

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

# Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations

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2023-24



**GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY**  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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## Introduction

The purpose of a thesis or dissertation is for a student to demonstrate competence while producing original research, investigating a scholarly topic, or producing creative work. The completed thesis or dissertation should include full documentation, development, and execution of an approved research, scholarly, or creative topic, and complete a final document in a manner that can be understood by both an individual knowledgeable in the topic and an individual whose advanced training is in another discipline.

Selecting a topic or question worthy of investigation for a thesis or dissertation is one of the most significant aspects of graduate education. Students should choose a topic with thoughtful consideration and in consultation with a graduate advisor or graduate mentor. Even though the research, scholarly or creative development itself may be the most important aspect of the work, the clear and effective communication of the research and scholarship is also of prime importance.

This manual defines the procedures for creating and submitting a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation at Grand Valley State University. **Adhering to the guidelines for theses and dissertations will help students avoid delays in the completion and the acceptance of their final document.** The final document submitted to Grand Valley State University becomes a part of the university's permanent collection and contributes to scholarship in a given field. Consequently, it should be of professional quality and be free of spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors. Additionally, it must contain the requisite signatures and then be received and approved by The Graduate School by the deadlines detailed on the website ([gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information](http://gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information)) in order to have the student's degree conferred. Students are responsible for knowing their program or department's specific requirements regarding the thesis or dissertation. The content of the completed document is outside the province of this manual. When The Graduate School receives a thesis or dissertation, it assumes that the research, scholarship, or creative activity are completed, that all required approvals and/or permissions have been acquired, and that the final draft has been examined and approved by the supervising professor and committee.

## Section I: Process Overview for Theses and Dissertations

A thesis or dissertation represents the culmination of research, scholarship, or creative work that significantly contributes to existing knowledge within academic fields and disciplines. The completed document is considered an original contribution to the student's professional field or discipline; therefore, it should be written to present meaningful research, scholarship, and ideas to create credible conclusions. The process for completing a thesis or dissertation is detailed throughout this manual, but a general overview is included in the steps shown in the Thesis and Dissertation Process flow chart on the next page. It is important for students to maintain open communication with their committee chairperson and committee members. This will facilitate an efficient progression through the thesis and dissertation process.

Prior to beginning the process outlined in these guidelines, students must meet with an advisor or Graduate Program Director to review any department-specific guidelines and proposal information.

### Responsible Conduct of Research

All graduate students are required to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research training prior to initiating any research or scholarly activities. Students should contact their Graduate Program Director to determine which activities satisfy program-specific requirements or visit the following website: [gvsu.edu/gs/responsible-conduct-of-research-requirements](https://gvsu.edu/gs/responsible-conduct-of-research-requirements).

### Thesis and Dissertation Workshop

All students completing a thesis or dissertation will be required to attend a thesis or dissertation workshop. The first semester students enroll in 695 or 795 credits, they must attend a workshop sponsored by The Graduate School during the concurrent semester. The current schedule of workshops is available on The Graduate School's website ([gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information](https://gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information)).

### Thesis and Dissertation Credits and Workload

Students should enroll in the number of thesis or dissertation credit hours per semester that is consistent with the following workload guideline: 1 credit hour is expected to average between 3-6 clock hours per week of work, or 45 - 90 hours per semester.

