



Master's Thesis Manual

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS MANUAL	3
ABOUT THE MASTER’S THESIS	3
PRE-THESIS AND THESIS COURSEWORK.....	3
ELIGIBILITY	4
THESIS ADVISOR AND THESIS COMMITTEE.....	4
STEPS IN THE THESIS PROCESS	4
STEP 1: PRE-THESIS ACADEMIC WORK PROPOSAL	4
<i>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</i>	5
<i>Adding a Thesis to a Graduate Program of Study</i>	5
STEP 2: THESIS PROPOSAL & APPLICATION	5
STEP 3: THESIS RESEARCH AND WRITING	5
<i>Formatting</i>	6
Page Arrangement.....	6
Typeface (font)	7
Margins	7
Pagination	7
Spacing.....	7
Footnotes.....	7
Tables and Figures	8
Illustrative Materials	8
Proofreading.....	8
STEP 4: THESIS DEFENSE	8
STEP 5: DEPOSIT.....	9
<i>Depositing to the Graduate School</i>	9
Graduating in Absentia	9
Submission Deadlines	10
<i>Depositing to ValpoScholar</i>	10
(OPTIONAL) STEP 6: THESIS CERTIFICATION BY THE REGISTRAR	11
FORMS MENTIONED IN THIS DOCUMENT	11
PRE-THESIS ACADEMIC WORK PROPOSAL.....	12
MASTER’S THESIS PROPOSAL & APPLICATION	12
SAMPLE TITLE PAGE.....	12
THESIS APPROVAL FORM.....	12
AUTHOR’S RELEASE FORM.....	12
THESIS CERTIFICATION.....	12

About This Manual

The purpose of this Thesis Manual is to guide you as graduate students and your faculty mentors on the general process of planning, researching, writing, and defending a thesis. Because thesis requirements can vary from graduate program to graduate program, this manual should always be used in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog entry for a student's specific degree program. However, this Manual is more specific than the Graduate Catalog insofar as it contains a) guidance on the general thesis process and b) specific details about requirements for formatting and depositing the document with the Graduate School and with ValpoScholar. To ensure that the thesis will be accepted, you and your thesis advisor should review this Thesis Manual together to ensure that all understand the thesis requirements and procedures including timing, registration, and formatting guidelines.

This manual was developed with input by faculty and staff across campus, was approved by the Graduate Educational Policy Committee, and is administered by the Graduate School. Thesis format procedures may change from year to year, so be sure that you always consult the most recent version of this Thesis Manual posted on the Graduate School web site. Date "last updated" always appears on the front cover.

About the Master's Thesis

A master's thesis is a written document that provides an opportunity for a graduate student to report independent work that has been supervised by a faculty Thesis Advisor; the thesis is typically read and approved by a faculty Thesis Committee. Graduate programs differ concerning the level and amount of original research required of the thesis candidate. Not all departments at Valparaiso University require a thesis as partial fulfillment for a Master's degree. Check the Graduate Catalog or with your graduate advisor for unique program requirements. For programs in which students may choose to add a thesis "option," they often do so either because they plan to pursue doctoral study in the United States or because an external sponsor requires that they complete a thesis as part of their graduate study.

Pre-Thesis and Thesis Coursework

The Master's Thesis typically requires that students register for two sequential semesters of credit: one semester of pre-thesis coursework involving research and writing, followed by one semester of thesis writing, editing and defense. Students planning to complete a Master's thesis should review the relevant Graduate Catalog requirements for registering for pre-thesis and thesis coursework in their specific academic program. Most programs require the students to complete at least two courses, each customarily for 3 credits, to fulfill the Master's thesis requirements. In some cases, the number of credits may be modified by the appropriate Program Director or Department Chair. You should also consult academic program requirements and guidelines for specific minimum grades in pre-thesis coursework, as well as GPA and GRE score requirements that must be met before you are able to register for thesis coursework.

Eligibility

Prerequisites and other eligibility requirements to register for thesis credits vary across programs. See your graduate program page in the Graduate Catalog for details on thesis eligibility for your specific graduate program.

