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# Master's Thesis Guide



Washington  
University in St. Louis  

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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## *Overview of the thesis process*

Your thesis is the culmination of your master's program, and its acceptance by the Graduate School is the final requirement for your degree. Therefore, we have written this guide to help you complete your work as efficiently as possible.

This guide is itself an outline of the stages of your work in which you interact with the Graduate School; in the following overview, some notice is also taken of ways in which you interact with your faculty advisor and other committee members.

1. At some point in your thesis research, you will present a proposal or prospectus of your thesis to your faculty adviser and at least two other faculty members. This presentation may be as casual as handing around your Title, Scope, and Procedure Form for their signatures, or as formal as defending an oral presentation to the committee. The Graduate School will know you are at this point in your work when your fully signed Title, Scope, and Procedure Form has been submitted to our office.
2. While you work on your thesis, you will want to keep in mind the ways in which material should be organized and formatted. Review the Graduate School's *Dissertation and Thesis Template* found on the [Policies and Guides](#) page of the Graduate School website. The template uses all required formatting, and its text can be replaced with your own. Whether you use it as the basis for your document or not, you must consult it for answers to all your formatting questions; that information is no longer included in this guide.
3. When you and your faculty agree that your thesis is ready to be defended, your defense will be scheduled. It may be private or public; it may consist only of questions and answers, or you may give a presentation that is followed by questions and answers. The Graduate School will know you have passed your defense when your fully signed form ([Master's Thesis Approval Form](#)) has been submitted to our office.
4. After your defense is over and your paperwork is complete, you will submit your thesis to the Graduate School electronically.
5. After your electronic thesis has been accepted, you may order copies from Thesis on Demand. Instructions for how to do so can be found later in this Guide.
6. Also after your thesis has been accepted, we strongly encourage you to submit your thesis data (e.g., field notes, spreadsheets, images, economic models, coordinates) and supplemental files (e.g., scripts, analysis, protocols) to the Washington University Digital Research Materials Repository (DRMR) hosted by the University Libraries. This is a free service which ensures the access and preservation of your scholarship for future use, meeting funder data sharing and archiving requirements. Data and files deposited with DRMR will also be assigned a digital object identifier (DOI), which allows for impact metrics and downloads to be tracked over time. For more information, or to submit your datasets, please see the DRMR webpage at <http://libguides.wustl.edu/drmr>.

## *Preliminary paperwork*

### *Title, Scope, and Procedure*

You *may* file your [Title, Scope, and Procedure Form](#) as soon as your Research Advisory Committee has signed it.

You *must* file your [Title, Scope, and Procedure Form](#) no later than one semester before your thesis examination.

Your project's "scope" defines its limits—what you intend to cover and what you intend not to cover. Your "procedure" describes the manner in which you intend to conduct your research. By defining the scope and procedure of your thesis, you provide an initial outline or model for yourself as you research your topic.

The form also serves as a contract between you and your Research Advisory Committee.

Research Advisory Committees normally consist of three tenured or tenure-track Washington University faculty members from within your degree program.

Your thesis's title, scope, and procedure may change in the course of your research. You are not required to file an amended form with the Graduate School, although getting your committee's written approval of the changes may be advisable.

### *Intent to graduate*

You must file an Intent to Graduate form for the semester in which you intend to graduate. Deadlines for filing the Intent to Graduate form for each semester are listed on the Graduate School's online calendar.

Complete this form by logging onto [WebSTAC](#) and clicking on "Intent to Graduate" from the menu. Take note of the diploma pick-up and mailing dates that are included on the form because your diploma will be mailed to the address entered. If your graduation semester changes, you must file a new form.

### *ORCID*

We strongly encourage you to establish an Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) and begin to populate your profile at <http://orcid.org>. ORCID is a free, persistent personal digital identifier which several funders, publishers, scholarly associations, databases, and universities are beginning to adopt or require. Many scholars will want to establish their ORCID profile and maintain it throughout their careers. You are also encouraged to include your ORCID in your thesis submission in Open Scholarship. For further information, review <http://libguides.wustl.edu/orcid>.

## *Forms and permissions needed Prior to Electronic Submission*

### *Deadlines*

Your thesis must be not only submitted but also accepted by the deadlines indicated in the academic calendar at <http://graduateschool.wustl.edu/events>. You should submit your thesis before the deadline, in case you need to make changes. Also, you should make sure your Master's Thesis Approval Form is submitted prior to the deadline.

### *Copyright permissions*

Before you submit your thesis electronically, you must have obtained **permissions** for any copyrighted work included in it for which you do not hold the sole copyright. This may include your own previously published work, whether or not you are its sole author. You may wish to consult your subject librarian, or email [WULIB\\_copyrighthelp@wumail.wustl.edu](mailto:WULIB_copyrighthelp@wumail.wustl.edu) for help with this topic.

### *The Master's Thesis Approval form*

The form is signed by members of your committee at your defense and by the chair of your department or program afterward. Check with your department as to whether you will be responsible for submitting this [form](#) to the Graduate School, or whether your department will submit it on your behalf. Forms should be submitted to Angie Mahon in Cupples II 212, or mailed to her at Campus Box 1187.

