

## FORMATTING & DEFENDING YOUR THESIS

The Office of Undergraduate Research put together this handy checklist for you to help you prepare for your upcoming defense and final submission of your thesis. Short of writing your thesis for you, we're here to help you in any way we can.

### THESIS FORMATTING

Thesis students have the option of formatting their thesis using Microsoft Word or LaTeX. Please consult your thesis director before deciding on which tool to use. To access the appropriate templates and instructions, please follow the hyperlinks below:

[Microsoft Word for PC & Mac](#)

[LaTeX](#)

### FORMAT REVIEW

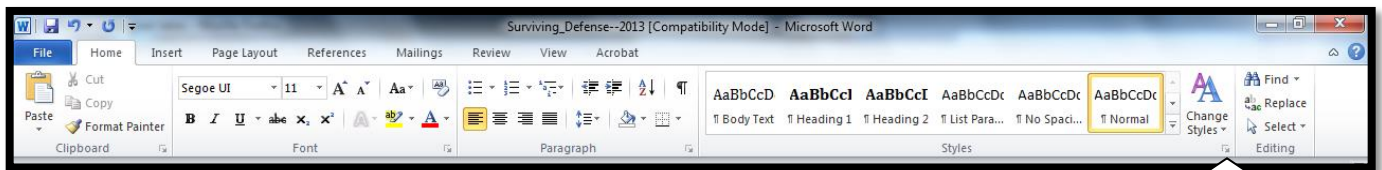
Students must use the Senior Thesis styles to ensure that their finished thesis will meet all University format regulations. If you read the guidelines and experiment with the template and/or have difficulties formatting as you go, feel free to contact Emily to make an appointment. (If having difficulty with LaTeX, please inquire at your department.) At the review, you will also receive instructions for final submission and the bond paper you need to print your title page, signature approval page, and abstract upon.

As a part of final submission, all students must have a format review. At the review, Emily, Lauren, or other staff will sit and go through parts of your thesis document with you to make sure it is formatted correctly and nothing stands out as a problem. Please schedule your formatting review ideally 2 – 3 weeks before your thesis defense and absolutely before May 21<sup>st</sup>.

### IMPORTANT FORMATTING ITEMS TO CHECK PRIOR TO REVIEW

#### POP OUT THE STYLES:

For easier access to the styles in Microsoft Word, click open the "Home" tab. Over in the section on the home tab, look for "styles." Below "change styles" there should be a small pop-down arrow.



Clicking the arrow will pop out a tool box where styles are easier to view. If not all styles are available there, click "Options..." at the bottom of the Styles tool box. It will open "Style Pane Options" and in the drop down box below "Select styles to show:" choose "All." This will give you everything (and probably more than you need)!

## **FORMATTING THE APPROVAL PAGE:**

In addition to your thesis committee, your Approval Page must have a space for a fourth signature. Our office will get this signature for you. You are responsible only for your thesis committee's signatures.

### Fourth signature for DWD:

Michelle Provost-Craig, Ph.D.  
Chair of the University Committee on Student and  
Faculty Honors

### Fourth signature for HDWD

Michael Arnold, Ph.D.  
Director, University Honors Program

Also, make sure to put in your committee's names and departments in the appropriate spaces on the Approval Page (otherwise it will read like "department of department name" and silly things like that).

## **FORMATTING THE TITLE PAGE:**

Your title page will list your degree. Use these guidelines:

### DWD Examples:

Bachelor of Arts in Art Conservation with Distinction  
Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences with Distinction

### HDWD Examples:

Honors Bachelor of Arts in History with Distinction  
Honors Bachelor of Arts in Journalism with Distinction

### Engineering Exception:

\*Engineering is an exception in that students will not include "arts" or "sciences."

Bachelor of Chemical Engineering with Distinction  
Honors Bachelor of Chemical Engineering with Distinction

Any students who are confused on what degree to put and/or unsure of the proper program title should contact either their thesis director or our office.

## **THE DEFENSE**

By April 14<sup>th</sup>, you should schedule your defense. You have between April 14<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup> to hold your defense. Faculty are insanely busy in May, so contact your committee early in the semester to arrange a date and time for your defense. Your committee consists of your thesis director (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> Reader), 2<sup>nd</sup> Reader, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Reader. Our office does not need to have a staff member present and check with your thesis director regarding whether or not you are welcome to also invite friends, parents, etc... should you so desire. Then schedule a room through your department (you can contact the administrative assistant in your department for help with this) or give the information to Emily so she can assist with scheduling. As soon as you have scheduled the date and location of your defense, please email this information to Emily ([emmiller@udel.edu](mailto:emmiller@udel.edu)) and include the date, time, and room information.

At least one week before your defense, email a final draft of your thesis to your committee. Discuss with your committee members how much advance time they need to read your thesis. This should be your most complete copy to date and should include a table of contents, lists of figures and tables, notes and bibliography. Your committee members cannot be expected to be prepared for your defense if your thesis is incomplete or they do not even have a copy of your thesis to read.

