A Study of Collective Action as a Method of Enhancing Professional Status and Autonomy Within Bureaucratic Organizations" [1977], a dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Johns Hopkins University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science by Nolan James Argyle. Used by permission.

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Sample Preface Page

PREFACE

[If you desire to include a preface in your thesis or dissertation, you should examine several prefaces to books in your field and use them as examples.]

Sample Acknowledgements Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. John T. Greer, Chairman of my committee, I express my sincere appreciation for the opportunities I had to learn from him, and for his encouragement to conduct qualitative research. I thank him for his persistence on my behalf.

I am grateful to Dr. Virginia Wylie and to Dr. Alfred McWilliams for their exemplary professional support and guidance in this effort.

Dr. Robert Michael, a true mentor, a humorist, and a true friend who never lost faith in his pupil, gave me the needed guidance to keep going. I will forever be in his debt.

To Dr. Robert Bauer and Dr. Jay Hertzog, I appreciate their time, effort, and technical criticisms that kept this study on track.

Dr. Hansel Allen, an educational leader, a role model, and an interviewer in this study gave me the encouragement to undertake the doctoral studies. I will always remember him for his assistance, encouragement, and charity.

To my children Clayton, Megan, and Jared who make me proud to be their father. I thank them for their support, and I give my apologies for not being there those times they may have needed me.

A special thanks to my caring, loving, and supportive wife, Mary Anne. Her commitments as an educator, mother, wife, homemaker, and cheerleader required more effort and energy than this study. She will be rewarded for these efforts.

[A brief dedication may be included at the end of the acknowledgments, or it may be on a separate page]

SOURCE: Adapted from "A Qualitative Study of Leadership Activities of Elementary and Secondary School Principals" [1993], a dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Georgia State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Supervision by Albert S. Gibbs. Used by permission.

Sample Dedication Page

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my wonderful wife, Margarete, and to Tony and Anne. They know why.

SOURCE: "Collective Action by Public School Teachers: A Study of Collective Action as a Method of Enhancing Professional Status and Autonomy Within Bureaucratic Organizations" [1977], a dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Johns Hopkins University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science by Nolan James Argyle. Used by permission.

