

Wittenberg University

Master of Arts in Education



Thesis Project Preparation Guide

2019-2020

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I. General Information and Procedures

This handbook has been prepared by the Graduate Program Committee at Wittenberg University as an aid to students writing theses. The handbook should be used in conjunction with the current edition of the *APA Publication Manual* for references, table and figure format, and other stylistic considerations. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the requirements for thesis submission and defense, and all other requirements for graduation.

Introduction

This guide provides information for the preparation of theses for the Master of Arts degree at Wittenberg University. The guide includes student and committee responsibilities, as well as timelines. It specifies the requirements for the completion of the proposal and the final document.

The completion of the thesis fulfills one central purpose of graduate study at Wittenberg. The program's theme affirms an ongoing commitment to social change and improving the conditions of teaching and learning. In Wittenberg's Master of Arts program, practitioners examine their own purposes and mission. They develop research questions that will help them better serve their students, schools, and community. The research provides evidence of scholarship, and the scholarship provides evidence of the commitment to community leadership.

The research model that guides work toward the Master of Arts degree at Wittenberg is described generally as "action research" or "teacher research." The model seeks to honor the contextual and ever-changing character of a teacher's work. **It understands that teachers must ground their everyday work in the best knowledge about human development, curriculum and pedagogy. It also understands that teachers must be involved in research every day of their practice and that such research unavoidably is tied to sustaining and building relationships with young people.** In this type of scholarship, both the teacher and the students are involved. At stake is the mutual project of academic and social improvement. In addition, it is expected that the candidate will observe Wittenberg University's "Code of Academic Integrity" available at ([www4.wittenberg.edu/academics/academic integrity](http://www4.wittenberg.edu/academics/academic%20integrity)) as a guide for upholding personal academic integrity throughout the research and thesis process. A copy of the honor statement is included in this publication and must be signed and returned with the Thesis Sign-Off Form.

As a final requirement of the thesis research, candidates must successfully defend their work in an oral defense to the committee. In addition, candidates must share their research at Department professional development or alternative approved by the Director. Teaching can be an isolating occupation. The practice of sharing teacher research breaks down such barriers and provides for the community of scholarship necessary for school improvement.

The faculty of Wittenberg applauds the accomplishments of the Master's candidates and encourages their continued scholarship. Such study conveys the commitment to service and to becoming teacher leaders.

Thesis Roles and Responsibilities

Candidate Responsibilities

- Select a thesis committee chair, establish a thesis committee by the end of EDUC 590.
- Complete the *Approved Thesis Committee* form with the names of the committee members-- 3 or 4 members, 2 must be from education department, a member can be a colleague who has a master's degree (must submit a resume for approval)
- Submit to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval.
- Write a fairly complete draft of thesis chapters 1-3 (takes place in EDUC 595).
- Meet with committee to discuss proposal.
- Submit a signed *Thesis Proposal Form* to Director of Graduate Studies.
- Take and pass with 80% the Citi Training found on IR website.
- Submit University *Institutional Review Board (IRB) forms* to Committee Chair if it is determined that it is needed. **Committee chair will submit to IRB.**
- Communicate to the Committee Chair and the committee members the type of guidance that would best facilitate the completion of the research and thesis; schedule regular meetings for continual review of the thesis progress.
- Take the initiative in communicating any problems or difficulties that may arise during the thesis process (research or writing), thereby contributing to a constructive, effective, and collaborative working relationship.
- Progress through the thesis process in accordance with the schedule written with the Committee Chair; this includes providing sufficient time for the chair and committee members to work with the candidate at each stage of the thesis process.
- Submit a draft of the thesis to committee chair and committee by midterm of the intended graduation semester.
- Upon approval of committee chair, schedule an oral defense no later than the 12th week of the intended graduation semester (or mid-July for summer), and submit a copy of the thesis to each member of the committee
- Prior to the defense, prepare one copy of the Master of Arts in Education *Committee Approval of Thesis* form on appropriate paper for each bound copy that will be printed. Bring copies to the defense for signatures.
- Prepare by typing in student and faculty full legal names and avoid use of degrees and titles except as pre-printed on the sample form.
- Prepare and present summary of thesis to committee members at defense.
- Make changes to manuscript as suggested by committee members; work is supervised by committee chair.
- Ensure that the thesis is submitted within the required time.
- Final submissions to Director of Graduate Studies
- Two completed copies of the thesis printed according to established guidelines (Submit three copies of completed thesis if candidate desires a bound copy.) The bound thesis will also include signed copies of *Honor Statement* and *Final Reading Approval*.
- Payment for binding and publication (\$19 per copy)
- Thesis Sign-off Form and Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Center Release Form
- Fill-in Thesis Forms can be found on the Master of Arts website (Resources)

Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Agree to chair committee and sign *Approved Thesis Committee* form
- Along with the members of the committee, approve the candidate's proposal (chapters 1-3) and IRB Proposal and sign *Thesis Proposal Approval* form
- Submit candidate's IRB proposal to the university IRB
- Give guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, the plan of the research program, literature and sources, and in general, contribute to a constructive and effective working relationship.
- Maintain contact through regular meetings, as agreed to in discussions with the candidate.
- Be accessible to the candidate at other appropriate times when he or she may need advice.
- Give detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time.
- Request written drafts at regular intervals and returning drafts with constructive comments within a reasonable amount of time.
- Assist with the writing process but not providing proofreading or editing; referring candidates to the appropriate campus resources for additional assistance with writing and/or communications.
- Schedule regular meetings to discuss the progress on the thesis with the candidate.
- Communicate clearly to the candidate when he/she is not making adequate progress or their level of work does not meet the standards expected of a master's level candidate. If the committee chair is of the opinion that a candidate is unlikely to complete his/her thesis in order to obtain the degree, the Committee Chair should notify the candidate, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chairperson of the Department.
- Provide additional assistance to the candidate who may have language differences that interfere with their progress on a thesis.
- Schedule the thesis oral defense with the Director of Graduate Studies and other committee members.
- Attend the oral defense of the thesis and provide a written assessment (i.e., scored rubric and comments) of the thesis defense as part of the examination process.
- Submit copies of the committee's completed *Thesis Rubrics* to the Director of Graduate Studies
- Sign the thesis and any other related documents to verify its successful completion. (*Master of Arts in Education Committee Approval of a Thesis*)
- Provide feedback to the candidate for revisions to be made to the thesis prior to final approval by the Director of Graduate Studies

Committee Member Responsibilities

- Provide feedback to the committee chair at the conception, research and writing of the thesis.
- Read candidate work on thesis as needed or requested by the candidate or Committee Chair.
- Meet with the candidate or the entire committee as needed.
- Attend the oral defense of the thesis and provide a written assessment (i.e., scored rubric and comments) of the defense as part of the final examination process.
- Read the final copy of the thesis and sign when approved.

Director of Graduate Studies Responsibilities

- Verify that an acceptable committee has been established; obtain Graduate Committee Approval for outside committee members.
- Decide with Graduate Committee whether University IRB approval is necessary.
- Ensure that reports on candidate's progress, if required, are received regularly according to the normal departmental procedures.
- Facilitate assistance when requested by candidate.
- Post and invite campus community to scheduled candidate presentation of thesis research at the appropriate Department professional development or alternative
- Receive the two completed copies of the approved thesis and verify that submission standards have been adhered to.
- Communicate with the Registrar's Office that the thesis has been received and accepted and that all degree requirements have been met.

Suggested Thesis Project Timeline

Components	Timeline
Committee Formed	Following the completion of EDUC 590
Chap. 1-3 submitted & approved	During EDUC 595
Meeting with Chair & Committee	Upon approval of chap. 1-3 & at least 1 time per semester during the thesis process
Draft of Thesis Submitted to Committee	By midterm of the anticipated graduation semester (2 weeks prior to defense in summer)
Oral Defense	No later than the 12th week of the anticipated graduation semester (mid-July in summer)
Submission of Final Copy	No later than the final week of the anticipated graduation semester
Presentation at Research Forum	At the next scheduled Department professional development following successful oral defense

Coauthored Theses

A single thesis that a student has coauthored with another student (or students), each of whom is a candidate for a master's degree, may be submitted provided the thesis committee gives prior approval to each student's role in the collaboration, the thesis represents the work equivalent of a single, independent thesis for each coauthor (i.e., the scope, depth of analysis, and sophistication of approach reflect the work of more than one author), and it is evident that each student has made a significant contribution to the thesis. All research, writing, and submission procedures are the same as for a single author thesis.

