



PRESUBMISSION GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

The Graduate School • Valdosta State University

Before submitting your final manuscript to the Graduate School, carefully review and complete the checklist below. Following these steps will ensure a smooth and timely review and approval of your dissertation or thesis.

1. TEMPLATE AND GENERAL FORMATTING

☐ **Use the official university template.**

- **Compare your document *side-by-side*** with the template on a dual monitor, if possible.
- Copy and paste your text into the template rather than reformatting the template to match your document.
- Confirm all margins, spacing, pagination, and headings **match the template exactly**.

☐ **Margins:**

- Standard margins: **1"** on all sides on all pages.
- Bound margins (*Optional*): **1.5" left margin** and **1" top, bottom, and right margins** on all pages, including the signature page.

☐ **Page Margins by Section:**

- The first page of each chapter needs a **2" top margin**. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- All other pages will have the **1" top and bottom margins**.

☐ **Page Numbering:**

- Preliminary pages use **lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii)** starting with the Abstract.
- Main text begins with **Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3)** starting on Chapter I.
- Page numbers appear **top right corner**—no running head is used.

☐ **Spacing:**

- Double-space throughout the manuscript.
- **No extra space between paragraphs** or sections. (Turn off *Add Space After Paragraph* and *Remove Space before Paragraph*)
- **Single-space** only on the Acknowledgments and Dedication pages.
- Use **one space** after a period at the end of a sentence.

☐ **Font and Alignment:**

- Use **12-point Times New Roman** (unless otherwise approved).
- Use the "center" alignment button—not the tab key—to center chapter titles or headings.

☐ **Check Front Matter Order:**

Title Page → Copyright Page → Signature Page → Fair Use Page → Abstract → Table of Contents → Acknowledgments → Dedication (optional) → Main Chapters → References → Appendices.

☐ **Signature Page:**

- All signatures are to be in indelible blue ink or use electronic signature via DocuSign
- For each committee member, indicate their full name, academic degree (Ed.D., Ph.D., Ed. S., etc), and their proper rank and field of study (i.e., Professor of Biology, Associate Professor of Special Education, Assistant Professor of English, etc).

☐ **Ink Color:** Please use **black ink** for all main text throughout your document, including hyperlinks. Color may be used for tables, figures, graphics, and illustrations.

☐ **Punctuation:** Use consistent punctuation, italics, and capitalization.



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2. HEADINGS AND STRUCTURE

- ☐ Ensure all **chapter titles and headings** follow the required APA 7th edition style and hierarchy (up to five levels).
- ☐ Each heading must have **two lines** of text following it to avoid **“hanging headers.”** If a heading falls at the bottom of a page with fewer than two lines of text following, Ctrl+Enter to move the section to the next page.
- ☐ Maintain consistent **capitalization, indentation, and spacing** of headings.

3. TABLES, FIGURES, AND APPENDICES

- ☐ Include a List of Tables or List of Figures only if you have **three or more** of each type.
- ☐ **Tables:**
 - Titles go **above** the table, with one blank line between the title and table.
 - *Note.* **Double-spaced** below the table.
 - Only horizontal lines are allowed. NO VERTICAL LINES or SHADING.
- ☐ **Figures:**
 - Titles go **above** the figure.
 - Figures may be in color or black and white.
- ☐ **Formatting:**
 - Each table/figure is numbered sequentially and referenced in the text before appearing (see Table 1).
 - Captions and labels follow APA 7th edition format.
 - Appendices are labeled (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) and referenced in the text. Order in the sequence in which they are referenced in the text. Appendix B must not be referenced before Appendix A, etc.

4. CITATIONS AND REFERENCES

- ☐ **Cross-check all in-text citations with your References list.**
 - In Word, use **Ctrl + F** to search for parentheses “(” or author names.
 - Every citation in text must appear on the References page.
- ☐ **Cross-check all references with in-text citations.**
 - Highlight each reference as you verify that it is cited in the text.
 - Remove any reference not cited in the manuscript with committee chair permission.
- ☐ **Follow APA 7th Edition formatting** for all citations and references.
 - **Book:** Author, A. A. (Year). *Title in italics: Subtitle capitalized.* Publisher.
 - **Journal:** Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, volume(issue), page range. <https://doi.org/xxxx>
- ☐ Ensure **hanging indentation (0.5")** for all reference entries.

5. QUOTATION MARKS AND SYMBOLS

- ☐ Use **Ctrl + F** to search for " and ' .
 - Replace all **straight quotes** with **curly (smart) quotes** for professional formatting.
 - In Word: File → Options → Proofing → AutoCorrect Options → AutoFormat → Replace straight quotes with smart quotes.
- ☐ Use **block quotations** (quotations of more than 40 words)
 - Indent 0.5 from the left.
 - Double-space
 - Punctuation goes before the in-text citation



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- ☐ When using mathematical or statistical symbols ($=$, $<$, $>$, $+$):
 - Place **one space before and after** each symbol.
 - Example: $n = 45$, $p < .05$
- ☐ **Consistency:** Be consistent in expressing percentages—either use the symbol (%) or the word (percentage), but not both.

6. GRAMMAR, MECHANICS, AND CONSISTENCY

- ☐ Run **Spelling and Grammar Check** in Word.
- ☐ Read your document aloud to catch awkward phrasing or repetition.
- ☐ Keep verb tenses consistent—**past tense** for methods; **present tense** for discussion.
- ☐ Define all abbreviations at first use.
- ☐ Follow APA rules for numerals (use numerals for 10 and above; words for nine and below).
- ☐ Use **Ctrl + H** to replace any **double spaces** with single spaces.
- ☐ Verify **consistent font and spacing** throughout (including before and after tables, figures, and appendices).

7. FINAL DOCUMENT REVIEW

- ☐ Review all front matter for correct alignment, labeling, and order.
- ☐ Make sure **chapter titles begin on new pages**.
- ☐ Enable **widow/orphan control** (no single lines stranded at the top or bottom of a page).
- ☐ Update the **Table of Contents** and **Lists of Tables/Figures** (right-click → “Update Field”).
- ☐ Ensure the **IRB approval or exemption letter** is included as an appendix and cited in-text (usually in the Methodology chapter).

8. FINAL VERIFICATION AND SUBMISSION

- ☐ Save your file as a **.docx** using naming convention: **Lastname, Firstname – Date**
- ☐ Email your **.docx** to gradreviewer@valdosta.edu
- ☐ Expect 2-4 weeks for the first review depending on the number of submissions ahead of yours.

Final Tip:

Take your time with this checklist. A well-formatted dissertation not only meets requirements, but it reflects professionalism, precision, and care in your scholarly work.

Dissertations or Theses that did not follow these guidelines will be returned to the student for corrections.