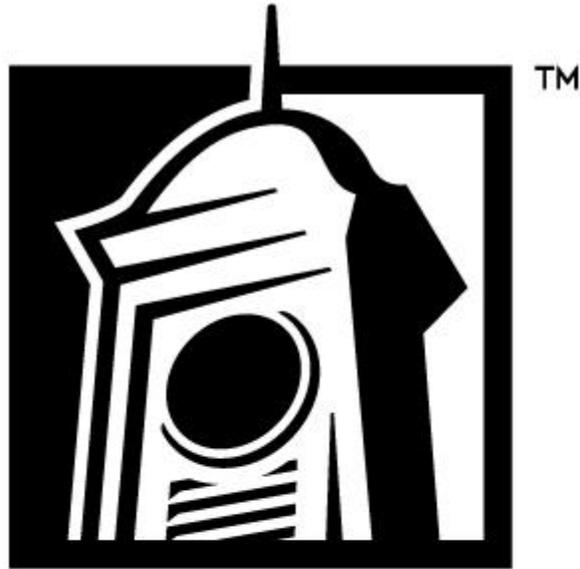


# Dissertation Preparation Guide



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ARKANSAS  
TECH  
UNIVERSITY

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*Graduate College*

Advanced Leadership Studies  
Arkansas Tech University  
Center for Leadership and Learning  
Russellville, AR 72801

*Updated  
January 13, 2022*

© Year Student Name

Abstract

DISSERTATION TITLE

Student name

The *Abstract* heading should be in upper and lowercase, centered, one inch from the top of the page. Text for the abstract should be double-spaced, in a single paragraph form without paragraph indentation. The word count should be a minimum of 200 and not exceed 350. Keywords are permitted and should be found at the end of the Abstract; these are not taken into the total word count.

Keywords: dissertation; formatting

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## I. Introduction

As a formal research paper, the dissertation should reveal the candidate is able to produce original research that meets the professional standards of the discipline. Preparation for writing a dissertation should include careful and wide reading of professional journals and texts of involved disciplines, including the most recent scholarly work in the academic field. Students must exhibit capabilities of gathering, organizing, evaluating, and reporting data which are pertinent to the topic of investigation, as well as exhibiting their ability to use technology appropriate to the discipline.

The following guide includes information applicable to all dissertations produced at Arkansas Tech University. Students must also follow procedures and guidelines set forth by their individual departments.

**Graduate College Dissertation Preparation Process Timeline** (See Table 1 for Breakdown with Dates)

### *Dissertation Committee Composition*

The graduate student who plans to write a dissertation is responsible for determining the content area of the projected study in consultation with the dissertation chair. The dissertation chair must have doctoral faculty status and expertise in the selected topic area. Together they will decide upon the other members of the dissertation committee, which will include one other qualified member of the doctoral faculty and one non-affiliated Arkansas Tech member with expertise in the selected topic area. If more than three members are appointed to the dissertation committee, a majority of the members must hold doctoral faculty status. The program director will have final approval of the dissertation chair and committee.

In addition to the regular doctoral faculty members, a person having no official relationship with Arkansas Tech University may be appointed to serve with prior approval of the Graduate College dean. When nominating a non-affiliated person, the program director must submit a Graduate Faculty Nomination form, describing the qualifications of the non-affiliated person, along with their current résumé.

A Graduate Faculty member holding non-regular graduate faculty status may serve on a dissertation committee, with prior approval of the program director and written approval by the Graduate College dean.

If a dissertation committee makes a change in its membership, a “**Dissertation Committee Member Change**” form must be submitted to the Graduate College dean for approval.

### *Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee*

The committee will approve the dissertation proposal, and ensure particulars of the proposal are carried out. Other responsibilities include: reading the dissertation for

content, style, and standard English usage; ensuring mechanics are followed according to departmental and university guidelines; affirming proper research techniques are followed, an in-depth review of the literature is completed, and the conclusions reached are both legitimate and supported by data; and ensuring plagiarism does not occur. The committee should make certain the dissertation is of quality and reflects high standards of scholarly writing. The dissertation committee chair is responsible for the initial reading and initial corrections of the student's paper. The chair is then responsible for submitting the dissertation to the committee members for their review. Please use the **"Graduate College Dissertation Timeline"** that governs this process. The committee and chair will meet with the student as needed during the time the student is engaged in the Dissertation process.

### ***Dissertation Committee Appointment Form***

Students must submit a **"Dissertation Committee Appointment Form"** with all Committee Members signatures to the Graduate College dean for final approval of the dissertation committee. The form is available on the Graduate College website.

### ***Dissertation Proposal Defense Form***

A dissertation proposal must be prepared and defended by the student and approved by the dissertation committee before work on the dissertation continues. A **"Dissertation Proposal Defense Form"** is available on the Graduate College website. After the dissertation proposal has been defended successfully and signed by the dissertation committee and the program director, it is then submitted to the Graduate College dean for final approval. After the oral defense, the student may make no change to the dissertation, unless authorized by the dissertation committee.

