

A Guide to the Preparation and Submission of Theses and Dissertations

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1. INTRODUCTION

This manual should help you as you prepare your thesis or dissertation for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). The most important aspects of a thesis or dissertation¹ are, of course, the content substance, depth, and accuracy. Correctness in form as required for electronic submission, however, is also important. Reading this manual *before* you write your thesis or dissertation will increase the likelihood of routine acceptance of your manuscript, thereby saving you both time and expense.

A. Plagiarism

Northeastern University has a policy of complete honesty in all academic work. This means that ideas or data of others must be acknowledged. All research requires the incorporation of the work of others to compare and contrast, contradict or support one's own conclusions. Appropriate documentation of these sources will protect one from the charge of plagiarism. The Council of Writing Program Administrators document "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices" (2003) has a clear description of *plagiarism*:

*"In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source."*²

For further information, please refer to [The Council of Writing Program Administrators](#).

B. Division of Research Integrity

The mission of the [Division of Research Integrity](#) is to educate members of the university community about federal, state and university research regulations and provide assistance to students, faculty and staff in obtaining approval for teaching and research activities under those guidelines. The Division delivers support services for the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Animal Care and Use Committee. Part of its responsibility is to ensure university-wide compliance with federal, state and university statutes and regulations relating to the protection of human subjects, to the care and use of animal subjects in research and teaching, and to research and scholarly integrity. The Division collaborates with the university units responsible for health and safety, particularly with the University Environmental Health and Safety, as well as the Radiation Safety Committee, Biosafety Committee and Chemical Hygiene Committee.

For further information, please refer to the [Division of Research Integrity](#) or contact the appropriate office as noted below.

[Office of Human Subjects Protection](#) 617-373-7570
[Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine](#) 617-373-3958

2. IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION:

¹In this manual, the document produced for a Master's degree will be referred to as a thesis, the document for a Ph.D. degree will be referred to as a dissertation.

²Council of Writing Program Administrators, "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism" (2003).

•General Commencement Questions:

[NU Commencement Office](#)

[Email](#)

617-373-4098

[Commencement Contact](#) within your academic department

[Graduate School of Arts and Sciences](#)

124 Meserve Hall

[Email](#)

617-373-3982

•Electronic Submission of your Thesis or Dissertation:

[Proquest/UMI](#)

[Email](#)

1-800-521-0600 x7020

3. DEADLINES

Theses and Dissertations:

Submitting the thesis or dissertation is your responsibility. You should not expect an advisor or departmental staff member to do this for you. We strongly urge you to contact the GSAS prior to your defense in order to arrange for a format review of your manuscript. This appointment will ensure that your manuscript is in the correct format and problems in your electronic submission will be avoided. Prior to defending your dissertation, please create a [Northeastern University Graduate School Approval Record](#) to bring to your defense and get as many signatures from your committee as possible. Once all committee signatures are obtained, submit the form to the GSAS (a copy will be returned to your department after it is signed by the Director of Graduate Student Services). **Note: This must be done prior to the electronic submission and prior to the deadline stated above.**

Theses and Dissertations may be submitted to Proquest/UMI and the NU Graduate School Approval Record submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) at any point during the year, upon completion of all degree requirements. However, in order to be cleared for a specific commencement date, these are the deadlines by which the thesis or dissertation must be submitted electronically and the NU Graduate School Approval Record submitted to the GSAS (124 Meserve Hall). You should allow adequate time for your committee to review your manuscript, and schedule the final defense so that there is enough time for necessary corrections to be made to the document. You should be aware that if you are planning to graduate in August, it may be difficult to assemble your committee for a summer defense, so plan accordingly.

*Note: There will be no ceremonies in January or August. Those students who are cleared in January or August will be invited and welcome to participate in the May commencement ceremony. Your dissertation must be submitted prior to the Spring graduation deadlines in order to be hooded at the May ceremony.

Make sure to allow enough time to complete the final steps of the submission process before leaving the state or country. If unexpected problems are uncovered in the final stages of the submission process, your graduation could be delayed.

Grades and Petitions:

All requests for missing (including Dissertation, Dissertation Continuation or Thesis Continuation) or incomplete grade changes, transfer credits, and any other types of petitions must be turned in by the departments to the Graduate School Office with appropriate documentation by the deadlines listed below. *To ensure that your academic record is complete, you should review your transcript.* Unofficial transcripts can be obtained via your [myNEU account](#). To allow time for departmental review, please submit all necessary paperwork to your instructor or department well in advance of the Graduate School deadline. We will be unable to guarantee the graduation of a student whose paperwork does not meet the deadline.

