

Manual for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations

2025-2026



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Introduction

A thesis or dissertation demonstrates a student's competence through original research, scholarly inquiry, or creative work and represents the culmination of work that significantly contributes to existing knowledge within academic fields and disciplines. The thesis or dissertation must fully document, develop, and execute an approved topic, resulting in a final document that is understandable to both specialists and non-specialists. 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.

Selecting a topic is a key step in graduate education and should be done thoughtfully with a graduate advisor. While the work itself is central, clear and effective communication is equally important.

This manual outlines the procedures for creating and submitting a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation at Grand Valley State University. **Following these requirements helps prevent delays in acceptance and degree conferral.** The final document becomes part of the university's permanent collection and must meet professional standards—free of spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors—and include all required approvals and signatures. It must be submitted to and approved by The Graduate School by the posted deadlines (gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information). Students are also responsible for knowing any of their program's specific requirements.

Upon submission, The Graduate School assumes the research, scholarship, or creative work is complete; all permissions and approvals are secured; and the final draft has been reviewed and approved by the committee chair and all members.

Section 1: Process Overview and Requirements

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. Students should maintain open communication with their committee chair and members to ensure steady progress. Before starting the process, they must meet with an advisor or Graduate Program Director to review department-specific requirements and proposal details.

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.

Research Compliance

Research involving vertebrate animals or human subjects must be approved by the appropriate review board or committee: the Human Research Institutional Review Board (IRB) (www.gvsu.edu/irb/) for human subjects or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) (www.gvsu.edu/iacuc) for vertebrate animals. No recruitment or data collection may begin until written approval is received.

Depending on the research topic, additional approval may be required from the Biological Safety, Laboratory Safety, or Radiation Safety committees. More information is available on the Research Compliance & Integrity website (www.gvsu.edu/rci/) under “Research Safety.”

Thesis and Dissertation Workshop

All students completing a thesis or dissertation are **required to attend a thesis or dissertation workshop** prior to or during the first semester students enroll in 695 or 795 credits. The schedule of workshops is available on The Graduate School’s website (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 of work per week, or 45 - 90 clock hours of work per semester.

Continuous Enrollment

Students begin the **master’s thesis** phase of their program when they first enroll in the course xxx¹-695 (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.

¹xxx refers to the discipline-based course prefix (e.g., CMB for Cell and Molecular Biology)

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.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- Know the program requirements for the culminating experience, as detailed in program materials and the Student Handbook provided by each graduate degree program.
- Students choosing a thesis or dissertation will need to select a graduate faculty member as Committee Chair.
- Work with the Chair to identify additional graduate faculty to serve on the committee who would make meaningful contributions.
- Meet all Committee expectations for deadlines, forms, approvals, and responsible conduct of research, scholarship, or creative work.
- Be prepared to credibly defend the study's purpose, methodology, results, and conclusions in a public defense.

Thesis or Dissertation Committee Chairperson

- Must hold full graduate faculty status and be capable of mentoring graduate students in scholarly activities.
- Mentor the student to complete rigorous, ethical, worthwhile work within a timeframe that is reasonable for the program.
- Ensure the project fosters critical inquiry, evidence-based decision-making, reflection, presentation, and scholarly writing skills.
- Call and lead Committee meetings, coordinate activities, and promote fair, honest, and equitable assessment.
- Work toward a successful, satisfactory outcome for the student and Committee.

Thesis or Dissertation Committee Members

- Hold graduate faculty status at GVSU and contribute expertise to improve the project.
- Collaborate with the student and Chair to ensure a fair, honest, and equitable assessment.
- Critically review and evaluate the proposal and final thesis or dissertation, offering constructive, timely feedback.
- Responsibilities conclude upon signing the final thesis or dissertation copy submitted to The Graduate School.

Section 3: Preparing the Thesis or Dissertation

Committees

The student and the Committee Chairperson need to identify appropriate graduate faculty to serve on the committee. The following 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 (including any members external to GVSU) must hold graduate faculty status (full, associate, or non-tenure track) 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.
- Graduate faculty status must be approved by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. This may include individuals external to GVSU who can be approved as non-tenure track graduate faculty.
- The Graduate Program Director, the appropriate Unit Head, and the Dean of the Graduate School must review and endorse the committee membership.

Once the committee membership is determined, the student should complete the Committee Membership Endorsement Form and submit the form after being signed by the Unit Head to The Graduate School no later than the third week prior to the start of the semester in which the student registers for thesis or dissertation credits.

*Some programs may have specific requirements about committee membership.

Selecting a Subject Area or Topic

The student will collaborate with their Committee Chairperson and 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

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 students. 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 to enable application of any necessary permitting or approvals (e.g., IRB).

