

APPENDIX D. Thesis Formatting

Guidelines for Master's Thesis Preparation
(adapted from Office of Graduate Education, SUNY-Brockport)

As a candidate for a master's degree, the Department of Environmental Science and Ecology requires a thesis representing original research that contributes to your discipline. You must provide one digital and four hard copies of your thesis. Drake Memorial Library will have the digital copy that will not leave the library and one circulating copy that can be checked out by the campus community or the public at large. One copy will be provided to the student, one to the major advisor, and one to the Department. Extra copies may be ordered but there is a cost to the student.

This document will help you organize your thesis and format it appropriately. In addition, you should seek the guidance of your advisor and the other members of your thesis committee throughout the entire process of writing your thesis. It is the responsibility of each candidate for a master's degree to follow the guidelines established in this document.

THESIS FORMAT

Title Page

The title page of the thesis must include your full legal name, your department's official name, the title of your work, a thesis submission statement, and the name of the degree you are seeking. Be sure to double space all portions of your title page. See below for an example.

Signature Page

Your thesis must include a signature page with the **original** signatures of your committee members. This is available from the ES&E Graduate Handbook.

Dedication

A dedication page is **optional**. If you choose to include one, it must be on its own page.

Acknowledgments

An acknowledgments page is **optional**. If you choose to include one, it must be on its own page.

Table of Contents

A table of contents is **required**. Place the table of contents immediately before the text of the thesis and any lists of Figures and Tables that you include.

List of Figures

The list of figures includes photographs and graphs.

List of Tables

The list of tables includes tables.

Abstract

An abstract of your thesis is **required**. Your abstract should be brief (no more than one page) and double-spaced on its own separate page.

Text

The text of your thesis represents the body of your research. Be sure to cite quotations and ideas borrowed from others in a style that is appropriate to your discipline. It should include the following section:

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion

Formatting of Literature Cited

All literature cited in the thesis must be clearly and accurately referenced. This could change based on the target journal but must be agreed upon by the major advisor and the student. Most commonly the citation format for the journal “Ecology” is used. List citations in alphabetical order, and include *only* those works cited in your paper. In the text of the paper, cite the references using the author's name and year. For example:

One author:

“Male Harris’s Sparrows actively defend their breeding territories (Jones 1985).” Or:
“Jones (1985) documented the territorial behavior of male Harris’s Sparrows.”

Two authors:

"Male Harris’s Sparrows actively defend their breeding territories (Jones and Smith 1985)."

More than two authors:

"Male Harris’s Sparrows actively defend their breeding territories (Jones *et al.* 1985)."

Two or more separate works:

" Male Harris’s Sparrows actively defend their breeding territories (Jones *et al.* 1985, Smith 1995)." Note that the more recent paper is given last.

Examples of the correct format (with special attention to capitalization, punctuation, and spacing) for use in the Literature Cited section are as follows:

Journal article

Author(s). year published. Title. Journal Name Volume: pages.

Buttner, J. K., J. C. Makarewicz, and T. W. Lewis. 1995. Concentration of selected priority organic contaminants in fish maintained on formulated diets in Lake Ontario waters. *Progressive Fish-Culturist* 57:141-146.

Book

Author(s). year published. Title. Edition (if applicable). Publisher, City, State, Country.

Merritt, R. W., and K. W. Cummins. 1996. An introduction to the aquatic insects of North America. Third Edition. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Dubuque, Iowa, USA.

Chapter in book

Author(s). year published. Chapter title. Pages *in* Name of Editor(s), editor(s). Book title. Publisher, City, State, Country.

Nickum, J. G. 1993. Walleye. Pages 115-126 *in* R. R. Stickney, editor. Culture of non-salmonid freshwater fishes. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida, USA.

Edited book

Editor(s), editors. year published. Title. Publisher, City, State, Country.

Batzer, D. P., and R. R. Sharitz, editors. 2006. Ecology of freshwater and estuarine wetlands. University of California Press, Berkeley, California, USA.

Thesis or Dissertation

Author. year completed. Title. Institution, City, State, Country.

Meeker, J. E. 1993. The ecology of wild rice (*Zizania palustris* var. *palustris*) in the Kakagon Sloughs, a riverine wetland on Lake Superior. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, USA.

Agency Report

Author(s). year published. Title. Report series and number, Agency name, City, State, Country.

Wilcox, D. A., T. A. Thompson, R. K. Booth, and J. R. Nicholas. 2007. Lake-level variability and water availability in the Great Lakes. Circular 1311, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia, USA.

These should be used sparingly, and only with the Major Advisor's approval. Many web sites are scientifically suspect. In addition, use only those cities that are more or less permanent, although this may be difficult to determine.

Author(s). Year. Title, version. [Online.] Organization, City, State. Available at: web address. Access date.

