

Preparing a Senior Thesis for the International Degree

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You have arrived at a significant step in your pursuit of an undergraduate education and in preparing for your future: writing your senior thesis! Having devoted considerable effort to your thesis, you must now document that work.

Your thesis must describe clearly and completely:

- (1) the goals of the research,
- (2) the rationale, theories or hypotheses tested,
- (3) methods used,
- (4) results obtained and
- (5) conclusions drawn.

In doing this, you must also acknowledge all sources of information you have used (both written and oral) in assembling the final package.

Your thesis, and any published articles resulting from it, represents your contribution to the knowledge of your field. Therefore, the final product must be written in a style and format, which are acceptable, consistent and understood– which is why we have organized this guide. A well-written thesis not only reflects favorably upon you but also on your advisor, the International Degree Program and Oregon State University.

This guide should answer your questions about the final written thesis. We recommend that you read it in its entirety before you begin writing your thesis. If you have specific questions that still are not answered, please contact the International Degree Program office at International.Degree@oregonstate.edu. Good luck!

Note: In preparing this manual, we have relied heavily on Oregon State University's "Preparing a Thesis or Dissertation at Oregon State University: A Graduate Student's Guide." Changes have been made to reflect the requirements and needs of students in the International Degree Program.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Although your thesis advisor will provide guidance, ultimate responsibility for completing the research and preparing a quality thesis rests on you. You are responsible for gaining the information necessary to prepare a thesis properly, meeting deadlines associated with its preparation and ensuring that the final copy of your thesis is signed and delivered to the appropriate offices.

Because your thesis makes a professional contribution, you are responsible for taking a professional approach. Do the best job that you are capable of doing. Accomplishing this requires good planning, an early start and familiarizing yourself with the broader protocols of your discipline and the world of research in general. In completing your thesis, you are responsible for meeting regularly with your advisor and following his/her recommendations, establishing a realistic timeline, doing your best to follow the objectives of the research goals, maintaining a thesis log, providing your advisor with rough drafts, and preparing a high quality final product.

TIMELINE

The sequence you might follow in completing your senior thesis is as follows:

12 months before graduation

Locate an advisor/mentor and discuss research interests, timeline, feasibility and your their expectations. Establish frequency of meetings. This relationship should be established at least 10 months prior to your anticipated graduation/defense. **Discuss with your advisor how completion of your senior thesis will satisfy the WIC requirement for your International Degree, see the WIC Requirement section of this document.

9 months before graduation

Read literature. Refine your approach. Submit your proposal to the IRB if you plan to conduct a survey, questionnaire or interviews. Conduct analysis. Write a rough draft. Keep track of your ideas, feelings, setbacks and inspirations in your thesis log. Meet with your thesis advisor to discuss progress and setbacks.

3 months before graduation

Meet with your thesis advisor to discuss progress. Submit your rough draft and thesis log for his/her review. Summarize your advisor's recommendations. Inform the International Degree Program office of your progress.

2 months before graduation

Continue the analysis and investigation. Statistical analysis (if warranted). Write final draft of the thesis.

1 month before graduation/defense (FINAL DRAFT IS COMPLETE)

Submit the final draft to your advisor for his/her approval. His/her signature on your thesis will indicate that it meets the requirements for a BA in International Studies.

Note: Honors College students will require signature lines for two additional committee members and for the Dean of the Honors College.

Obtain the signatures of your Department Head/Chair and the Head Advisor of the International Degree Program.

Schedule a final oral presentation with the International Degree Program office at least 2 weeks in advance. Distribute signed copies of your thesis as follows:

- a. Advisor
- b. Department Head/Chair
- c. International Degree Program office
- d. Honors College main office (if you are in the UHC)

2 weeks before graduation (absolute latest date for defense)

Final oral presentation (25-30 minutes).

