

## Thesis

### Format, Defense, Final Submission, Guidelines, and Best Practices

#### **Format**

The UWM Graduate School determines the standard format for completed MA theses. If this format is not followed, graduation may be delayed. It is therefore important for students to familiarize themselves with these requirements as soon as possible. For the full list of requirements, including instructions for spacing, font, margins, page numbering, tables and figures, appendices, etc., consult the Graduate School's website:

<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/thesis-dissertation-formatting/>

Students are **required** to attend the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Workshop.

Page length of the thesis will vary depending on several factors: the topic itself (e.g., some topics require more extensive literature reviews), citations, etc. Length will ultimately be determined in consultation with the supervisor.

The Graduate School does not dictate the citation format for MA theses. An advisor may have preferences where the use of footnotes or endnotes are concerned. Whatever the format it must be employed consistently throughout. Students should use the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style or the particular style guide preferred by the thesis advisor.

#### **Defense**

The student must pass an oral defense of the thesis. The student will be examined by both the advisor and second reader. The student must receive approval from the advisor in order to schedule the defense. The defense must be scheduled in consultation with the advisor and the second reader and must take place by the deadline provided by the Graduate School. **It is essential that students know the defense and submission deadlines to graduate on time.** Please check the Graduate School website for more information.

During the defense, students are generally required to give a brief discussion of the scholarly significance of the thesis. This is followed by questions from the advisor and second reader. The defense length is a minimum of 1 hour. Students must bring a copy of the thesis to the defense.

Immediately following the defense, the advisor and second reader will decide whether to approve the paper as submitted, approve with minor changes, request major changes, or reject.

1. **Approval as submitted:** The advisor recommends approval. The second reader recommends approval. Any necessary changes are made by the student before final submission to the Graduate School.
2. **Approval with minor changes:** The advisor recommends minor changes. The second reader recommends minor changes. The student must make the recommended changes to secure the advisor's approval and make final submission to the Graduate School.
3. **Major changes:** The advisor recommends major changes. The second reader recommends major changes. The student must make the recommended changes to secure the advisor and second reader's approval before making final submission to the Graduate School. Major changes may result in a revised graduation date.
4. **Rejection:** The advisor recommends rejection. The second reader recommends rejection.

## **Final Submission Guidelines**

In order to make final submission to the Graduate School, the contents of a successfully defended thesis must be ordered as follows:

### **Preliminary Pages:**

- Title page – required
- Abstract page - required
- Copyright page - optional
- Dedication – optional
- Table of Contents – required for all except creative works
- List of Figures – required if figures appear in thesis
- List of Tables – required if tables appear in the thesis
- List of Abbreviations – optional
- Acknowledgements – required if permission to reproduce copyright material is necessary
- Frontispiece (illustration) or Epigraph (quotation) – optional

### **Main Body:**

- Main text
- References
- Appendices – optional

## **Best Practices**

The completion of a successful MA degree requires careful planning and attention to detail. Students should begin planning a degree path shortly after arrival in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. While that path may change, it is essential to understand all degree requirements as soon as possible.

During their second semester, it is recommended that students select a primary thesis advisor. Students work with the primary advisor to set specific objectives and deadlines for the completion of the thesis. Regular communication with the primary advisor is essential for the successful completion of a thesis.

Students should provide at least two weeks for primary and secondary faculty advisors or editors to provide feedback on a draft.

Students are strongly encouraged to share drafts with fellow Art History graduate students or to consult with the UWM Writing Center.