Thesis Advisor and Thesis Committee

A thesis is conducted under the supervision of a thesis advisor/chair (from the home department) and possibly a co-chair, who oversees and convenes the thesis committee. The ideal thesis committee will be comprised of at least two full time faculty members. In some cases, a part time faculty member who has unique expertise that can contribute significantly to the project may serve as a co-advisor.

In many programs, the Program Director and the Department Chair, if not already committee members, are ex officio members of all thesis committees. The Program Director and Department Chair roles are to ensure that committee members' work load credit is appropriately distributed and that there is adequate planning prior to each semester in which the thesis work is initiated and completed. In addition, a representative of the Graduate School will serve as an ex officio member of a thesis committee. The Graduate School representative will ensure administrative and registration procedures are followed.

Steps in the Thesis Process

The general thesis process involves five steps: 1) Pre-thesis academic work proposal; 2) Thesis proposal and application; 3) Thesis research and writing; 4) Thesis defense; and finally, 5) Deposit. (In rare cases, a sixth step is used, typically for sponsored students: 6) Thesis Certification by the Registrar.) The sections that follow address specific details regarding each step in the two-semester thesis completion process.

Step 1: Pre-Thesis Academic Work Proposal

As noted above, the typical thesis sequence is comprised of two semesters in which the student is registered for credit: the pre-thesis semester and the thesis semester. However, advance preparation is needed even before the pre-thesis semester, as the student must submit a [Pre-Thesis Academic Work Proposal](#) to register for the necessary credits. This section explains how to do that.

During the independent study or pre-thesis coursework, you will work closely with your thesis advisor to select a topic, determine if IRB approval is necessary (see page 5), and prepare your proposal. You are encouraged to consult with your thesis advisor and academic department regarding specific requirements and formatting guidelines for this pre-thesis work. This includes that you ensure you've explored necessary IRB requirements (please see page 5) as well as preferred academic discipline formatting. To register for this first semester of work, submit a completed and approved [Pre-Thesis Academic Work Proposal](#) to the Graduate School by the following deadlines:

- By December 1 to register for spring for the first semester of coursework
- By April 11 to register for summer for the first semester of coursework
- By August 1 to register for fall for the first semester of coursework

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Proposals for projects that employ research involving human subjects (i.e., studies involving people) must first be reviewed and approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the research can proceed. Students are responsible for knowing whether their projects are governed by IRB rules and for securing necessary approvals. Please consult the Sponsored Programs website to learn more about IRB requirements: <http://www.valpo.edu/sponsored-and-undergraduate-research/student-resources/institutional-review-board/>. Work with your thesis advisor early in the project to submit your proposal to the IRB. Approval by the IRB must be received before a student may register for thesis credits. Institutional review of your project may take 2-6 weeks, so submit your project to the IRB as early as possible.

Adding a Thesis to a Graduate Program of Study

To add a thesis to a graduate program that does not require a thesis or does not have a thesis option, the Graduate Catalog provides the following guidance:

Students should communicate with their academic adviser about whether thesis credits are applicable to degree completion in their respective graduate program. When a thesis is required for reasons other than program requirements and there is no other option for a student, up to 6 additional credit hours of thesis work should be added to the total number of program credits. Three credits of coursework, applied toward either concentration or elective categories, are first completed as 692 Research Project, or 595 or 695 Independent Study and are intended for the development of a thesis proposal. With satisfactory completion of preparatory coursework and approval of thesis candidacy, the student may enroll in 699 or 795 Master's Thesis. (Graduate Catalog)

Step 2: Thesis Proposal & Application

After your committee has approved your topic and thesis proposal, prepare the [Master's Thesis Proposal & Application](#) and accompanying proposal documentation. You are encouraged to consult with your thesis advisor and academic department regarding specific requirements and format for this thesis work. Once paperwork is complete, please submit to the Graduate School for final approval. Like the pre-thesis guidelines, all paperwork should be submitted to the Graduate School by the following deadlines:

- By December 1 to register for spring for the second semester of coursework
- By April 11 to register for summer for the second semester of coursework
- By August 1 to register for fall for the second semester of coursework

Step 3: Thesis Research and Writing

The typical length of a Master's thesis varies across programs. A thesis submitted to the Graduate School may be completed using any professionally recognized style manual, such as the Chicago Manual of Style, the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), or

the Modern Language Association citation style (MLA), so long as it used consistently throughout the thesis. The student should consult with his or her advisor to know and use the appropriate style guide recognized by the disciplinary field of study.

Like other written works, copyright is conferred upon creation, i.e., at the time that the thesis is written. As such, as a student, you hold the copyright to your thesis whether or not you register with the U.S. Copyright Office. Please see the United States Copyright Office website at <https://www.copyright.gov/> and the library's Copyright Information guide: <http://libguides.valpo.edu/copyrightinformation> for more information. Included in the library guide is important information about Creative Commons licenses.

Please utilize the Christopher Center Library librarians and research staff as needed. Program-specific librarian information may be found on the Christopher Center Library webpage at <http://library.valpo.edu/liaison.html>.

As with all other work completed for credit, as a graduate student you are expected to know and to abide by the Valparaiso University Honor Code in the preparation, research, writing, defense, and deposit of the thesis. If you include, in your thesis manuscript, any copyrighted material that goes beyond the limits of "fair use," you are responsible for obtaining written permission from the copyright holder. Valparaiso University takes no responsibility for damages that may arise from copyright violations by a degree candidate.

Formatting

Formatting the thesis includes 1) page arrangement and 2) elements of typesetting. To arrange your thesis, include each of the following items in the list below, and in this exact order (except for items noted as "optional").

Page Arrangement

- Title page (See [Sample Title Page](#))
- Copyright page
- Dedications (optional)
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if required)
- List of Figures (if required)
- Abstract (required for some programs)
- Blank page
- Text
- Bibliography (precise name will vary depending on style manual: Bibliography, Works Cited, References, etc.)
- Appendices
- Blank Page

To typeset your thesis properly, use a word processor and adhere to the following rules, *unless they contradict the professional style guidelines of your program's specialty*.

Typeface (font)

- Use a traditional serif typeface such as Times New Roman or Cambria.
- Use a 12-point font size for body text with exceptions for table and figure formatting according to your style guide.
- Use consistent typeface throughout the document (e.g., if captions are 10-point Times in chapter 1, they must be 10-point Times in all other chapters).
- Ensure high print quality so the document is legible and readable.

Margins

- Plan page margins to create enough room for your thesis to bound as a book. Specifically, to facilitate binding, all portrait-oriented pages must have a left margin of at least 1.5 inches. All landscape-oriented pages must have a top margin of 1.5 inches. All other margins (top, right, bottom of portrait oriented pages; and left, right, bottom of landscape oriented pages) must be at least 1 inch.
- Each heading and subheading must be followed by at least two full lines of body text. If only one line of text fits below a heading, move the heading to the next page.

Pagination

- Number all pages consecutively. Starting with page 1 on the first page of body text and number in consecutive order until the end of the thesis, including all pages in appendix, bibliography, and including all pages with photographs, illustrations, and drawings.
- Place page numbers in the upper right-hand corner of the page, 3/4" from the top.
- Number pages that precede text page 1 with lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.).
- Page numbers on landscaped pages should still be in portrait orientation.
- Do not use a period after the page number.
- Do not number the title page even though it is counted as “i.”
- Do not insert lettered page numbers such as 10a, 10b, 10c, etc.

Spacing

- Double space general body text.
- Insert at least 3 single-spaced lines of space after body text and right above table captions and figures. Insert at least 3 single-spaced lines of space below figure captions, tables, and other graphics before proceeding again with body text.
- Single space footnotes and long quotations set off in a block.
- Single space bibliographic/reference entries, but double space between each bibliographic//reference entry.