DEADLINES

International Degree students must be aware of two deadlines:

1. Application for Graduation. To receive the International Degree (BA in International Studies) at commencement, students must have completed all requirements for the primary degree by the end of final exam week of spring quarter. The BA in International Studies cannot be awarded alone; it must be accompanied by the primary degree. Students must apply for graduation with both degrees by the appropriate deadline. Check the Schedule of Classes for the exact deadline for applying to graduate.
2. Oral Presentation. Candidates for the International Degree are expected to make a final oral presentation of their thesis. The International Degree Programs office needs to be informed of your intent to make this presentation two weeks in advance of the presentation date. Also, your presentation must be completed by the final week of the term (the week before finals week). Failure to meet these requirements may delay the awarding of your International Degree. The final, bound and signed copy of the thesis should be submitted to the International Degree Office at this time.

INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENT

The thesis should demonstrate your comprehensive understanding of global issues and of the international dimensions of your primary degree. One approach to the thesis is to formulate a hypothesis and test the hypothesis via experimentation. Another approach would be to base the thesis on the collection of information, analysis of this information, and summary of new insights and perspectives.

Some students find it helpful to ask the question, how does this impact people (globally, in country a vs. country b, domestic vs. abroad, etc.)

WIC REQUIREMENT

In order for your thesis to satisfy the final graduation requirement for the International Degree you must submit a Thesis Log along with your signed final draft of your thesis. **Your MyDegrees will not be marked complete until both items are turned in.** Your Thesis is a substantial written work, but the thesis itself cannot satisfy the WIC requirement. Typically students take their WIC as part of their major in which they refine their writing style academically through many exercises and opportunities for feedback. For the International Degree, students are able to complete their WIC within the mentor relationship independent of a focused course. Make sure to discuss this requirement with your mentor as you are establishing your thesis mentor relationship.

When you turn in your thesis log, it should be a substantial record of your process throughout the entire experience and can include:

- Brainstorming notes around thesis topics/research questions- including reasoning behind choosing your final question, notes from your mentor, and thoughts that changed your question entirely
- Any papers from class that have similar focus to your thesis
- Drafts with edits from your mentor
- Drafts with edits from the writing center

- Drafts with edits from your peers
- Outlines or diagrams that you use to organize your thoughts throughout the writing process
- Timelines or notes that are established between you and your mentor that frame the thesis writing journey
- Anything else that was relevant to you in your thesis writing process

THESIS ADVISOR EXPECTATIONS

Final decisions on thesis content are left to the advisor and the student, but general principles follow:

- (1) Rough draft. The rough draft is meant solely to inform your advisor (or committee) about your progress and allow him/her to provide feedback. Your advisor will determine the format and the number and content of rough drafts.
- (2) Final draft. The final draft must be typed and double spaced (1.5 spacing acceptable). As a general rule, most theses are 30-50 pages in length. Even a thesis which involves substantial non-written content must include a minimum of 8-10 formal, written pages.

THESIS COMPONENTS

A sequence you may follow for a thesis that formulates and tests a hypothesis is:

A. Abstract (200-250 words). This is a synopsis of your work, a condensed version of the entire thesis. It should provide enough information for a lay reader to understand the rationale and significance of the work. It includes:

- background (1-2 sentences)
- rationale for the study
- methods
- results
- analysis and conclusions

B. Background/Literature Review (8-10 pages). This section reviews pertinent literature in sufficient depth that the reader will come to appreciate why you are asking your questions or stating a specific hypothesis. It needs to be balanced (i.e., considers all relevant opinions). Typically, the introduction leads to a statement: "As a result, the objectives of this thesis were to"

C. Methods (3-4 pages). How did you go about conducting your analysis? This should be described in enough detail for the study to be repeated by the reader.

D. Results (8-12 pages). This should include all pertinent results. All data must be presented, not only the data which supports your thesis. Figures and tables may be included in the text or at the end of the thesis to support the results section.

E. Analysis/Conclusions (10-14 pages). This is the most important part of the thesis because this is your opportunity to interpret your results and make decisions on their significance. You should try to extend

your results into uncharted territory! What are the implications of your work? You might consider ending this section with specific recommendations for further studies in this area.

