



# Graduate Student Handbook

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# **Graduate Student Handbook**

## **Introduction**

This handbook was developed by the Graduate Council to help graduate students at Humboldt State University (HSU) successfully navigate their way through a master's program. This handbook includes information reproduced from various sources including the HSU catalog, faculty handbook and from numerous policy documents. Effort has been taken to avoid conflicts between various sources; however conflicts over interpretation or language may occur. When conflicts transpire, Title 5 of the California Administrative Code of Regulations and the HSU catalog take precedence over this handbook. This handbook stipulates the minimum HSU requirements for completion of a master's degree, though some graduate programs have additional requirement beyond those covered herein.

If at any time you have questions regarding policies, procedures, requirements, or any other matters related to your academic program you should seek advice in the following order: 1) your major advisor, 2) your graduate committee members, 3) the graduate administrative assistant and graduate coordinator of your program, and finally Graduate Studies, particularly on questions relating to university-wide policies, procedures, and requirements.

## **Graduate Council**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the council is to discuss and approve such things as graduate program policy, program review, and the strategic plan for graduate education.

### **Membership**

The Graduate Council consists of the Vice Provost, Academic Programs (Chair) and a faculty member (graduate coordinator) from each master's program. One student from each college may attend as a representative for all students within the college. If you are interested in being a representative please contact your program's graduate coordinator. Appointments are for one year and student representatives should be available to attend each meeting.

### **Meetings**

Meetings are held during the academic year on the first Monday of the month from 3:00 to 4:30 pm.

## **Student Classification**

### **Conditionally Classified**

A conditionally classified graduate student has been admitted to the university, but has not yet satisfied all program admission requirements.

### **Classified Graduate Standing**

A classified graduate student has been admitted to the university and fulfilled all program admission requirements.

## Program Timeline and Paperwork

### Committee Formation

Your graduate committee should be formed during the second semester of your program. The number of committee members varies by program. You will select committee members in consultation with your major advisor, who serves as chair. You should strive to select committee members that will be the most help as you design and complete your thesis or project.

- With rare exceptions, your major advisor/chair will be a tenured or probationary faculty member. If your major advisor/chair is an adjunct faculty or in the faculty early retirement program (FERP), at least one committee member must be a tenured or probationary faculty member in your primary discipline.
- At least one committee member, in addition to your advisor/chair, must be HSU faculty or adjunct faculty who hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree. You may select a faculty member with a required terminal degree from outside your discipline as appropriate. **All theses, projects, and comprehensive examination responses must be evaluated by at least two HSU faculty members.**
- Persons with expertise or experience in your research area who are not affiliated with HSU or who do not hold a terminal degree can serve as an additional committee member.

Makeup of the graduate committee is reviewed by the graduate coordinator and graduate dean at advancement to candidacy.

### Advancement to Candidacy

Once your advancement to candidacy is approved, you are officially a candidate for your master's degree. The advancement to candidacy document is a contract between you and Humboldt State University that details the requirements of your degree.

### Eligibility

You must have "classified" standing, a GPA of 3.0 or better, completed 12 to 15 units of approved coursework for the master's program, the approval of your advisor, committee and graduate coordinator, and approval of any plan to use humans or animals as subjects for research, if applicable. (See Use of Human Subject in Research or Use of Animals in Research for more information).

### Paperwork: Application for Advancement to Candidacy and Graduation

Make an appointment with your major professor to discuss your coursework and culminating experience. It may be helpful to bring a copy of your transcript to your meeting. Consult the university catalog for the degree requirements of your master's program. List only those courses constituting your program. Degree requirements are those that are in effect at the time you were admitted into the master's program.

The graduation fee may be paid online through your student center or on campus at Student Financial Services, SBS 285 Deliver your application and proof of fee payment to Academic Programs Office SH 217A.

### **Deadlines**

There is no official deadline to advance to candidacy. It is recommended that students pursuing master's degrees apply for graduation by the census date of at least one semester before finishing all degree requirements. Please refer to the **Calendar of Activities and Deadlines for specific dates**. An additional fee will be assessed after the published date.

Early application ensures that you will receive your degree check in time for adequate planning for your final semester(s) of enrollment.

### **Degree Check**

Once your application for graduation is received, a degree check is prepared and sent to you and your advisor. The degree check summarizes how degree requirements have been satisfied and lists any remaining requirements. You are encouraged to contact the Office of the Registrar if you have any questions about your degree check or need an update on your progress towards your degree objective. If graduation needs to be postponed, a Graduation Date Change Request form must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. If the graduation date has already passed, a reapplication fee is charged.

### **Program Variation**

A change of your advisor, a committee member, or any coursework listed on your program contract must be proposed with a **Request for Program Variation or Waiver**. A change to your type of culminating experience must be requested with an Addendum to Advancement to Candidacy form. Forms are available on the Graduate Programs website. The changes must be approved by your major professor, committee members, graduate coordinator and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

## **Graduate Degree Requirements**

### **Coursework**

Please refer to the university catalog for the specific requirements of your program. General requirements for the master's degree programs as specified by Title 5 are below.