The last day to hold your defense is May 16<sup>th</sup>. At your defense, you will give a presentation of your work. Your committee will have read your thesis and have prepared questions. Your thesis director will act as moderator and a discussion of your work should develop, and your committee members will provide suggestions for required revisions. After you make these revisions, your thesis will be officially complete.

Many thesis defenses follow this format:

- Your presentation of your work
  - o Length varies but are usually 20+ minutes.
- Question & Answer session
  - o Your committee will ask questions. More information below.
- Deliberation by your committee (2 – 5 minutes)
  - o Student will need to exit the room during this time.
- Re-Group for final discussion and discussion of revisions to your thesis (5 – 20 minutes)

Generally, defenses can last anywhere from 75 minutes to 2 hours with 90 minutes being the median time.

### **Defense Advice**

- Remember! You know this material better than anyone else. At this point, you could probably defend in your sleep. So remember that when a question or moment gives you pause. You are the master!
- Committees generally start with easy questions (ex. "I noticed here on pg. 30 that you mentioned \*insert blah blah\* ... Could you talk a bit more about that?") before moving on to "push" questions. Push questions are when they may try to get you to consider aspects about your thesis that you may not have thought of.
- Sometimes these push questions can throw you for a loop. The best thing to do is remain cool, calm, and collected.
  - o Remember to breathe and if you need a moment to think about it, kindly request a moment to think about it.
  - o Possible responses can be:
    - "I hadn't thought of that. That's a great question!" Then you can try to answer it as best you can.
    - "It's not a direction I wanted to pursue because ..." Then try to explain why or why not.
    - "That's interesting, and while I was listening to you, I thought of..." While this is a stalling technique, it allows you to think out loud and jumpstart your brain.
    - "I don't have an answer for that, but thank you very much." Because sometimes you won't, and that's okay!

### **What to Bring:**

- A copy of your thesis for you to refer to.
- Your PowerPoint presentation (if you decide to use a visual; it is highly recommended).
- If needed, brief notes outlining what you'll talk about. (Do NOT stand there and just read your thesis.)

### **Before Your Defense:**

Ask your thesis director what format the defense will follow. For example, will you give a presentation

first? If so, for how long? Would a PowerPoint be appropriate? If so, great. If not, also great. Ask your thesis director for guidance.

**Invitations:**

Will your thesis defense be open to the public? The public can include peers/colleagues, friends, parents, etc... However, standard university policy for doctoral and master's candidates is this: the public may attend a doctoral candidate's defense and listen to their presentation, they may ask questions, and then they must \*leave\* when the committee begins asking questions. Thesis students follow this same format. Talk with your thesis director about how public your thesis presentation at your defense should be and what you're comfortable with.

**The Defense Report:**

Immediately after your Defense, your Third Reader will fill out your Defense Report and submit it to the Undergraduate Research Program. The Defense Report lets our office know whether you passed or failed your defense.

**Post-Defense Signatures:**

At the defense, find out when each committee member will be available to sign your final copy after you have made the final required revisions. Note: Immediately after your defense, your committee members \*may\* agree to sign the approval page of your thesis, except for your thesis director, who may wait until you make the final revisions and email it to her/him for their approval. Ask your thesis director what they prefer.

**FINAL SUBMISSION**

Our office will only accept a digital version (a PDF) of your senior thesis. You may choose to print out a copy for yourself or your thesis director, but you'll be responsible for handling this. Both the Copy Center in Trabant and Kinko's have information on printing and binding costs if you choose to get a copy printed for yourself. Our office will not print copies for you or retain copies of your thesis in paper form.

Before you submit the final copy of your thesis:

- Meet with the URP for a format review (can be held before or after your defense)
- Successfully defend your thesis
- Make all revisions requested by your committee
- Have your three committee members sign your approval page. You are not responsible for the fourth signature.

Submitting your thesis:

To submit a digital copy of your thesis, bring the following to the URP by noon on the Wednesday, May 28th:

- An electronic copy of your thesis saved as a PDF, accessible via your email or a flash drive. The file name for the PDF should be your name, last name first. (Ex: Miller, Emily.pdf)
- A print copy, on bond paper, of your:
  - o Title page
  - o Approval (signature page) signed by all three of your committee members
  - o AbstractAt your formatting review, you will have received the bond paper on which to print these items. Items will not be accepted if they are not printed on UD bond paper.
- o Signed copyright consent form (optional)

Copyright Consent: The digital copy of your thesis will be kept at the Undergraduate Research office for reference by future senior thesis candidates. With your permission as copyright holder, your thesis will also be made publicly accessible via the internet, and permanently stored in the library's Institutional Repository. To provide your permission, fill out or email the copyright submission form and submit it to the URP office. If you have any further questions about this, please contact Lauren Barsky ([lbarsky@udel.edu](mailto:lbarsky@udel.edu)).