F. Bibliography (literature cited). Cite all sources of information using a standard and consistent method of citation appropriate to your discipline. An example of format is included in this manual; however, other formats are acceptable. Remember to cite not only published sources but oral and internet sources as well.

FORMAT

The International Degree Program office is not interested in rigidly enforcing formats for theses. More important to us is that you are creative, make a significant contribution and have some fun in preparing the thesis. You and your advisor may decide to follow a different format from that outlined here. In some cases, it may not be possible to follow this format. However, we provide this sample format to you as a point from which to start thinking about your format.

PAGES AND NUMBERING

Page i (unnumbered)

Title page. This should include the thesis title, your name, departmental affiliation and date of preparation (see template on next page).

Page ii

Abstract (200-250 words; see template on next page).

Page iii

Copyright Page

Page iv

Signature Page (see template on next page)

Page v

Acknowledgment Page

Page vi

Table of Contents

Page vii

List of Figures and Tables

Page viii

List of Appendices

Page 1-?

Main Body of Thesis and Appendices.

Details

(1) Paper. Under most circumstances, you should use standard 8 1/2 X 11 inch paper.

(2) Margins. One inch margins on left and right, top and bottom are recommended.

(3) Page numbers. Number sequentially from the first page of the thesis body through the appendices. All prior pages should be numbered in lower case Roman numerals (except title page).

(4) Spacing. Double space (or at least 1.5 spacing) the thesis for ease of reading.

(5) Fonts. Use a readable font. Font size should be at least 10 point and no larger than 12 point (preferred). Level one headings may be 14 point, but should be consistent throughout the thesis.

(6) Paragraphs. Indent paragraphs five (5) spaces from the left-hand margin or use block paragraph format throughout.

(7) Footnotes. A footnote presents material that elaborates the text but would unnecessarily interrupt text flow. Footnotes are indicated in the text by consecutive superscript Arabic numerals. The footnote itself is placed at the bottom of the page on which it is cited but should not invade the bottom margin. Footnote entries should be single-spaced. In some styles, footnotes are instead collected at the end of the thesis and designated as endnotes. Discipline-specific formats are acceptable.

(8) Citations. Reference to others' work, whether published or not, may be given by including the author's names in text or by referring by Arabic numeral. In the former case, author's names are arranged alphabetically in the bibliography. In the latter case, citations are sequenced chronologically, according to reference number. Discipline-specific formats are acceptable.

(9) Terminology, abbreviation and symbols. Difficult terminology should be defined. Abbreviations must follow the first unabbreviated version of the phrase and placed in parentheses. You are encouraged to minimize use of symbols in the text.

(10) Figure and tables. Figures and tables highlight key points in the text. These may be included in the text or collected at the end of the thesis in a designated section. Where information might be displayed as a figure or a table, choose a figure as most readers relate more readily to visual material. Figures and tables should be numbered sequentially. Separate sequences are used for figures and tables. Each figure and table should have a clear legend. Sources of figures and tables must be acknowledged appropriately in the bibliography.

(11) Consistency. Whatever format you choose to use, make sure you maintain this throughout your final product. It will enhance the professional image of your thesis.

THESIS TEMPLATE

For ease of formatting, you may download the International Degree Thesis template. The template is set up for use with Microsoft Word. Please note that you may not have the font used installed on your computer. While you may select any readable font for use in the thesis, the spacing, particularly on the Table of Contents and List of Tables, Figures, etc, pages, will change slightly. Be sure to fix the formatting on these and other pages where necessary.

To access the thesis template, go to:

- Word Document Format (.doc) -

<http://oregonstate.edu/international/sites/default/files/forms/id-form-thesistemplateformat.doc>

- Adobe Acrobat (or Reader) Format (.pdf) -

<http://oregonstate.edu/international/sites/default/files/forms/id-form-thesistemplateformat.pdf>