NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES
College of Science

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 College of Science. The most important aspects of a thesis or dissertation\(^1\) 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 has a clear description of plagiarism:

“In instructional settings, plagiarism is a multifaceted and ethically complex problem. However, if any definition of plagiarism is to be helpful to administrators, faculty, and students, it needs to be as simple and direct as possible within the context for which it is intended.”\(^2\)

For further information, please refer to The Council of Writing Program Administrators.

B. Division of Research Integrity

The mission of the Division of Research Compliance 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), the Animal Care and Use Committee and Responsible Conduct of Research. 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 Compliance or contact the appropriate office as noted below:

- **Office of Human Subjects Protection** 617.373.7570
- **Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine** 617.373.3958
- **Responsible Conduct of Research** 617.373.4588
- **Environmental Health and Safety** 617.373.2769

\(^1\)In 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.

2. IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION:

*General Commencement Questions should be directed to your departmental commencement contact

Other helpful Commencement information:

Northeastern University Commencement Office  
Email: commencement@neu.edu  
617.373.4098

Graduate Student Services  
College of Science  
205 Mugar Hall  
Email: gradcos@neu.edu  
617.373.4275

*Electronic Submission of your Thesis or Dissertation:  
ProQuest/UMI  
Email  
800.521.0600 x7020

3. DEADLINES

Please refer to the checklist provided in section 9 of this document. Following the checklist will ensure that you complete all of the steps necessary for graduation.

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 Graduate Student Services (gradcos@neu.edu) prior to your defense in order to arrange for a format review of your manuscript. This appointment will be brief but it will ensure that your manuscript is in the correct format and problems in your electronic submission will be avoided.

Please print the following to bring to your format appointment:  
Northeastern University Graduate Approval Record  
(prepared by you based on the template provided in this link);  
All introductory pages (thesis title page through the table of contents);  
A few pages of your text; and  
Any pages for which you have format questions.

Prior to defending your dissertation, please create a Northeastern University Graduate 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 Graduate Student Services (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 below.

Theses and Dissertations may be submitted to ProQuest/UMI and the NU Graduate Approval Record submitted to the Graduate Student Services 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 Approval Record submitted to Graduate Student Services (205 Mugar 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. Also, 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.

**COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY PARTICIPATION**

**Ph.D. Graduates**

Graduates must have their dissertations submitted by April 25, 2014 in order to be hooded in the May 1, 2014 hooding ceremony. August 2013 graduates will be invited to participate in the May 2014 ceremony. August 2014 graduates will be invited to participate in the May 2015 ceremony.

**Master’s Graduates**

January 2014, May 2014 and August 2014 graduates should plan to participate in the May 2, 2014 graduation ceremony.

**Graduate Deadlines listed below are firm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Date</th>
<th>Commencement Ceremony</th>
<th>Thesis/Dissertation Upload Deadline</th>
<th>Thesis/Dissertation Deadline to avoid Continuation Registration in Subsequent Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Graduation</td>
<td>May 2, 2014</td>
<td>Friday, December 13, 2013</td>
<td>Friday, January 3, 2014 (for May 2014 graduation date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(January 24, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Graduation</td>
<td>May 2, 2014</td>
<td>Friday, April 25, 2014</td>
<td>Friday, May 9, 2014 (for August 2014 graduation date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(May 2, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Defense must occur by April 18, 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Graduation</td>
<td>See participation notes above</td>
<td>Friday, August 8, 2014</td>
<td>Friday, September 5, 2014 (for January 2015 graduation date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(August 28, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. APPLY TO GRADUATE

Whether or not you are planning to attend a commencement ceremony, you must initiate the commencement process by applying to graduate via your myNEU account. You should apply 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 Graduate Student Services can easily take your name off the list at the last minute. Even if you do apply to graduate just prior to commencement, you will not graduate if the department and Graduate Student Services have not had sufficient time to complete the full clearance process.

5. 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, is done on-line, and is a required component of the commencement clearance process. If you are uncomfortable with answering some of the questions, you may leave them blank.

The NORC Survey should be submitted before the student brings the signed NU Graduate Approval Record to Graduate Student Services. Note: The Director of Graduate Student Services will receive an automated confirmation email once you have completed the Survey.

6. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Northeastern 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. Please be sure to click on the links so you'll have all of the necessary information.

1. Format your manuscript
   - Formatting tips
   - Sample introductory pages

2. Submit your Northeastern University Graduate Approval Record

   Ensure that your NU Graduate Approval Record (hard copy) has been submitted to the College of Science Graduate Student Services, 205 Mugar Hall, prior to submitting your electronic submission of your thesis or dissertation.

3. Convert your Thesis or Dissertation to PDF on the ProQuest Web Site

   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, 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”

Fees associated with “traditional publishing” are covered by ProQuest.

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 of 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 Northeastern University Graduate Approval Record is not submitted to Graduate Student Services and the electronic version is not received by ProQuest/UMI by the deadlines as stated.

7. 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.

8. INFORMATION FROM NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Please click here for important information from the NU Libraries.
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.

___ Apply to graduate via myNEU.
   (Note: you must do this regardless of whether or not you plan to participate in a ceremony.
    If you receive an error message via myNEU, please contact your department as your
    “expected graduation date” may need to be updated.)

___ Prepare and print your NU Graduate Approval Record.

___ Make an appointment with Graduate Student Services for a format review. This appointment
   should occur 1-2 weeks prior to your defense and section 3 of this document
   explains what you should bring to the appointment.

___ Submit your NORC Survey on-line.

___ Defend your thesis or dissertation prior to the College of Science deadline leaving adequate
   time for you to make revisions as required by your committee.

___ Finalize your edits and obtain signatures on the NU Graduate Approval Record. Please note
   that edits cannot be made once the signatures are obtained.

___ Submit your signed (including your Department Chair’s signature) NU Graduate Approval
   Record to Graduate Student Services, 205 Mugar Hall.

___ Submit your thesis or dissertation to the ProQuest/UMI web site as soon as the Director of COS
   Graduate Student Services signs the NU Graduate Approval Record.

___ Submit a paper copy of your thesis or dissertation to your department, if required.

~ CONGRATULATIONS! ~