Thesis and Dissertation Defense

All theses and dissertations must be publicly defended. A thesis or dissertation defense announcement 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 shumwayt@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 audience members 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 to 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 Graduate Program Director, Academic College Dean, and the Dean of the Graduate School attest to the acceptability of the document from all standpoints when they sign the approval page.

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. Conduct the defense via Zoom that allows all committee members to actively participate in the proposal or defense meeting with approval from the Graduate School.

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 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 shumwayt@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 4: Preparing the Manuscript, Copyrights, and Electronic Submissions

Thesis and Dissertation Preparation

Students **must use an approved format** for the thesis and dissertation document. Approved formats include the Traditional Format ([Appendix A](#)) and the Manuscript/Journal Format ([Appendix B](#)). **Failure to follow correct formatting will result in the thesis or dissertation being returned to the student for changes, which could result in a delay in the graduation date.**

Students should consult their committee chairperson or 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 requirements 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* (9th ed., 2018), Kate L. Turabian.

*****Theses and dissertations should not be modeled from those submitted in past years, as changes in university policy and style requirements may have rendered past practices obsolete.***

Students who are following the manuscript format should consult with their committee chairperson to determine which journal format to 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. During 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 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 required that you include recognition of this use in your document. You will need to describe how you used the tool in your Methods section or in a comparable section of your research project, thesis, or dissertation and tools should be appropriately referenced in the reference section. 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 (<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>).

Plagiarism and Copyright

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., © 2021 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).

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.

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 C](#).

In addition to applying for 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.

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.

Electronic Filing and Completed Work

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. 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 (scholarworks@gvsu.edu) 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 Dean of the Graduate School.

Section 5: Formatting the Thesis or Dissertation

General Formatting

Templates for both thesis and dissertation formats can be found on The Graduate School webpage at <https://www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-35.htm>.

Pagination and Spacing

- Arabic numbers are used for thesis pagination.
- Page numbers do not appear on Page 1 (Title Page) and Page 2 (Approval Page).
- All general text is double-spaced.
- Every major section—chapters, references, etc.—should begin on a new page.

Table 1: Page order and pagination information.

Page Name	Required?	Print page number:	Page counts as:
Title page	Yes	No	1
Approval page	Yes	No	2
Dedication page (limited to one page)	No, optional	Yes	3
Acknowledgments (limited to one page)	No, optional	Yes	3 or 4
Preface	No, optional	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Abstract (limited to 350 words)	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)
Bibliography/References	Yes	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Appendices	Yes, if applicable	Yes	(next number in sequence)
Vita	No, optional	Yes	(next number in sequence)

Typeface

- Use a consistent 12-point font for the entire document including the headings, body text, footnotes, and page numbers.
- A different font for scientific notations and tables may be used as needed.

- Acceptable fonts for theses and dissertations are Arial, Calibri, Courier, Garamond or Times New Roman.

Margins

- The body of the manuscript, including appendices, must adhere to the following margins:
 - All margins: 1 inch
- Top and bottom margins are measured to the first and last lines of type.
- Justify the left margins but do *not* justify the right margins.
- 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.

References, Bibliographies, Endnotes

Follow formatting requirements that are specific to the academic program. Formatting must be consistent throughout the document.

Formatting for Individual Pages

Templates of the following pages are available as MS Word documents on The Graduate School website (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 their degree. The title page must conform to the formatting provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Title page formatting.

Page element	Margins & placement
All margins	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
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 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 approval page available in MS Word on The Graduate School website at www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-35.htm) as a template for the approval 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

Page element	Margins & placement
All margins	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 with 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
All margins	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
All margins	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. 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
All margins	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 A) and the manuscript format (Appendix B) can be found in the Appendices.

Table 7: Table of contents formatting

Page element	Margins & placement
All margins	1"
Table of Contents	Centered, boldface type

Page element	Margins & placement
<text>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two lines below Table of Contents, flush left ▪ Single-spaced within each entry and double-spaced between ▪ Page number should correspond with text ▪ Use leader dots before the page number
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

Page element	Margins & placement
All margins	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 requirements shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Appendices or data table formatting

Page element	Margins & placement
All margins	1"
<text>	Title of appendix should appear centered at the top of the page
Pagination	Next in sequence, centered, .5" from bottom of page.

Appendices

Appendix A: 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
Bibliography/References
Appendices
Vita/biosketch (Optional)

Appendix B: 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
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 (Optional)
Bibliography
Appendices
Vita/biosketch (Optional)

Appendix C: 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 students' 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 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 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: _____

References: Original Sources Consulted for this Manual

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