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

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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 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, reserach 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

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

Name, Committee Member

Name, Committee Member

Name, Committee Member

Name, Graduate Coordinator

May 2015

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

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

Use official degrees titles only.

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

Use May for spring or December for fall graduation

Appendix B: Sample Abstract Page

ABSTRACT

Your title page will not have

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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.

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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.