Thesis & Dissertation Formatting Specifications
For the DMin, ThM, MABTS, and MAET Programs
Revised: December 20, 2018

The standard for style employed by Covenant Seminary is *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th Edition, by Kate L. Turabian. Theses and dissertations submitted to the Seminary are required to use the footnote-bibliography style as described in chapters 16 & 17.

The candidate is responsible for adhering to the format specified and for selecting appropriate software and/or services, proofreading the result, and making alterations as necessary.

MARGINS

The margins should be set at 1 inch, except for the left margin, which should be set at 1½ inches.

TYPEFACE (FONT)

The typeface should be clear and readable. Ornamental typefaces, including script, should not be used. Examples of acceptable typefaces include Times New Roman, Palatino, and Garamond.

Standard text size is 12-point type, with footnotes in 10-point type.

TITLES AND HEADINGS

Below is a recommended system for formatting titles and headings. You may use a different system if required by your degree program, or if a different system would better fit the structure of your project.

Titles should be followed by two blank lines. Use line breaks (shift-return) to insert a blank line between chapter number designation and chapter title.

Headings should be preceded by two blank lines and followed by one blank line. (See “Tip: Blank lines between items” on page 3 for technical guidance.)
For headline-style capitalization, capitalize the first letter of every word and of every part of a hyphenated compound word, regardless of length, except:

- Do not capitalize articles (a, an, the), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor), or the words to and as, unless they are the first or last word.

- Do not capitalize prepositions (of, in, at, on, for, above, under, through, etc.), unless they are the first or last word.

- Do not capitalize the second part of hyphenated words if the first part is a prefix (Anti-, Pre-, Re-).

- Do not capitalize parts of proper nouns that are normally in lowercase (Ludwig van Beethoven, iPhone, etc.)

**Chapter Titles, Titles of Pages in the Front Matter, etc.**

16 pt., Bold, Centered, Headline-Style Capitalization

**First-Level Headings**

14 pt., Bold, Centered, Headline-Style Capitalization

**Second-Level Headings**

14 pt., Italic, Centered, Headline-Style Capitalization

**Third-Level Headings**

12 pt., Bold, Left-Aligned, Headline-Style Capitalization

**Fourth-Level Headings**

12 pt., Italic, Left-Aligned, Headline-Style Capitalization

**Tip: Styles**

Word processors allow you to define reusable styles for frequently used elements in your document such as headers, captions, and block quotations so that you don’t have to worry about manually formatting those elements consistently as you work.
New documents come with a few styles predefined, but you can modify them to suit your needs. For example, modify the Heading 1 style to match how you’d like your chapter titles to look and then apply that style whenever you create a new chapter title. Use Heading 2 for major sections of your chapter, and Heading 3 for subsections.

Styles also allow you to quickly make formatting changes across your document. Realize that you need to italicize a level of subheadings? Just change the associated style definition and all instances will be instantly updated.

For more information on how to define, modify, and apply styles, search for “styles” in your word processor’s help menu or documentation.

**Spacing**

The main text of your thesis or dissertation should be double-spaced. However, there are several elements that should be single-spaced, as indicated in Table 1.

Titles should be followed by two blank lines. Use line breaks (shift-return) to insert a blank line between chapter number designation and chapter title.

Headings should be preceded by two blank lines and followed by one blank line.

**Table 1: Items That Should Be Single-Spaced**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single-Spaced</th>
<th>Single-Spaced + Blank Line Between Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Block quotations</td>
<td>• Table of contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Table titles</td>
<td>• Lists of figures, tables, or abbreviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Figure captions</td>
<td>• Footnotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bibliography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Tip: Blank lines between items*

Don’t use the return or enter key to create extra space between items! Extra line breaks between list items can cause spacing issues if the list wraps across multiple pages. When you need a “blank line” between list items, look under the paragraph formatting options for the “space after” or “space before” setting (depending on where you want the blank space to appear). Set the value to be equal to your font size to achieve the required spacing.
TYPESETTING ISSUES

Widows and Orphans Should Be Avoided

A widow is the last line of the paragraph appearing at the top of a page with the rest of the paragraph appearing on the preceding page. An orphan is the first line of a paragraph appearing at the bottom of a page with the rest of the paragraph on the following page. At least two lines of a paragraph must appear together on a page.

