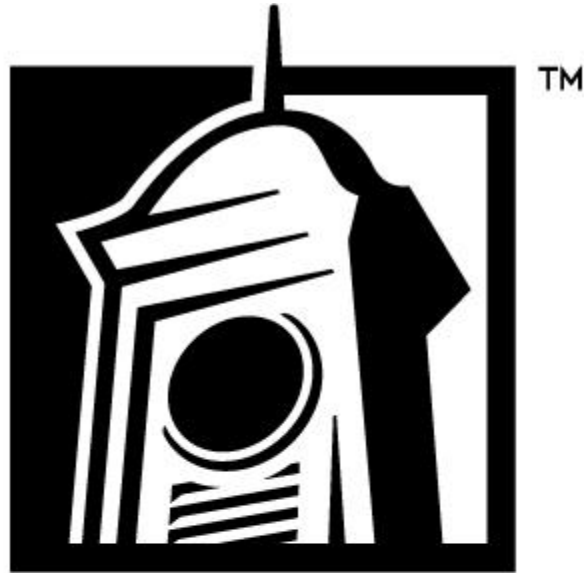


# Dissertation Preparation Guide



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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  
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## 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 Deadlines (See Table 1 for Breakdown with Dates)

- Students must complete the “**Dissertation Committee Appointment Form**” prior to beginning dissertation work. A signed copy of the form by all committee members should be submitted to the Graduate College Dean for approval.
- In addition to satisfying all degree requirements, a candidate for a degree must file an “**Application for Graduation**”. Students will need to complete this online application form the same semester as the “**Dissertation Proposal Defense Form**” is submitted. The student must reapply and pay an additional diploma fee if they do not graduate in their intended term.
- Committee members must complete the “**Dissertation Proposal Defense Form**”. A signed copy of the form by all committee members should be submitted to the Graduate College Dean for approval. We will accept electronic signatures from Committee Members if they are unable to be on campus to sign the form.
- Committee members must complete the “**Request to Schedule Dissertation Defense Form**”. A signed copy of the form by all committee members should be submitted to the Graduate College Dean for approval. We will accept electronic signatures from Committee Members if they are unable to be on campus to sign the form.
- A dissertation draft must be submitted for committee approval before the final dissertation is prepared. The Dissertation Committee must receive the dissertation at least seven (7) weeks before the degree is to be conferred for Fall or Spring graduates.
- The final version of the dissertation, in acceptable form, with signatures of all committee members on the “**Dissertation Defense Final Report**”, must be filed with the Graduate College no later than the close of the work day which precedes the date of graduation by six (6) weeks for Fall or Spring graduates.

- A committee-approved dissertation draft must be submitted electronically to the Graduate College at least two (2) weeks before the degree is to be conferred for Fall or Spring graduates.

### **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 graduate faculty and one non-affiliated Arkansas Tech member with expertise in the selected topic area. The program director will have final approval of the dissertation chair and committee.

Only full-time regular doctoral faculty status may serve as the dissertation committee chair. Of the three-person committee, at least one other member must hold regular graduate faculty status. If more than three members are appointed to the dissertation committee, a majority of the members must hold regular graduate faculty status. 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.

In addition to the regular or non-regular graduate faculty members' eligibility to serve on a dissertation committee, 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.

Membership on the graduate faculty terminates at the time of retirement. The chair of a dissertation committee, who retires, may no longer continue to serve as the chair. However, the retired faculty member may remain on the committee, if the student wishes for the relationship to continue and has received approval from the program director and 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 of typing and printing 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.

### **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.

## **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.

## **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. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase the words of another (such as in summarizing passages, rearranging sentence order, or changing words), or referencing someone else's ideas, credit must be giving to the source in your writing.

## **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.

### **Copies**

The library will cover the cost of the printing and binding fees for the library. In addition, the library will publish a copy of the thesis via its online repository. If a student wishes to purchase personal copies of their thesis, the Graduate College will email the student a website link to order personalized copies online.

## **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 a 10 to 12-point font size and black ink.

## **Line Spacing**

The entire text must be double-spaced, unless exceptions are specified in the specific style manual. Half spacing is not acceptable. Do not split words from one page to the next.

