

BRIERCREST | SEMINARY

THESIS FORMAT REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

This manual presents the standard format for a master's thesis at Briercrest Seminary. These format standards ensure consistency and allow for binding requirements. **Central guidelines and items unique to Briercrest Seminary are emphasized; specific guidelines described in this manual take precedence over the professional stylebooks.** For all other formatting issues the student should consult either the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) or *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Turabian). These books are available at Archibald Library, and can be purchased at Briercrest Book Store. Students should not rely on completed theses for details of format, as such theses may no longer meet Briercrest standards.

APA or Turabian

Students may choose between two approved style manuals: Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2018) or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th ed. (Washington, DC: APA, 2020). It should be noted that Turabian is required for students studying in the fields of Bible, Theology and History while APA is recommended for students studying in the Social Sciences. What follows below will apply to theses prepared with either Turabian or APA.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Length

The typical length for a thesis will be 100 pages (between 80 and 120 depending on research approach).

Spelling

Canadian spelling should be used. If in doubt about a spelling consult the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, 1998. This is available at the Archibald Library.

Layout Requirements

Printing

- Final copies will be printed on archival quality paper and are included in the thesis fee.

Typeface

- Use Times New Roman or an equivalent font.
- Use a 12-point type for all text, including page numbers and 10 point type for notes.
- The same font should be used throughout the entire thesis.

Margins and Justification

- The left margin should measure 1.5 inches to allow for binding.
- Other margins should measure 1 inch.
- The right margin should not be justified.

Spacing

- The abstract, acknowledgements, and general text (except for block quotations) must all be double-spaced.
- Single-space each footnote and bibliographical entry, with a blank line between each entry.
- Use single-spacing for long tables, block quotations, tables, figures, or illustration headings, and multi-line headings.
- Appendices may be single or double-spaced depending on the nature of the material.

Pagination

- All page numbers will be placed on the bottom centre of each page.
- Preliminary pages use lowercase Roman numerals.
- The title page, blank page, and approval page do not have numbers typed on them but count as page i, ii, and iii respectively. Actual page numbering begins with iv on the Abstract page.
- Use Arabic numerals for the balance of the thesis (main text, appendices, and bibliography) beginning with "1" on the first page of the thesis, and continuing consecutively until the end.
- Page numbers must be the same font style and size as the text of the thesis.

Headings

- Below you will find the format headings, laid out as they would appear in a thesis.
- More than four levels of headings is not necessary.

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER HEADS AND OTHER MAJOR HEADINGS SECOND LINE OF TITLE IF NEEDED

First Level of Subheading Within the Chapter

Headings for major sections of the paper begin two inches from the top of the paper, are centred, boldface, and typed in full capitals. Major headings include chapters, contents, list of illustration, tables, acknowledgements, appendixes, and bibliography/reference list. If headings are longer than four inches, they should be split into two (or more) lines, the first being the longest (inverted pyramid). There is no blank line between the multiple lines of a chapter title. There are always two blank lines after major headings, whether followed directly by text or by a first level subheading.

Second Level Subheading

All subheadings begin on the third line below the preceding text. There will be one blank line between the subheading and the text following or if another subheading follows. The first level subheading is centred, bold, and capitalized headline style¹. The second level subheading is centred and capitalized headline style. The third level subheading is flush left, bold, and capitalized headline style and the fourth level is flush left and capitalized headline style but not bold.

¹ Headline style is explained in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 325 and in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th ed. (Washington, DC: APA, 2020), 167 (called title case in APA).

Third Level Subheading

Every heading level must contain at least two listing; otherwise, incorporate the material into the heading above that level. The student should also try, if possible, to make parallel headings grammatically similar.

Fourth Level Subheading

A heading or subheading should never appear at the bottom of a page without at least two lines of text under it.

ARRANGEMENT OF CONTENTS

Each thesis will have three divisions: preliminary pages (items 1 to 11); main body; and back matter (appendices and bibliography or reference list). Use the following order to organize your thesis. Boldface items are required in all theses.

1. **Title Page**
2. **Blank page**
3. **Signature page**
4. **Abstract**
5. Dedication
6. Epigraph (quotation)
7. **Table of contents**
8. List of illustrations
9. List of tables
10. List of abbreviations
11. Acknowledgments
12. **Main body**
13. Appendices
14. **Bibliography or Reference List**

Preliminary Pages

Number preliminary pages with lower case Roman numerals, centred at the bottom of the page. Although the title page, blank page, and signature page are counted in the pagination, they will not have a number typed on them. Therefore, the first page to have a number will be the abstract, which will be page iv.

Title Page

- Double-space the title page and begin typing 1.5" from the top of the page.
- The title should be bold and all capitals and written in an inverted pyramid if more than one line long.
- The date should give the month and year the thesis was submitted.
- An example of a title page is given on page eight of this document.

Signature Page

- The heading on this page begins 2" from the top.
- An example of a signature page is given on page nine of this document.