- Complete a minimum of 30 semester units of approved coursework within a maximum of seven years. (See seven-year limit)
- 21 or more semester units must be completed at Humboldt (residency requirement) unless an exception is made; courses taken through HSU Extended Education cannot be used for resident credit;
- at least half the units required for the degree are graduate level (500-600 courses);
- lower division courses (100-200 level) cannot be counted toward the degree;

- no more than six thesis or project units will apply toward the degree with a maximum of nine total units for independent study, field work, and thesis/project courses;
- B- or better in all courses taken to satisfy the requirements for the degree and maintain a grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better. A higher grade standard than the campus minimum (B-) may be specified by a graduate degree program.

### **Culminating Experience**

Complete an approved thesis, project, or comprehensive examination as defined by Title 5. It is the student's responsibility to determine from his/her advisor the departmental policy on theses, projects, or comprehensive exams.

All culminating experiences for the Master's degree, regardless of specific form or discipline, must document the student's achievement of the program learning outcomes at an appropriate level. All theses, projects, and comprehensive examination responses must be evaluated by at least two faculty members.

### **Thesis**

A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis is required.

### **Project**

A project is a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral defense of the project may be required.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

A comprehensive examination assesses a student's ability to integrate knowledge of the area, show independent and critical thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results evidence independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation. Examination questions and responses are kept according to the CSU records retention policy.

### **Deadlines for Culminating Experience Submission**

To meet the submission deadline for a specific term, all culminating experiences, including thesis, oral defense, projects, and comprehensive examinations must be completed prior to the deadline as listed below. Forms documenting satisfactory completion of comprehensive examinations are due in the Academic Programs/Graduate Studies office by 5 p.m. on the



relevant deadline, as are master's theses and projects, in final format and accompanied by an approval form signed by all committee members.

- Spring graduation: May 7th
- Summer graduation: July 25th
- Fall graduation: December 10th

**Note:** *(If the date falls on a weekend, the deadline will be extended to the following Monday)*

Your degree will post to your transcript for the following graduation date if your culminating experience is received in Academic Programs after the deadline.

A digital copy of the thesis or project must be archived with the University Library. Embargo (delayed release) for a period of 1-5 years to allow for publication may be requested by the student. If needed for publication purposes, a one-to-five year embargo may be requested when appropriate. For example, a publisher may allow deposit of published articles into an institutional repository, but may place an embargo of one or more years before the article may be made publicly accessible. Such a postprint may be deposited into Digital Commons @ HSU as required for the degree, but no access to the item would be allowed for a period of one year.

**Note:** Check your final document carefully. Any requests for editorial changes to a thesis/project after archival with Digital Commons @ HSU will be denied. Editorial changes include errors in punctuation and spelling, minor changes, or major changes to interpretation of data or content.

### **Graduate Writing Requirement**

All graduate students must demonstrate competency in writing by completing either a designated course that contains a significant writing component (at least 30% of the course grade), a 50th percentile score or better on a verbal component of a standardized entrance exam (GRE or GMAT), a thesis/project proposal approved prior to advancement to candidacy, or an approved thesis/project manuscript. The graduate writing requirement is built in to each program. For more information, please check with your committee chair or graduate coordinator.

### **Commencement/Hooding Ceremony**

Students wanting to walk in the Commencement ceremony in May are required to register in advance. You may participate in Commencement if you received a degree from Humboldt State during the past summer or fall semesters, or if you have applied for graduation and expect to be awarded your degree at the end of the spring, summer or fall semesters. Details regarding the May commencement ceremony are available online at <http://www2.humboldt.edu/commencement/>.

### **Commencement Program**

Your name, title of your thesis/project and major professor are listed in the commencement program if your Application for Advancement to Candidacy was submitted by the deadline set by the Office of the Registrar. The deadline is posted in the Calendar of Activities & Deadlines.

Please contact the Office of the Registrar if you do not want to be included in the printed program.

### **Distinction**

The Patricia O. McConkey Awards recognize the outstanding students graduating with a master's degree from each program. Each program may select a recipient based on academic performance, academic citizenship and the quality of the student's thesis, project, or comprehensive exam. Students who receive the award will "graduate with distinction." This title will appear on the official HSU transcripts. Recipients will be invited to attend the Outstanding Students Award Ceremony and Reception (Recognizing Students Who Make a Difference) held in the spring at HSU and will receive a certificate of award. Recipients are also allowed to purchase a gold stole for commencement that identifies them as graduating with distinction.

### **Posting Degree and Receiving Diploma**

You will receive a diploma cover during the commencement ceremony. After semester grades are processed, degree checks are reviewed for all candidates for graduation for that term in the Office of the Registrar. After all degree requirements are satisfied, your degree will be posted to your academic record. Diplomas are printed and sent out to graduated students approximately three to four months after the end of the term they graduated.

### **The Fine Print**

#### **Full-time Status**

Graduate students taking nine or more semester units, or post-baccalaureate students taking twelve or more semester units are enrolled full-time for student verification purposes.

