

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES, RESEARCH,
AND OUTREACH

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY
AND
GUIDE FOR MASTER'S THESES AND PROJECTS

2007-2008

INTRODUCTION

The general requirements for the preparation of theses/projects as presented in this manual pertain primarily to mechanical considerations. The purpose of this manual is to provide a degree of uniformity and to assure that each thesis is in a form suitable for binding, is legible, and can be preserved for a period of time.

The thesis represents the culmination of a major research project that makes a significant contribution to knowledge within a given academic field. It will consist of a written interpretation of facts and opinions gained through independent research. The thesis provides a permanent record of the student's research and should describe why the work was done, how the research relates to previous work as recorded in the literature, the research methods used, the results, an interpretation or discussion of the results, and a summary and/or conclusion. It should be thorough, written in a creditable literary style, and meaningful in its conclusions.

The project should be unique to the individual needs, interest, and experiences of the student. It should represent a definitely formulated plan, a task or problem engaged in to supplement and apply classroom studies. It should consist of something the candidate does, designs, or builds in contrast to a reflection, or reading, purely. There should be some physical outcome—a project or a display, as well as the written project report. Projects may include resource units, a proposed course of study or curricula, a historical account of a note-worthy endeavor, models or equipment, films or film-strips, and equivalent creative forms.

The thesis will be displayed in the Library; therefore, the research and manner in which it is presented should reflect credit to the student, the department, and the University.

The project will be retained in the student's department.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

NO STUDENT MAY ENROLL FOR THE RESEARCH AND THESIS COURSE, THE MASTER'S PROJECT COURSE BEFORE HE/SHE HAS BEEN ADVANCED TO CANDIDACY.

APPLICATION FOR ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

One of the requirements for advancement to candidacy is the attainment of a satisfactory score on the general section of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). All students admitted conditionally or unconditionally must satisfy this requirement for candidacy. The scores should be submitted prior to the student's enrollment or before the end of their first semester of enrollment in Graduate School. Arrangements to take the test should be made with the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey.

Admission to Graduate School does not imply advancement to candidacy for a degree. Students initially admitted into a program leading to a degree are evaluated later for advancement to candidacy. A student is eligible to apply for candidacy after he/she has completed a minimum of 12 hours of course work at this University in his/her approved program of study. He/she must, however, attain candidacy one semester prior to the semester in which he/she expects to graduate. Students who are eligible to complete the requirements for a master's degree in two semesters, may apply for advancement to candidacy within the first two weeks of the semester in which they expect to graduate. **STUDENTS WRITING A THESIS OR PROJECT MUST SATISFY REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDACY BEFORE THEY ENROLL IN THE THESIS OR PROJECT COURSE.** Therefore, candidacy should be attained as early as possible in the program. (Students will not be certified as having completed more than 12 hours in a degree program, for employment purposes, until they have applied for and been advanced to candidacy.)

Procedures for Applying

1. Satisfactory completion of all requirements for unconditional admission to the Graduate School and any departmental requirements;
2. Satisfactory completion of the foreign language requirement where applicable;
3. A minimum of 12 semester hours of graduate-level courses in an approved program of study with a minimum graduate point average of B (3.00), both cumulatively and in their program area;
4. Satisfactory scores on the GRE. Scores vary by program area;
5. Evidence of proficiency in the use of the English language;
6. Approval of the major professor (adviser) in the student's program area;

The application for advancement to candidacy should be filed in duplicate. Application forms are available in the Graduate Office, and upon completion of the application (with adviser's signature) must be returned to the Graduate Office.

COMPILATION OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

This booklet is not a manual of thesis writing. It merely lists the requirements for compiling the master's thesis at Virginia State University. For a guide on the preparation of the manuscript, a graduate student should refer to a reputable thesis writing manual, available in most office supply stores, or bookstores. **It will be the responsibility of the student to see that his/her thesis conforms to the standards of the manual prescribed for his/her field of study.**

Order of Compiling

1. Blank sheet
2. Title page (see sample on page 6)
3. Biographical sketch of author
4. Acknowledgements
5. Table of contents
6. List of tables including page numbers
7. List of illustrations including page numbers
8. Body of thesis including introductions, chapters, parts of sections, summary/and or conclusions
9. Bibliography
10. Appendices
11. Blank Sheet

TYPING

Double spacing is to be used throughout the thesis except for extended quotations, footnotes, and tables containing many entries. Black print should be used for typing the manuscript. Colored print such as red, green, blue, etc., **should not be used**. A PLAIN FONT (12 point in size) should be used in the typing of the manuscript, and **not** ITALIC, SCRIPT, OR OTHER UNUSUAL TYPES.

Margins

- 1 ½ inches - Left Margin
- 1 inch - Right Margin
- 1 inch - Top Margin
- 1 inch - Bottom Margin

Page Number Sequence

Front matter pages are numbered in lower-case roman numerals (ii, iii, etc). The title page is counted as the **first** page, but does **not** carry a number. The roman numeral should be centered and rest on the one inch margin at the bottom of the page.