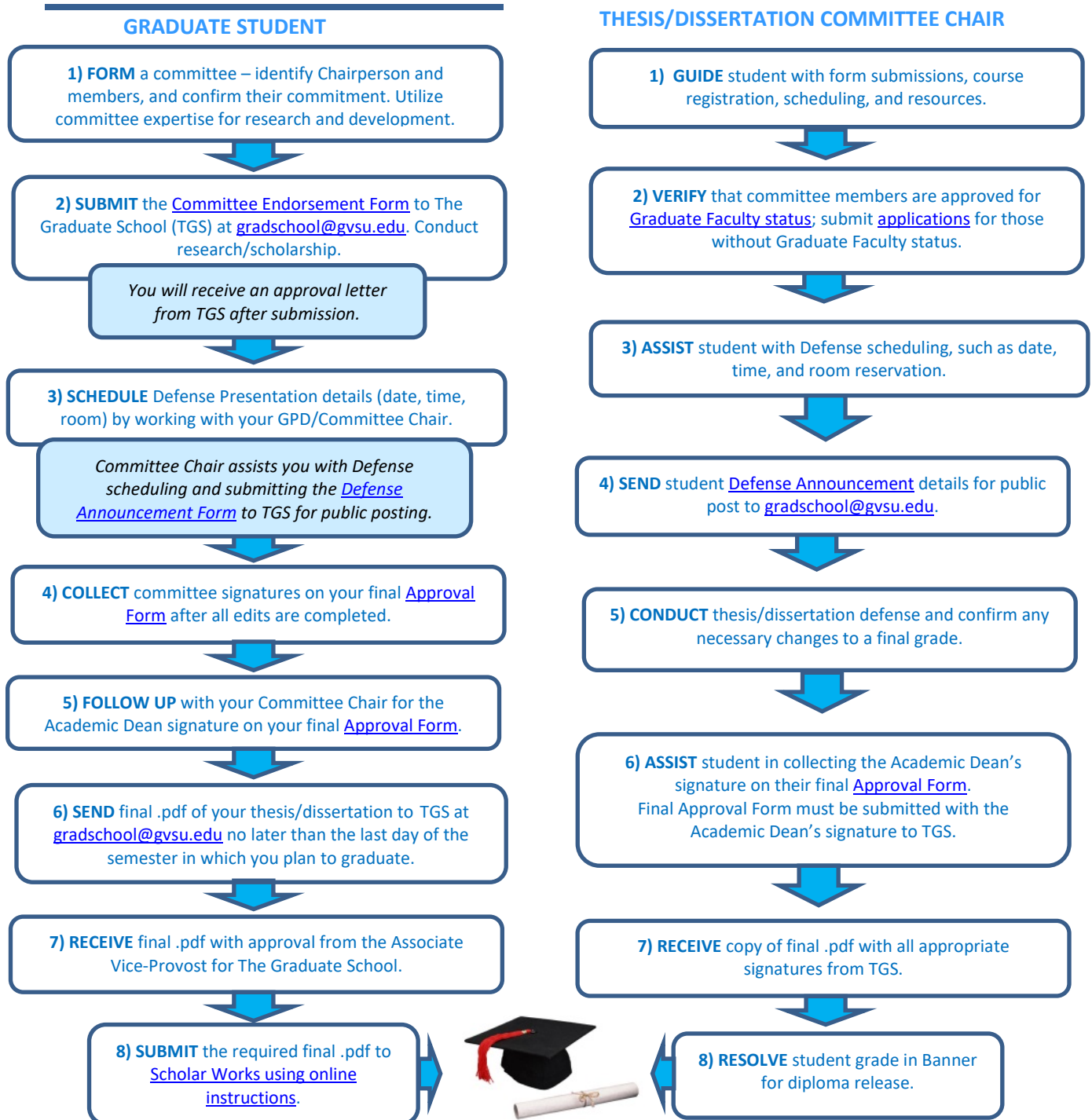
### Continuous Enrollment

Students begin the **master's thesis** phase of their program when they first enroll in the course xxx-695 (Thesis). Thereafter, they must continue to enroll in either xxx-695 or xxx-696 (Continuous Enrollment) for at least one credit hour every semester until they have completed all requirements for the thesis. Students begin the **doctoral dissertation** phase of their program when they first enroll in xxx-795 (Dissertation). Thereafter, they must continue to enroll in either xxx-795 or xxx-796 (Continuous Enrollment) for at least one credit hour every semester until they have completed all requirements for the dissertation.

*The continuous enrollment requirement also applies to Spring/Summer semesters. For all policies related to Thesis and Dissertation completion, please see the Graduate Education Policies and Procedures Manual at [gvsu.edu/gs/manual](https://gvsu.edu/gs/manual).*

## THESIS and DISSERTATION Process

- BEFORE beginning the process below, students must meet with an advisor or Graduate Program Director to review the department specific guidelines and proposal information.
- **Students are required to remain continuously enrolled** in either 695/696 or 795/796 once a thesis/dissertation is started and until the end of the semester of graduation.



For resources, such as policies, guidelines, forms, and templates, visit:

[gvsu.edu/gs/thesis](http://gvsu.edu/gs/thesis) or [gvsu.edu/gs/dissertation](http://gvsu.edu/gs/dissertation)

Email the GVSU Thesis and Dissertation Coordinator with questions: [bergerut@gvsu.edu](mailto:bergerut@gvsu.edu)

## **Section II: Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Students**

It is the student's responsibility to know the program requirements pertaining to the culminating experience expected for the degree. These requirements are usually detailed in the program materials and contained in the Student Handbook provided by each graduate degree program. Students who choose a thesis or dissertation as the culminating experience will need to identify a graduate faculty member to serve as the Committee Chairperson. The student should work with the Committee Chairperson to identify additional graduate faculty who would make meaningful contributions to the development and completion of a thesis or dissertation. Throughout the thesis or dissertation, it is the student's responsibility to fulfill the expectations of the entire Committee in regard to deadlines, completion of all necessary forms and approvals, and the responsible conduct of research, scholarly, or creative work with academic integrity. Regardless of the form of research, scholarly, or creative activity required for the degree, the student is expected to defend with credibility all decisions regarding the purpose/intent of the study or scholarly activity, methodology or approach, interpretation of results or outcomes, and conclusions in a public defense that includes the Thesis or Dissertation Committee.

### **Thesis or Dissertation Committee Chairperson**

The primary responsibility of the Chairperson of the Committee is to mentor the student with the goal of having the student complete a worthwhile research, scholarly, or creative work that has rigor and is appropriate for the student to complete within a reasonable amount of time during the academic program. The research, scholarly, or creative work should challenge the student to develop and use the skills of critical inquiry, evidence-based decision-making, reflection, presentation, and scholarly writing. The Committee Chairperson is required to hold **full graduate faculty status** and be capable of, and/or experienced in, mentoring graduate students in scholarly activities. The Committee Chairperson is responsible for calling Committee meetings, coordinating the activities of the Committee, and setting the tone for fair, honest, and equitable assessment of the student's academic work. Finally, the Committee Chairperson has the key responsibility of working to ensure a successful, satisfactory outcome for both the student and the Committee.

### **Thesis or Dissertation Committee Members**

The responsibilities of the Committee members are to work with the student and the Committee Chairperson to ensure a successful, satisfactory outcome that is assessed in a fair, honest, and equitable manner. Members shall hold graduate faculty status and make active contributions to improve the project given their expertise and knowledge. Members are expected to critically read and evaluate both the initial proposal and final documents, providing constructive feedback, editorial comment, and suggestions for improvement to the student and the Committee Chairperson in a collegial and timely manner. These responsibilities are completed when they sign the final copy submitted to The Graduate School.