****GSAS Deadlines listed below are firm****

| Commencement Date | Theses/Dissertation Deadline | Missing grades, petitions, etc. Deadline | Theses/Dissertation Deadline to avoid Continuation Registration in Subsequent Term |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Fall Graduation (January 29, 2010)* | Friday, December 4, 2009 | Thursday, January 14, 2010 | Friday, January 8, 2010 (for May 2010 graduation date) |
| Spring Commencement (May 7, 2010) | Friday, April 30, 2010 | Friday, April 23, 2010 | Friday, May 7, 2010 (for August 2010 graduation date) |
| Summer Graduation (August 26, 2010)* | Thursday, August 12, 2010 | Wednesday, August 11, 2010 | Friday, September 3, 2010 (tentative date for January 2011 graduation date) |

4. COMMENCEMENT LIST

Whether or not you are planning to attend the commencement ceremony, you **must** initiate the commencement process by registering for graduation via your [myNEU account](#). You should register even if there is a chance that all your requirements will not be completed in time to graduate on a specific commencement date. Do not wait until after you have defended your thesis or dissertation to put your name on the commencement list, since the clearance process for graduation begins several months prior to commencement. Your department or the Graduate School can easily take your name off the list at the last minute. Even if you do register for graduation just prior to commencement, you will not graduate if the department and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences have not had sufficient time to complete the full clearance process.

5. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences requires your thesis or dissertation be submitted electronically to Proquest/UMI prior to the deadlines stated above. Below are the steps required to submit your thesis or dissertation:

1. Submit your [Northeastern University Graduate School Approval Record](#)

Ensure that your NU Graduate School Approval Record (hard copy) has been submitted to the GSAS, 124 Meserve Hall, prior to submitting your electronic submission of your thesis or dissertation.

2. [Format](#) your manuscript.

[Formatting tips](#)

[Sample introductory pages](#)

3. [Convert](#) your Thesis or Dissertation to PDF

If the text of your document is in Microsoft Word or RTF format, you can just upload your file(s) to the Microsoft Word to Adobe PDF Conversion Page (link), and you will soon receive an email with a link to the PDF file(s), which you can then save to your computer. If your document is in a format other than Microsoft Word (ie LaTeX), please refer to the [Proquest PDF Questions page](#) section "[What software do I need to create PDF files](#)"?

4. Check your PDF file

Please carefully check the PDF file page by page before submitting it as formatting can shift and pages can go missing.

5. [Submit](#) the final, approved copy of the thesis or dissertation via "Traditional Publishing"

You will **not** be expected to pay any fees to Proquest if you select "Traditional Publishing" as Northeastern University will cover the cost for you.

Please use the [Northeastern University Employee Directory](#) to ensure your advisor and committee members' names are correctly spelled.

If you have any questions or encounter problems with the electronic submission, please contact Proquest directly via [email](#) or telephone at 1.877.408.5027.

6. Confirming Submission of your Thesis or Dissertation

Once you submit your dissertation via the Proquest/UMI web site, both you and the Director of Graduate Student Services will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your submission. If there is something wrong with the file you submitted, someone will contact you. Please give Proquest a few months to complete its review and make the thesis or dissertation available through its [Proquest Dissertations and Theses Database](#).

Please note that no student will be cleared for commencement if the electronic version is not received by Proquest/UMI and the Northeastern University Graduate School Approval Record submitted to the GSAS by the Graduate School deadline.

6. PAPER DISTRIBUTION

You should consult your department concerning the number of copies of your manuscript that will be required for departmental distribution (note that no other paper copies are required at Northeastern). You are responsible for binding personal copies of your thesis or dissertation, including the one for your department if the department requires it to be bound. For binding services, please contact larger local copy centers.

7. INFORMATION FROM NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Please click [here](#) for important information from the NU Libraries.

8. NORC SURVEY

Doctoral students must complete a survey form for the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) as part of the dissertation submission process. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete and is a required component of the commencement clearance process. This [survey](#) can be downloaded or obtained from the GSAS (124 Meserve Hall). The survey must be submitted to the GSAS by the posted deadline.

9. CHECKLIST

To ensure you have fulfilled all of the required steps in the commencement clearance process, please complete the step-by-step checklist, in order, below.

- Add your name to the commencement list
- Make an appointment with the GSAS for a format review 1-2 weeks prior to your defense
- Defend your thesis or dissertation 2 weeks prior to the GSAS deadline
- Submit your signed NU Graduate School Approval Record to the GSAS
- Submit your NORC Survey to the GSAS (PhD students only)
- Submit your thesis or dissertation to the Proquest/UMI web site
- Submit a paper copy of your thesis or dissertation to your department, as required