



Kimbell School of Geosciences

The Robert L. Bolin Graduate School of Geology
Master's Thesis Guidelines

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The following series of standards serve two purposes: To place your thesis document in a superior state before completion, and to maintain consistency among the KSG Theses.

Note: this document provides guidelines for a "standard" format. For those preparing a publishable manuscript, please follow the "Master's Thesis Guidelines for Publishable Manuscripts."

Content

- 1.1 For completion acceptance, a Kimbell School of Geosciences thesis provides a thorough and properly cited background and original content that significantly address the topic of the thesis proposal or a thesis committee-approved modification of the proposal.
- 1.2 The thesis must be entirely free of plagiarism or AI-authorship; any violation will be subject to university punishment and dismissal from the program (or rescinding of the degree, if discovered after its award).
- 1.3 The thesis should be a well-written document before submission. It should be free of typographical errors and misspellings. It should be grammatically correct and efficiently organized. It needs to adhere to the style guidelines presented below
- 1.4 Your thesis is not complete until it has successfully resolved all concerns, comments, and criticisms of your Graduate Research Committee
- 1.5 Your thesis is not complete until it has been accepted with signature by the Dean of the McAda Graduate School.

2 University-Wide Thesis Formatting and Submission Guidelines

- 2.1 The format for title pages and other preliminary pages is that adopted by MSU for theses in all academic areas.
- 2.2 Kimbell School of Geosciences theses deviate from the MSU guidelines in style and organization as specified below.

3 Style

- 3.1 Theses will use *The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publisher*, except for the deviations listed below.
- 3.2 Specific guidelines for theses follow those of the Geological Society of America in *GSA Publications Manuscript Style*, except for further deviations specified below. This includes headings, sample location, appendixes, and mathematical expressions. Graduate Advisory Committee Chair chairs will provide a pdf to their advisees.

- 3.3 Punctuation, abbreviations, and commonly used geologic descriptors should follow the *Suggestions to Authors of the Reports of the United States Geological Survey, 7th Edition* (STA7). Graduate Advisory Committee Chair chairs will provide a pdf to their advisees.
- 3.4 Typeset
- 3.4.1 Eleven point print; Times New Roman or identical serif font.
- 3.4.2 All text is left justified (like this document).
- 3.5 Margins
- 3.5.1 Left margin: one and one-half (1.5) inches (offset for binding)
- 3.5.2 Top, right and bottom margins: one (1) inch.
- 3.6 Numbering of Pages
- 3.6.1 Page numbers are to be placed at least two spaces above the first line of text against the right margin.
- 3.6.2 The first page of each division or other major section (e.g. Introduction) is counted but not printed. This includes the Abstract.
- 3.6.3 Preliminary pages, those preceding the text, are to be numbered with lower case Roman numerals.
- 3.6.4 The page number is not printed on the title page or the approval page. Title and approval pages are i and ii, respectively; they do not have a printed page number.
- 3.6.5 The first printed page number is iv, appearing only if the Abstract exceeds a single page.
- 3.6.6 Arabic numerals are used for pages of the text, literature cited and appendix divisions.
- 3.6.7 The first page of each division or other major section (e.g. Introduction) is counted but not printed.
- 3.7 Line Spacing
- 3.7.1 All body text must be double-spaced
- 3.7.2 Table legends and figure captions and literature cited should be single-spaced.
- 3.8 Punctuation_– Follow general rules for effective writing. There must be only one space after a full period between two sentences within a paragraph.
- 3.9 Sections (including chapters) should begin on a new page, with the heading placed two or more spaces below the first text line, e.g., the one designated for continuation of text from the previous page.
- 3.10 Illustrative Material
- 3.10.1 Tables, graphs, charts, etc., must appear in all copies of the thesis. Titles, captions, legends, etc., must accompany the illustration, and fit within the margins.
- 3.10.2 Tables and figures must be placed on the page or pages following their reference in text
or
- 3.10.3 they must occur as a series of tables, followed by figures, at the end of each chapter, appearing in the order in which they are referenced in the text.
- 3.10.4
- 3.10.5 Images should be reproducible at 300 dpi.-All figures must be legible at page size. Lettering on figure may not be reduced below 8 point font.
- 3.10.6 All figures must preserve the aspect ratio of original data.
- 3.10.7 Landscape figures must have a landscape caption (page number appears in the same position as portrait).
- 3.10.8 Location maps need to include location in state, province, or country.
- 3.10.9 Captions are 11 point fount, single spaced, 6 points below the figure, and within the full margins.
- 3.10.10 The figure caption includes the word “Figure” in regular typeface, followed by a space and the Arabic figure number followed by a period, a space, and a descriptive caption for the figure.
- 3.10.11 Figures and tables are enumerated in the order in which they are encountered in the text. Figure 2 follows figure 1.
- 3.10.12 All tables and figures need to be referenced in the text. Within the sentence, the reference is capitalized and the number is followed by a period: “The data are in presented in Table 3 and Figure 15.” For figures referenced in parentheses, use Fig.: “(Fig. 15)”.