#### **Seven-Year limit**

Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations limits the maximum time for completing a master's degree program to seven years. The seven years is calculated from the time of completion of the oldest course listed on your approved graduate course list. An extension may be granted, if warranted by individual circumstances and if the outdated coursework is validated by examination. You may petition for an extension with a Request for Program Variation or Waiver form and a completed Documentation of Examination for Currency for Extension of the Seven-Year Limit form for each course older than seven years.

#### **Grading**

Grading symbols are interpreted the same for graduate students as for undergraduate student (Please see Catalog for details) with the following exceptions.

#### **Credit/No Credit Grading**

A grade of Credit (CR) indicates satisfactory achievement of course requirements and is equivalent to a B- or higher grade. It is not used in grade point calculation.

A grade of No Credit (NC) indicates unsatisfactory achievement for course requirements. This grade is not used to in grade point calculation, however, some universities and many graduate and professional schools interpret an NC grade as F. NC is equivalent to a C+ or lower grade.

Some graduate courses have a mandatory grade mode of CR/NC; no more than a third of the CR/NC courses may count toward your degree. You may choose the CR/NC option for courses not required by your program. Students may take only one optional CR/NC course per semester at Humboldt State.

### **Report in Progress**

A grade of Report in Progress (RP) is used in conjunction with thesis, project, and other courses where work assigned extends beyond one academic term. The RP indicates that work is in progress but that assignment of a final grade must await completion of additional work. RP is not included in your grade point average. Work is to be completed in one year except for master's thesis/project courses. Master's thesis/project courses with an RP grade must be completed within seven years from the end of the term in which it was assigned. If you do not complete your additional work within one year (or seven years for thesis/project courses), the RP grade will be administratively changed to a grade of F (Failure) or NC (No Credit) depending on the grade mode of the course.

### **Required GPA**

You must maintain a grade-point average of 3.0 (B) or better in all courses taken to satisfy your degree requirements. Courses in which no letter grade is assigned are not used in computing GPA.

### **Academic Standing**

#### **Good Standing**

Graduate students whose Humboldt State cumulative GPA and overall GPA are 3.0 or above are considered in good academic standing.

#### **Academic Probation and Disqualification**

Graduate students, including those who are classified or conditionally classified, and credential seeking students will be placed on academic probation if their Humboldt State cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.0 (B grade average). A graduate coordinator may also notify a student of academic probation or disqualification for failure to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better in all courses taken to satisfy the requirements of the degree. Graduate students may be placed on probation and/or disqualified for failure to make adequate progress in the program, as defined by the requirements and policies of individual programs, by recommendation of the program faculty and graduate coordinator, and action of the graduate dean. While on academic probation if a graduate student or a credential student's cumulative GPA at Humboldt State is below a 3.0 for a second consecutive term, the student will be academically disqualified.

Graduate students may be placed on probation and/or disqualified for failure to make adequate progress in the program, as defined by the requirements and policies of individual programs, by recommendation of the program faculty and graduate coordinator, and action of the graduate dean.

#### **Readmission/Reinstatement**

Disqualified graduate students will not be allowed to register unless they are formally reinstated and/or readmitted to the university. Regularly enrolled students who are

academically disqualified from HSU are not eligible to enroll in coursework through Extended Education

First DQ: Students may be immediately reinstated to the university given a positive recommendation from the graduate program including an agreement by a graduate faculty member to serve as the student's advisor submitted to the Graduate Studies Office.

Second DQ: Student must take a minimum of one semester off before reapplying. Students may be required to take additional time off. Students may be readmitted to the university given a positive recommendation from the Graduate Program including an agreement by a graduate faculty member to serve as the student's advisor. Students will be required to provide a letter with a statement describing the reasons for the academic probation and a plan to address the underlying problems in order to increase the likelihood of success. Both documents will be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Office for processing. After the absence period, an admission application is required for reinstatement consideration. Humboldt State reserves the right to accept applications for disqualified students during specified application terms only. Please contact the Admissions Office for more information.

Third DQ: No option to reapply to HSU. May complete coursework elsewhere and reapply to a different CSU campus.

## **Catalog Rights**

Your catalog rights are based on when and where you began college and how long you have been "continuously enrolled." If you have been enrolled either at a California Community College or a CSU campus for at least one semester or two quarters of consecutive calendar years, you are considered to be "in continuous attendance." If you maintain continuous enrollment, you may choose to meet the requirements for graduation specified in the Humboldt State University catalog which was/is in effect, when you first enrolled in any CSU or California community college, first enrolled at Humboldt, or at the time you graduate.

### **Continuous Enrollment**

You are required to enroll for a minimum of one unit per term for at least two terms per academic year (fall, spring, summer) until your degree requirements are completed.

Master's degree students who do not maintain continuous enrollment (two terms each academic year), and who have not been granted a leave of absence are required to reapply for admission to the university and to the graduate program. If readmitted, you will be subject to any new admission or degree requirements that have been approved since your first admission to the program.