Likewise, headings should not appear alone at the bottom of the page, but should be kept with the paragraph that immediately follows.

Tip: Widows and orphans

The setting to automatically adjust the flow of text to avoid widows and orphans is found with the paragraph formatting options and is usually enabled by default.

For headings, Microsoft Word has a “Keep with next” option under paragraph settings. Be sure that this option is enabled for your heading styles.

Only One Space Should Be Placed after Punctuation

Previously, it had been standard practice to insert two spaces after a period ending a sentence. Current standard practice is to only use a single space after a period or other terminal punctuation.

PAGE NUMBERS

Page numbers are to be centered at the bottom of the page. The front matter—everything prior to the body of the thesis or dissertation—is numbered with consecutive lower-case roman numerals (e.g., iii, iv, v). The body of the thesis or dissertation is numbered with consecutive Arabic numerals (e.g., 1, 2, 3).

The title page and signature page do not display a page number, although they are still counted. The abstract, which is the first page to display a page number, is always page “iii”.

Tip: Working with page numbers

The key to getting the page numbers to display properly is to break your document into sections using section breaks. Whenever you are ready to start a section with a different page numbering format, look in the Insert or Page Layout menu and select the section break command. Microsoft Word users will see a few different kinds of section breaks to choose between, such as “continuous” (i.e., to keep the new section
on the same page as the previous section), and “next page” (i.e., to automatically start the new section on a new page). You’ll want to use the “next page” variety in this case.

Once you have all your sections set up, you can configure different footers with the appropriate page numbers (look in the Insert or Document Elements menu).

Consult your word processor’s help menu or documentation for more information on setting up headers and footers, and formatting page numbers.

COMPONENTS AND THEIR ORDER

The components of your thesis or dissertation should follow the order given in Table 2. Components marked with an asterisk (*) are required. Each of the components, as well as individual chapters and appendices, should begin on a new page (using a page break or section break, as appropriate).

Table 2: Component Order & Appearance of Page Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (in order of appearance)</th>
<th>Displays Page Number?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Title Page</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Signature Page</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Abstract</td>
<td>Yes Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Yes Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epigraph</td>
<td>Yes Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Table of Contents</td>
<td>Yes Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>Yes Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>Yes Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>Yes Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td>Yes Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Chapters (Main Text)</td>
<td>Yes Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>Yes Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Bibliography</td>
<td>Yes Arabic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Title Page & Signature Page

Follow the models provided by your degree program. Do not display a page number on these pages; however, do count them in the pagination.
Abstract

The abstract should start on page iii, which is the first page to display a page number.

Title this section “Abstract” at the top of the first page, and then include two lines of blank space before beginning the abstract itself (see “Tip: Blank lines between items” on page 3).

Dedication

A dedication should be a very brief statement to acknowledge someone of importance to your life and/or the work at hand. Begin the dedication ⅓ of the way down the page, center the text horizontally, use regular type, and omit terminal punctuation. Do not include the word “Dedication” at the top of the page. Acceptable forms of dedication would include:

To Jane

To my wife, Jane

To my wife, Jane, for her love and support

To my wife, Jane, and children, John & Lucy

Longer, more detailed, or more numerous dedications should instead be included in the Acknowledgements section.

Epigraph

An epigraph is a quotation that has special significance to your project, such as by highlighting, summarizing, or illustrating a key theme. Begin the epigraph ⅔ of the way down the page, and do not enclose it in quotation marks. If the epigraph fits on one line, center it horizontally, otherwise format it as a block quotation. Indicate the author or source of the quote on the next line, set flush right, and beginning with an em-dash (—). Do not include the word “Epigraph” at the top of the page.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents should list all of the components of the thesis or dissertation that follow it. The components that appear prior to the Table Contents are not included.

Title this section simply “Contents” at the top of the first page, and then include two lines of blank space before beginning the table of contents itself (see “Tip: Blank lines between items” on page 3).
Remember to separate entries in the Table of Contents with a blank line. Page number references should be flush with the right margin (use a right-aligned tab stop), and it is recommended that you include a dot leader.

Tip: Automatic table of contents

If you are using heading styles (see “Tip: Styles” on page 2) then your word processor can automatically generate your table of contents. Position your cursor where you want your table of contents to appear and then look in the Insert, References, or Document Elements menu and select the Table of Contents command.

List of Figures, Tables, etc.