## **Section III: Preparing the Thesis or Dissertation**

### **Committees**

The student and the Committee Chairperson need to identify appropriate graduate faculty willing to serve on the committee. The following aspects govern the selection of committee members:

- Master's theses must be overseen by a committee consisting of at least three (3) members.
- Doctoral dissertations must be overseen by a committee consisting of at least four (4) members.
- All committee members must hold graduate faculty status at GVSU. The chair of the committee must hold full graduate faculty status. At least one committee member must be from outside the specific research or disciplinary area of study.
- The Graduate Program Director, the appropriate Unit Head, and the Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School must review and endorse the committee membership.
- The Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School must approve non-graduate faculty as members for the thesis or dissertation committees.
- Non-graduate faculty members may include individuals external to the university that are approved for non-tenure track graduate faculty status.

Once the committee membership is determined, the student should complete the Committee Membership Endorsement for Thesis or Dissertation Form (Appendix A) and submit the signed form to The Graduate School no later than the third week prior to the start of the semester in which the student registers for a thesis or dissertation course.

\*The College of Education further requires that any student earning a Master's in Education and electing the thesis option must have a thesis committee consisting of at least two College of Education faculty members, including the Committee Chairperson. The Committee Chairperson will assist the student in coordinating an appropriate committee structure.

### **Selecting a Subject Area or Topic**

The student will collaborate with their Committee Chairperson and/or committee members when selecting a subject area or topic. The topic selected should be of interest to the student and one that can be completed with academic rigor within a reasonable period of time of the student's graduate studies.

After choosing a subject area or topic, the student will proceed with the development of a proposal that provides specific details of the research, scholarly, or creative work.

### **Thesis and Dissertation Proposal**

All thesis and dissertation proposals must be publicly presented. A thesis or dissertation announcement (Appendix B) must be posted electronically on an academic program or departmental website and the Graduate School website. Announcements to be posted on The Graduate School website should be emailed to [gradschool@gvsu.edu](mailto:gradschool@gvsu.edu).



A thesis and dissertation proposal is considered to be complete when all committee members agree that the proposal is of sufficient quality and merit to warrant conducting the research, scholarship, or creative work. Committee members will document the approval of the proposal to the student.

Committee approval of the research proposal is an important step in your degree program and should be completed as early as possible in the research process. This will allow time to obtain approval from the Human Research Institutional Review Board (IRB) ([www.gvsu.edu/irb/](http://www.gvsu.edu/irb/)) if the research involves the use of human subjects or approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) ([gvsu.edu/iacuc](http://gvsu.edu/iacuc)) if the research involves the use of animals. If the research project does use human or animal subjects, the student and Committee chairperson must submit an electronic application to these committees at [www.gvsu.edu/irb/submission-process-55.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/irb/submission-process-55.htm). No subject recruitment or data collection can begin until written approval is received from the appropriate Institutional Review committee. Depending on the nature of the topic and research, students may need additional approval from any of the following committees: Biological Safety, Laboratory Safety, and Radiation Safety. More information is available on the Research Compliance & Integrity website at <https://www.gvsu.edu/rci/> under the “Research Safety” menu.

### **Thesis and Dissertation Defense**

All theses and dissertations must be publicly defended. A thesis or dissertation defense announcement (Appendix C) must be posted electronically on an academic program or departmental website and the Graduate School website. Announcements to be posted on The Graduate School website should be emailed to [gradschool@gvsu.edu](mailto:gradschool@gvsu.edu).

A thesis or dissertation defense should consist of the following components:

1. an oral presentation by the student,
2. an open question period for members of the audience in attendance,
3. a closed question period that consists of committee members and the student, and
4. a closed session consisting of only committee members who deliberate on the performance of the student.

A thesis or dissertation has been successfully defended when a majority of the committee members approve both the public defense and the written document. Committee members will document the approval of the research, scholarly, or creative work with written signatures on the approval page of the thesis or dissertation once all necessary changes and edits to the written document have been completed. The Academic College Dean and the Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School attest to the acceptability of the document from all standpoints when they sign the approval page (Appendix D or Appendix F).

### **Thesis and Dissertation Proposal and Defense Attendance Requirements**

The student and all committee members are required to be physically present for the public proposal and defense for programs that are delivered face-to-face or in a hybrid format. Theses and dissertations completed for a program delivered entirely online are allowed to be proposed and defended remotely but must be conducted in real-time (not prerecorded).

If a committee member is unavailable, then the committee chairperson, in consultation with the student, will select one of the following options:

1. Postpone the proposal or defense until all members of the committee are available to attend the meeting,
2. Substitute an appropriate member of the graduate faculty to serve as the committee member's proxy during the public presentation and closed session, or
3. Use electronic media (audio or video conferencing) that allows for all committee members to actively participate in the proposal or defense meeting.

### **Fees**

Graduate students will be charged the applicable graduate tuition rate for work on their thesis or dissertation based on their degree program. Students who do not complete the work after registering for all required credit hours will be required to maintain continuous enrollment (XXX-696 or XXX-796) during each semester until final approval of the thesis or dissertation is granted.