- 3.10.13 Tables and figures must be numbered consecutively, and presented, centered within the margins (horizontal and vertical) on a separate page or pages
- 3.10.14 Tables should follow guidelines in *GSA Publications Tables*.
- 3.10.14.1 Table title is all caps, with double underline (tables never have captions).
- 3.10.15 Tables should be text such that it can be copied from the page as individual letters and numbers. Tables should never be images (pictures).
- 3.11 Units of measure
- 3.11.1 Follow all rules for significant digits as based on acquired data
- 3.11.2 Report any all error ranges with level of confidence
- 3.11.3 Utilize the International System of Units (SI). Provide converted values into common units in parentheses if required for clarity. Example: 9.00 m (29.5 feet). *SI units may be suspended in cases where the thesis director and committee deem it necessary to solely use units in common application.*
- 3.11.4 Utilize negative exponents to express units in the denominator when three or more units are used (e.g., $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ rather than $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2/\text{s}$).
- 3.11.5 A space separates the number and the unit (e.g., 10 mM rather than 10mM).
- 3.12 Abbreviations: should follow those in the USGS STA7. Mineral abbreviations should follow those of Whitney, D. L., and Evans, B.W., 2010, Abbreviations for names of rock-forming minerals: *American Mineralogist*, 95,185-187.

4 Organization

- 4.1 Sections: The order the thesis is as follows (proper section titles are **bold**):
- 4.1.1 Fly Leaf (a blank page)
- 4.1.2 Title Page (use McAda grad school format)
- 4.1.3 Approval (Signature) Page (also McAda grad school format)
- 4.1.4 Abstract**
- 4.1.5 ***Acknowledgments*** (optional)
- 4.1.6 Table of Contents**
- 4.1.7 ***List of Tables*** (optional)
- 4.1.8 ***List of Figures*** (optional)
- 4.1.9 Text (the body of the thesis)
- 4.1.9.1 Introduction**
- 4.1.9.2 **Background** including Literature Review
- 4.1.9.3 Procedure or Materials and Methods**
- 4.1.9.4 Results**
- 4.1.9.5 Discussion**
- 4.1.9.6 Conclusions**
- 4.1.10 Literature Cited**
- 4.1.11 ***Appendices*** (optional)
- 4.1.12 ***Vitae*** (optional)
- 4.1.13 ***Oversized-format documents*** (optional)
- 4.2 References
- 4.2.1 In line text citations should be arranged chronologically, alphabetized by name within the same year. For example: Jones (1971); (Jones, 1971); Jones (1971; 1975); (Jones, 1971; Smith, 1973; Davis, 1975); (Smith and Davis, 1985). When the citation contains more than two authors the following format must be followed: Jones et al. (1986) or (Jones et al., 1986). Citations to publications by the same author(s) in the same year should be designated alphabetically: Jones (1999a; 1999b); (Jones, 1999a; 1999b).
- 4.2.2 For entries in Literature Cited, follow the format of the GSA, as exemplified in *GSA Reference Guidelines and Examples*, including alphabetization and chronological ordering.

- 4.2.3 Entries in the Literature Cited section should use a hanging line indentation.
- 4.2.4 The Literature Cited must include all citations in the text, tables, and figures.
- 4.2.5 The Literature Cited should not include additional references not mentioned in the text.

5 Form

5.1 Number of Copies

- 5.1.1 Electronically submit the final thesis document to the Kimbell School of Geosciences Chair in a Microsoft Word format.
- 5.1.2 Electronically submit any final thesis oversized-format materials (e.g. maps, well-logs, seismic sheets) to the Kimbell School of Geosciences Chair as a full-scale .pdf
- 5.1.3 Once fully evaluated and approved, submit a compiled final thesis to the Graduate Advisory Committee Chair, the Kimbell School of Geosciences Chair as a single pdf document, and the Dean of the McAda Graduate School.
- 5.1.4 The KSG produces four-print copies for binding that includes all appendices and large-format materials (note: the KSG will bind these documents at its expense).
 - 5.1.4.1 Bond paper, at least 20 pound weight and at least 25% cotton rag content; 8.5 x 11 inches.
 - 5.1.4.2 Single sided.
 - 5.1.4.3 Large-format materials should be printed on heavy bond or heavy coated paper at 300 dpi.