

## FGSR Minimum Thesis Formatting Requirements

As of April 3, 2014

Your thesis is your work. Matters of style are matters for you to decide, subject to certain minimum university rules, and any requirements imposed by your particular degree program. For questions about the content within a thesis, ask your supervisor.

Your supervisor can also advise if your department (or Faculty if non-departmentalized) has any specific requirements concerning a thesis. Theses at the University of Alberta can be written in the traditional, monograph format or in a multiple-manuscript, journal-article format (sometimes called a “paper-based” thesis), or a combination of both formats. It is for the department (or Faculty if non-departmentalized) to provide guidance as to which formats are permitted and to set out the additional requirements for that format.

All master’s and doctoral theses must conform to requirements of the Theses Canada program sponsored by Library and Archives Canada and the requirements of the University of Alberta Libraries, with these requirements included in this document. The distributor of a thesis makes no changes to the formatting of a submitted thesis; how the manuscript looks is entirely the responsibility of the author. Keep in mind that future readers of your thesis will likely read your thesis online, and thus you want your thesis to be readable as a PDF file. Starting on April 3, 2014, all University of Alberta theses must be submitted electronically.

FGSR suggests that you work your way systematically through the following guidance document on minimum requirements, using the document like a checklist. You can tick the box for each component when you have verified that you have met the rules.

### **The Components of a Thesis**

All theses at the University of Alberta must contain the following components, in the order presented here (with several generally applicable requirements listed at the end):



## Page numbers

The pages of a thesis must have page numbers.

All theses, including theses that contain journal articles (sometimes called a “paper-based thesis”), must have page numbers that are consecutive and strictly sequential throughout the thesis. Each and every page of a thesis (with the exception of the title page) must have a page number visible on the page (and visible when the thesis is converted to a PDF format).

Lower case Roman numerals are used for the preliminary pages (front pages) of a thesis. Arabic numerals are used for the body of the thesis, starting with the introductory chapter and up to and including appendices (if any). Page numbers must be strictly sequential, e.g. ii, iii, iv, v etc. (with no page number showing on the title page), and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 etc.

The position of the number must be consistent throughout the thesis, either at the top centre, top right, bottom centre or bottom right position. FGSR recommends that the page number be no less than  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” from the edge of the page to ensure that the page number is visible.



## 1. Title page

A thesis must have a title page. The title page is the first page of the thesis, but the page number (“i”) is not displayed.

A title page must indicate the following:

- the title of the thesis,
- the student’s name,
- the degree for which the thesis is submitted,
- the official specialization, if applicable (as indicated on Bear Tracks),
- the Department or (if non-departmentalized, the Faculty) that offers the degree program, and
- the name of the institution at which the degree was pursued.

Typically, the universal copyright notice symbol of a “©” is included, followed by the student’s name and the year in which the thesis was submitted.

The title page also includes the statement: “A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of ...” and then the name of the degree is spelled out in full, not abbreviated e.g. Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy. (Master is not pluralized, nor

does it have a possessive s.)

Your supervisor can give you guidance on selecting a title. In the thesis title, use word substitutes for formulae, symbols, superscripts, subscripts, Greek letters, and so on, if possible.

**A sample title page is given in Appendix A and a template is also available from the FGSR website.**



## **2. Abstract**

A thesis must have an abstract. The abstract comes after the title page and is marked page “ii”.

The abstract is a concise and accurate summary of the thesis. It states the problem that was researched, the methods of investigation, and the general conclusions. An abstract must **not** contain non-text content, such as tables, graphs, complex equations, or illustrations. Even for theses containing journal articles, there is one single abstract for the entire work, included within the preliminary pages (front pages) of the thesis.

For any thesis that is permitted to be written in a language other than English, two abstracts must be included; the first in English and the second in the language of the thesis.

The font used for the abstract must be at least a 10 point font, with the text double-spaced, to ensure readability. A strict maximum word count of 700 words applies, regardless of whether the abstract is for a master’s or a doctoral degree (many abstracts are 300-500 words).



## **3. Preface**

**If you need assistance on writing the preface, ask your supervisor. Your supervisor must review and verify the preface before it becomes part of the final version of the thesis.**

A preface is a mandatory component of a thesis, regardless of thesis format, when a thesis contains journal articles authored or co-authored by the student (including an accepted paper that is forthcoming at the time of thesis submission). A preface is also a mandatory component when the research conducted for the thesis required ethics approval. A preface remains optional if there is no inclusion of journal articles and/or no need for ethics approval.

