



California State University, Sacramento  
Office of Graduate Studies

## Project Format Requirements

The culminating experience for a master's degree in the California State University system can be a thesis, project, or comprehensive examination. Each of the three options is equivalent in academic rigor but different in terms of the final product. There are subtle, yet distinct differences in these products.

There are three major types of projects:

- Fine and performing arts that include creative works such as a series of paintings or sculptures, a musical composition, a novel or collection of short stories or poems, or the production of a stage play.
- Professional fields that include production of a technical manual, business plan, curriculum plan, software program, multimedia program, or web-based instructional program.
- Print and media projects that include a text-based musical composition, novel, or play script, or a media project such as a film or multimedia program that includes a written report and non-print documentation, such as printouts of computer screen displays.

### UNBOUND PROJECTS

Some departments do not require projects to be bound and shelved in the University Library. In addition, some projects do not lend themselves to binding and shelving (e.g., web-based, art piece). In these instances, a Project Completion Approval Form may be submitted upon approval by the faculty advisor and department graduate coordinator. These unbound projects are submitted and retained in the department.

### BOUND PROJECTS

The information below is designed to provide graduate students with the formatting requirements for the standard cover pages for these projects. Departments may use other style manuals that do not conflict with the guidelines provided in this document. These style manuals describe rules for manuscript preparation including headings, tables, figures, notes and other matters related to the final production of a written, publishable document. Sample pages for standard cover pages can be found on the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) website:  
[www.csus.edu/gradstudies](http://www.csus.edu/gradstudies).

### FORM AND STYLE (FOR BOUND PROJECTS ONLY)

The single-sided, double-spaced manuscript is to be arranged as follows:

1. Blank Page
2. Title Page. The candidate's name must be the same as name listed on thesis/project receipt form.
3. Copyright Page (optional)
4. Approval Page
5. Format Approval Page
6. Abstract
7. Preface, Dedication and/or Acknowledgment Pages (optional)
8. Table of Contents with page references. Individual listing of preliminary pages (Preface, Dedication, Acknowledgments, if included; Individual listing of Tables, Figures, Illustrations, Software Specifications, if included; List of Chapter or Section Headings; Appendices; Bibliography). Do NOT list abstract.
9. Text (double spaced)
10. Bibliography/References
11. Blank Page

**NOTE:** One copy of the project is required for filing with OGS. We also require an extra copy of signature pages (format approval, approval page and abstract), three copies of **THESIS/PROJECT RECEIPT FORM**, and one paid **MICROFILM AND BINDING RECEIPT FORM**.

### PAPER

Use 20lb. (50 or 100% cotton) or 24 lb. (100%cotton); 8 1/2 x 11 (except for oversized items).

### FONTS AND SPACING

The preferred font is Times New Roman or a similar font; acceptable font sizes are 10-12; different typefaces (e.g., italics) may be used only to show differences in captions and special text.

### PRINT QUALITY

Use laser printers or minimum 600 dpi inkjet printers.

### MARGINS AND PAGINATION

- Text must be double spaced, except for quoted passages that may be indented and single-spaced for emphasis.
- Bottom and right margins of text: one inch from edge of paper.
- Top and left margins of text: one and one-half inch from edge of paper.

- Pages preceding Chapter 1 must have lower case Roman numerals, centered one inch from bottom of page, starting with the approval page that is numbered “ii”. Title page is unnumbered, but is the implied number “i”.
- First page of text uses the Arabic number “1” and pages thereafter carry consecutive Arabic numbers, including the pages in the Appendices and the Bibliography.
- Arabic numbers are positioned in the upper right-hand corner, one inch from the top and one inch in from the right edge of the paper. Double space to the first line of the text.

#### **COPYRIGHT**

Projects receive copyright protection when accepted by the University; students do not need to include a copyright page unless they are formally registering the manuscript.

#### **ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIALS**

##### **TABLES AND FIGURES**

- Color may be used, however, when it is microfilmed, it will be in black and white.
- If color is used, students must label or number the table or figure so that meaning can be determined in black and white.

##### **OVERSIZED MATERIALS**

- Oversize foldout pages may be included, though ample margins for binding must be included. Leave oversize pages unfolded. The bindery will fold and insert them.
- All pages must be appropriately numbered if bound in the text.
- If the oversize pages are bulky, the bindery will place them in a special pocket at the back. If a pocket is required, it must be listed in the Table of Contents, but no page numbers are required.
- A duplicate set of all oversized materials must be submitted.

##### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs may be reproduced on 100 percent cotton paper and placed within the standard text margins.

#### **CDs AND DVDS**

Submit in duplicate and identify with title, name of student, and semester.

#### **COMPUTER SOFTWARE**

- Describe in separate section in prefatory pages (e.g., list of figures and tables).
- State requirements for the use of the software (e.g., hardware, screen resolution type) and any other information necessary for proper viewing of the software.

#### **SLIDES**

Submit in duplicate and identify with student's name, semester and slide number.

#### **SAMPLE PROJECT LAYOUT**

The following will present a framework for projects that will be shelved in the University Library. The framework below is offered as a general guideline. Students should always consult their graduate coordinator and program documents for additional regulations and policies.

*Introduction:* purpose of the project; scope (description) of the project in terms of content and format; significance of the project; limitations of the project; definition of terms; and organization of the remainder of the project.

*Review of the Literature:* source materials for the project; other studies related to the project; and synthesis of the literature that identifies the various approaches and themes.

*Methodology:* description of how the project was conducted (e.g., questionnaires), compiled, or created (e.g., visual aids).

*Project:* includes actual project documents.

*Appendices:* material too detailed or lengthy for inclusion in the body of the study (e.g., questionnaires, maps, photos, letters of permission).

*Bibliography/References:* Includes all sources used in the project.

