Completing a Thesis or Dissertation

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Topics Include:

• Getting Started
• Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD)
• Common Problems

Getting Started: General Tips

• Begin early and plan ahead
• Hire a proofreader/style expert?
  • Generally a good idea
  • Departments often have names of proofreaders in your discipline

Getting Started: Thesis/Dissertation Committee

• Committee must be set up as soon as possible
• Thesis: minimum 3 members
• Dissertation: minimum 5 members
• Dean of Graduate School must approve the committee before the defense.
• All committees (thesis or dissertation) must include 1 member outside of the department
• http://graduate.ua.edu/students/forms/
Getting Started:
Thesis/Dissertation Committee

- Graduate Faculty database may be found on the Graduate School’s website
- The database has Full, Associate, and Temporary members listed by department
- Must have “Full” status to chair a dissertation
- Must have “Full” or “Associate” status to chair a thesis
- Dean of the Graduate School can give “Temporary” Graduate Faculty status to an outside member not associated with UA

Getting Started:
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- Institutional Review Board for the testing of or research on human subjects
- Obtain approval BEFORE starting your research
- A copy of the IRB certification must be included in an Appendix in your ETD (all signatures are censored)
- Information: http://osp.ua.edu/site/irb.html
- IRB has bi-monthly seminars:
  - http://osp.ua.edu/site/irb SHERPASchedule.html

Getting Started:
Copyright/Publishing

- Publishing options: traditional versus open access
- UA encourages open access
- Consider the embargo options
- Plan ahead: future book or other publishing
- SHERPA/RoMEO has listing of publishers’ policies
  - http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo

Getting Started: Getting Finished!

Steps to Completion:

In the next few days, take some time to identify YOUR important dates:

1. Proposal defense meeting
2. Final defense meeting
   - This should be 3 to 4 weeks BEFORE the final day to submit your ETD to ProQuest (which automatically sends it to the Graduate School)

Then pencil in the other dates, share with your advisor for feedback that is specific to you and your thesis/dissertation

Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD)

- Electronic submission has been mandatory since August 2009
- Advantages:
  - No expensive paper
  - Secure and safe
  - Faster processing
  - Faster publishing

2/7/16
Electronic Theses and Dissertations: The Manuscript

- Title: avoid redundancies. Longer is not better
- Abstract: less than 350 words
- Table of Contents: matches the body of the manuscript
- Format: varies widely by discipline
- References: matches body of manuscript

Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD)

Suggestion: review the Graduate School’s ETD site and then the ProQuest site

- ProQuest link may be found on the Graduate School’s ETD site
  - Guidelines for submission, PDF, ordering bound copies, copyright, publishing
- UA ETD submission demo
  - www.etdadmin.com and
  - ProQuest’s own site
  - “About ETD Administrator” for practice

Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD)

- ETD Submission Workshops are held each semester
  - The Graduate School sends out notifications and posts the information on the website

Be sure UA’s logo appears in the upper corner
ETD Submission Process Overview

Submission Steps
1. Set up your login information
2. Practice
3. Decide on your publishing option

NOTE: Submission is not complete until you include
1. Committee Acceptance Form (sent the Graduate School)
2. NORC Survey of Earned Doctorates (submitted online)

ETD: Getting Ready to Submit

You will need the following:
1. Full text in PDF format
2. Abstract
3. Optional supplementary files
4. Advisor and other committee members' names
5. Subject category: 1-3 terms that best describe your thesis/dissertation

Review and Acceptance

1. ProQuest reviews and verifies completeness
2. Graduate School reviews the submitted document
3. Graduate School emails the student
   1. Problems
   2. Corrections
4. Final approval and publish

Common Problems:
See “Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations”

- Committee Acceptance Form is photocopied and does not have original signatures
- Confusing "Article style" with "Journal format"
  - "Article style" is used for dissertations only, contains multiple studies, used only in some departments
  - "Journal format" is used for theses and dissertations; it is simply in the style of an accepted journal in your field; contains one study

Common Problems

- Preliminary pages: all required pages are present and in correct order
- Page numbering:
  - all bottom-center of all pages
  - Roman numerals for preliminaries
  - Arabic numerals for main document
  - Note special sequences
- Embargo inconsistencies
- Line spacing for long titles/references
- Acknowledgements? Acknowledgments?

Common Problems

- Be wary of relying too heavily on spell checkers
  "Dios knot trussed sone speller two fined ael yore mistakes."
- Grammar checks
  "Marketing are bad for brand big and small. You Know What I am Saying? It is no wondering that advertiseings are bad for company in America, Chicago and Germany."
  "Let's eat, Grandma!" or "Let's eat Grandmaw?"
- Most spell/grammar checkers identify 2 or fewer problems
We Are Here To Help

- http://graduate.ua.edu/thesis

- Contact us:
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  john.chambers@ua.edu

- The Graduate School
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  348-5921