

Valdosta State University Graduate School

Thesis & Dissertation Formats

The Graduate School accepts two options for thesis and dissertation formats:

- Traditional Format
- Journal Ready Article Format

The format used should be decided in consultation with the Thesis or Dissertation chair.

I. Traditional Thesis & Dissertation Format:

The Traditional Format generally consists of five or six chapters organized, most commonly, in the following sequence:

Chapter 1 - Introduction	OR	Chapter 1 - Introduction
Chapter 2 - Literature Review		Chapter 2 - Literature Review
Chapter 3 - Methods		Chapter 3 - Methods
Chapter 4 - Results		Chapter 4 - Results
Chapter 5 – Conclusions		Chapter 5 - Discussion
References		Chapter 6 - Conclusions
Appendices		References
(generally quantitative studies)		Appendices
		(generally qualitative studies)

The number of chapters may vary according to disciplinary fields and/or methodological approaches.

II. Journal Ready Article Thesis & Dissertation Format:

With this format a minimum of two chapters of the dissertation are individual journal-length manuscripts ready for submission to academic journals. This format may be particularly beneficial to those thesis and doctoral students whose career goals include positions in academia. The decision about which format is most appropriate should be made jointly by you and the chair of your committee. Special consideration should be given to:

- The fit of your topic to the format
- The academic field's view of the format
- The practical considerations regarding the (job) positions you wish to apply for when you finish your training (academia or private sector).

The Journal Ready Article Format allows the presentation of thesis or dissertation research in the format of

- Journal manuscripts published during a candidate's current thesis or doctoral training as sole or lead author
- Journal manuscripts submitted for publication during a candidate's doctoral training as sole or lead author
- Journal manuscripts to be submitted for publication immediately following dissertation defense proceedings as sole or lead author

The doctoral candidate decides, in agreement with his/her thesis or dissertation chair, on the number of articles suitable for a particular thesis or dissertation report. The decision regarding the number of manuscripts is tied to the number and types of research questions being posed.

The Journal Article Format for a thesis or dissertation minimally contains the following sections:

Chapter 1 - Introduction
Chapter 2 – Literature Review
Chapter 3 - Manuscript # 1
Chapter 4 - Manuscript # 2
Chapter 5 - Conclusion
References
Appendices

One manuscript may be acceptable in some disciplines. Otherwise, if a thesis or dissertation is written differently from the above format, the thesis or dissertation chair should include the parameters of the format along with the thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School.