

THESIS AND DISSERTATION SERVICES EXAMPLE DISSERTATION FOR
STUDENTS SUBMITTING THEIR MANUSCRIPT

A Dissertation

by

JANE DOE

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee, John Doe
Co-Chair, Marty McFly
Committee Members, Indiana Jones
James Bond
Head of Department, Ellen Ripley

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Major Subject: Biology

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ABSTRACT

Please read the following guidelines before continuing with your manuscript. This template is formatted to meet accessibility standards. When used correctly, it will help ensure your document is accessible.

Use the provided Word Styles when creating chapters and subheadings.

Insert your abstract text here. The abstract should appear on page ii, using lowercase Roman numerals.

Do not include citations in your abstract, as it is a standalone section.

Avoid labeling any subheading as “Abstract”. If a similar term is needed, consider using “Synopsis,” “Overview,” or another appropriate alternative.

Your entire manuscript should be double-spaced (2.0 line spacing). Only specific sections—such as the Title Page, Table of Contents, and List of Figures/Tables—may be single-spaced.

For major headings, insert two blank lines between the heading and of text. Ensure spacing between major headings and the text that follows is consistent throughout your manuscript.

DEDICATION

Your dedication is an optional page. Manuscripts cannot be edited after being published, so please be mindful when writing your dedication.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The acknowledgement section is an optional page. Manuscripts cannot be edited after being published, so please be mindful when writing your acknowledgements.

CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Contributors

List contributors beneath the “Contributors” subheading. These typically include your committee members and research collaborators but may also include anyone who made a meaningful contribution to your document

Funding Sources

List funding sources beneath the “Funding Sources” subheading. If you did not receive any external funding, include a brief statement indicating that no outside funding was received

NOMENCLATURE

ETD	Electronic Thesis and Dissertations
TDS	Thesis and Dissertation Services
TOC	Table of Contents
LOF	List of Figures
LOT	List of Tables

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND SAMPLE LONG TITLE TO DISPLAY HOW EXTENDED CHAPTER HEADINGS SHOULD APPEAR IN THE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Your manuscript must be double-spaced (2.0 line spacing) throughout and use a 12-point font. The main body of your work should always begin on page 1, using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.).

For a detailed explanation of page numbering requirements, please refer to the formatting guidelines available on our website. Submissions with incorrect pagination will not be accepted.

Subheading Level 1

All level 1 subheadings must be included in the Table of Contents. Including subheadings below level 1 is optional. However, if you choose to include any lower-level subheadings, you must include all of them.

Lower-level subheadings must not appear before a level 1 subheading. For example, a level 2 subheading must always be preceded by a corresponding level 1 subheading.

Subheading Level 2

All manuscript subheadings must use the predefined Word Styles provided in the Word Styles gallery. Using these styles ensures consistent formatting across the document and allows for the automatic generation of a properly formatted Table of Contents.

Subheadings should be applied consistently according to their hierarchical level and must match the entries in the Table of Contents exactly.

Subheading Level 3

Subheadings up until level 4 have been created in the Word Styles gallery.

Major Headings

Major headings include preliminary and end material headings, while chapter headings appear in the body of your work. Both major headings and chapter headings must always be typed in all capital letters.

Major headings include: Abstract, Dedication, Acknowledgements, Contributors and Funding Sources, Nomenclature, Table of Contents, List of Figures, List of Tables, References, and Appendixes.

Although your major headings are correctly formatted using Word Styles, you still need to manually type them in all caps—otherwise, they will appear in lowercase in the table of contents. Tricky, I know

CHAPTER 2

CONSISTENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Consistency

When reviewing a manuscript, the TDS Office checks for consistency throughout the document. Key questions include: Do your subheadings match the Table of Contents exactly? Is each subheading level applied consistently? Are paragraph indentations used consistently throughout the manuscript?

Maintaining consistent formatting is essential for approval.

Justification and Indentation

Your manuscript must maintain consistency in formatting. If you choose to justify your text, the entire manuscript should be justified. However, be aware that justification can create large gaps between words, often referred to as “rivers.” To avoid this, you may instead choose to left-align the entire manuscript. Either option is acceptable, but the formatting must be consistent throughout.

Paragraph indentation should also be applied consistently across the entire document.

Accessibility

Students can find many helpful resources online for formatting assistance. Microsoft Word offers an extensive support section that can be consulted for formatting questions. Additionally, students are encouraged to visit [the IT Accessibility website](#) for guidance on accessibility standards. While the TDS Office can provide some support,

our resources are not comprehensive. In addition, our office does not provide troubleshooting in regards to accessibility formatting.

Students can refer to Chapters 3 and 4 in the Sample Dissertation for more information on accessible figures and tables.

Converting to PDF

When converting your manuscript to an accessible PDF, some cleanup may be necessary. Images that convey meaningful content **must not** be marked as decorative. In PDFs, decorative images have their alternative text (alt text) hidden, causing screen readers to ignore them. According to accessibility standards, all non-decorative content must be perceivable to all users. Failing to provide alt text for meaningful images results in non-compliance and can create barriers for users relying on assistive technologies. The TAMU IT Accessibility website can provide formatting assistance regarding PDF accessibility.