All text pages following the front matter pages carry Arabic numbers, beginning with “1” on the first page of text and continuing to the end of the thesis. Pages with titles (Chapters, Bibliography, etc) the page number should be centered at the bottom resting on the one inch margin, subsequent page numbers will rest on the one inch margin at the top right corner of the page.

Page numbers on horizontal (landscape) tables should be placed in the same position on the page as other page numbers (top right one-inch margin).

Title Spacing

The first line on any page carrying a title (title page, front matter pages, and the first pages of chapters and major sections) will rest on a line two inches from the top of the page.

Text Spacing

On **title** pages, the first line of text will begin three spaces below the last line in the title. The last line of text will be two spaces above the page number.

On all other pages, the first line of text will begin two spaces below the page number. The last line of text will be on or above the bottom one-inch margin.

Chapter Titles and Front Matter Headings (Acknowledgement, Table of Contents, etc.)

Chapter titles and front matter headings are typed in all capital letters and centered. Chapter titles begin two spaces below the chapter number heading and may consist of more than one line, with the lines single-spaced. (Each new chapter begins on a separate new page).

MATERIALS

Type of Paper

The paper for the original copies (2) of the thesis should be white paper containing 25-100 percent cotton or rag content. If this type of paper is not available in the University

Bookstore or at local office supply dealers, the highest quality on hand may be used. All pages must be identical in weight, color, and texture throughout. The other two copies can be duplicated, but must be clear of any dark smudges or smears. The size of the paper should be 8 ½ x 11. All drawings and graphs in the thesis must be made with permanent black ink.

TABLES

Tables should be complete as to titles, box headings, subheadings, and column headings. Tables may be Qualitative, Statistical or Functional. A thesis may contain no tables or contain one or more of the three classes of tables. Numerical entries in a table should be correct. A zero should be entered in a table whenever the best value of an entry seems to be zero. If the value of a quality was not measured the broken line (---) or three dots (...) should be used. Each column of figures should show the correct number of significant figures. (For example, if one is counting “heads” an entry like 2.567 has little meaning.)

BINDING AND NUMBER OF COPIES

The completed thesis, two copies, should be placed in individual **Black Report Covers**, held together by binder clips of proper size for submission to the Graduate Office, upon approval of the student’s adviser. **(Please do not punch holds in the paper or use any other type of binding method—such as spiral binders, glue binders, etc.).** Usually the student wishes to retain a copy of his/her thesis and the professor may desire a copy, a total of two copies. Therefore, in general, each student should prepare **four** copies (the two copies for submission to the Graduate School must be on the bond paper). The Graduate School will submit the two copies of the thesis to the Library for preservation. The student may wish to have his/her copy bound, and may do so at his/her own expense.

THE ABSTRACT

The thesis abstract should contain not more than 500 words except upon the recommendation of the professor in charge of the student’s thesis.

The placement of the abstract may be determined by each department concerned as long as it conforms to one of the following: (1) the abstract may be placed at the beginning of the thesis; (2) the abstract may be placed at the end of the thesis ; (3) the abstract may be included in the body of the thesis immediately before the first chapter. (See sample on page 8)

CHECKING THE MANUSCRIPT

The Graduate Office does not serve as an editor. The author and thesis committee members should carefully proofread the thesis before it is submitted to the Graduate Office. The Graduate Office will, however, check for proper formatting as listed in this guidebook.

COMPILATION OF THE MASTER'S PROJECT

The writer of a project should basically follow the same guide in preparing the manuscript as outlined in a reputable thesis writing manual. The same procedures outlined in this guide for thesis—typing, materials to be used, margins, and binding—should be followed in preparing the project.

Order of Compiling

1. Title page (see sample on page 7)
2. Acknowledgements
3. Table of contents
4. Statement of the Problem or Purpose
5. Explanation of the methods and procedures employed
In gathering data or constructing the product
6. Analysis of the data
7. Summary or other conclusive statement

Number of Copies

Two typewritten copies of the project are to be prepared (one for the department and one for the student). The project is **not submitted to the Graduate School.**

(SAMPLE TITLE PAGE FOR THESIS)

THE DAY THE MOON AND THE STARS
REFUSED TO APPEAR

by

John Q. Quinson

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
the School of Graduate Studies, Research, and Outreach
of Virginia State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science
in
Astronomy
May 2007

APPROVED:

Major Professor

Thesis Professor (include this line only if your thesis professor was
different from the major professor)

(SAMPLE TITLE PAGE OF PROJECT)

HOW THE WEST WAS WON

by

John C. Wayne

A project submitted to the Faculty of
the School of Graduate Studies, Research, and Outreach
of Virginia State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Education
in
Education
May 2007

APPROVED:

Major Professor

ABSTRACT

(Title of Thesis)
by (Student's Name)

[TEXT]