## *How to submit a thesis electronically*

Master's theses are submitted through the Washington University Library's Open Scholarship website. <http://digital.wustl.edu/publish/thesis-prep.html>. You will need an *activated* WUSTL Key and password in order to create your thesis submission. When you are ready to submit, make sure you have or know the following:

- *Activated* WUSTL Key and password
- Full text of the thesis as a single PDF file, preferably under 30MB. If your PDF is larger than that, or if you have problems formatting your thesis as a PDF, please contact Digital Library Services at [digital@wulib.wustl.edu](mailto:digital@wulib.wustl.edu).
- Abstract
- Optional supplementary files
- Adviser and other committee members' names

Before you login to Open Scholarship for the first time, go to the *Final Checklist* on the last page of this guide, to be sure you are ready to proceed.

## *Review and approval process*

The Graduate School is notified when you submit your thesis to Open Scholarship. When we review your submission, we make sure that we have received your Master's Thesis Approval form, and we check the submitted PDF to ensure that all formatting requirements have been followed. The amount of time we will need to review your manuscript, and the number and nature of any changes you may be required to make, are generally determined by how carefully you have prepared your work. **Please do not wait until the deadline day to submit your thesis!** Your work must be formatted correctly and approved by the Graduate School in order for you to graduate.

Once our review is complete, we will send you an email through Open Scholarship, saying one of the following:

- a. Your submission has no revisions and is being accepted.
- b. Your submission has no revisions, but we are missing required paperwork.
- c. Your submission has a few revisions that must be made before we can accept it.

## *How to submit copies to be printed and bound*

As of February 1, 2016 the Graduate School will no longer accept any paper copies for binding. Once your revisions are submitted in Open Scholarship, and the Graduate School has reviewed them, you will receive an email saying your thesis is approved. Then, and *only* then, you can order copies of your thesis to be printed and bound. Any copies must all be identical to your approved Open Scholarship submission. Therefore, when you upload a PDF of your dissertation for printing and binding, use the same one that was just approved in Open Scholarship.

1. Ask your department's administrator if your program is one who will pay for a certain number of copies to be bound by Thesis on Demand. In some departments, those will be ordered directly by departmental staff; in other departments, you will order those and request reimbursement for them. Clarify your department's procedures before starting to order printed and bound copies of your work.
2. Go to <http://wustl.thesisondemand.com> to order copies. Begin by uploading your PDF; when prompted, fill out the rest of the page. If you want copies sent to different shipping addresses, you will need to go through this process separately for each address; all copies ordered together will be shipped together to a single destination. Note that this service will *not* ship to international addresses.
3. As soon as you reach the second page of the order form, "Document Information as Uploaded" will appear on the right-hand side of the page; check to be sure that the total number of pages, the number in color versus black and white, and the information about images is all accurate. Your PDF for ProQuest will already have embedded fonts.
4. If your dissertation *does not* have color pages, choose the "Print Document in Black and White Only" option; if your dissertation *does* have color pages, choose the "Print Document in Color" option.
5. If you have any difficulty, begin by consulting the FAQ section of the bindery's website: <http://thesisondemand.com/faq/>. You will need to enter the university's zip code, 63130, in order to access these questions and answers.

## *Final checklist*

It's a great relief to pass your defense and have very little work left to do before you can put your Master's degree on your CV.

It's a great frustration to turn your thesis into a PDF and submit it electronically, only to be asked to do it again after making changes to the text.

Here are some things to check before you submit your manuscript to Open Scholarship.

- ✓ Have you filed your Intent to Graduate for the semester in which you plan to complete your degree?
- ✓ Does your title page indicate the correct administrative unit?
- ✓ Is Your Title in Upper and Lower Case, as in This Question?
- ✓ Does your title page indicate the month and year in which your degree is being conferred?
- ✓ If you are including an abstract page, does it use the required heading found in the Dissertation & Thesis Template?
- ✓ Is your front matter numbered correctly, starting with ii?
- ✓ Does the page numbering on your table of contents correspond to the correct page location?
- ✓ Does your table of contents include your bibliography/references/works cited?
- ✓ Has the Graduate School received your Master's Thesis Approval form?

After your thesis has been approved by the Graduate School, make sure you have checked the following, if you plan to have copies bound.

- ✓ Have you spoken with your department administrator, to find out if your program pays for any copies to be bound?

*You may need to present proof that you have completed your degree to a prospective employer before you receive your diploma. In that case, only after you have been notified that your submission has been approved, you may request a [degree certification](#) on the Graduate School website, on the Forms page.*

Questions about use of copyrighted materials, permissions, and fair use may be addressed to your subject librarian or [WULIB\\_copyright@wumail.wustl.edu](mailto:WULIB_copyright@wumail.wustl.edu). For further information on thesis guidelines, please refer to this library web page: <http://digital.wustl.edu/publish/thesis-prep.html>

If there are other questions not addressed by the Library's website or by this thesis guide, please email Angie Mahon ([angiemahon@wustl.edu](mailto:angiemahon@wustl.edu)).

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