

Chapter 2

SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS OR DISSERTATION

This chapter presents an overview of the procedures for preparing and submitting the thesis or dissertation and of the forms to be submitted and approvals to be sought.

2.1 Four Main Preparation Stages

Although you may compile a number of different versions of the thesis or dissertation in the process of your research and writing, there are four late stages in particular that are of concern in this manual. The terminology used here will appear in the “Steps in the Submission Process and Degree Certification Process”; see 2.2.

Final draft. This version is approaching finished content and should reflect a good attempt at using the required formats. It has been worked on in close consultation with the advisor and may also have involved other members of your committee. Although close to the finished form, it will be subject to further changes, possibly extensive ones, during the “formal submission” stage.

Draft for formal submission. This version is the one submitted to your graduate committee and should use the correct formats. Revisions required either after the committee’s review or from criticisms or suggestions that surface during your thesis or dissertation defense are to be incorporated. When your advisor and committee are satisfied that all of their stipulations have been met, they will sign your signatory page to indicate that the conditions for “formal submission” have been met.

Master copy. This version is the one submitted for approval to the academic officials beyond those on your thesis or dissertation committee: Department Chairperson and/or Coordinator of the Graduate Program (as determined by your college), Dean of the College, and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Graduate Studies. As stated above, all corrections that you know of, including any specified by the graduate committee, will have been made, but if any revisions are required by the officials who review your work, these will be incorporated (in consultation with your advisor and committee if appropriate) before your master copy is deemed completely prepared. (At each step, the academic officials will sign your signatory page when satisfied that their stipulations, if any, have been met.)

Final or official copies. These are the high-quality photocopies or laser-printer copies, on appropriate paper, of the accepted master version after it has been approved as being in final form by the Office of Graduate Studies. At UMass Dartmouth, two of these copies are bound and placed in the library collection. Additional copies may be required by the college, department, committee, or wanted by the author for personal use.

**Follow carefully the steps in the submission
process described here!**

2. 2 Steps in the Submission Process and Degree Certification Process

1. Review the guide and a style manual for your field; seek any clarification you need.
2. Complete the process to achieve a final draft as defined above. This process encompasses steps 3-6 here.
3. Prepare a signatory page carefully, in final form, and copy the unsigned pages onto thesis or dissertation-quality, rag-content paper (see 3.1) using a high-quality reproduction process. Make two or more copies of this

page—for as many official copies as you will ultimately want—two for the final copies for the library and one each for any copies required by your department or wanted for your own use. Every bound copy should have a signature page with original signatures on thesis or dissertation-quality paper. The type face and margins that you use must be those of the final or official copies. Be very careful about this step; if the signatory page does not meet requirements, you will have to redo it and obtain the signatures all over again!

4. Submit copies to your thesis or dissertation advisor and committee members. Normally, your defense will occur at this step.
5. Make any changes required by the advisor and committee. If you (or your committee) are not sure about some aspects of correct formatting, you may consult the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies (ext. 8029) at this stage. Such early consultation can save time in preventing the need for extensive later changes.
6. Receive committee approval. Obtain the committee members' signatures in dark ink on all copies of the signatory page.
7. You will now begin the process toward completion of the master copy (steps 8-11 here). Proofread the manuscript carefully and do all other necessary checks.
8. Prepare a copy of the work on regular paper that is cleanly photocopied or legibly printed. Sequentially, submit this copy along with required supporting materials (see the following section of this chapter) to the officials on your signature sheet, starting from the departmental level and on to the dean of your college. At each step, obtain the official's signature on all copies of the signatory page and make any corrections needed.
9. Once the dean of your college has signed, you will begin the process of converting your master copy into final or official copies. Submit the thesis or dissertation to the graduate office—still on regular paper and not the final-form copy. You should drop the copy off for the Associate Vice Chancellor

for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies to review in the next few days. Bring the signatory pages with you; they should have all signatures on them except that of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies.

10. Your copy of the thesis or dissertation will be returned showing any changes needed. If relatively few changes are required, step 11 may also occur at this time. If there are many corrections, you will be asked to resubmit another final draft.
11. This step gives authorization to prepare the actual final or official copies.