Sample appendix cover page

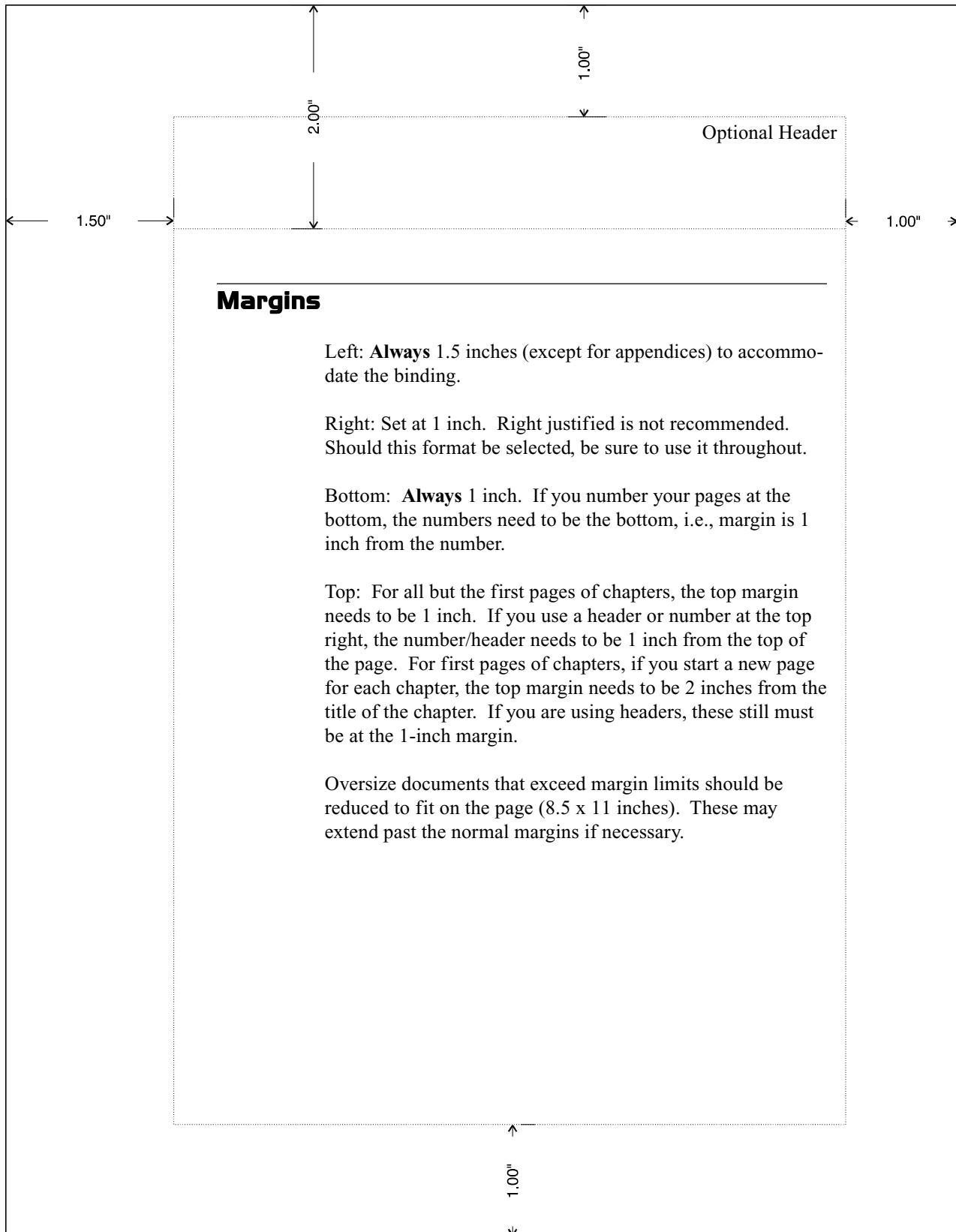
Appendix A: Sample Tax Expenditures in the Utah State Income Tax Code

[The appended material would follow.]

SOURCE: "Tax Expenditures in the Utah State Tax System" [1974], a thesis submitted to the Graduate School of The University of Utah in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Political Science by Nolan James Argyle. Used by permission.

Margins

Not Drawn to Scale



Margins

Left: **Always** 1.5 inches (except for appendices) to accommodate the binding.

Right: Set at 1 inch. Right justified is not recommended. Should this format be selected, be sure to use it throughout.

Bottom: **Always** 1 inch. If you number your pages at the bottom, the numbers need to be at the bottom, i.e., margin is 1 inch from the number.

Top: For all but the first pages of chapters, the top margin needs to be 1 inch. If you use a header or number at the top right, the number/header needs to be 1 inch from the top of the page. For first pages of chapters, if you start a new page for each chapter, the top margin needs to be 2 inches from the title of the chapter. If you are using headers, these still must be at the 1-inch margin.

Oversize documents that exceed margin limits should be reduced to fit on the page (8.5 x 11 inches). These may extend past the normal margins if necessary.

The Three Heading Format

(First page of text, 2 inches from top of page)

Not to Scale

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

[single double or double double space – be consistent]

In today's society, . . .

Statement of the Problem

In order to discover ways to address the problem of . . .

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine . . .

Definitions

Term one. This refers to blah blah (Complete sentences following the period.)

Term two. For the purposes of this study, this means blah blah.

(NOTE: Strict APA style requires pages to be numbered upper right corner, but other manuals require centered bottom. Because of this circumstance, either centered bottom or upper right is acceptable.)

The Three Heading Format

(First page of Chapter 2, 2 inches from top of page)

Not to Scale

Header (if used) 1 inch from top

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, the relevant literature will be discussed. The major areas are testing, cooperative learning, and academic achievement.

Testing

A considerable number of studies have been conducted . . .

Multiple choice. Jones and Smith (1997) found that . . .

*(NOTE: Subsequent chapters should follow the same template. Consistency is important.
Be sure to actually LOOK at your paper to be sure of this characteristic.)*

3 (etc.)