II. Content, Organization, and Style of Thesis

Thesis Components

It is difficult to describe the exact contents of each and every thesis, especially given the wide variety of topics and methodologies that might be selected by the prospective thesis candidate. The following descriptions are offered as a guide. Each component of the thesis is listed in the order it should occur. Format details are specified for each page and samples can be found in the Appendices.

Some components are required and others are optional. Each component is identified with a major heading unless otherwise noted. The major heading should be centered and have a 2-inch margin.

Preliminary Pages

In order of appearance:

- Title Page
- Thesis Approval (signed by committee members at defense)
- Final Reading Approval
- Honor Statement
- Abstract (not to exceed 150 words)
- Dedication, Acknowledgements and Preface (optional)
- Table of Contents, with page numbers
- Lists of Tables
- Lists of Figures; and
- List of Abbreviations or Symbols (if applicable)

The preliminary pages are counted in sequence. The title page is counted, but no page number is typed on the page. Preliminary pages are numbered with lower case Roman numerals centered within the thesis margins one line above the 1-inch bottom margin

Chapter I: Introduction

- A. Introduce the topic
- B. Background
- C. Statement of the problem
- D. Significance of the study
- E. Research question(s)
- F. Limitations and Assumptions
- G. Definitions of terms; operational definitions of terms that are highly technical to a particular discipline or are used in a unique way in the study

Chapter 2: Literature Review

- A. The literature review should be an in-depth, exhaustive look at the extant research on the proposed topic.

- B. The review should be organized according to key concepts or variables, types of samples used, methods employed or some similar device that focuses the information on the proposed topic.

Chapter 3: Methodology

- A. A statement of the methods and design utilized in completing the thesis research should be clearly stated, including, where appropriate, a justification of the specific methods to be employed.
- B. Indication of the source and availability of the participants and data should be included.
- C. The operationalization of key variables should be discussed.
- D. Where appropriate, the research hypotheses should be stated.
- E. If historically available data are to be subjected to secondary analysis, all articles, monographs or reports based on the data should be cited, along with any limitations and proposed remedies for these limitations.

Chapter 4: Findings

- A. Report the data in graphic format (i.e., tables and/or graphs),
- B. Provide an accurate analysis(es) of the data.

Chapter 5: Discussion

- A. Provide summary, discussion, and application of the findings
- B. Ideas for future research
- C. Reflection

References

Appendices

Two bound copies of the Master's thesis will be the public record of the extensive research and analysis done by Master's candidates in partial fulfillment of their graduate work. The university library and education department will collect and bind the candidate's Master's thesis and make it publicly available to other students, faculty, and outside researchers. These documents will become a visible and permanent measure of the quality of scholarship expected at Wittenberg University. In order for the thesis to be bound, it must adhere to uniform standards of format and construction. Cost for binding is \$19 per copy.

Thesis Style and Fonts

The document should be typed using Times New Roman or Arial 12 pt. This style and font applies to all aspects of the document except photo records or others facsimiles that may be part of the data collection. All page numbers should be centered at the bottom of each page. The title page counts as a page, but does not have a printed page number. All preliminary page numbers are represented with lower case Roman numerals. **All candidates must use the current edition of the *APA Style Manual* for pagination, citations, and references.**

Paper

The copies of the thesis being submitted for binding must be printed on 8 1/2" x 11" unbound white paper of 24-26 lb. weight. The paper must also meet the specification of 100% cotton rag content (i.e. acid free) and must not contain lines, smudges, spots, or shaded background. Watermarks identify cotton content, and therefore appear on each page. Copies from a laser printer or commercial copier service are required. ALL PRINTING SHOULD BE ONE-SIDED.

Margins

All pages of the final copies of the manuscript must be within the following limits:

left margins:	1.5 inches
right margins:	1 inch
top and bottom margins:	1 inch
main (title, chapter, etc.) pages, top:	2 inches

Pages of text should be of consistent length. Pages with full-page tables and figures will vary in length depending upon the amount of data displayed in the table or the size of the figure. Pages of text with a small table or figure beginning or ending the page must be the same length as pages of straight text. Because freestanding subheadings must be followed by at least two lines of text, the bottom margin may vary slightly on pages with freestanding subheadings. At least two lines of text must be placed on the last page of any section/chapter of the manuscript. If a chapter ends with only one line of text on a page, a line from the preceding page must be moved to the last page.