### ***Request to Schedule Dissertation Defense Form***

The dissertation student and their committee chair must work together to determine a date and time to schedule the dissertation defense. A **"Request to Schedule Dissertation Defense Form"** is available on the Graduate College website. The form must be signed by the dissertation committee and the program director, it is then submitted to the Graduate College dean for final approval.

### ***Dissertation Defense Final Report***

An oral defense of the dissertation is required. It will be conducted by the dissertation committee, which will then notify the Graduate College dean, in writing, the student has passed the final oral defense. The **"Dissertation Defense Final Report"** form is available on the Graduate College webpage. The oral defense of the dissertation be successfully completed at least six (6) weeks before the degree is conferred for fall or spring graduates. After the oral defense, the student may make no changes to the dissertation, unless authorized by the Dissertation Committee.

### *Dissertation Approval*

The dissertation committee, program director, Graduate College reader, and Graduate College dean must approve the dissertation before it is reproduced in its final form prior to graduation.

### *Credits and Grades*

A grade of **R** is given on all dissertation enrollments until the dissertation is accepted, and then appropriate credit is granted. The mark **R** gives neither credit nor grade points toward a graduate degree. The mark **CR** gives credit for hours only. Departments may choose to assign a letter grade or only give credit for hours.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Steps and Required Forms*

<b>What?</b>	<b>When?</b>	<b>Where?</b>
1. Submit “ <b>Dissertation Committee Appointment Form</b> ”	Prior to beginning dissertation research	Graduate College
2. Complete “ <b>Application to Graduation</b> ”	The semester prior to graduation	Degree Works
3. Complete “ <b>Dissertation Proposal Defense Form</b> ”	Review Cohort Timeline	Graduate College
4. Complete “ <b>Request to Schedule Dissertation Defense Form</b> ”	Review Cohort Timeline	Graduate College
5. Complete “ <b>Dissertation Defense Final Report</b> ”	No later than the close of the work day which precedes the date of graduation by six (6) weeks	Graduate College
6. Submit committee approved draft electronically via the ORC	At least seven weeks before the degree is to be conferred	Graduate College
7. Last day to submit final version of dissertation.	At least two (2) weeks before the degree is to be conferred	Graduate College
8. Approved dissertations must be submitted to ORC	The first Friday after the end of the graduating semester	Graduate College

## **II. Policy Matters**

### **Protocols for Research Involving Human Subjects or Animals**

All dissertation students will be required to submit an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Once a student's research project has been approved by the IRB, an official Protocol Approval Statement must be included in the dissertation included in the Appendices section of the dissertation.

### **Plagiarism**

Claiming the exact words, paraphrases, ideas, arguments, or thoughts of another as your own is plagiarism, and Arkansas Tech University requires disciplinary action (possibly including dismissal) and/or grade adjustments for this offense.

### **III. Dissertation Elements and Style**

#### **Style Guides**

Each department will determine and specify the required style guide for dissertations within its own discipline. Students should avoid referring to previous dissertations as guides since newer editions of style manuals frequently include substantive changes. Regardless of the style used by the student's departments, the requirements described below apply to all dissertations at Arkansas Tech University.

#### **Typeface**

The typeface must be clear, non-distracting, and consistent throughout. Style manuals may specify the use of italics and allow exemptions for graphs, illustrations, and appendices. Use an ADA friendly font style (Tahoma, Calibri, Helvetica, Arial, Verdana, or Times New Roman), 12-point font size, and black font.

#### **Line Spacing**

The entire text must be double-spaced, unless exceptions are specified in the specific style manual.

#### **Margins and Justification**

All left margins must be 1.5 inches to provide space for binding. All other margins (top, bottom, and right) should be one inch. Do not hyphenate words between lines.

#### **Illustrations**

Formatting and positioning of tables, graphs, drawings, figures, and photographs should follow the requisite style guidelines. Usually they are placed as near as possible to the first textual reference. Computer-generated tables and graphs must be clear, distinct, and must fit within the required margins. Photographs may be reprinted or photocopied only if the quality of the photograph does not diminish in shading, color, or clarity.

#### **Pagination**

- Every page of the dissertation is numbered except for the title page.
- Preliminary pages are numbered with lower-case Roman numerals centered at the bottom of the page, starting with "i" on the Dissertation Approval page (see current *Dissertation Template*).
- Pages in the body of the text are numbered with Arabic numerals, beginning with the first page of the text, which will be page 1.
- All page numbers of chapters, appendices, tables, and addenda are centered of the bottom of the page.

## Footers

- To Change the Footer in Microsoft Word:
  - Click at the bottom of the preceding page (not in the Footer)
  - Then go to the Page Layout tab in the toolbar.
  - Click on the arrow beside Breaks, in the Page Setup box; double-click on Continuous.
  - Put your cursor in the Footer of the page needing a different style.
  - Deselect Link to Previous in the Navigation box, located in the Design tab.
  - A new Footer may now be placed on this page.

## **IV. Preliminary Pages Formatting**

### **Title Page**

The title should indicate the contents of the dissertation. On the title page, be sure your formal degree is listed correctly. It should be in all capital letters and centered two inches below the top of the page. The rest of the page is centered as shown in the sample page and is spaced to maintain optical balance. The date of the dissertation on the title page must be that of the month and year in which the degree is awarded. On the title page, be sure your formal degree is listed correctly. The format of the title page shall follow the model in Appendix A.