If you include any figures or tables in your thesis or dissertation, you may wish to list them in the front matter for ease of reference.

Title such sections simply “Figures” or “Tables”, as appropriate, at the top of the page, and then include two lines of blank space before beginning the list itself (see “Tip: Blank lines between items” on page 3).

Use Arabic numerals to number each figure or table. Include the text of each figure caption or table title in the list, and match the wording and capitalization used in the main text. Page number references should be flush with the right margin (use a right-aligned tab stop), and it is recommended that you include a dot leader.

Remember to separate entries with a blank line.

Acknowledgments

In addition to personal acknowledgments, this section should recognize any and all sources (publishers, authors, etc.) from which you had to seek permission to reproduce material. This includes permission notices for any and all modern Bible translations used in your work. Many Bibles include usage limits and guidelines on the back of the title page, and provide the necessary permission statement to include in your acknowledgments. For example:

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
If you use multiple Bible versions, you should indicate which is your primary version used by default, and then specify the abbreviations used to identify other versions. For example:

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.


Put the title “Acknowledgements” at the top of the first page, and then include two lines of blank space before beginning your acknowledgements (see “Tip: Blank lines between items” on page 3).

List of Abbreviations

List in this section any abbreviations or acronyms of published works, organization names, or other terms that you use in your thesis or dissertation, and that are not self-explanatory.

Title this section simply “Abbreviations” at the top of the page, and then include two lines of blank space before beginning the list itself (see “Tip: Blank lines between items” on page 3).

For each entry, give the abbreviation and then the spell out the full term or phrase on the same line. Align the left edges of the spelled-out explanations with one another to form a neat column of text. Organize your list alphabetically by the abbreviation, not the spelled-out explanation. Remember to separate entries with a blank line.

Chapters (Main Text)

The main text of your thesis or dissertation is divided into several numbered chapters. Your program may prescribe a certain structure of chapter divisions and titles, or you may be free to structure and title your chapters as you wish based on the scope and execution of your project. In most cases, the first chapter will serve as an introduction to the thesis or dissertation topic, although some students may opt to have a separate, unnumbered Introduction that immediately precedes Chapter 1. In that latter case, the Introduction is formatted the same as a chapter, with the exception of omitting the chapter number designation at the top of the first page.
Begin each chapter with a chapter number designation, “Chapter #”, at the top of the page, then type two line breaks (shift-return), and then give the chapter title:

Chapter 1

Introduction

Do not include a colon or other intervening punctuation between the chapter number designation and the chapter title. (See “Titles and Headings” on page 1 for specifics on font settings for chapter titles.) Finally, include two blank lines between your chapter title and the text of the chapter itself.

Number the pages of your chapters with Arabic numerals, beginning with 1. (See “Tip: Working with page numbers” on page 4 for advice on how to switch page number format and restart numbering.)

Appendices

Essential material that cannot be worked into the main text of your thesis or dissertation may be included in one or more appendices after your final chapter. Examples of such material include large images or tables, copies of survey instruments that you used, or raw survey response data. Any material in an appendix should be referred to in the main text of your thesis or dissertation at least once, or else it should be omitted.

Put the title “Appendix” at the top of the first page. If you have multiple appendices, differentiate them with sequential letters of the alphabet (Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C…), and then give a descriptive title on the next line. Include two lines of blank space between the appendix title and the content of the appendix (see “Tip: Blank lines between items” on page 3).

Page numbering for appendices continues from the main text.

Bibliography

The final element of your thesis or dissertation is your bibliography. Here you list all the books, articles, websites, and other sources of information that you have cited, and you may also include any works that you consulted and that generally informed your background knowledge.

Put the title “Bibliography” at the top of the first page, and then include two lines of blank space before your first entry (see “Tip: Blank lines between items” on page 3).
Your bibliography should be sorted alphabetically by author last name (or title, when anonymous). Do not divide your bibliography into separate lists by type of source, format, medium, or the like. If you have good reason to create different categories of entries (e.g., works by an individual under study vs. works about that person), include headings and/or descriptive text to make that organization clear.

Each entry should have a ½-inch hanging indent, that is, the first line of each entry is flush with the left margin, and any subsequent lines are indented. Entries are single-spaced, but include a line of blank space between entries.

Page numbering for the bibliography continues from the main text, or appendices, if present.