III. Thesis Submission Process

Submission of Completed Thesis to Director of Graduate Studies

Candidates must submit two copies of their approved thesis to the Director of Graduate Studies, both of which must be signed by all members of the thesis committee on the thesis signature page, thesis committee chair on final reading approval form, and Master's degree candidate(s) on the Honor Statement. These signatures indicate that the thesis committee has accepted the thesis. **ALL SIGNATURES MUST BE IN BLACK INK.** One copy will be kept in the Education Department archives; the other will become part of the circulating collection in Thomas Library. A third copy may be submitted for binding if the candidate wants a personal bound copy.

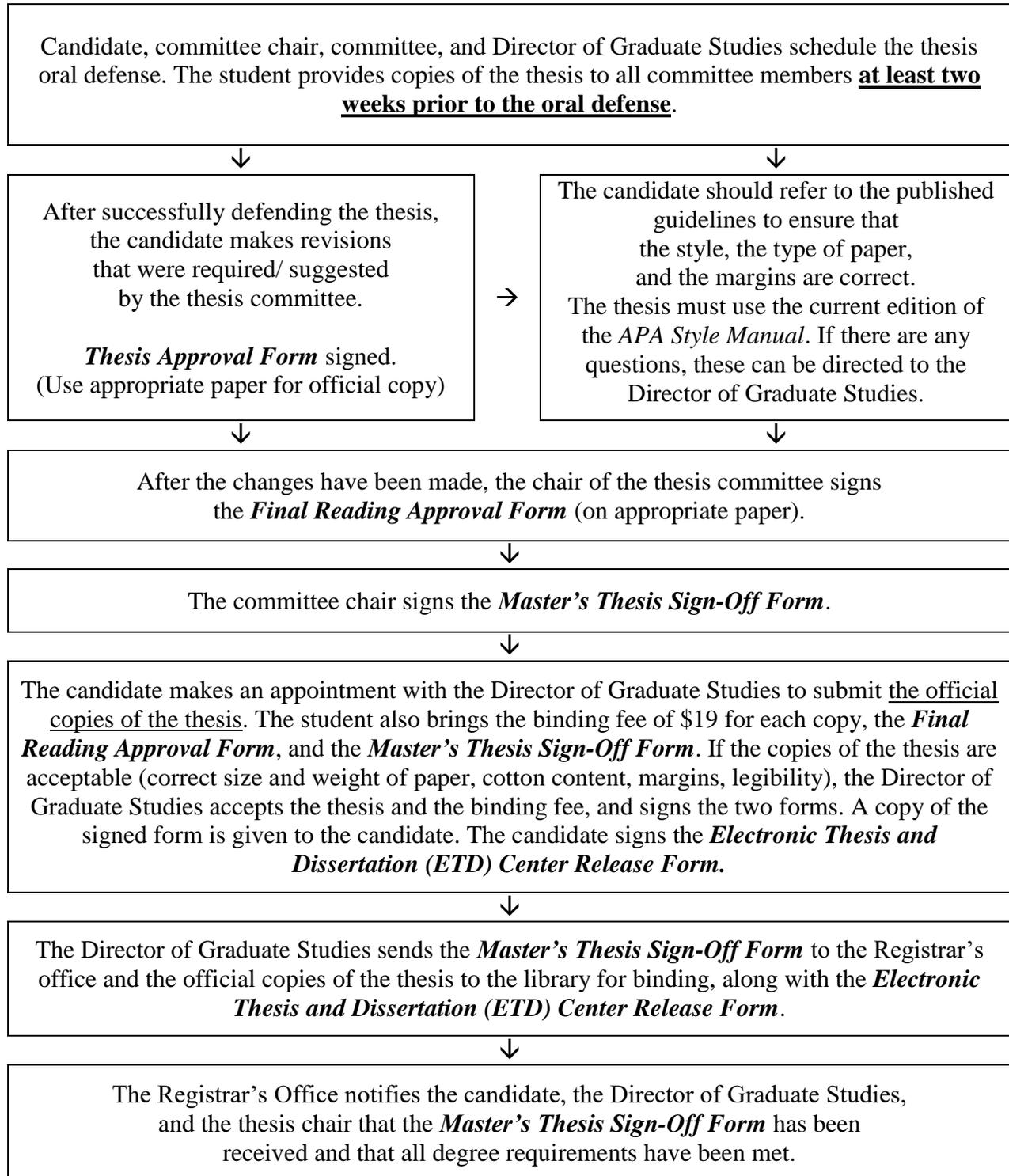
After a successful thesis defense, the candidate must prepare two or more official copies of the thesis. The candidate must also:

1. Obtain signatures of the thesis committee on the signature page that will accompany each official copy at the conclusion of a successful oral defense (two or more copies required on specific weight and content paper). This is generally completed at the oral defense.
2. Obtain Thesis Committee Chair signature on the *Master's Thesis Sign-Off Form* and *Final Reading Approval* form after all recommended changes have been made.
3. Make an appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies to submit two or more copies of the thesis and all signature pages.
4. Bring to appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies the following:
 - Two or more official copies of the thesis;
 - Completed signature pages;
 - *Master's Thesis Sign-Off Form* (signed by the Thesis Chair)
 - Binding fee (\$19 per copy) for the two official copies of the thesis

If the thesis and all other documents are acceptable, the Director of Graduate Studies will accept all documents. A copy of the *Master's Thesis Sign-Off Form* (with the signature of the Director of Graduate Studies) is given to the candidate as a receipt, certifying that the graduate program has accepted the submission of the thesis.

5. The Director of Graduate Studies sends the *Master's Thesis Sign-Off Form* to the Registrar's Office and they will, in turn, notify candidate, the thesis Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies when the candidate's record reflects completion of all degree requirements.
6. The Director of Graduate Studies forwards both thesis copies and signature pages to the Library for binding. In addition, the candidate needs a signed copy of the *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Center Release Form*.

Thesis Submission Flowchart



IV. Appendices

- Sample Title Page
- Chapter 1
- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5
- Preparing and Submitting the IRB Proposal
- Review the Institutional Review Board Policies
 - Policy on Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Procedures
 - IRB Petition
- Thesis Review Process Rubric

Sample title page

Top margin is 2 in or 2.5 inches, depending on the number of lines in the title.

Center the title, all caps, bold-faced

ADOLESCENT ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY

← One line title – 6 single spaces
Two line title – 5 single spaces

by

← 5 single spaces

Johnnie B. Good

← 6 single spaces

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Wittenberg University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

← 5 single spaces

MASTER OF ARTS

← 5 single spaces

Education Department

Wittenberg University

May 2019

Chapter One Guidelines

(Formatting: 2" from top; size 12 font; Times New Roman or Arial; bold; uppercase and lowercase)

(Example format and suggested headings)

Chapter One

Introduction

Beginning (No heading)

- Begin with a brief opening that leads the reader into the subject of your paper.
- May choose to start with a relevant quote centered in italics under the heading, and the author off centered under the quote. If including quote, write additional text to connect the quote to the subject of your study.
- This is your opportunity to interest the reader in your research, so do not be afraid to be creative in the opening.

Background (headings and subheadings are always bold print)

- 1-2 paragraphs
- Write in narrative format in past tense throughout to indicate this report was written after completion of the study.
- Describe background information such as:
 - Where study was conducted
 - Size of school, location, population, and other demographics;
 - Performance levels and other relevant instructional information;
 - A description of who you are; and
 - Any other information that sets the stage for your study
- Use school report card information (testing results, demographics, etc.)

Statement of the Problem

- 1 paragraph
- State the purpose of the study immediately in your first sentence, "The purpose of this study was . . ."

Importance of the Study

- 1-2 paragraphs
- Describe why you are undertaking this study, why it is significant, and what it is that you hope to change.
- Research Questions
- Write a short introductory sentence, such as, "One major question was explored throughout the course of this research" or "Several questions related to students' engagement in independent reading guided this study."
- Write the research questions in a numbered list.
- Establishing the Study
- 2- 3 paragraphs

- **Briefly** describe the steps and measures you would take to establish or implement the study in your classroom, school, and/or district.

Limitations

- 1-2 paragraphs
- Examples of limitations: You are limited to your class, school, district, number of students, types of data collection tools, district approved tests or texts, and length of time for your study. Your research would be limited by students who begin the study but do not finish. The implementation of your intervention was limited due to the fact that more than one researcher conducted the study, and there was no way to ensure that each researcher implemented the study in precisely the same manner.

Definition of Terms

- 1/2 - 2 pages
- Begin with an introductory statement such as “The researcher used the following terms consistently throughout this study.”
- Define relevant educational terms with appropriate citations.
- Write in bulleted list in alphabetical order.
- Terms should be bold and in italics.