### **Matriculated Enrollment**

If you have "substantial work" to do to complete your project/thesis you will register as a regularly enrolled student. The number of units registered for would be estimated based on the amount of work required and the extent of faculty involvement.

### **Graduate Continuous Enrollment (GCE) through Extended Education**

The minimum requirements to be eligible to enroll through extended education are that you have advanced to candidacy, completed all the coursework required for your degree and have a current graduation date on file with the Office of the Registrar. Some departments allow graduate students to register for one unit of a discipline-specific x693 course through the College of eLearning & Extended Education. Enrollment in the discipline-specific x693 course allows you to maintain continuous enrollment and to maintain your status in the master's degree program. Please check with your graduate coordinator; additional requirements for registering through extended education vary by department. For example, in the Biological Sciences department graduate students must have completed all the requirements above and in addition have their thesis approved by their committee and graduate coordinator. They may register in one unit of BIOL x693 to return to campus the following semester to deliver their thesis presentation. For another example, Natural Resources allows graduate students to register through extended education after they have produced a complete first draft thesis and met the minimum requirements above.

Please refer to the [College of eLearning & Extended Education](#) website for information about campus privileges associated with enrollment through Extended Education.

### **Educational Leave of Absence**

An educational leave of absence must be requested if you will not be attending HSU each semester. You must attend at least one term prior to requesting a leave of absence. Submit your request to the Office of Academic Programs by the published deadline. Please refer to the Calendar of Activities and Deadlines for last day to file Educational Leave. You must keep your HSU Preferred Email Address up-to-date. HSU will contact you via email with important registration information after your leave has ended. Please see the "Email Policy" in the university catalog.

The maximum duration of a single leave is one academic year; the total duration of combined leaves may not exceed 2 years. A leave of absence does not extend the seven-year time limit. If the leave changes your date of graduation, a Graduation Date Change Request must be submitted. If you are registered in any course work in the semester for which you are requesting leave you must officially drop the course using Student Center. The instructor will not drop the class for you.

A leave of absence maintains continuing student status. This allows you to maintain catalog rights and eligibility to enroll for the term immediately after the expiration of the leave without reapplying to the university. You are not eligible for any university resources or services (computers, laboratories, the library, faculty supervision, etc.) while on leave. Therefore students must be currently enrolled in order to present findings, submit final thesis/project, and graduate. Enrollment through Extended Education may be possible (please refer to Continuous Enrollment).

## **Financial**

### **Cost of Attendance**

For estimates of current tuition and fees see Student Financial Services: Tuition & Fees at [http://www.humboldt.edu/studentfinancial/tuition\\_fees.html](http://www.humboldt.edu/studentfinancial/tuition_fees.html)

## **Financial Aid**

Placement in one or another of the post baccalaureate admission categories has an effect on student eligibility for financial aid. Contact the Financial Aid office, 707-826-4321, for clarification of eligibility. More information can be found in the [HSU 2016-17 Financial Aid Award Guide](#).

## **Graduate Student Support**

In addition to financial aid, other forms of support are available for graduate students. For example, employment as student assistant, teaching associate, graduate assistant, and research technician or assistant are available in some programs. These positions are awarded on a competitive basis. Please check with the administrative assistant or graduate coordinator for each program.

## **Tuition Waivers**

Two types of tuition waivers are available for graduate students; nonresident tuition waivers and fee waiver for graduate assistants or teaching associates.

### Tuition Fee Waivers for Nonresident Students

The university may waive nonresident tuition fees for individual students who display exceptional scholastic ability and prior scholastic achievement. To be eligible Students must enroll in a minimum of ten units. Individual programs decide who receives the fee waiver allocation.

### Tuition Fee Waivers for Graduate Assistants and Teaching Associates

To be considered for financial assistance offered by some programs, including GA/TA fee waivers, be sure to file a FAFSA by March 2.

NOTE: You can now file your FAFSA as early as October 1st, allowing you to use earlier income & tax information (rather than having to estimate for the following year).

Only students who do not receive a SUG or other fee coverage will be eligible to receive a GA/TA waiver. You must be appointed at a minimum of 15 hours/week as a Graduate Assistant or minimum of two WTU's as a Teaching Associate and be enrolled for at least two units related to your academic program to receive a fee waiver. The amount of the fee waiver will vary; students who enroll for six or fewer units will receive funding for half-time enrollment, and those that enroll in more than six units will receive support for full-time enrollment. You must enroll for at least seven academically relevant units to be eligible for a full-time waiver.

**Note:** Effective beginning 2014/15 AY, the GA/TA waivers have the same unit limit as the State University Grant (no more than 125% of the published minimum of Masters' program) and 2 a year (4 semesters) maximum.