### **Deadlines**

Students should work with their committee to establish a schedule for completion of the thesis or dissertation that meets the deadlines established by The Graduate School. Regardless of the established schedule, students must adhere to The Graduate School deadlines for the final submission of the thesis or dissertation documents:

- The thesis or dissertation must be successfully defended three weeks before the last day of finals week of the semester in which the student intends to graduate.
- The submission of a signed approval form and the completed document in a PDF format must occur on the last day of the semester in which the student intends to graduate.
- Failure to meet these deadlines will require enrollment in a continuation course (e.g. XXX-696 or XXX-796) in all subsequent semesters until all materials are submitted and approved.
- The final submission includes emailing a PDF of the final version of the approved thesis or dissertation to The Graduate School at [gradschool@gvsu.edu](mailto:gradschool@gvsu.edu). The Approval Page must first be sent to the Academic College Dean of the student's respective college, and then sent to The Graduate School for final review.
- Defense and submission deadlines for upcoming semesters can be found on The Graduate School webpage at <https://www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-35.htm>

## Section IV: Preparing the Manuscript, Copyrights, and Electronic Submissions

### Thesis and Dissertation Preparation

Students **must use an approved format** for the thesis and dissertation document. Examples of approved formats are found in Appendix H (Traditional Format) and Appendix I (Manuscript Format). **Failure to use an approved format may result in the thesis or dissertation being returned to the student for changes. This could result in a delay in the graduation date.** Students should consult their thesis/dissertation committee chairperson or their graduate program director to identify which format and writing style to use. In fields of study that demand a specific style guide, students should follow it consistently, except where its instructions conflict with the guidelines in this manual as this manual supersedes an academic unit's style guide. If questions arise which are not answered by departmental style guides or by this manual, consult *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2018), Kate L. Turabian.

***\*\*Do not model your thesis from those submitted in past years, as changes in university policy and style requirements may have rendered past practices obsolete.***

In many disciplines, it is common practice to follow a manuscript format (Appendix I – Manuscript Format) for theses and dissertations. If that is true for the student's area of study, please contact your thesis or dissertation advisor to determine which journal format you will use. Follow the journal's instructions for authors, or the equivalent, as well as current journal practices for all matters not explicitly explained in this manual (including guidelines for textual citations, references, tables, figures, form, and hierarchy of headings, treatment of special terms, etc.).

### Intellectual Property

Grand Valley State University seeks to promote the public good through excellence in teaching, active scholarship, and service. In the course of these activities, faculty, staff, and students create Intellectual Property that may be eligible for copyright, patent, and other forms of legal protection. In order to reinforce the fairness of mutual commitment and in the spirit of academic freedom, the University recognizes the rich and varied products of individual scholarship, in all its manifestations, are rightly the property of the Creator except as otherwise defined by this policy. The University also recognizes that Intellectual Property should remain available for the benefit of the entire University community and that the Creators shall not use Intellectual Property in conflict or competition with the University. Therefore, the Grand Valley State University community seeks to establish an environment in which the creation of Intellectual Property is suitably recognized as an academic achievement and in which the benefits of intellectual property to the creators, the university community, and the general public are optimized. For more information, please visit the University Policies webpage at [gvsu.edu/policies](https://gvsu.edu/policies) and refer to section 4.1.10.2.

### *Artificial Intelligence (AI)*

If you have used AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) in your research, it is pertinent that you include recognition of this use in your document. You will need to describe how you used the tool in

your Method section or in a comparable section of your research project, thesis or dissertation (e.g., acknowledgements portion of your document). For literature reviews, you might describe how you used the tool in your introduction. In your text, provide the prompt you used and then any portion of the relevant text that was generated in response.

You may also put the full text of long responses from an AI tool in an appendix of your paper or in online supplemental materials, so readers have access to the exact text that was generated. It is particularly important to document the exact text created because AI will generate a unique response in each chat session, even if given the same prompt. If you create appendices or supplemental materials, remember that each should be called out at least once in the body of your research project, thesis, or dissertation.

For further information and citing examples please see the appropriate manual of style for your discipline. For example, please see the APA Style article on “How to cite ChatGPT” if you use APA as your reference style.

## **Plagiarism and Copyrights**

### *Plagiarism*

Properly citing sources can help students avoid plagiarism. The style guide used by an academic unit should address plagiarism; for additional information, consult the GVSU Library’s plagiarism guide (<https://help.library.gvsu.edu/knowledgemarket/faq/272017>).

According to the GVSU Student Code (section 4.0), plagiarism is defined as:

Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches, or the writings of another individual. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment also is considered plagiarism. Any student who fails to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.

### *Copyright protection*

Copyright protection is granted automatically under current U.S. law to “original works of authorship... fixed in any tangible medium of expression.” Copyright notices (e.g. © 2011 John H. Jones) are not required to appear on copies of a work for it to be protected. While copyright does not need to be registered with the U.S. Copyright Office for the work to be protected, there are practical and legal advantages to both notice and registration (for more information, see [copyright.gov/help/faq](http://copyright.gov/help/faq)).

Students who incorporate copyrighted works of others into their thesis or dissertation are responsible for ensuring that their use of this material is lawful. Whether the material is included under a written grant of permission by the copyright owner or whether the student’s use of the work is covered by one of the statutory limitations on copyright, such as fair use.