The graduate office will give you two things: the signatory pages signed by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Graduate Studies, and a memorandum authorizing submission of the final thesis or dissertation for library binding. Make any required final revisions. Now, finally, you will move to the step of making your final pages. Copy or print the final-form thesis or dissertation onto the required grade of paper—as stipulated in subsequent chapters—preparing the pages for the two library copies and for any other copies you are required to make or desire for your own use.
12. Be sure that all pages are present and in order, including the signatory pages, and that there are no printing errors (e.g., spots or lines on the paper). Also be sure that special inserts or photographs, if any, are properly in place in all copies that are to have them and are of high quality.
13. Submit the unbound pages for two final copies to the library (and for any additional copies that you will have bound by the library), accompanied by the library binding memorandum from the graduate office. At this time, as well, sign the “permission to copy” page if you have not done so already. You will pay a thesis or dissertation binding fee that covers the university’s costs in binding the library copies and any other bound copies that you may order. This fee is in addition to the graduation fee that all students pay. Finally, a copy of the approval memorandum, now signed by the library’s representative to verify that the final copies have been accepted, will need to be returned to the graduate office by you or your representative, and that

office will then notify the Registrar of your completion of this degree requirement.

The library's officer may require you to correct inadequate pages or graphics and may refer questionable instances back to the graduate office.

2.3 Forms and Verifications for Degree Completion

Early in your final semester, you should file your Intent to Graduate form in the Office of the Registrar and pay the graduation fee.

In parallel with the process of submitting a thesis or dissertation, you should be sure that your department has initiated the degree certification process. Your department must submit a Certification for Degree form that indicates your completion of all department and college requirements for graduation—courses, examinations, presentations. Your department and then the college dean sign to indicate approval and then forward this form to the graduate office, which coordinates a review and gives final approval.

Your academic record probably shows the grade “IP” (“in progress”) for your thesis or dissertation course work. When your department accepts your work as finished, the department chairperson or your advisor must change the grade on your thesis or dissertation courses to a permanent grade, through a form submitted to the University Registrar. This step should occur after successful completion of the graduate examination and at about the same time as the committee and department signatures are placed on the thesis signatory page.

The graduate office encourages departments not to wait for final thesis or dissertation approval before submitting the degree certification form, but instead to allow the two processes to move in parallel. The department should view the formal signing of your official signature pages by the department chairperson as comprising their approval of the thesis or dissertation, note that approval on the degree certification form, and then send that form forward for final approvals. Once the department and dean have signed your thesis or dissertation pages, the graduate office takes over responsibility to monitor the final approval and the preparation and

submission of final copies for the library. However, some departments will hold the degree certification papers until they receive the copy of your thesis or dissertation (if required) for the departmental archives. As stated before, the student is responsible to know about departmental procedures and requirements for the thesis or dissertation approval process.

2.4 Timing

Keep the following principles in mind: (a) each step is likely to take longer than you think it should take, (b) the closer you are to a final deadline for degree completion, the more of a “traffic jam” there will be because other people’s theses and dissertations will also need review and approval, (c) those responsible for review and approval, at all levels, have both the right and the responsibility to require revisions that are needed, and (d) although everyone should strive to be prompt so that you may meet your goal of a timely completion of all requirements, that goal shall always be of less consequence than the goal of achieving an acceptable, quality work.

At any level, when a thesis or dissertation is found to require major revision and the author must resubmit it in an acceptable form for a new review, it may not be possible for the student to produce a final, approved copy in time for graduation in a particular semester or session.

The date of your completion of all degree requirements, including the final approval of the thesis or dissertation, is the date that will determine the period of the official posting of your graduation, which may be either May/June (dependent which), September, or January. We do not back-date approvals to allow for an earlier posting. If you need documentation that you have met the requirements for the degree before your degree is actually conferred but after all requirements have been met, you may apply to the Office of the University Registrar for a letter of certification. The Registrar's Office will show the title of your thesis or dissertation on your official transcript after all final approvals are obtained.

2.5 Copies in Addition to Those for the Library

You should check with your department for the number of additional copies it or the college requires (if any). This manual has no information in it about such department- or college-level requirements. However, in addition to the final official copies for the library, you will probably need a copy for your departmental library, your advisor, and yourself. Some authors give a copy to each committee member. However, library binding may or may not be required (or desired) for these copies. If appropriate, you may have the additional copies bound elsewhere in a less expensive format.

The following checklist may prove useful.

- Receipt of all departmental and college approvals
- Application for Diploma form filed in the Registrar's Office
- The signatory page, prepared and signed in the process described
- Grade for thesis or dissertation course changed to permanent grade(s)
- Certification for Degree form prepared by your department and sent forward for approvals; arrives in graduate office
- Approval for binding obtained; final copies submitted and fee paid at the library; approval memo returned to graduate office

At this point, the graduate office gives your Certification for Degree and library binding memo forms to the Registrar, to authorize your graduation posting. That concludes the process. Congratulations are in order!