## **Research**

### **Use of Human Subjects in Research**

Humboldt State University is committed to promote, encourage, and facilitate academic and clinical research. The purpose of HSU's Policy for Protection of Human Subjects in Research is both to protect the rights and wellbeing of human subjects of research and to support the research efforts of Humboldt State University faculty and students. This policy encourages recognition of the basic ethical principles for the use of human subjects, respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

If you have a research project that includes humans or data on humans in any way, you must submit a proposal to the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, also known as the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This will ensure that your project will not only comply with Federal regulations, it will also protect the rights and well beings of your subjects. Please refer to the Humboldt's HSU Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) web site.

### **Use of Animals in Research**

Our Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) strive to facilitate the efforts by our faculty and students to produce quality research and teaching experiences. At the same time, we have been appointed by the University President to monitor and share the responsibility of ensuring that individuals associated with HSU who work with vertebrate animals do so in compliance with relevant state and federal laws.

Prior to initiating a research project involving animals or incorporating animals in a teaching program, you and your advisor should review the laws that may regulate your work (note that individual students and their faculty advisors are held legally responsible for complying with these laws). The next stage of the process involves obtaining approval, and permits when necessary, from the appropriate governing bodies. Finally, the faculty member or student must submit a completed Section 5 protocol to the IACUC for in-house review. It is illegal to use animals for any purpose without first obtaining the necessary permits from federal and state agencies and without obtaining approval from the IACUC.

The protocol application form used by HSU is relatively short and, if sufficient time has been spent planning the research, takes only a short time to complete. The form is updated at irregular intervals. Please refer to the HSU [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) website for more information.

## **Change Your Program**

### **Change to an Option within the Program**

Students enrolled in the English, Environmental Systems, Natural Resources, and Psychology master's programs may switch to another option within the program by completing a "Request for Program Variation or Waiver" form available in the Graduate Studies office, SH 217A.

**Change to another Master's Program**

Students who want to change from one master's program to another will need to completely reapply. This includes completing the CSU application and paying the \$55 application fee. In addition, they will need to submit supplemental application materials required by the program to which they are applying. Only one application per term can be submitted.



## **HSU Thesis and Project Format Requirements**

HSU format requirements were developed to assist you in preparation of a thesis/project for publication through Digital Commons @ HSU. It is your responsibility to make certain that the HSU format requirements are met. Theses or projects from the library or departmental offices should not be used as examples of correct format.

Each program must either (a) adhere to the university guidelines for thesis formatting, as described in the HSU thesis and project format requirements, or (b) develop and post its guidelines for the project or thesis, including documentation style, limits on length, and other standard elements of document formatting.

### **Student Responsibilities**

The responsibility for writing and for editing rests with the student, not with the advisor/committee chair, graduate committee, or graduate coordinator. The student's minimum responsibilities for the thesis/project are to:

- Work closely with your advisor/committee chair and consult with other members of the graduate committee as needed. Keep your advisor/committee chair informed of progress.
- Allow adequate time for revisions (see Turnaround Time)
- Receive approval from your advisor/committee chair, committee members, graduate coordinator and graduate dean prior to changing the scope of your project or research
- Comply with university policy, state laws and federal laws/regulations regarding research that includes humans, data on humans or involves vertebrate animals
- Ensure that your thesis/project evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation
- Use correct formatting and accuracy of quotations and literature citations, each thesis or project should be an original contribution to your discipline. Plagiarizing all or part of a thesis or project will make the entire document unacceptable
- Make corrections as suggested by the graduate committee and graduate coordinator.
- Proofread the entire document, including acknowledgments, references, and appendices.
- Ensure that thesis or project meets program and Humboldt State University format requirements.
- Take primary responsibility to stay informed and adhere to department, Graduate Studies and Office of the Registrar deadlines. No exceptions will be made for missed deadlines or late submissions.

### **Advisor/Committee Chair Responsibilities**

Although the primary responsibility for writing the thesis/project lies with the student, the student should work closely with their advisor/committee chair. The advisor/committee chair should:

- Advise the student on improvements to organization, form, content, and expression of material.
- Resolve any disagreements between committee members
- Familiarize themselves with policies and deadlines that affect their graduate students

By signing their approval on Digital Commons @ HSU, the advisor/committee chair certifies that:

- the document is well-written, this includes writing and format as well as the overall quality of the research or project;
- it is an accurate description of the work performed;
- it is an original and worthwhile contribution by the student;
- the suggestions made by the graduate committee have been incorporated into the final document.

### **The Revision Process** (adapted from the Natural Resources handbook)

The student submits the initial drafts of their thesis or project to their advisor/committee chair, who reviews the drafts and makes corrections and recommendations. The student corrects errors and incorporates suggested changes to the thesis/project or meets with their advisor/committee chair to discuss why suggested changes should not be made. This process continues until the student and committee chair feel that the document is ready for the committee to review. Note the committee reviews the thesis/project only after the chair has approved it. Again, several drafts may be provided to the committee. When each committee member is satisfied with the document, the student will submit the thesis or project in Digital Commons for committee member and graduate coordinator approval.

### **Turnaround Time**

The standard turnaround for advisors/committee chairs, committee members, and graduate coordinators to read each draft is three weeks. Any time constraints are solely the responsibility of the student. Note that the standard turnaround time applies only to faculty academic work days. Faculty are not obligated to read drafts during approved holidays, breaks or during the summer. Students and their advisors/committee chairs should discuss the turnaround time for the student to submit a revised document.