The fair use provisions of copyright law provide the opportunity to make limited and reasonable use of copyrighted materials in a thesis or dissertation. However, being a student does not make one exempt from the limits that fair use places on the use of copyrighted materials. It is also not adequate to simply cite a work when the use of that material exceeds fair use, and the original author or copyright holder has not granted permission. University Libraries provides a Fair Use Checklist, which is available in Appendix J.

Each instance of incorporating a copyrighted item in a thesis or dissertation requires a fair use assessment that takes into account the purpose, nature, amount, and effect of that use. When a use is determined to be outside of fair use, permission from the copyright holder must be obtained to use the material and evidence of received permission should be included in the appendix of the thesis or dissertation. A sample of a Copyright Permission Letter can be found in Appendix K.

In addition to applying fair use and requesting permissions, students can also consider including content that has been licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licenses or content that is in the public domain. The University Libraries have developed resources to provide information and to assist authors in the areas of fair use, requesting permissions, and using and identifying content that is licensed for reuse or in the public domain. This and additional information on copyright can be found on the University Libraries website at [gvsu.edu/library/copyright](http://gvsu.edu/library/copyright).

### **Research Misconduct**

Research misconduct is the fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing research, in reporting research results, and/or engaging in ordering, advising, or suggesting that subordinates engage in misconduct in research, scholarship, or creative activities. Please see the following link for more information on research misconduct: [gvsu.edu/rcr/research-misconduct-21.htm](http://gvsu.edu/rcr/research-misconduct-21.htm).

### **Electronic Filing and Completed Work**

All theses and dissertations must be electronically filed in the GVSU electronic repository (ScholarWorks@GVSU). Students must submit a PDF of the entire document to The Graduate School after the committee has approved the thesis or dissertation.

Once the thesis or dissertation is approved by The Graduate School, the student must submit their work to the University Libraries for inclusion in ScholarWorks@GVSU. This will make the thesis or dissertation openly available online to a global audience of researchers, furthering scholarship in the student's field of study. In 2018-19, scholars around the world downloaded theses and dissertations from ScholarWorks@GVSU more than 242,000 times!

To submit a thesis or dissertation to ScholarWorks@GVSU, a student will [log in to ScholarWorks@GVSU](#) to digitally complete the submission agreement and upload a PDF of the final approved thesis or dissertation.

The ScholarWorks@GVSU submission agreement includes an option to embargo a thesis or dissertation for a specified period of time after it is submitted. The abstract and title of an embargoed file will be visible online, but the thesis or dissertation itself will not be available to

read or download until the embargo period ends. Contact the library's ScholarWorks@GVSU administrator for more information regarding embargoes.

Students are strongly encouraged to work with their advisor if their thesis or dissertation could lead to a patent application, includes sensitive or confidential information, or might be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. Faculty advisors can reach out to The Graduate School to request an exemption from including the student work from ScholarWorks@GVSU by completing a [Petition for Exemption](#). All exemptions require the approval of the Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School.

The current ScholarWorks@GVSU administrator can be reached at [scholarworks@gvsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@gvsu.edu).

## Section V: Formatting the Manuscript and Orders of Pages

### General Formatting

#### *Pagination*

Arabic numbers are used for thesis pagination. Page numbers do not appear on Page 1 (Title Page) and Page 2 (Approval Page). Please see Table 1 for page order and pagination information.

**Table 1:** Preliminary pages formatting.

Page Name	Required?	Print page number:	Page counts as:
Title page	Yes	No	1
Approval page	Yes	No	2
Dedication page ( <b>limited to two pages</b> )	No, optional	Yes	3
Acknowledgments ( <b>limited to two pages</b> )	No, optional	Yes	3 or 4
Preface	No, optional	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Abstract ( <b>limited to 350 words</b> )	Yes	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Table of contents	Yes	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Lists of tables, figures, key to symbols or abbreviations (each a separate section)	Yes, if applicable	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Text and supplementary pages	Yes	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Appendices	Yes, if applicable	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Bibliography/References	Yes	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Vita	No, optional	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Submission agreement for ScholarWorks@GVSU	Yes	No	Not included in page count

#### *Typeface*

Acceptable fonts for the thesis and dissertation documents are:

- Arial
- Calibri
- Courier
- Garamond
- Times New Roman

Use a single 12-point font consistently for the entire document including the body text, footnotes, and page numbers. A different font for scientific notations and tables may be used as needed. All general text is double-spaced.

*Margins*

The body of the manuscript, including appendices, must adhere to the following margins:

- Left margin: 1 inch for PDF or spiral binding; 1.5 inches for hardback binding
- Right margin: 1 inch
- Top margin: 1 inch
- Bottom margin: 1 inch

Top and bottom margins are measured to the first and last lines of type.

Center page numbers one-half (1/2) inch from the bottom of the page. The page number position should be the same on all pages where page numbers appear.

Justify the left margins but do *not* justify the right margins.

***\*\*Every major division—chapters, references, etc.—should begin on a new page.***

Students should follow their academic program’s style for the main text/body of the document pages, endnotes, reference lists, and/or bibliographies. There are specific formatting requirements for individual pages, as noted below.

**Formatting for Individual Pages**

Samples of the following pages can be found in Appendix D, E, F, and G of this handbook and are also available as MS Word documents on The Graduate School website ([www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-35.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-35.htm)).

*Title page*

The date on the title page must indicate the month and year in which the student will receive his or her degree. The title page must conform to the formatting provided in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Title page formatting.