Summary

- 2-6 sentences
- Review the focus of your study
- Include transition sentence that leads the reader into Chapter Two

Chapter Two Guidelines

(Formatting: 2" from top; size 12 font; Times New Roman or Arial; bold; uppercase and lowercase)

(Example format and suggested headings)

Chapter Two

Literature Review

(Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading)

- Introduction—brief opening that restates the subject of your study (no heading)
- List the topics you will include in your review
- First topic will be broadest--theoretical foundations, historical review, policies, etc.
- You must use at least **15 – 20** scholarly resources for your completed review when you turn in your thesis.
- Citations must be in correct APA format. Consult your APA manual (6th edition) for assistance.

Guidelines for writing the body of your literature review

- The topics that were listed in the introduction become your headings for the subsequent sections of the chapter.
- Headings are set up as shown in the example below. Refer to APA manual.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

(Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading)

Brief opening and overview of literature review

History of Spelling (Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading)

Start the first sentence of your paragraph here.

Debate over Instructional Methods

Traditional methods of instruction. (Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period)

Developmentally appropriate methods of instruction. Start your first sentence of the paragraph immediately following the period.

Effective Instructional Practices

Start the first sentence of your paragraph here.

Chapter Three Guidelines

(Formatting: 2" from top; size 12 font; Times New Roman or Arial; bold; uppercase and lowercase)

(Example format and suggested headings)

Chapter Three

Methodology

Brief opening

- **No heading**
- Size 12 font; Times New Roman or Arial
- Restate the subject of your paper, what you are planning to do, or how you are planning to proceed
- Identify the research method selected for your study and explain why this method was selected.

Participants

- Who was involved?
- Why were these students participating?
- What was their demographic information?
 - It might be appropriate to summarize this information in a table for your reader.
- What behaviors did they demonstrate related to your study? (for example, if you chose fluency, describe students' oral reading fluency; if you're studying spelling, describe their spelling abilities based on the Developmental Spelling Inventory (Bear, et al., _____))
- If you have more than one researcher, you must have a separate paragraph or section in which the participants are described for each researcher—Researcher A, Researcher B, etc.

Setting (or Context)

- If you have more than one researcher, you must have a separate paragraph or section in which the setting is described for each researcher—Researcher A, Researcher B, etc.
- Describe the environment, the specifics, of your room
- Physical arrangement of the room
- Any elements that are applicable to your specific study (for example, describe your classroom library if your study is related to leveling books; describe your whole group gathering area if your study is about interactive read alouds, etc.)
- Point of time in your school day in which your topic was studied or your intervention implemented; this aspect may have some bearing on your results

Data Collection

- Brief introductory paragraph telling the reader what measures you chose and what data were being collected by each measure for your study
- Thoroughly describe each tool you used to collect your data. Also, provide examples in your appendices.
 - Commercially available instrument—give author & publication date; tell what the tool measures and how it was administered to the participants
 - Researcher-developed instrument or collection strategy—describe how you designed the tool, what data you wanted to collect, and how it was administered to the participants or used to collect data
 - Recall that you gave this information in Chapter One, so make sure this correlates.

Data Analysis

- Describe how you will analyze the data collected in your study: basic descriptive statistics (mean, median, percentages, totals, etc.) for numerical data; themes and patterns for qualitative data
- Describe your analysis for each data collection instrument in the same order they were described in **Data Collection** section

Procedures

- As you describe your procedures, keep this question in mind--**Could someone else duplicate your work from your writings?** Be explicit and provide specific details.
- Organize this section in chronological order
- What did you do? Be specific and provide all the details!! (For example, if you conducted a parent information night, tell the date & time, tell in which building and room your meeting was held, number of attendees, your program for the evening, any handouts you provided, etc.)
- When did you implement each step? Give dates, not just general times. (for example, September 28, 2008 rather than fall 2008)
- Were specific directions given to the participants?
- How did you implement measures? Were data collected pre- and post-intervention, did you collect student samples throughout your study?
- Refer reader to Appendix for samples of checklists, surveys, worksheets, etc. (see Appendix A)

Summary

- 2-6 sentences
- Review the steps in your methodology
- Include transition sentence that leads the reader into Chapter Four

Chapter Four Guidelines

(Formatting: 2" from top; size 12 font; Times New Roman or Arial; bold; uppercase and lowercase)

(Example format and suggested headings)