The Four Heading Format

(First page of text, 2 inches from top of page)

Not to Scale

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In today's society . . .

Background

Much attention has been given to . . .

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated . . .

Definitions

Term one. This term refers to . . .

Term two. For the purposes of this study, . . .

APPENDIX D: Miscellaneous Materials



College of _____ and The Graduate School
Valdosta State University

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT/CHANGE FORM

STUDENT _____

ID NUMBER _____

DEPARTMENT _____

PROGRAM AREA _____

Check all that apply:

- Thesis Committee Chair
- Thesis Committee Appointment
- New Committee
- Change(s) to Thesis Committee

MAJOR PROFESSOR _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

It is recommended that the faculty members listed below serve as members of the Thesis Committee for the above named student.

THESIS COMMITTEE CHAIR _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

MEMBER _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

MEMBER _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

MEMBER _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

MEMBER _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

[Original must be filed in Graduate School.]

APPENDIX E



College of Education and The Graduate School
Valdosta State University

IRB GUIDELINES

IRB guidelines for student-initiated course projects, and student-initiated group or organization projects at Valdosta State University

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at Valdosta State University recognizes that many projects conducted to fulfill course requirements and group or organizational interests involve research with human subjects. Such research occasionally entails certain risks to the subjects involved. As students vary in expertise regarding research procedures designed to protect the rights of human subjects, the IRB has developed the following guidelines regarding classroom based and group or organizational research projects. These guidelines are intended for group or organizational research projects. These guidelines are intended to provide clarification and simplify the process for obtaining IRB approval.

DEADLINE: The deadline for obtaining IRB approval for classroom based projects is at the beginning of each term as soon as possible. All proposed projects must be submitted a minimum of 21 days prior to the initiation of the data collection. Projects conducted during summer terms or student-initiated group or organization projects must be submitted 14 days prior to the initiation of data collection.

Conditions Under Which IRB Approval Is Required:

- ❶ Any project that asks randomly selected subjects specific questions regarding his/her opinion, behavior and/or experiences and identifies the individual by name, social security number, ethnicity, or any other substantial identifier.
- ❷ Any project that systematically selects subjects from a specific group and asks questions regarding their opinion, behavior and/or experiences, e.g. gifted children, pregnant women, individuals with substance abuse issues, etc., or any other substantial identifier.
- ❸ Any project involving human subjects that requires the use of audiotape, videotape, or photography of any type.
- ❹ Any project that proposes to investigate opinions, behaviors, and/or experiences regarding the following high-risk, sensitive topic areas:
 - a. Issues and questions regarding sexuality, e.g., AIDS or HIV, incest, rape, date-rape, sexual molestation or abuse;
 - b. Issues and questions regarding substance use and/or abuse, e.g. alcohol, cigarette smoking, marijuana, steroids, cocaine, crack, heroin, or any prescription or non-prescription use of legal or illegal drugs, etc.;
 - c. Issues and questions regarding contraception, pregnancy or abortion;
 - d. Issues and questions regarding any aspect of the subject's mental health, e.g., suicide, depression, compulsive behaviors such as gambling, smoking, eating disorders or behaviors;
 - e. Issues and questions regarding religious orientations and/or views;
 - f. Issues and questions regarding veterans and/or wartime experiences.
- ❺ Vulnerable Populations:
 - a. Any projects utilizing subjects who are minors (under the age of 18 years old);
 - b. Any projects utilizing subjects who, for any reason, have a diminished capacity to understand the consent form and the research instructions.

Conditions Under Which IRB Approval Is Not Required

Students wanting to collect data from human subjects as part of the requirements for a specific class or student based organization may conduct opinion research that is not specific to the behaviors and/or experiences of the interviewees, as long as informants are not identifiable by name or description. For example, IRB approval is not required for a student to survey people's opinions about topics such as the following:

- a. Opinions of political candidates or issues.
- b. Opinions regarding American made vs. Foreign made products.
- c. Opinions concerning environmental issues or policies.
- d. Opinions regarding the subject's favorite television show, preferred vacation spot, musical preference, etc.