An average thesis or project usually requires three to four drafts to the committee chair and one or two drafts to the committee. Considering the standard turnaround time, if a student worked one to two weeks on each revision, the revision process would take between 3 to 8 months.

### **Accessibility**

Accessibility of your final pdf document starts with a properly formatted Word document. Visit the Graduate Studies website or call our office (707.826.3949) for assistance with the following:

- Use built-in styles to create headings and subheadings.
- Use the Insert Table tool to create accessible tables. (See Tables)

- Add descriptions of all images, charts and graphs as alternative text. (See Figures)

## **Style**

Consult your major professor or graduate program coordinator regarding the approved style manual for your program. For more information visit HSU Library Citing Your Sources or Purdue Online Writing Lab: Research and Citation Resources

## **Fonts**

Theses and projects are typed in Times New Roman using 12-point characters. You may reduce the font size to no less than 10-point within tables or figures to fit within margins. However, keep the font style consistent throughout your document.

## **Spacing and Justification**

Text must be double spaced, except for quoted passages that may be indented and single-spaced for emphasis and within the Table of Contents or List of Figures/Tables when a heading or caption title wraps to a second line. Text must be left aligned.

## **Margins, Headers and Footers**

Bottom and top margins of text: 1.3 inch (93.6 pt.) from edge of paper.

Left margin of text: one and one-half inch (108 pt.) from edge of paper.

Right margin of text: one inch (72 pt.) from edge of paper

Set header at 1" from top of page and footer at 1" from bottom

## **Page Numbers**

The preliminary pages (preceding the first main section) must have lower case Roman numerals starting with the abstract page that is numbered "ii". The title page is unnumbered, but the implied number is "i". The lower case Roman numerals are placed within the footer (bottom center).

The first page of text (typically the Introduction) uses the Arabic number "1" and pages thereafter carry consecutive Arabic numbers, including the pages in the Appendices and References. Arabic numbers are positioned in the upper right-hand corner, one inch from the top and one inch in from the right edge of the paper.

## **Headings and Subheadings**

Use built-in formatting styles for headings. Define the format of headings and subheadings to match the general outline below or as required by your program. Using built-in formatting styles for heading levels will allow for conversion to a tagged accessible PDF. Each new primary heading must start on a new page.

For further instruction refer to the grad studies [Instructional Video - Using the Templates.](#)

Note: The following is a general heading level outline to be used if your program does not specify heading level styles.

## HEADING LEVEL ONE

The primary heading or heading level one is center justified, and all upper case. Triple space to text.

## Heading Level Two

Heading level two is center aligned; the first letter of each major word is capitalized, and has spacing set at 12 points before and 18 points after.

## Heading level three

Heading level three is left aligned; the font is underlined and sentence case. There is a double space to the following text.

Heading level 4. (paragraph heading). This heading is indented with the paragraph. The font is underlined and in sentence case. The heading ends with a period.

## Layout of Preliminary Pages

The thesis or project includes preliminary pages in the following order. The abstract, acknowledgments, table of contents and list of tables/figures are heading level one.

- **Title Page:** The title page is assumed to be page “i” but is not numbered. Your title is typed in all upper case. All text on the title page is center justified (Appendix A). See [sample title page](#) for a full list of requirements.
- **Abstract:** The abstract should not exceed 250 words (approximately 1.5 pages). Literature citations and footnotes are not used. Double space down from the heading and center your title. Double space down and center your name (first and last name). Triple space down and start the text (Appendix B).
- **Acknowledgments** (optional, unless your study was funded)
- **Table of Contents:** Double space down from heading. Insert table of contents. All headings and subheadings are capitalized and punctuated exactly as they are in the text. The table of contents is double-spaced except when a heading or caption wraps to a second line.
- **List of Tables** (if applicable): Triple space down from heading. Insert “table of figures”. Set caption label to “Table”.
- **List of Figures** (if applicable): Triple space down from heading. Insert “table of figures”. Set caption label to “Figure”.
- **List of Appendices** (if applicable): Triple space down from heading. Insert “table of figures”. Set caption label to “Appendix”.

## Sample Layout – Main Body of Document

The following presents a framework for a thesis or project. The information is offered as a general guideline. Please consult your committee or graduate coordinator regarding the specific primary headings in your discipline.