Sauer, J. R., G. Gough, I. Thomas, and B. Peterjohn. 1997. The North American Breeding Bird Survey, version 96.1. [Online.] Pautuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland. Available at <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/>. Accessed 17 August 1999.

Note, information obtained by verbal correspondence or from unpublished material is not considered "literature," but may be referenced as (personal communication, individual, affiliation):

Aardvarks are not capable of insight learning (personal communication, Dr. Jane Doe, Department of Environmental Science and Ecology, SUNY Brockport.)

Footnotes

Footnote and endnotes are generally discouraged and not used in works of science.

Appendices

Use an appendix or appendices to include materials that are not an integral part of the text, but that contribute examples or supporting evidence

Other Suggestions

- a. General Requirements: All these must have a high-quality professional appearance to them. Computer printout and all figures and graphs must meet the same standards as the rest of the thesis.
- b. Number of copies required: Four (4) unbound copies each in a separate file or folder, must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator. Before candidates prepare their final copies, they should determine from their Advisory Committee whether the committee or the candidate requires additional copies. Extra copies may be requested but must be paid for by the candidate
- c. The scientific name (binomial) *must* be used the first time any organism is mentioned in the paper; common names can then be used by themselves. Because scientific names are in Latin, they should be either underlined or in italics, as in: We studied Harris's Sparrows (*Zonotrichia querula*) near Lawrence, Kansas.
- d. Always use metric units and their abbreviations! Some of the more common ones are:

km = kilometers	s = seconds	mg = milligrams
m = meters	min = minutes	g = grams
cm = centimeter	h = hours	kg = kilograms
ha = hectares	d = days	mL = milliliters
		L = liters
- e. Use the following rules when reporting numbers. When reporting counts (number of items), write out numbers < 11 (one aardvark, nine eggs, etc.). Numbers > 10 should be in numerals (11 newts, 30 wombats, etc.). When reporting measurements with units (days, meters, liters, seconds, kilograms, etc.), always use numerals, as in 1.0 m, 5 ha, 3 s, etc. The only exception to the above rule is that you cannot use a numeral when starting a sentence.
- f. Plagiarism is unacceptable, and grounds for dismissal. Plagiarism can be the blatant copying at length from another work or the failure to give credit for information obtained through reading an article. When in doubt, reference the source according to the following practices: Buttner *et al.* (1996) found... or yellow perch survived and grew (Buttner *et al.* 1996).

Example of a title page

<p>Full Title of Thesis (centered in top quarter of page)</p> <p>by</p> <p>Full name of author</p> <p>A thesis submitted to the Department of Environmental Science and Ecology of SUNY-Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science Month, day, and year submitted</p>

PHYSICAL FORMAT of the Thesis

Prepare your manuscript using a word processing program.

Paper

Use only one side of high-quality 25 percent or 100 percent cotton bond paper. Check the watermark on the paper to ensure that it is 25 percent or 100 percent cotton bond. Paper must be white and unlined and must be the standard 8-1/2" by 11" size.

Type Size, Font, and Print

Use a 10 or 12-point standard font such as Times New Roman, Helvetica, Geneva, Courier, or Palatino. Avoid using fancy fonts as they are difficult to read and are not appropriate for a thesis. Use the same font throughout the document. While illustrations may be in color, you should use only black type in your manuscript.

When printing your thesis, use a high-quality ink jet or laser jet printer. Make sure the type is uniformly dark and crisp throughout the document. It is preferable that you print multiple copies of your thesis, but you may also take your manuscript to be professionally photocopied. Make sure that you request your thesis be photocopied on 25 or 100 percent cotton bond paper and not on regular photocopier paper.

Pagination

Number **ALL** pages of your manuscript with the exception of the title page, signature page, and the copyright page. Begin numbering the pages with the dedication page or the acknowledgements page (if included). Otherwise, begin numbering with the table of contents. All numbered pages preceding the text of your thesis should be numbered with lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, ...). The text of your thesis should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, ...). Check the style guide that your advisor approved to determine whether numbers should appear in the header or footer of the thesis and whether they should be centered or in the right corner of the page.

Spacing

Indent every paragraph and double-space your manuscript, including the title page and copyright page. Check your selected style guide to determine whether long quotations, footnotes, the table of contents, and the bibliography should be single-spaced or double-spaced. Do not add extra spaces between paragraphs or sections.

Margins

To facilitate binding, the left margin of your thesis must be 1-1/2". The remaining margins should be 1-1/4". Page numbers and illustrations must fit within the specified margins. If an illustration is too large to fit into the margins, reduce it so that it will fit.

Illustrations

Tables, figures, graphs, etc. must be numbered. Numeration must be consecutive (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, etc.). High-quality laser or ink jet produced photographs are preferred to actual photographs.