Footnotes

- When using a style manual that allows for footnotes, separate footnotes from the text with a line, and leave one single-spaced line of space between the line and the footnote.

Tables and Figures

- For both tables and figures, use a word processor or draw with black India ink and use a lettering guide for captions, numerals, symbols and characters.
- Color may be used. If you will be printing any copies in black-and-white be sure the color portions will photocopy legibly.
- Margin limitations (e.g., 1.5" on the binding edge) apply to pages with tables and figures. Ensure that margins are sufficient so that tables and figures do not extend into any of the margins.
- Insert at least 3 single-spaced lines of space after body text and right above table captions and figures. Insert at least 3 single-spaced lines of space below figure captions, tables, and other graphics before proceeding again with body text.
- Place figure captions below figures. Place table captions above tables.
- If a figure or a table continues onto a subsequent page, include the following caption: Table x (continued) or Figure x (continued). Landscaped figures and tables should have landscaped captions. Page numbers should be in portrait orientation.
- Tables and figures can be grouped in a separate chapter in the text or as an appendix.

Illustrative Materials

- Make sure all illustrative materials conform to permanent record standards and are as close as possible to the same size and margins as the text.
- If you must use larger fold-out illustrative material, fold it with a minimum number of folds so that it falls within the margins of a normal text page (8 1/2" x 11"). Note: Since binding of a thesis requires edge trimming, illustrative materials that are folded too close to the sewing or trimming edges may be defaced during the binding process.
- If a diagram, photograph, or similar material is smaller than thesis page size (8 1/2" x 11"), mount it with a high-quality permanent adhesive. Do not use glue, mounting tape or rubber cement. Instead, use permanent archival adhesive such as dry mounting tissue, library paste or spray-on adhesive.
- Where possible, print photographs on 8 1/2" x 11" single weight photographic paper. Include and number each page as a part of the text.

Proofreading

- Use all available grammar, punctuation, and spell checker programs to ensure good usage, and take the time to proofread your thesis carefully as these electronic tools will not catch every error. Please consult with your advisor regarding the Writing Center as another possible resource.

Step 4: Thesis Defense

After you finish writing your thesis, it is customary to formally “defend” your work by making an oral presentation to the committee at a designated time, who will ask you questions about your process and your work. Hence, this meeting is called a thesis defense, with invitations extended to the department faculty, fellow graduate students, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Please

refer to the Graduate Catalog for information about the thesis defense that may be applicable to your program of study.

Students are encouraged to participate in other opportunities to present their thesis work at scholarly events, including disciplinary conferences and the Valparaiso University Graduate Academic Symposium. In some programs, presentation of thesis work at external events or conferences may substitute for the thesis defense. Check your program page in the Graduate catalog for details.

Following the thesis defense, the thesis committee may require final revisions to your thesis before it will be finalized. These revisions must be completed and approved by the committee before moving on to the next step.

After revisions are completed and approved, please prepare the [Thesis Approval Form](#) for final signature by your Thesis Advisor, members of your Thesis Committee, as well as the Dean of the Graduate School. Please ensure that the Dean of the Graduate School will have adequate time to review the final document before the bound copy is submitted to the Graduate School for signature. To do so, follow this procedure: At least one week before you deposit of a bound copy for signature, submit an electronic copy of your final Master's thesis with the signed [Thesis Approval Form](#), to Jamie Haney, Associate Director of Academic Services by email at Jamie.Haney@valpo.edu.

If you will need your thesis notarized for authentication, please notify Jamie at the time you drop off your [Thesis Approval Form](#) so that she can provide you with the prepared **Thesis Certification Form** for inclusion in your bound thesis.

Step 5: Deposit

Before moving on to this step, you must have successfully defended your thesis, made any required changes, and obtained all necessary signatures by Thesis Advisor, members of the Thesis Committee, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

After you have met the above requirements, you will “deposit” your thesis by submitting two electronic copies of your completed thesis (including a scanned copy of the signature page): one to the Graduate School, and one to ValpoScholar, Valparaiso University's scholarly repository, as follows:

Depositing to the Graduate School

To submit to the Graduate School, please send to Jamie Haney, Associate Director of Academic Services as an email attachment to Jamie.Haney@valpo.edu.