When required because a thesis contains journal articles, the preface serves as a place for the student to include a statement indicating his or her contribution to the journal articles, such as the identification and

design of the research program, the performance of the various parts of the research (including the collection of data, construction of any necessary apparatus, and the performance of experiments), and the analysis of the research data. If any of the work presented in the thesis has led to any publications (accepted or published), these publications must be listed clearly in the preface with their bibliographical details and an indication as to where in the thesis this work is located (e.g. state in which chapter or chapters). For jointly authored publications, indication must also be given as to the relative contributions of the collaborators and co-authors, and a statement as to the proportion of research and writing conducted by the student. Note that permission may be needed if the co-authors hold the copyright in these publications. If ethics approval was required for the research, a statement to this effect must be included in the preface with the details of the approval that was granted.

Note that the inclusion of a preface does not excuse a student from failing to acknowledge the contributions of others in the body of the thesis, as per the University's [Research and Scholarship Integrity Policy](#) and the [Code of Student Behaviour](#). One would still expect to see footnotes, endnotes or in-text references within the thesis acknowledging the works. Acknowledgments, such as thanks to the supervisor and supervisory committee members, to colleagues, lab mates and friends, and to family, do not appear in the preface.

**Examples of several prefaces are given in Appendix B and are also available from the FGSR website.**

**4. Dedication**  
(optional)

Dedications, quotations, poems etc are optional. Ask your supervisor for advice or views on whether to include such matters in an academic work, with the next component serving as the place to thank people.

**5. Acknowledgments**  
(optional, but advisable)

An Acknowledgments page (no more than 2 pages in length) is a recommended, but not mandatory, component of a thesis.

The Acknowledgements page serves as a place within a thesis where students may wish to acknowledge the provision of funding from third parties, such as an external scholarship bodies, research granting agencies, and foreign governments. It is also appropriate to recognize the assistance provided by the supervisor and members of the supervisory committee.



**6. Table of Contents**

A detailed table of contents is a required component of a thesis. The components of the thesis must appear in the table of contents in the same order as in the body of the thesis. There are usually at least two, and often three (or four) levels of headings.

Students are encouraged to learn about the capabilities of their word processing software early on in their graduate studies, with most software programs being capable of automatically generating a table of contents if certain style codes are included throughout the text of the thesis. Online manuals for the software you are using are easily found on the internet, as are videos demonstrating how to create a table of contents with a particular software program.



**7. List of Tables**

A List of Tables is a required component of a thesis if the document has tables.

Tables must be numbered consecutively, either 1, 2, 3, or with the chapter number included, 3.1., 3.2., 3.3. etc. FGSR does not impose rules on matters of style, but consistency is required. Students must choose one numbering system and stick with it. If a thesis has tables, figures and/or plates, the same

numbering system must be used. Tables, figures and illustrations must be presented in a size and format that can be read. Colour can be used.



**8. List of Figures or Illustrations**

A List of Figures or Illustrations is required if document has figures or illustrations.

Figures or Illustrations must be numbered consecutively, either 1, 2, 3 or with the chapter number included, e.g. 3.1., 3.2., 3.3 etc. FGSR does not impose rules on matters of style, but consistency is required. Students must choose one numbering system and stick with it. If a thesis has tables, figures and/or plates, the same numbering system must be used. Tables, figures and illustrations must be presented in a size and format that can be read. Colour can be used.



**9. List of Plates**

A List of Plates is required if the thesis contains plates.

Plates must be numbered consecutively, either 1, 2, 3 or with the chapter number included, e.g. 3.1., 3.2., 3.3. etc. FGSR does not impose rules on matters of style, but consistency is required. Students must choose one numbering system and stick with it. If a thesis has tables,

figures and/or plates, the same numbering system must be used. Tables, figures and illustrations must be presented in a size and format that can be read. Colour can be used.



**10. List of Symbols**

A “List of Symbols” or a list of “Abbreviations” is optional. Students should ask their supervisor for advice on whether or not to include a list of symbols or abbreviations.