- **Introduction:** background; statement of the problem; purpose of the study; theoretical bases; limitations of the study; definition of terms; and organization of the remainder of the study.
- **Review of the Literature:** chronological, categorical or related theoretical viewpoints related to topic.
- **Materials and Methods:** research design or approach (quantitative or qualitative); population and/or sample; collection and tabulation of data; and data analysis procedures.
- **Results:** Present the findings of your research.
- **Discussion:** Evaluate and interpret the implications of your results. Include similarities and differences between your results and the work of others. Present implications of your findings for practical application or future studies.
- **Conclusions, Recommendations or Summary:** summarize the entire research effort.
- **References or Literature Cited:** includes all sources used in the study. For help with citing references visit HSU Library: Tools to Manage References or Purdue Online Writing Lab: Research and Citation
- **Appendices:** Include material too detailed or lengthy for inclusion in the body of the study (e.g., questionnaires, maps, photos, letters of permission). If your document has one appendix use your main chapter heading and leave it in the Table of Contents. If your document has two or more appendices do not use a chapter heading. Caption the appendices alphabetically (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) in the order they are referenced in you document. Insert a list of appendices following the list of figures in your preliminary pages.

## Tables

Use the Insert Table tool (Microsoft Word) to create accessible tables in your document. Include clear column headings to provide context and assist in navigation of the table's contents. Identify the top row of the table as a header row by selecting "Repeat Header Row" in the "Layout" tab in Table Tools.

For further instructions refer to the grad studies [Instructional Video - Tables, Captions, and Alternative Text](#)

Do not use tabs or spaces to make a table. It may look like a table; however, it will not be accessible or readable by assistive technologies. Do not merge or split cells. Do not use the Draw Table tool in Word to create tables. Do not copy and insert tables as pictures or figures. Do not use color (either through text or background fill) to convey meaning or information.

Use the Insert Caption tool (Word) to create accessible captions for your tables. Do not insert a text box. Number tables consecutively with Arabic numerals in the order referenced in the text (Table1, Table 2, etc). Place the number and caption above the table. Capitalize the first word and proper nouns in the caption.

Insert each table after the paragraph where it is first referenced. Tables may be placed on a page with text or on a separate page. Do not allow text to wrap around tables. Tables may be placed horizontally or vertically within the page margins. If placed horizontally, the caption should also be horizontal. Keep tables from breaking across pages unless the table is too large for a single page.

Add an alternative text (Alt Text) description to all tables to comply with the accessibility requirements. Alternative text is a word or phrase that conveys the same essential information contained in the figure. It allows people using assistive technology to understand the content of your pictures, tables, charts and graphs. Try to keep descriptions as short as possible while still conveying equivalent information. It is unnecessary to begin a description with “photo of” or “picture of”. If the information contained in the table is described completely in the document text or in the figure caption enter “refer to text” or refer to caption” in the Alt Text description box.

## **Figures**

Any figure that is made up of multiple images and/or objects should be grouped using Word's object grouping function. See the Grouping Images and Objects tutorial on our [thesis/project help page](#) for more information.

Use the Insert Caption tool (Word) to create accessible captions for your figures. Do not insert a text box. Number figures consecutively with Arabic numerals (Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.) in the order they are referenced in the text. Place the number and caption below the figure. Do not use color alone to convey meaning or information.

Insert each figure after the paragraph where it is first referenced. Figures may be placed on a page with text or on a separate page. Set the wrapping style to “In Line with Text”. Do not allow text to wrap around figures. Figures may be placed horizontally or vertically within the page margins. If placed horizontally, the caption should also be horizontal.

For further instructions refer to the grad studies [Instructional Video - Tables, Captions, and Alternative Text](#)

Add an alternative text (Alt Text) description to all figures to comply with the accessibility requirements. Alternative text is a word or phrase that conveys the same essential information contained in the figure. It allows people using assistive technology to understand the content of your pictures, charts and graphs. Try to keep descriptions as short as possible while still conveying equivalent information. It is unnecessary to begin a description with “photo of” or “picture of”. If the information contained in the figure is

described completely in the document text or in the figure caption enter “refer to text” or refer to caption” in the Alt Text description box.

### **Quotations**

Longer quotations block indented 0.5” left and right. Please check with you advisor for specific requirements in your department.

### **Numbers and Abbreviations**

The general rule governing the use of numbers in manuscript writing is to use words to express numbers less than 10. Numbers at the beginning of a sentence must be spelled.

An abbreviation or acronym should only be used if the full expression is excessively long or if the abbreviation is well known to researchers in your discipline. Define an abbreviation the first time it is used.

### **Optional Formatting Consultation**

The Scholarly Communications Office is available to answer specific formatting questions by appointment. Contact the Scholarly Communications Team by phone at 707.826.5602 or email [cfr@humboldt.edu](mailto:cfr@humboldt.edu) to schedule a consultation.

### **Requirements for Completing Your Thesis or Project**

#### **Before Submission:**

- 1) Your thesis or project must be approved by your advisor/committee chair and all committee members (or second reader for projects).
  
- 2) You must have successfully defended your thesis or project, if your program requires a defense.
  
- 3) All content additions or corrections requested by your committee members (or readers) must be incorporated into your document. Your thesis or project must be formatted per specifications detailed in the HSU Thesis and Project Format Requirements. Each program must either (a) adhere to the university guidelines for thesis formatting, as described in the HSU thesis and project format requirements, or (b) develop and post its guidelines for the project or thesis, including documentation style, limits on length, and other standard elements of document formatting.