Graduating in Absentia

If you are living and/or working out of town while you are completing your thesis, please arrange to have someone on campus obtain the required signatures on your [Thesis](#)

[Approval Form](#) and submit your materials to Graduate School and ValpoScholar if you cannot do so in person.

Submission Deadlines

You must submit the signed [Thesis Approval Form](#) to the Graduate School (Kretzmann Hall Lobby) no later than ten days after final grades have been submitted. Finally, please check with your thesis advisor to ensure there that are no additional deposit expectations that may be specific to the academic department or college.

Depositing to ValpoScholar

To submit to ValpoScholar, please follow these guidelines:

- Upon completion and final approval, all documents should be sent to ValpoScholar's email: scholar@valpo.edu within 21 days of awarding of degree.
- Submissions will not be considered complete until all documentation has been received at this email address. Submissions sent to other email addresses will not be confirmed.
- The official, archival copy of your thesis is the electronic copy stored in ValpoScholar. Submitting a print copy for the Moellering Collection does not replace the required electronic submission.
- To submit your thesis to ValpoScholar, you will need to electronically submit the following documents/files:
 - [Author's Release Form](#), electronically signed and dated (acceptable file formats: pdf, doc, docx, rtf, jpg) (Example available here: http://libguides.valpo.edu/ld.php?content_id=28447296)
 - Copies of all permission letters sent to copyright holders (acceptable file formats: pdf, doc, docx, rtf, jpg)
 - Copies of all permission letters received from copyright holders, both denials and acceptances (acceptable file formats: pdf, doc, docx, rtf, jpg)
 - Full-Text version of capstone project (acceptable file formats: pdf)
 - Cover sheet for the full-text version of capstone project, signed and dated by all appropriate faculty and administration personnel (acceptable file formats: pdf, jpg)
 - Copyright page with your intended copyright declaration (i.e. Copyright by or a Creative Commons license) (acceptable file formats: pdf). See the library's Copyright Information guide: <http://libguides.valpo.edu/copyrightinformation>
 - Any supplemental documentation, including Poster and/or Presentation slides (optional) (acceptable file formats: pptx, pdf)
- ValpoScholar administrators will send an email once the documents have been received, either confirming the submission or requesting more documentation.
- Theses are usually posted within ValpoScholar within 4-6 weeks, depending on use of copyrighted materials and if an embargo is requested by the author. An embargo is a temporary hold on the public dissemination of the documents, which is sometimes requested by copyright holders or by the author for various reasons, sometimes related to other pending publications or research. If an embargo is requested, a record of the project will still be posted with a note indicating that the full-text is temporarily unavailable. More information on this procedure can be found at

- <http://libguides.valpo.edu/scholarlycommunication/valposcholar>. Please email scholar@valpo.edu if you wish to know more about embargo options.
- If you wish to deposit a print copy to the Library for the circulating collection, bring an unbound copy of the final approved version to the Library Administrative Assistant (Located in Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources, Room 410) during regular business hours, with appropriate payment to cover the cost of library-grade binding. If paying by check, it should be made out to Valparaiso University.
 - Submitting a print copy for the Library Circulating Collection does not replace electronic submission. Your submission will not be considered complete until electronic submission is confirmed.

(Optional) Step 6: Thesis Certification by the Registrar

Students who need their thesis notarized for authentication will need to complete a **Thesis Certification Form** and follow the steps listed below. The form will be made available upon request by Jamie Haney, Associate Director of Academic Services in the Graduate School.

The University Registrar is responsible for certifying the validity of official academic documents. The notarization process is performed by a Registrar's office Notary Public to ensure the certification process is consistent on documents being used outside of the United States.