**11. Glossary of Terms**

A “Glossary of Terms” is optional. If you are concerned as to whether or not to include a Glossary of Terms, ask your supervisor for advice.



**12. Body of the Document**

The first page of the introduction is marked as page “1” and then the pages that follow are numbered sequentially.

The minimum academic requirements for the text of a thesis are an introduction, followed by the presentation of the research in a manner suitable for the field, and a conclusion.

The introduction must outline the thesis, problem, hypothesis, questions or goals of the research. It must provide a clear statement of the research question(s). The conclusion must highlight the student’s contribution to knowledge, providing conclusions with respect to the problem, hypothesis or goals of the research. In all theses, regardless of format, the body or chapters of the thesis contain methodology, research results, and scholarly discussion in accordance with the norms of the academic discipline.

The University of Alberta encourages students to publish. Thus, one or more chapters of a thesis may contain published material if permitted by the regulations of your department (or Faculty if non-departmentalized) governing your specific degree program. It is a matter for individual graduate programs to develop specific guidance for students and supervisors, as well as supervisory committee members, with such specific guidance likely to reflect the needs of the particular field or academic discipline.

For example, individual graduate programs that continue to prefer the traditional monograph-style thesis may have department-specific rules on such matters as maximum length (taking into account the burden on an external examiner to read a thesis that is over 100,000 words).

Individual graduate programs that opt for a multiple-manuscript or journal-article format, or choose to accept both traditional and paper-based formats, or a combination of both, must have department-specific guidelines in place to address potential student and supervisor queries. For example, the department-specific guidance needs to address what counts as a publication (e.g. self-publication, any journal, or only journals listed in a particular source); whether a paper-based thesis can include both published and accepted papers; whether the student must be the first author for a multiple-authored publication to be acceptable for inclusion within the thesis; and whether some form of connecting text is needed to link the papers beyond the introduction (and if so, what form or forms of connectors are acceptable).



**13.**  
**Bibliography**  
**Works Cited**  
**Sources Used**

A thesis must have a bibliography indicating all sources used by the student, with the bibliography placed at the end of the thesis. The bibliography is not a chapter, and does not have a chapter number. It can be headed Bibliography, Works Cited, or References, etc.

The requirement to have a bibliography at the end of a thesis indicating all sources used does not preclude individual graduate programs that have opted for a thesis format that contains published journal articles (e.g. a “paper-based” thesis format) from also requiring a student to retain the bibliography that appears with the journal article that now appears as a chapter in the thesis. There may be some duplication in this situation, as some (but perhaps not all of the chapters) might have their own bibliography if the journal article was published with a bibliography. Nevertheless, the Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR Council) has adopted a rule that a thesis as a whole must have a bibliography listing all sources used, located at the end of a thesis.

External examiners often go to the back of a thesis to check a bibliography to see if the sources used by a student are current and complete.



**14.**  
**Appendices**  
(optional)

Appendices are used for supporting material that is referred to in the main body of the document, but are subsidiary to the main argument of the work. Appendices are used sparingly. Appendices are not chapters of the thesis and do not have chapter numbers.

Ask your supervisor for advice with respect to the use of appendices.

In addition to the above components, the following general requirements must also be met:

**Font and Page Size**

A readable conventional font must be used consistently throughout the thesis, with many recommending a minimum font size equivalent to Arial 10 point or Times New Roman 12 point. Since many readers are likely to view the thesis on a screen, it is recommended that you use a font with easy screen readability, such as Georgia 11 point, Times New Roman 12 point, Trebuchet MS 10 point, and Verdana 10 point.

If your graduate program permits the incorporation of published material into the thesis, such as a journal article, that publication(s) must be formatted so that the font is consistent with the rest of the thesis.

A different font and/or size of font may be used for headings and captions, keeping in mind the need for readability.

The page size used must be the standard North American letter size of 8.5" x 11"/21.5 cm x 28 cm. The page margins (left, right, top and bottom) must be no less than 1"/2.5 cm (applicable throughout, with the exception of the page numbers which can be placed 3/4" from the edge of the page). Students wishing to bind a hard paper copy of their thesis, either for themselves, or for departments (and Faculties) that require bound copies, may wish to use a wider margin on the left-hand side to accommodate the binding.

**Line Spacing**

Line spacing must be at least one-and-a-half spaces, except for the thesis abstract, which must be double-spaced. Single spacing may be used for long quoted passages and footnotes.