### **Abstract**

The dissertation abstract should not be more than 350 words, double-spaced. Individual programs will specify the content of the abstract.

### **Table of Contents**

All components of the dissertation must be listed in the Table of Contents, along with page numbers for each item. Preliminary pages, chapters, and subsections should be listed. Items on the Table of Contents should only be at the heading and subheading levels. See Table 2 for complete list of what pages need to be included and how.

Setting Tab Stops will provide a uniform leader.

- To set Tab Stops in Microsoft Word, right click where the leader is to begin.
- Select Paragraph, then click on the Tabs...button.
- Enter a Tab Stop Position of 6", an Alignment of Right, and a Leader of periods.
- A Default Tab Stop of .5" will already be entered. Click Set then OK.
- For subheadings, an additional Tab Stop of .5", Left Alignment, and no Leaders should be set.

### **List of Tables/List of Figures**

All tables should be listed by title with page numbers. On a separate page, all figures should also be listed by title and page number.

### **List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations**

Abbreviations and symbols not universally accepted within a discipline or as a part of the style guidelines should be defined, although they should also be explained upon initial use within the text.

### **Arrangement of Dissertation Materials**

Materials in the Dissertation should be arranged in the following order:

- Title Page
- Copyright
- Acknowledgements (optional)

- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if any)
- List of Figures/ Illustrations (if any)
- List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations (if any)
- Main Text
- Bibliography/List of References/Literature Cited
- Appendices (if any)

**Table 2**

*Arrangement and Numbering of Pages*

<b>Order</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Page Number Placement</b>	<b>Listed in Table of Contents</b>
<b>Preliminary Pages</b>	<b>Required/Optional</b>	<b>Lower-Case Roman Numerals</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Title Page	Required	Count but do not number	No
Copyright	Required	Bottom center	No
Acknowledgements	Optional	Bottom center	No
Abstract	Required	Bottom center	Yes
Table of Contents	Required	Bottom center	No
List of Tables	Required if used in text	Bottom center	Yes
List of Figures or Illustrations	Required if used in text	Bottom center	Yes
List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations	Required if used and not explained in text	Bottom center	Yes
<b>Dissertation Content</b>	<b>Required/Optional</b>	<b>Arabic Numerals, Starting over at 1</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Body of Text	Required	Bottom center	Yes. List all headings.
<b>End Pages</b>	<b>Required/Optional</b>	<b>Arabic Numerals, (continue sequential numbering)</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
References	Required. Format according to discipline's style manual.	Bottom center	Yes
Appendices	Required if in used in text (Must include IRB approval forms).	Bottom center	Yes

## V. Dissertation Student Submission Process

The dissertation student (not the Dissertation Committee Chair) must submit the committee-approved dissertation, and supporting documents electronically (PDF format) to [Online Research Commons @ATU](#) by the date specified on the official Dissertation Timeline. The Graduate College Reader will check for form, style, and accuracy of documentation as well as for clarity and major errors in grammar.

The Graduate College reader will return the dissertation for corrections via the [Online Research Commons @ATU](#). The student will then need to make the desired corrections and return it to the Reader via [Online Research Commons @ATU](#). This procedure will be repeated until the document is error-free. The deadline for submission of the final draft may be found on the Dissertation Timeline. Acceptance of the dissertation by the Graduate College is required component of degree completion. Certification of completion is required in order to graduate.

Once the dissertation is approved the student will upload the final graduate college approved dissertation to the ProQuest ETD system ([ProQuest ETD Administrator - Arkansas Tech University](#)) for publication in ProQuest and the graduate reader will release the dissertation to the BePress website for publication.

Appendix A

**DISSERTATION SAMPLE PRELIMINARY PAGES**

CENTER DISSERTATION TITLE TWO INCHES BELOW THE TOP OF THE PAGE,  
IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS; TITLES MORE THAN ONE LINE SHOULD HAVE  
ALL  
ENSUING LINES SHORTER THAN PREVIOUS, SINGLE-SPACED

By

STUDENT NAME

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of  
Arkansas Tech University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
MASTER OF (DEGREE) IN (PROGRAM)  
Graduation Month & Year

## Dissertation Approval

This dissertation, “[The Complete Title of your Dissertation],” by [your full name here as it appears on university records], is approved by:

Dissertation Committee Chair:

---

[Full name of Dissertation Chair]  
(For example, Bob Smith, PhD)  
[Academic Rank and Department]  
(For example, Professor of Chemistry)

Dissertation Committee  
[include as many name blocks  
as needed]:

---

[Full name of Committee Member]  
[Academic Rank and Department]

---

[Full name of Committee Member]  
[Academic Rank and Department]

Program Director:

---

[Full name of Program Director]  
[Academic Rank and Department]

Graduate College Dean:

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[Full name of Graduate College Dean]  
[Academic Rank and Department]

- \* This page, along with the dissertation defense form, will be uploaded as an additional file, separate from the dissertation, and made unavailable.