4) Check your final document carefully. With the exception of format corrections required by Graduate Studies, any requests for editorial changes to a thesis/project after submission will be denied. Editorial changes include errors in punctuation and spelling, minor changes, or major changes to interpretation of data or content.

**Final Submission Instructions (after completing steps 1-4):**

Submit your thesis or project through the Digital Commons platform at <http://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/>. See our new thesis/project submissions page for more details.

The thesis or project file name should include your name and graduation date. For example: if Susan Smith was submitting her thesis and graduating in Spring 2016, her file should be named smith\_susan\_sp2016.

**Submission Deadline:**

Graduation Term	Courtesy Review Deadline*	Final Submission Deadline*
Spring	April 15	May 7
Fall	November 11	December 10
Summer (your advisor must notify Graduate Studies before the end of the Spring semester)	June 24	July 25

\*If the date falls on a weekend, the deadline will be extended to the following Monday.

Documents posted by 5:00 pm PST on the above deadline are assured of review and processing in time for clearing the culminating experience portion of your degree, barring any major format errors. If Digital Commons @ HSU receives your thesis or project after the deadline, your degree will not post to your transcript until the following graduation date.

**After Submission:**

Allow 2-3 days after submission for electronic approval of your thesis or project. If we do not receive an approval from your committee, we will notify you immediately.



Upon approval from your committee and graduate coordinator, your submission will be reviewed for compliance with university formatting and accessibility requirements. Your thesis or project will not be reviewed for content, research quality, spelling, punctuation, grammar, bibliographic format, plagiarism, or adherence to style guidelines. The outcome of the reviews will be as follows:

**No formatting issues:** Your document will be archived by the university library. You will receive notice via email that the culminating experience portion of your degree is cleared.

**One to ten formatting errors:** You will receive instructions for correcting the formatting errors and length of time allowed for resubmission of your document.

**Eleven or more formatting errors:** You and your committee will be notified via email that your document is being returned for correction and revision. If there are numerous or major formatting errors you may be advised to change your graduation date to the next term.

Once finalized and approved, the library will archive your document in Humboldt Digital Scholar (HDS). You will receive notification from the library via email when your document is available through HDS.

## Appendix A: Sample Title Page

THE TITLE IS CENTERED BETWEEN THE MARGINS AND DOUBLE-SPACED IF LONGER THAN ONE LINE

by

Author

All text on the title page is centered between the margins.

A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of Humboldt State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Environmental Systems: Geology

### Committee Membership

Advisor's name, Chair

Use full names for the faculty on your committee. Include "Dr." before the names where appropriate.

Name, Committee Member

Name, Committee Member

Name, Committee Member

Name, Graduate Coordinator

Use official degrees titles only.

Some options & emphases are not part of the official degree title.

May 2015

Use May for spring or December for fall graduation

## Appendix B: Sample Abstract Page

ABSTRACT

Your title page will not have

INSERT YOUR TITLE, THE TITLE ON THE ABSTRACT IS SINGLE-SPACED IF  
LONGER THAN ONE LINE

Insert your name

The heading “abstract” is centered and placed at the top margin of the page. Double space down and center your thesis or project title. Titles longer than one line are single-spaced on the abstract page. Double space down from the last line of the title and center your name. Triple space down and begin the text of your abstract.

The abstract should summarize the contents of your thesis or project. Emphasis should be on what you found. The abstract should include the following elements: the key topic or problem, your main approach (methods), one or two important results, and discuss/interpret your results or note your main conclusion. For examples of abstracts, see the Graduate Studies website and completed HSU theses on Humboldt Digital Scholar. Abstracts are read by those who are trying to decide whether or not to read the main document. Sometimes abstracts are read by people who want to get the big picture before reading the main document. The abstract should not exceed 250 words (approximately 1.5 pages). Literature citations and footnotes are not allowed. Page numbers on the preliminary pages are lower case Roman numerals placed center-bottom. The title page is not numbered, but is assumed to be page number “i”. Therefore, the first page of the abstract is page number “ii”.

## **Appendix C: Digital Commons @ HSU Non-Exclusive Distribution License**

In order for Digital Commons @ HSU to reproduce, translate and distribute your submission worldwide, you must agree to the following terms.

### **NON-EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION LICENSE**

By submitting this license, you (the author(s) or copyright owner) grant to Digital Commons @ HSU the non-exclusive right to reproduce, translate (as defined below), and/or distribute your submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video.

You agree that Humboldt State University may, without changing the content, translate the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation.

You also agree that Humboldt State University may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, back-up and preservation.

You represent that the submission is your original work, and that you have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. You also represent that your submission does not, to the best of your knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.

If the submission contains material for which the author does not hold copyright, the author is responsible for ensuring that: such third-party material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission AND permission to freely distribute the content has been obtained from the copyright owner OR access to the third-party content is restricted to fair use.

If the submission is based upon work that has been sponsored or supported by an agency or organization other than Humboldt State University, you represent that you have fulfilled any right of review or other obligations required by such contract or agreement.

Humboldt State University will clearly identify your name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to your submission.