The key factor shared by the above examples is that they do not require subjects to reveal anything about their personal experiences, behaviors, and/or identity. Therefore, the subjects are not considered to be placed at risk by their participation. Thus, in such cases as these, no IRB approval is required.

NOTE: If you have any questions regarding a project, refer to the IRB Policy and Procedures or contact Dr. M. H. Watson, IRB Administrator, at mwatson@valdosta.edu. You can also reach Dr. Watson by calling 333-7837.

APPENDIX F: Guidelines for Preparing a Proposal

Required Proposal for Your Thesis or Dissertation

The proposal should be a key part of any research process. It will help you organize your research project, construct a research design that is manageable within the constraints of time and resources facing you, and focus your research effort. Time spent in developing a good proposal will pay off with high dividends throughout the remainder of the research process.

You are required to prepare two proposals for your thesis or dissertation: a preliminary proposal and a formal proposal. The purpose of the preliminary proposal is to ensure that you have carefully thought out what you wish to do when you talk to your program coordinator concerning your expected project. This proposal doesn't need to meet all of the requirements of your formal proposal, although you are encouraged to have it do so. This will help you and your program coordinator in your discussion. The formal proposal is presented to your committee and is used to "kick-off" your formal work on the project.

Proposal Instructions

The proposal includes a minimum of eight parts: a title, the background or context of the problem, a statement of the specific research problem, an explanation of the proposed research methodology, a preliminary outline, an annotated bibliography or reference list, a research time line, and a brief statement concerning your qualifications to research this problem.

The Title

A title should be indicative of what the research project is about. Don't attempt to make titles "cute." If you have to be cute, be cute in the subtitle. For example, one article has the following title:

Civil Service Reform: Carter's Little Liver Pill for Government Indigestion

This is **not** a good title for a professional piece, and the author of the article should be ashamed of himself.

The title should use "keywords"—words that clearly identify **what** the article is about. The above title accomplishes this. One final point concerning the title also concerns the rest of the proposal and the paper itself. **Avoid jargon.** This does not mean that you should avoid words of more than two syllables. You should, however, write in English that is appropriate for your target audience.

Background/Context of the Problem

Provide a brief history of the problem, and your familiarity with it. State the current status of the problem, and what may happen in the future. This assists you in establishing your rationale for selecting this problem.

Research Problem

Following the title and general problem statement, the proposal should state what your specific research is focused upon. Be precise in stating your research problem. The research problem should include your explanatory propositions, or hypotheses; a statement of the significance of the research problem (if it has no significance, why research it?); and your expected findings.

Research Methodology

The next step is to indicate which research methods will be employed in your research. If you will be conducting a survey, state that you will. If your research design will rely heavily on secondary sources for part of your study, state that fact. You should also indicate which statistical methods are appropriate for your research. For example, you might want to use regression analysis if you are looking for a relationship between expenditures per pupil and SAT scores.

Preliminary Outline

A preliminary outline helps you think the research problem through. Keep in mind that this preliminary outline is just that: preliminary. It should not be thought of as engraved in stone. Once the research process is moving along, you may want to make major changes in the outline.

Annotated Bibliography

The next element of the proposal is an annotated bibliography or reference list. For a preliminary proposal, you must have a minimum of ten items in your preliminary list. The number required for your formal proposal will be determined by your program coordinator or by your major professor.

Research Time Line

You need to indicate the time frame for your research project, and assess it to see if it is realistic. Have you allowed time for return of questionnaires, etc.? Provide a graphic to supplement your text. A basic Gantt Chart is acceptable for this, although a PERT chart is better.

Researcher Qualifications

Tell your committee why you are qualified to conduct this study. Tie your explanation to both your academic and your professional preparation. If you are going to do a study on the impact of Proposition 48 on two-year institutions in the state of Georgia, for example, you might point out that you have been an athletic director for a given period of time, and that you have taken a number of (named) courses relating to both the general topic and to the research methodology needed to study it.

Preparing and Submitting the Proposal

Use the style manual approved for your program to determine the proper format and documentation of your proposal.

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