**Footnotes, Endnotes and In-Text References**

Whichever style is used for footnotes, endnotes or in-text references, students must use a consistent style throughout the thesis. Guidance should be made available by departments (or Faculties if non-departmentalized) as to any preference with respect to style of referencing and if there is a preference as to the location of the references (with the usual locations being within the main body of the work, at the bottom of the page, or at the end of each chapter).

Guidance on the use of the RefWorks citation management program can be obtained from the [University of Alberta Libraries](#). Students remain responsible for checking the consistency of their references even if a citation management program is used.

**Personal  
Information**

Theses Canada (part of Library and Archives Canada) prohibits the inclusion of personal information, such as signatures, student numbers, home addresses and telephone numbers, in a thesis. Do not include a copy of the signed "Thesis Approval/Program Completion" form within the thesis.

**Electronic  
Submission**

As of April 3, 2014, the University of Alberta will require all theses to be submitted electronically using a PDF-A (archive) format. FGSR will no longer accept "hard copy" paper submissions of theses.

The PDF-A file name should be:

lastname\_firstname\_middleinitial(s)\_submissionyearmonth\_degree.pdf

e.g. Brown\_Mark\_J\_201304\_PhD.pdf

If you do not have middle initial(s), then the file name will be:

lastname\_firstname\_submissionyearmonth\_degree.pdf

When preparing a thesis, a student should use margins that ensure that the text and the pagination are visible in the PDF-A format. A thesis must have a consistent and readable appearance.

The electronic submission process does permit the uploading of supplementary files for those graduate programs that require film, sound and other medias. Students should consult the specific rules for their department (or Faculty if non-departmentalized) if the use of other medias is applicable.

Appendix A: Sample Title Page

**Thesis Title**

by

Student's Full Name

**Thesis title:**

A title is typically presented using initial capital letters.  
e.g. This is an Example of a Title

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

INSERT OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION OF SPECIALIZATION

**Degree, Specialization, Department:**

Check [Beartracks](#) for your specialization and program information going in Bear Tracks to Academics>My Academics>Graduation. Also check with your Department.

If there is no specialization, then do not include "in...[insert specialization]"

If using a Mac computer, the drop-down menus will not be available.

Note that Master is not plural nor is there a possessive 's'.

Department of [INSERT NAME]

**OR** (if non-departmentalized) Faculty of [INSERT NAME]

University of Alberta

© Full name, Year

**Year:**

Enter the year the thesis was submitted.

## **Appendix B: Sample Prefaces**

The preface serves as the place within the thesis where a student can provide a brief statement as to the nature and extent of his or her contribution to any collaborative work that has been included in the thesis. It also serves as a place for including a short factual statement that any required research ethics approval was obtained. All theses at the University of Alberta must contain a preface when the thesis contains journal articles authored or co-authored by the student (including an accepted paper that is forthcoming at the time of thesis submission) and/or when the research conducted for the thesis required ethics approval. A preface need not be long; its purpose is not to summarize the thesis. The preface must be reviewed by your supervisor before your thesis to be considered by the examiners for the final examination.

### **Preface (Mandatory due to research ethics approval)**

This thesis is an original work by John Doe. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "TITLE", No. 12345, DATE.

### **Preface (Mandatory due to collaborative work)**

Some of the research conducted for this thesis forms part of an international research collaboration, led by Professor R.C. Smith at the University of Hogwarts, with Professor D.R. Brown being the lead collaborator at the University of Alberta. The technical apparatus referred to in chapter 3 was designed by myself, with the assistance of M.C. White and Professor D.R. Brown. The data analysis in chapter 4 and concluding analysis in chapter 5 are my original work, as well as the literature review in chapter 2.

Chapter 3 of this thesis has been published as J.D. Doe, M.C. Smith, and R.C. Smith, "Theoretical Responses to Rays in the Gamma System," *Journal of Scientific Affairs*, vol. 165, issue 3, 459-475. I was responsible for the data collection and analysis as well as the manuscript composition. M.C. Smith assisted with the data collection and contributed to manuscript edits. R.C. Smith was the supervisory author and was involved with concept formation and manuscript composition.

### **Preface (Optional)**

This thesis is an original work by John Doe. No part of this thesis has been previously published.