Chapter Four

Findings

Brief opening to review the subject of your paper

Organization of the chapter

- Your research questions should guide the headings for this chapter; **bold print, left justified**. (Under each question, write a short descriptive paragraph introducing the data that will be presented.)
- Above each table or graph, write a short paragraph introducing the data being presented in the table or graph. You must specifically refer to the table or graph by name (i.e. Table 1) AND the table or graph must appear IMMEDIATELY after the paragraph in which you referred to it. If the table or graph does not fit on the page, you must move to the next page to insert it (with no new paragraph in between).
- Insert the table or graph
 - Number each table or graph; the numbering begins in chapter 1 and continues throughout the paper
 - Tables are labeled as Table _____
 - Graphs are labeled as Figure _____
- Tables and graphs are labeled differently
 - Table—Located above the table; table number in top line (no period); table title in second line with capitalization and italics (no period)—refer to the APA manual
 - Graph—Located below the graph; Figure number is italicized and followed by a period; caption follows after the period in regular font with only the first word capitalized; followed by a period—refer to the APA manual
- Continue your narrative under the table or graph, write descriptions pointing out important or interesting data presented in the preceding table or graph—highlight some of your information!!
- If there are multiple researchers, conclude the section for each research question by writing a paragraph or two in which the findings for the researchers are compared and contrasted.

Summary

- 2-6 sentences
- Review the steps in your methodology
- Include transition sentence that leads the reader into Chapter Five

Chapter Five Guidelines

(Formatting: 2" from top; size 12 font; Times New Roman or Arial; bold; uppercase and lowercase)

(Example format and suggested headings)

Chapter Five

Discussion

Brief opening

- Review the subject of your paper; let the reader know you are offering opinions and comments about the project.

Organization of the chapter

- Your research questions should guide the headings for this chapter; bold print, left justified.
- Under each question, write a short descriptive paragraph introducing the conclusions that were drawn from your findings.

Research Question #1 (restate the question)

- Discuss each finding for your question
- Tie the literature review into your discussion – this will add credibility to what you have done and learned. Was the finding different from the literature or similar to the literature? Offer your conclusions regarding these results. Remember, you are working with a small sample in your research.

Research Question #2 (restate the question)

Research Question #3 (restate the question)

Reflections

- Reflect as the researcher and think about the study and research process in general.
 - What was successful?
 - What would you do differently? Why?
 - What are the implications of your study to your school, district, education in general?
 - What do you recommend a future researcher do with your work?
 - What have you learned through this entire action research process?

Summary

- Summarize entire action research project in a paragraph
- Conclude with general statement of what you learned

Preparing and Submitting IRB proposal

- Visit the Wittenberg University Academic Affairs and Institutional Research website:
 - <https://www.wittenberg.edu/administration/provost/academic-affairs-and-institutional-research>
- Select “Research Ethics and Compliance”
 - You’ll be directed to: <https://www.wittenberg.edu/administration/provost/research-ethics-compliance>
- There is a link to training under the “Responsible Conduct of Research” heading. Click this link to be directed to the CITI Training.
 - Pass the training with an 80% or higher.
- Submit your completed IRB proposal to your thesis chair, who will submit the proposal for you.

Review Institutional Review Board (IRB) Policies

- On Research Ethics and Compliance webpage, navigate to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) section
 - Read the Introduction
- Below the Introduction section are multiple Policy documents. Pay special attention to the following:
 - Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Procedures
 - IRB Petition

Thesis Review Process Rubric

Each committee member evaluates the written thesis and oral defense using the rubric shown below. At a meeting of all committee members, a final evaluation of the thesis and oral defense is conducted and one final rubric score in each category is determined. The final rubric will be placed in each candidate's file and a copy given to the master's degree candidate.