## **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. The right-hand margin may or may not be justified.

## **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. Each submitted copy of the dissertation must contain identical mounted materials.

Lettering and drawing for charts, figures, tables, and exhibits must be done neatly in black, permanent ink. Computer-generated text from plotters or laser printers is preferred for lettering and drawing; hand lettering or drawing must be of professional quality. Each should be placed in the appropriate place in the text or on a separate page immediately following the page on which it is first cited.

## **Original Documents**

Original letters or documents should be photocopied on the requisite paper and submitted as part of the dissertation. Students should retain the originals. Margin requirements may make size reduction necessary.

## **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**

- Varied Footers can be used throughout a document.
- To Change the Footer in Microsoft Word 2016:
  - 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. Continuous breaks may be used to change Footers throughout the document.

## **Preliminary Pages Formatting**

### **Title Page**

The format of the title page shall follow the model in Appendix A beginning on page 14. The title should indicate the contents of the dissertation. On the title page, be sure your formal degree is listed correctly. For example, use “Master of Arts” and not Master’s degree. Check with your Dissertation Chair if you are unsure of the formal title of your degree.

### **Approval Page**

With your dissertation being bound, include lines for signatures above each name. When creating a name block for your committee chair, committee members, program director, and the Graduate College dean on the approval page, do not include their titles such as Dr., Mr., Ms., etc. before their names and do not include their academic degree, such as Ph.D., M.S., etc. after their name. Use only first and last name on the first line and academic rank and department, such as Professor of Advanced Leadership Studies on the second line. Additionally, verify with each faculty member that you have the correct rank and department for each before you submit your dissertation

### **Abstract**

The dissertation abstract should not be more than 350 words. It should be double-spaced and must be included in each copy of the dissertation. 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. Please note, headings and subheadings should be appropriately titled per individual program guidelines and dissertation content relevance. 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 2010, 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:

- Blank Sheet
- Title Page
- Approval Page
- Permission Statement Page
- Copyright
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables/List of Figures/List of Illustrations (if any)
- List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations (if any)
- Main Text
- Bibliography/List of References/Literature Cited
- Appendices (if any)
- Blank Sheet

The Dissertation Committee Chair (not the Dissertation Student) must submit the first committee-approved draft electronically (Microsoft Word format) via email attachment to [graduatereader@atu.edu](mailto:graduatereader@atu.edu) by the date specified on the official Dissertation Timeline. The email should include the student's name, contact information, and committee chair's contact information. 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 email. The student will then need to make the desired corrections and return it to the Reader via email. 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.

Once the dissertation is approved, the reader will send a PDF dissertation copy to the library and the library personnel will upload the dissertation to the BePress website for publication.

The “**Dissertation Defense Final Report**” with all original signatures should be sent to the Graduate College in Tomlinson 113 by the date indicated on the Dissertation Timeline.

Upon receipt, the reader will forward a PDF copy of the work to the library for printing, binding, and online publication. The dissertation student, program director, and committee chair will also be included on this correspondence. The library will cover the cost of the printing and binding fees for the library copy of the approved dissertation. If a student would like to purchase personal copies of their dissertation, the Graduate College will email the student a website link to order copies online.

**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> ”	Review Cohort Timeline	Graduate College
2. Complete “ <b>Application to Graduation</b> ”	Review Cohort Timeline	It can be completed on the Graduate College website
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> ”	Review Cohort Timeline	Graduate College
6. Submit a committee-approved draft electronically for review by the Graduate College	Review Cohort Timeline	Graduate College
7. Last day to submit final version of dissertation. The Graduate College will provide successful candidates with publishing information	Review Cohort Timeline	Graduate College
8. Approved dissertations will be submitted to library for printing and uploading to BePress	After all requested revisions have been made	Graduate College

**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
Approval Page	Required	Bottom center	No
Permission Statement Page	Required	Bottom center	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	First page of section is bottom-center, each page after in the section/chapter is top-right. This process is repeated for each new section/chapter.	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.	First page of section is bottom-center, each page after in the section is top-right	Yes
Appendices	Required if in used in text (Must include IRB approval forms).	First page of section is bottom-center, each page after in the section is top-right	Yes