CHAPTER 3

MAKING FIGURES ACCESSIBLE

Alt Text

All figures and images included in your manuscript must contain alternative (alt) text. Manuscripts submitted to the TDS Office should try to meet accessibility standards, and providing alt text ensures that visual content is accessible to screen readers.

Alt text should briefly and clearly describe the content and purpose of the figure.



Figure 1 Informative Image of Texas A&M University. If an image is meant to demonstrate an important concept or information the text alternative should be a brief description conveying the essential information from the image.

Removing Excess Sentences in List of Figures

Your figure caption can include multiple sentences, but only the text up to the first punctuation mark (the first sentence) should appear in the List of Figures. Follow these steps to ensure only the first sentence is included in the List of Figures:

1. Insert your figure and set the text wrapping to Top and Bottom.. 2. Right-click the image and select Insert Caption. 3. Write your full figure caption (including your table title and any additional sentences). 4. Turn on formatting marks by selecting the Show/Hide button in the Paragraph section under the Home toolbar, or press Ctrl + Shift + 8 (Shift + 8 on Mac). This will help you see where formatting marks like paragraph symbols appear. 5. In your figure caption, place your cursor at the end of the first sentence. 6. Press the Return (Enter) key. A paragraph symbol (¶) will appear after the first sentence. 7. Highlight this paragraph symbol. 8a. FOR PC: On the ribbon at the top, go to the Home tab, then click the dialogue box (small arrow in the bottom right corner) in the Font section to open the Font dialog box. 8b. FOR MAC: Go to the Format toolbar and select Font. 9. Keep all settings the same except check the box labeled Hidden. 10. Click OK. 11. Go to the List of Figures (or List of Tables if you are generating a table caption) and right click. 12. Select Update Field.

The caption text will flow normally as if there were no breaks after the first sentence. When you update your List of Figures (or List of Tables), only the first sentence of your caption will appear there, while the full caption remains visible below the figure..



Figure 2 Sample Complex Image Complex data such as a graphic or diagram should have a complete text equivalent for alt text. The first part is the short description to identify the image and, where appropriate, indicate the location of the long description. The second part is the long description – a textual representation of the essential information conveyed by the image.

Further Assistance

Please refer to our Template Walkthrough for additional formatting questions.

Students are also encouraged to reference our Sample Dissertation on our website to see what a properly formatted manuscript will look like at the end of the formatting process.

Figures in the List of Figures

Your list of figures should already be formatted up to a certain point. Additional lines of text in your list of figures should be single spaced together. The same principle

applies to the List of Tables. Refer to the sample table title in the List of Tables for an example.



Figure 3 Landscape Orientation Figure

CHAPTER 4
MAKING TABLES ACCESSIBLE

Table 1 Standard Accessible Table

Element	Abbreviation	Number on the Periodic Table
Iron	Fe	26
Gold	Au	79
Silver	Ag	47

Table Accessibility

Use the Built-in Table Tools. Insert tables using Word’s Insert Table feature, not by manually creating with tabs or spaces.

Add a Clear Table Title. Use the Table Properties dialog to add a descriptive title (can be inserted above the table or as a caption).

Use Header Rows. Designate the first row as the header row by selecting “Repeat Header Rows” under the Table Layout tab. Format the header row cells clearly (e.g., bold text) to visually distinguish them.

Ensure Proper Reading Order. Make sure your table flows logically from left to right, top to bottom. Avoid merged or split cells, if possible, as these can confuse assistive technologies.

Avoid Empty Cells. Fill empty cells with “N/A” or another clear indicator if no data is available

Table Titles

Table titles should be placed above the table, while figure titles should be placed below the figure. These positions are already set in the template using the Insert Caption function.

Table 2 This table serves as an example to illustrate how long sentences are formatted correctly in the List of Tables using a proper hanging indent.

Table Cell 1	Table Cell 2	Table Cell 3
Blue	Green	Red
Yellow	Orange	Purple

Margins

All figures and tables must fit within the established margins. If a figure or table is too large, you may orient the page sideways (landscape orientation). However, if you do this, the page number must still appear at the bottom of the page, not along the left-hand side.

CHAPTER V

CONVERTING TO PDF

When you're ready to submit your manuscript, you must convert the document to a PDF file, as Vireo only accepts PDF submissions.

Converting a Word Document to a PDF

Please refer to our Template Walkthrough guide on our website for explicit instructions on properly converting your Word document to a PDF. Following these instructions will ensure you have proper tagging and a smoother conversion process.

REFERENCES

1. Texas A&M University. "Creating Documents." *Itaccessibility.tamu.edu*, 23 July 2025, itaccessibility.tamu.edu/incorporating_accessibility/docs.html. Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.
2. ---. "Digital Accessibility - Learning Management System." *Lms.tamu.edu*, 2025, lms.tamu.edu/digital-accessibility. Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.
3. ---. "Guidelines for Theses, Dissertations, and Records of Study." *Tamu.edu*, 2021, grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center/grad-student-resources/guidelines-for-theses. Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.
4. Utah State University. "PDF Accessibility." *Webaim*, 2025, webaim.org/techniques/acrobat/convert/#word. Accessed Aug. 2025.

APPENDIX A

An Appendix is an optional end material. An Appendix usually contains supplementary information. An Appendix should always be last and may not appear before REFERENCES in the end materials order.

APPENDIX B

You can have more than one Appendix. Each Appendix must have its own unique labeling (A, B, C, etc) and/or title.