

HOUGHTON COLLEGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Guidelines for Preparation of Graduate Theses

For some Houghton College graduate degree programs, a thesis constitutes the capstone experience. In such cases, when a student is formally eligible according to the guidelines of the particular graduate program, a thesis committee is appointed consisting of at least three tenured or tenure-track faculty members, and chaired by the candidate's thesis advisor (who serves as the third committee member). This committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the thesis.

Almost all other actions necessary for final completion of the thesis project are the sole responsibility of the candidate. Some of these responsibilities are listed below in the order in which they need to be undertaken. To ensure that all necessary steps have been completed, a thesis submission packet is sent to each student when eligible to begin thesis work.

Candidate's Responsibilities

Consultation

Consult early and frequently with thesis director (and members of the committee as appropriate) about the nature and progress of research as the project develops.

Writing

The writing of the thesis should be a serious concern. The finished product should exhibit correct grammar and spelling, as well as logical organization and a clear, literate prose style. The candidate is fully responsible for taking appropriate initiative to guarantee and perfect these elements, whether through consultation with an independent editor, working with Writing Center staff, or other means. **It is not the responsibility of the thesis director to serve as an editor of writing style or mechanics.**

Oral Defense

Schedule the final oral comprehensive examination in defense of thesis to take place at a time agreeable to all members of the committee. Be sure to consult the deadlines listed on the Academic Records Office website to ensure that you meet the defense deadline for commencement. In order to graduate, the final thesis must be submitted to the graduate coordinator before noon on the deadline listed in the Academic Calendar.

Documentation

Within one week after successful oral examination, final acceptance, or the deadline for edits/revisions, deliver an original copy of the Record of Comprehensive Examination or Thesis Acceptance form, signed and dated by the thesis committee, to the Academic Records Office. This signifies a successful completion of the thesis.

DOCUMENT GUIDELINES

I. Preparation

Style and Format

Different disciplines follow different guidelines for citing bibliographic references and other sources. Examples include:

- *The American Psychological Association Publication Manual*
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*
- Turabian, K. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (this is closely allied with Chicago style, particularly the new (2007) 7th edition).
- *The MLA [Modern Language Association] Style Manual*

Bibliographic citations in the thesis must follow the style and format accepted in your discipline and approved by your academic program. In final manuscript preparation, the student should follow the prescribed guidelines for the preparation of theses rather than guidelines for submitting manuscripts for publication in a journal. While consulting exemplar theses can be useful in stimulating one's thinking and garnering ideas, one should *not* use a previously prepared thesis as an example of the approved style or format. Also be wary of using online excerpts or representations of any given style manual, as they may lack consistency; library faculty recommend direct consultation of the hard copy of the relevant style manual. The main library holds several copies of each of the four listed above.

Most of the aforementioned style manuals will prescribe every aspect of manuscript preparation – title pages, pagination, margins, figures, etc. **We urge that you carefully consult a current, printed copy of the style guide approved for your program or discipline for the all matters of style, organization, and layout.**

Computers

A word processor must be used for the production of the final version of all theses. The college recommends using Microsoft Word, saving the document and related files in "Word Document" and PDF format. Multiple backup copies in at least two other file locations apart from the original document are highly recommended.

Paper

The copy for the Library must be on white bond paper which meets the following standards:

- 25-100% cotton content (watermark indicated);
- 8 1/2" x 11" size (unpunched, unlined);
- Archival, acid-free.
- 16lb. or 20lb. weight;

The same paper must be used throughout. Include a blank cover- and end-sheet.

Corrections

All pages must be free from hand-done corrections, wrinkles or folds. All text must have processor- or software-generated diacritical marks, formulae, musical examples, etc.

Degree Title and Certification of Approval Page

The student's official degree title must appear on the "Title" and "Certification" pages. Official degree titles can be found in the Graduate *Bulletin* of each discipline. The title of the thesis must match word for word on the "Title," "Certification of Approval," and Abstract/Annotation pages.

Abstract/Annotation Page

Every thesis/written creative work must include either an "Abstract" or "Annotation" (maximum one page in length and double-spaced). The Abstract of a thesis should include a brief statement concerning the nature of the study, the research methods and design, and the findings or conclusions. The Annotation of a written creative work should be descriptive of the content or theme of the work completed.

Copyright Page (optional)

If there is a possibility that all or part of the thesis/written work may be published elsewhere, the student is urged to complete this page. Under present laws, a copyright is secured automatically when the work is created and fixed in a copy form for the first time. This is defined as the date when the written work is approved by the Graduate Committee on behalf of the College. While notice of copyright of the written work is not required to have claim to copyright, failure to comply with the requirement can result in loss of certain additional rights otherwise available to the copyright owner. Therefore, students who anticipate publishing the copyright page or using the submitted written work in some way are urged to include the copyright page. (See the sample copyright page below for the format.) Since the written work is submitted in satisfaction of a part of the requirement for an advanced degree, the student automatically conveys to the University a license for limited use including: (1) microfilming, (2) distributions to major departments or libraries, or (3) responses to inquiries regarding research in the subject area of the work. According to the Copyright Act of 1976, a student has five years from the date of publication to register a copyright.

Collation Accuracy

The student is responsible for the proper numerical sequence of pages in the original and all copies. Neither the individual academic program nor the Library will review page order. Therefore, collation is extremely important. Again, **carefully adhere to the approved style guide approved for your program or discipline for collation contents and order.**

II. Submission.

Following successful completion and final acceptance of the thesis, two signed copies of the thesis must be submitted to the library no later than one week from the date of any oral examination, final acceptance, or deadline established for edits/revisions. Prepare the final copy of the thesis in accordance with instructions contained in the approved style guide approved for your program or discipline.

Deadline Date

In order to be assured that a credit grade is filed in time for graduation, the final work must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Graduate Committee and filed at the library on or before the by the deadline date published in the appropriate Graduate *Bulletin*.

Pre-Approval of Thesis/Written Creative Work

Prior to the completion of the final document, students are encouraged to have the thesis director or coordinator pre-approve the preliminary pages, first two pages of the document, and any charts, graphs, or questionable pages.

Fee Payment

The student will submit two (2) master copies, including the title page with original inked signatures, to the library where he/she will pay the required processing fees for the library copy and any additional copies. If any academic department or program is willing to cover some/all of these fees, the student must have written permission, with the appropriate account number, from the department or program executive. Consultation with a librarian will be necessary to determine the current standard fees. (Theses that exceed 2" or include scores, etc., on paper larger than the standard 8 1/2 x 11 may require an additional binding fee.) Each copy should be submitted in a correctly-size box, a padded envelope, or some similar protective covering for shipping to the bindery.

Additional Copies

Any additional copies should only be done after the original has been reviewed and approved by the Graduate Division. It is the responsibility of the student to reproduce additional copies he/she wishes to have bound and to ensure these copies conform to the master copy. The fee for binding each additional copy, whether departmental or personal, is the same as for the original and is paid to the library at the same time as the master copy is submitted. Binding colors for the library copies are standard, but personal--and sometimes departmental--copies may be bound in colors chosen by the student. The librarian will have color swatches available. Students may wish to use QuickPrint for the reproduction of the additional copies they are making and should consult QuickPrint about paper quality, prices, etc.