Page element	Margins & placement
Left margin	1” or 1.5” (must be consistent throughout document)
Right margin	1”
Top margin	1”
Bottom margin	1”
<Title of Thesis>	At the top margin, centered; the title must be less than 200 characters total
<Student’s name>	Two lines below the last line of the title, centered
<A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of>	Nine lines below student’s name, centered



<b>Page element</b>	<b>Margins &amp; placement</b>
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY	Two lines below previous line, centered
In	Two lines below previous line, centered
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements	Two lines below previous line, centered
For the Degree of	Two lines below previous line, centered
<title of degree>	Two lines below previous line, centered
<name of academic unit>	Four lines below previous line, centered
<month of graduation> <year of graduation>	Eight lines below previous line, centered
Pagination	Page 1 (page number does not appear)

### *Approval page*

The approval page certifies that the committee chairperson, committee members, academic dean, and the Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School all agree that the student's completed work satisfies the requirements for the thesis or dissertation. The student must use the sample approval page (Appendix D or F) contained in this Manual (download in MS Word available on The Graduate School website at [www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-35.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-35.htm)) as a template for the title page, replacing the text in <brackets> with the student's thesis title. The sample has signature lines for committee members in addition to the committee chairperson; if the committee has additional members, contact The Graduate School for a revised template.

### *Dedication page (optional)*

The dedication page, which is optional, follows the title page, is limited to one page, and is numbered (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Dedication page(s) formatting

<b>Page element</b>	<b>Margins &amp; placement</b>
Left margin	1" or 1.5" (must be consistent throughout document)
Right margin	1"
Top margin	1"
Bottom margin	1"
Dedication	centered, boldface type
<dedication text>	Two lines below the last line of the title, flush left, double-spaced
Pagination	3, centered, .5" from bottom of page

### *Acknowledgment (optional)*

The acknowledgment page provides the student a venue to recognize individuals who helped with the thesis. Acknowledgments should not exceed one page (Table 4).

**Table 4: Acknowledgement page(s) formatting**

Page element	Margins & placement
Left margin	1" or 1.5" (must be consistent throughout document)
Right margin	1"
Top margin	1"
Bottom margin	1"
Acknowledgment (use Acknowledgments if there are more than one)	Centered, boldface type
<acknowledgment text>	Two lines below the last line of the title, flush left, double-spaced
Pagination	3 or 4 (depending on if there was a dedication page); centered, .5" from bottom of page

*Preface (optional)*

A preface, which is optional, contains brief remarks describing what preceded the undertaking of the work and may be written in the first person. It is not to be used in lieu of the introduction and should not exceed three pages (Table 5).

**Table 5: Preface page formatting**

Page element	Margins & placement
Left margin	1" or 1.5" (must be consistent throughout document)
Right margin	1"
Top margin	1"
Bottom margin	1"
Preface	Centered, boldface type
<preface text>	Two lines below the last line of the title, flush left, double-spaced
Pagination	Next in sequence, centered, .5" from bottom of page

*Abstracts*

The abstract presents a summary of the thesis or dissertation (Table 6). It should contain:

- A short statement of the problem or area(s) of investigation
- A brief discussion of the methods and procedures used in gathering data or information
- A summary of findings
- Recommendations or conclusions

Abstracts may not exceed 350 words.

**Table 6:** Abstract page formatting

Page element	Margins & placement
Left margin	1" or 1.5" (must be consistent throughout document)
Right margin	1"
Top margin	1"
Bottom margin	1"
Abstract	Centered, boldface type
<abstract text>	Two lines below the last line of the title, flush left, double-spaced
Pagination	Next in sequence, centered, .5" from bottom of page

*Table of contents*

The titles of chapters or sections, and at least the primary and secondary subdivisions, should be listed. They must be worded exactly as they appear in the body of the thesis or dissertation (Table 7). Approved outlines for Table of Contents organization in the traditional format (Appendix H) and the manuscript format (Appendix I) can be found in the Appendices.

**Table 7:** Table of contents formatting

Page element	Margins & placement
Left margin	1" or 1.5" (must be consistent throughout document)
Right margin	1"
Top margin	1"
Bottom margin	1"
Table of Contents	Centered, boldface type
<text>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two lines below Table of Contents, flush left</li> <li>▪ Single-spaced within each entry and double-spaced between</li> <li>▪ Page number should correspond with text</li> <li>▪ Use leader dots before the page number</li> </ul>
Pagination	Next in sequence, centered, .5" from bottom of page.

*General text*

The general text should be double-spaced throughout the document (Table 8). The general text contains all of the information for the thesis or dissertation excluding any material that would be contained in the appendices.

**Table 8:** General text formatting

<b>Page element</b>	<b>Margins &amp; placement</b>
Left margin	1" or 1.5" (must be consistent throughout document)
Right margin	1"
Top margin	1"
Bottom margin	1"
<text>	Double-spaced throughout the entire document
Pagination	Next in sequence, centered, .5" from bottom of page.

*Additional information*

Additional information such as appendices and data tables may be included in the thesis or dissertation. Please be sure to adhere to the appendices formatting guidelines shown in Table 9.

**Table 9:** Appendices or data table formatting

<b>Page element</b>	<b>Margins &amp; placement</b>
Left margin	1" or 1.5" (must be consistent throughout document)
Right margin	1"
Top margin	1"
Bottom margin	1"
<text>	Title of appendix should appear centered at the top of the page
Pagination	Next in sequence, centered, .5" from bottom of page.