Thesis Rubric: Part I – Written Document

	Not Pass (1 pt.)	Below Pass (2 pt.)	Pass (3 pt.)	Pass with Distinction (4 pt.)
	Writing			
Writing Mechanics	Numerous errors; poor grammar, spelling, punctuation, and/or capitalization that hinder understanding throughout	Several noticeable errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization that hinder understanding in some places	Some noticeable yet minor errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization that do not hinder understanding	No or few minor errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization that do not hinder understanding
Clarity	Literature review, research methods, results, and analyses are not clearly or reasonably presented; tables and figures are difficult to read & interpret and/or do not support findings	Literature review, research methods, results, and analyses are clearly and reasonably presented; little support with tables and figures that are rarely easy to read & interpret	Literature review, research methods, results, and analyses are clearly and reasonably presented; some support with tables and figures that are mostly easy to read & interpret	Literature review, research methods, results, and analyses are consistently presented with strong, reasonable, and easily read tables and figures
Adherence to APA style	Lack of consistent adherence to current edition of AP A style with references and in-text citations; major errors apparent throughout	Somewhat consistent adherence to current edition of AP A style with references and in-text citations; some major errors apparent	Mostly consistent adherence to current edition of AP A style with references and in-text citations; some minor errors apparent	Consistent adherence to current edition of AP A style with references and in-text citations.
Organization	Structure incomplete or confusing; headings and subheadings missing or used incorrectly	Structure is somewhat evident; headings and subheadings sometimes used	Structure is evident and appropriate; headings and subheadings used correctly throughout	Structure is clearly evident, focused, full, and purposeful; headings and subheadings used correctly throughout
	Analysis			

Analysis of literature review (synthesis and integration)	Analysis is lacking or superficial; may/may not identify theoretical/historical basis; would have been strengthened with additional sources; lacks synthesis	Analysis is clear and well organized; may/may not identify theoretical/historical basis; would have been strengthened with additional sources; lacks synthesis	Clear, if not sophisticated, analysis of sources; identifies theoretical/historical basis; appropriate research and references identified but lacks a synthesis of information	Analysis is clear and well organized; identifies theoretical/historical basis; integrates and synthesizes more than one discipline
Area of Focus (research question)	Research question lacks any focus, specificity, or relevance; does not align with research approach	Research question lacks focus, specificity, and/or relevance; may or may not align with research approach	Research question is focused, clear, relevant, and aligned with research approach	Research question is significant, precise, focused, with a clear alignment to research approach
Data Collection	Data sources lack triangulation; not aligned with the research question(s) and provide little or no supporting evidence	Data sources lack triangulation; somewhat aligned with the research question(s) and provide some supporting evidence	Multiple data sources are evident. Data sources align with the research question(s) and provide adequate evidence	Multiple data sources are evident and triangulated. Data sources align with the research questions(s) and provide compelling evidence
Data Analysis	Unacceptable data analysis identified few implications; failed to point out gaps and/or contradictions.	Less than adequate data analysis is rarely accurate; identified some implications, gaps and contradictions	Adequate data analysis is mostly accurate; identified several implications, gaps and contradictions	Strong data analysis; explored implications in thorough detail noting gaps and contradictions
Conclusions	Interpretation of data is unacceptable and demonstrates few or no insights; suggests neither further research nor implications; does not connect to information in review of literature	Interpretation of data is less than adequate and demonstrates some insights; suggests further research and/or implications; rarely connects to information in review of literature	Interpretation of data is adequate and demonstrates several insights; suggests further research and/or implications; mostly connects to information in review of literature	Interpretation of data is original and demonstrates a high level of insight; suggests further research and implications; consistently connects to information in review of literature

Thesis Rubric: Part II – Oral Defense

	Not Pass (1 pt.)	Below Pass (2 pt.)	Pass (3 pt.)	Pass with Distinction (4 pt.)
Oral Defense				
Clarity	Responses to questions were unclear and seemed to indicate lack of familiarity with the research project	Responses to questions were sometimes clear and on target, but not always; indicated a knowledge of the research project that had some gaps	Responses to questions were clear and on target; indicated a general knowledge of the research project	Responses to questions were clear, on target, and insightful; indicated a thorough knowledge of the research project
Research question(s)	Unfamiliar with the major sources or major issues related to the research question(s)	Familiar with some, but not all, of the major sources or major issues related to the research question(s)	Familiar with the major sources and major issues related to the research question(s)	Has a deep, connected understanding of the sources and issues related to the research question(s)
Research design and implementation	Lacks an understanding of the basic assumptions of the research design used	Understands only some of the basic assumptions of the research design used	Understands the basic assumptions of the research design used	Effectively evaluates the research design used and meaningfully discusses other approaches that could be used to study the research question(s) further
Conclusions	Discusses few or no points related to the validity, significance, and limitations of the research with few or no connections to the literature	Discusses some points related to the validity, significance, and limitations of the research with some connections to the literature	Discusses several points related to the validity, significance, and limitations of the research with several connections to the literature	Discusses the full scope of the validity, significance, and limitations of the research with numerous and strong connections to the literature

Total Possible Points = 52		
Not Pass = 31 and below	Pass = 32-46	Pass with Distinction = 47-52