Abstract

- The abstract is a brief summary of the thesis; it states the problem, the methods of investigation followed, and general conclusions.
- The abstract should be between 150-350 words.
- See the example of an abstract on page ten of this document. It should begin 1.5" from the top
-

Dedication

- This is an optional element.
- It should be brief and does not need to include the word *Dedicated*. "To" is sufficient: e.g., To Mom and Dad
- Centre the text horizontally on the page starting 3" from the top.
- There is no heading on this page and no final punctuation.

Epigraph

- This is an optional element.
- Centre the quotation horizontally on the page starting 3" from the top.
- List the source of the epigraph below the quotation (flush right), but do not list it in the bibliography unless it is also cited in the main text. Only author's name and title of work (italicized) are needed.

Table of Contents

- Centre the heading **CONTENTS** 2" from the top of the page and begin typing the contents 3 lines below the main heading.
- The table of contents lists all sections that follow it. This may include a list of figures, list of tables, list of abbreviations, acknowledgments, main body, appendices, and bibliography or reference list.
- Chapter titles, and primary and secondary subdivisions should be listed exactly as they appear in the text, along with their page numbers.
- Single space within entries, and double space between entries.
- See an example of a table of contents on page eleven of this document.

List of Illustrations

- This is required if figures appear in the thesis.
- Type **ILLUSTRATIONS** centred 2" from the top of the page.
- Number illustrations consecutively throughout.
- The list of illustrations uses the captions as they appear below the figures in the text.
- Illustrations consist of illustrative materials including charts, drawings, photographs, graphs, and maps.

List of Tables

- This is required if tables appear in the thesis.
- Type **TABLES** centred 2" from the top of the page.
- Number tables consecutively throughout.
- The list of tables uses the captions as they appear above the tables in the text.

List of Abbreviations

- This is optional; include as necessary.
- Type **ABBREVIATIONS** centred 2" from the top of the page.

Acknowledgements

- This is an optional element.
- Centre heading **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** 2" from the top of the page.
- Double space and begin the remarks three lines below the heading.
- Acknowledgements should not exceed one page.

Main Body

Introduction

- Centre the heading **INTRODUCTION** 2" from the top of the page and begin typing the text three lines below the heading.
- The introduction should be a clear statement of the thesis topic or problem to be investigated, the importance of the subject, and the method by which the inquiry is to be prosecuted.

Chapters

- Centre the heading **CHAPTER ONE** 2" from the top of the page. Leave one space and then type the title of the chapter, as an inverted pyramid if more than one line, bold, and all capitalized. See page three of this manual for an example of chapter headings.
- Chapters are the substance of the presentation, arranged to reflect logical grouping of ideas.
- If footnotes are used, numbering starts over at the beginning of each chapter.

Conclusion

- Centre the heading **CONCLUSION** 2" from the top of the page and begin typing the text on the third line below the heading.
- The conclusion should be a concise summary of the writer's conclusions unfolded in the text in such a manner that introduction, text, and conclusion present a coherent discussion.

Back Matter

Appendices

- This is an optional element.
- Centre the heading **APPENDIX** 2" from the top of the page.
- Appendices should be designated A, B, C, etc. If there is only one appendix, it is simply call Appendix, not Appendix A.
- Appendices may include materials related to the thesis, but not critical to the argument of the thesis. An appendix may also contain materials which offer indirect support to the writer's conclusions.

Bibliography/Reference List

- Centre the heading **BIBLIOGRAPHY** or **REFERENCES LIST** 2" from the top of the page with the entries beginning on the third line below.
- Each bibliographical entry should be single-spaced with double spacing between entries.
- Use a hanging indent for all entries. That is, begin each entry flush with the left margin; if any entry runs more than one line, indent the subsequent line or lines five spaces from the left margin.
- Use italics rather than underlining for book and journal titles.

**THE TITLE IS TO BE WRITTEN IN BOLD CAPITALS USING
AN INVERTED PYRAMID (AS NEEDED)**

[Your Name]

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts

Briercrest Seminary

[Date: month & year]

SIGNATURE SHEET FOR THE THESIS

I certify that I have read and am willing to sponsor this thesis submitted by [your name].
In my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards and is fully adequate in scope and
quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts at Briercrest Seminary.

(date)

[Faculty name and degree]
First Reader

I certify that I have read this thesis and in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards
for a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts at Briercrest Seminary.

(date)

[Faculty name and degree]
Second Reader

Abstract of a thesis presented to Briercrest Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts

**THE TITLE IS TO BE WRITTEN IN BOLD CAPITALS USING
AN INVERTED PYRAMID (AS NEEDED)**

by

[your name]

[month & year]

The text of the abstract begins on the third line following the date and must be double spaced. The abstract should be between 150-350 words and is a brief summary of the thesis; it states the problem, the methods of investigation followed and general conclusions.

Use leader lines (tabs) for your table of contents; see formatting below

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