- All thesis copies must be bound and should include the following forms in the order listed:
 - **Thesis Certification Form** ready for signature and notarization
 - Signed [Thesis Approval Form](#)
 - **Thesis Title Page**
- For thesis format approval, follow carefully the guidelines discussed in the Thesis Arrangement Section of this manual. All copies must be:
 - Clean
 - Error-Free
 - Typed/printed only on one side of the page (not double-sided)
 - Properly collated
 - Prepared with a word processor or desktop publishing system to produce a uniform style. Use all available grammar, punctuation, and spell checker programs to ensure good usage. However, please also take the time to proofread your thesis carefully as these electronic tools will not catch every error.
 - Offset, letterpress, or laser printing is acceptable but the pages must conform to good printing standards throughout.
 - The paper size must be 8 1/2" x 11".

IMPORTANT NOTES: Thesis copies submitted to the Registrar's office that are not fully bound complete with all required forms will not be notarized for authentication. Individual or additional thesis certification forms will not be issued – they must be a part of the bound thesis.

Forms Mentioned in this Document

Forms mentioned in this document may be obtained from the Graduate School website at valpo.edu/grad. The following forms will be utilized throughout your thesis process and are listed in sequential order:

[Pre-Thesis Academic Work Proposal](#)

Complete this form with the help of your Thesis Advisor to register for your pre-thesis semester coursework. You must submit the signed form with all necessary signatures to the Graduate School by the deadline in order to be signed up for credits.

[Master's Thesis Proposal & Application](#)

After completion of your pre-thesis, complete this form with the help of your Thesis Advisor, obtain your thesis committee members, and submit the signed form to the Graduate School by the deadline in order to be signed up for thesis credits.

[Sample Title Page](#)

Students may use this sample document to format their Thesis Title Page.

[Thesis Approval Form](#)

The Thesis Approval Form will be completed and signed after a student has successfully defended and edited their final thesis.

[Author's Release Form](#)

This form must be completed prior to submission of your thesis to ValpoScholar.

Thesis Certification

In certain cases, a student may require a printed, signed, hard copy of the thesis to be certified by the University Registrar for a specific reason (such as for presentation to a sponsor). This form will be utilized as part of that process and is only to be prepared by the Graduate School.

VALPARAISO  UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Title of Thesis

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Valparaiso University

by

Name

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

of

Degree Name

Month Year

VALPARAISO  UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis Approval Form

Date: _____

This form is to certify that the thesis:

Title of Thesis

By:

Name of student

Has been reviewed and approved by the thesis committee.

Thesis Advisor

Thesis Committee Member

Thesis Committee Member

Dean of the Graduate School

Student Release Form

Project Title: _____

Course: _____

Release statement for students:

I give Valparaiso University and the Christopher Center permission to post my project on its website(s). This includes, but is not limited to, slide presentations, text, pictures, and streaming media. I have received and verified permission for all copyrighted material used. Also, if copyright permission cannot be verified by Valparaiso University and the Christopher Center for re-posting, I give the Christopher Center permission to limit access to such copyrighted material so that it meets the U.S. Copyright Office's definition for "fair use" of copyrighted materials for educational use. For more information on "fair use," please see the U.S. Copyright Office's website on fair use: <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>.

I attest that I have neither received unauthorized aid nor have I plagiarized sources in the completion of this project.

Signature: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

VALPARAISO  UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

**CERTIFICATION OF THESIS
ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL**

THESIS TITLE

BY

STUDENT NAME

MASTER'S THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate School of Valparaiso University

Valparaiso, Indiana in the United States of America

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

NAME OF DEGREE

Month and Year of Graduation

Dean of the Graduate School

Date

To become attached to and a part of:

Title or Type of Document

Document Date: _____

Number of Pages: _____

STATE OF INDIANA, COUNTY OF PORTER

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me this _____ day of _____

By _____

personally known to me _____ OR produced identification _____

Type of identification produced: _____

Rebecca A. Strain, Notary Public State of Indiana
My Commission Expires: September 20, 2023

SEAL