## **Original Sources Consulted for these Guidelines**

- College of Graduate Studies and Research. (2009). *Guidelines for preparing theses and dissertations*. Towson MD: Towson University.
- Cratis D. Williams Graduate School. (2008). *Student handbook for dissertation & thesis preparation*. Boone, NC: Appalachian State University.
- Graduate School. (2010). *Thesis guidelines*. Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University.
- Montclair State University. (2009). *Procedures and guidelines for the preparation of master's theses at Montclair State University*. Montclair, NJ: Montclair State University.
- The Graduate School. (2010). *Thesis and dissertation manual*. Harrisonburg, Virginia: James Madison University.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Committee Membership Endorsement Form for Thesis or Dissertation

Select one:     Thesis     Dissertation

Student Name:	Date:
Email:	G Number:

Graduate Degree Program:
Thesis Title:

	Committee Members:	Graduate Faculty Status:	Department/Program:
Chairperson:			
Member:			
Member:			
Member:			

**Graduate Program Director (Please Print Name):** \_\_\_\_\_

I approve this committee.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit Head (Please Print Name):** \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chairperson has:

- Appropriate disciplinary expertise to chair this committee.
- Sufficient workload availability to work with this student.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Associate Vice-Provost for The Graduate School:**

- This committee meets the requirements of the current Thesis and Dissertation Policy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B: Thesis or Dissertation Proposal Announcement Form**

Thesis or Dissertation Proposal Announcement Form

(posted electronically on Academic program or Departmental website, Graduate School website, and distributed electronically to appropriate list-serves at least 7 days prior to scheduled date)

---

Student's Name

---

Date and Time

---

Location

---

Graduate Program

**<TITLE OF THESIS/DISSERTATION>**

**Committee:**

**<Chair>**

**<Member 1>**

**<Member 2>**

**<Member 3> (or more, if applicable)**

To post on The Graduate School's website, email this form to [gradschool@gvsu.edu](mailto:gradschool@gvsu.edu).

## **Appendix C: Thesis or Dissertation Defense Announcement Form**

Thesis or Dissertation Defense Announcement Form  
(posted electronically on Academic program or Departmental website, the Graduate School website, and distributed electronically to appropriate list-serves at least 7 days prior to scheduled date)

---

Student's Name

---

Date and Time

---

Location

---

Graduate Program

**<TITLE OF THESIS/DISSERTATION>**

**Committee:**

**<Chair>**

**<Member 1>**

**<Member 2>**

**<Member 3> (or more, if applicable)**





**Appendix E: Thesis Title Page**

<Title of thesis>

(title can be no more than 200 characters in length double spaced)

<Student's full legal name here, double-spaced after title>

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

<name of the degree here>

<the academic unit>

<Month of graduation> <Year of graduation>

**Appendix F: Dissertation Final Approval Form**



The signatures of the committee members below indicate that they have read and approved the dissertation of <your full legal name> in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of <Doctor of XXXX>.

\_\_\_\_\_  
<name of dissertation chair>, Dissertation committee chair      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
<name of member>, Committee member      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
<name of member>, Committee member      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
<name of member>, Committee member      Date

Accepted and approved on behalf of the  
<Name of Academic College>

Accepted and approved on behalf of the  
Graduate Faculty

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the College

\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix G: Dissertation Title Page**

<Title of dissertation>

(title can be no more than 200 characters in length, double-spaced)

<Student's full legal name here, double-spaced after title>

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

<name of degree here>

<the academic unit>

<Month of graduation> <Year of graduation>

## Appendix H: Table of Contents – Traditional Format

Title Page
Approval Page
Dedication (Optional)
Acknowledgments (Optional)
Preface (Optional)
Abstract
Table of Contents
List of Tables (required if tables are used)
List of Figures (required if figures are used)
Key to Symbols (required if symbols are used)
Abbreviations (required if abbreviations are used)
Chapter 1 Introduction
Introduction
Purpose
Scope
Assumptions
Hypothesis or Research Question
Significance
Definitions (required if applicable)
Chapter 2 Review of Literature
Chapter 3 Methodology
Chapter 4 Results
Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusions
Appendices
Bibliography/References
Vita/biosketch (Optional)

## Appendix I: Table of Contents – Journal Format

Title Page
Approval Page
Dedication (Optional)
Acknowledgments (Optional)
Preface (Optional)
Abstract
Table of Contents
List of Tables (required if tables are used)
List of Figures (required if figures are used)
Key to Symbols (required if symbols are used)
Abbreviations (required if abbreviations are used)
Chapter 1 Introduction
Introduction
Purpose
Scope
Assumptions
Hypothesis
Significance
Definitions
Chapter 2 Manuscript (in specific journal style approved by the Committee Chairperson)
Title Page
Abstract
Introduction
Methodology
Results
Discussion
Acknowledgements
References
Figure Captions
Tables
Figures
Chapter 3 Extended Review of Literature and Extended Methodology
Extended Review of Literature
Extended Methodology
Appendices
Bibliography
Vita/biosketch (Optional)

# Fair Use Checklist

Name:  
Project:  
Item Description:  
Prepared by:

Date:

PURPOSE	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FAVORING FAIR USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit educational institution</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Criticism</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> News reporting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Transformative or productive use (changes the work for new utility)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restricted access (to students or other appropriate group)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parody</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPOSING FAIR USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial activity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Profiting from the use</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bad-faith behavior</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Denying credit to original author</li> </ul>
NATURE	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FAVORING FAIR USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Published work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Factual/informational and educational in nature or nonfiction work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Important to educational objectives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Non-consumable</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPOSING FAIR USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unpublished work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Highly creative work (i.e., art, music, novels, films, plays, poetry)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fiction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consumable work (i.e., workbook, test)</li> </ul>
AMOUNT	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FAVORING FAIR USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small portion of work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Portion used is not central or significant to the entire work as a whole</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Amount taken is narrowly tailored to accomplish a demonstrated, legitimate purpose in the course curriculum</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPOSING FAIR USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large portion or whole work used</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Portion used is central to or heart of the entire work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Amount taken is more than necessary to accomplish a demonstrated, legitimate purpose in the course curriculum</li> </ul>
EFFECT	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FAVORING FAIR USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> User owns lawfully purchased or acquired copy of original work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One or few copies made</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No significant effect on the market or potential market for copyrighted work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No similar product marketed by the copyright holder</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of licensing mechanism</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPOSING FAIR USE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Could replace sale of copyrighted work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Significantly impairs market or potential market for copyrighted work or derivative</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reasonably available licensing mechanism for use of copyrighted work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Affordable permission available for using work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Numerous copies made</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You made it accessible on the web or in another public forum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repeated or long-term use</li> </ul>

# Fair Use Checklist

## Introduction to the Checklist

The Fair Use Checklist and variations on it have been widely used for many years to help educators, librarians, lawyers, and many other users of copyrighted works determine whether their activities are within the limits of fair use under U.S. copyright law (Section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Act). Fair use is determined by a balanced application of four factors set forth in the statute: (1) the purpose of the use; (2) the nature of the work used; (3) the amount and substantiality of the work used ; and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the work used. Those factors form the structure of this checklist. Congress and courts have offered some insights into the specific meaning of the factors, and those interpretations are reflected in the details of this form.

This checklist is offered as a guide, not as an absolute protection against a charge of infringement.

## Benefits of the Checklist

A proper use of this checklist should serve two purposes. First, it should help you focus on factual circumstances that are important in your evaluation of fair use. The meaning and scope of fair use depends on the particular facts of a given situation, and changing one or more facts may alter the analysis. Second, the checklist can provide an important mechanism to document your decision-making process. Maintaining a record of your fair use analysis can be critical for establishing good faith; consider adding to the checklist the current date and notes about your project. Keep completed checklists on file for future reference.

## The Checklist as Roadmap

As you use the checklist and apply it to your situations, you are likely to check more than one box in each column and even check boxes across columns. Some checked boxes will favor fair use and others may oppose fair use. A key issue is whether you are acting reasonably in checking any given box, with the ultimate question being whether the cumulative weight of the factors favors or turns you away from fair use. This is not an exercise in simply checking and counting boxes. The more boxes checked on the left side of the list the stronger the argument for fair use, but it is not an absolute. Instead, you need to consider the relative persuasive strength of the circumstances and if the overall conditions lean most convincingly for or against fair use. Because you are most familiar with your project, you are probably best positioned to evaluate the facts and make the decision.

## Further Information

You can learn more about copyright and fair use from the University Libraries' copyright website: [www.gvsu.edu/library/copyright](http://www.gvsu.edu/library/copyright).



## **Appendix K: Sample Copyright Permission Letter**

On the following page is a sample letter for seeking permission to use copyrighted material in a thesis or dissertation. This letter is offered as a starting place for drafting a letter suitable to the student's needs. The University Libraries offers this material as a service and makes no representation or warranty about the suitability of this draft for individual purposes. Users should consult an attorney for advice concerning their specific situation.

Adapted under a Creative Commons BY-NC license from the Copyright Advisory Office of Columbia University, Kenneth D. Crews, director.

*[Insert: Today's Date and Your Address and Contact Information]*

*Name and Address of Addressee*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am requesting permission to reprint [a portion of] the following work:

*[Add here full citation information about the work, including author, title, publisher, date of publication, exact pages you are requesting, and any other identifying information.]*

This request is for permission to include the above content as part of the following project that I am preparing:

*[Add here full citation information about the project that you are preparing, including the name of the publisher and likely date of publication; also add a brief description of the subject or nature of the work.]*

I believe that you/your company, \_\_\_\_\_, are/is currently the holder of the copyright, because the original work states that copyright is held in your name/the name of the publisher, and my research indicates that \_\_\_\_\_ *[additional reason you think this person/company owns the copyright]*. If you do not currently hold the rights, please provide me with any information that can help me contact the proper rights holder. Otherwise, your permission confirms that you hold the right to grant this permission.

This request is for a non-exclusive, irrevocable, and royalty-free permission, and it is not intended to interfere with other uses of the same work by you. The permission requested extends to the prospective publication of this thesis/dissertation by the Grand Valley State University Libraries, which will make this work available to the public through its online institutional repository, ScholarWorks@GVSU. I would be pleased to include a full citation to your work and other acknowledgement as you might request.

I would greatly appreciate your permission. If you require any additional information, do not hesitate to contact me at the address and number above.

A duplicate copy of this request has been provided for your records. If you agree with the terms as described above, please sign the letter where indicated below and return one copy in the enclosed return envelope.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

Permission is hereby granted:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_