

GUIDELINES FOR DISSERTATIONS AND THESES USING PUBLICATIONS

GRADUATE GROUP IN ECOLOGY & JOINT DEGREE PROGRAM IN ECOLOGY

The expected format for PhD dissertations and MS theses in the GGE and JDPE can be somewhat different from the traditional format at other universities. In recognition of the importance of a publication record for obtaining post-doctoral or other academic appointments, the GGE and JDPE have elected to emphasize a format where chapters of the dissertation or thesis take the form of individual publishable papers. Typical expectations are a minimum of at least one manuscript paper for the MS thesis and three manuscripts for the PhD dissertation.

Co-authored manuscripts and ones in which the student is not first author are accepted by Graduate Studies. It is the GGE and JDPE's preference that students' dissertations be made up of first author manuscripts, however, your dissertation committee has final approval on the form and content of your dissertation.

I. Title Page

How to Structure your Title Page

- a. Line 1 – **The exact title** of your thesis. Capitalize the first letter of each word that would normally be capitalized in a title.
- b. Line 2 – Your full name as it appears on University records. Do not use initials
- c. Line 3 – Indicate if this a dissertation or thesis. PhD's will always use the term dissertation, MS's will always use the term thesis.
- d. Line 4 – Degree objective (MS or PhD)
- e. Line 5 - Your official major as it appears on your University records
- f. Line 6 – Signature space for your committee Chair with their name printed below, followed by the title of Chair
 - a. Additional lines should be added for each committee member signing your Dissertation
- g. Line 7 – Year your degree will be conferred
- h. The title page is always numbered as small Roman numeral -i-.

[See sample here](#)

II. Acknowledgments

III. Abstract

IV. Introduction

a. *Literature review.* **This section is optional**, to be determined at the discretion of the Thesis/Dissertation Committee. Normally, the intact papers will review the relevant literature in their introductions and discussions. This section can be used to provide a more

thorough review of the literature than is acceptable in the intended journal, if deemed necessary by the Committee.

b. *Organization and integration of the thesis/dissertation.* As in any paper, the last paragraph of the introduction should guide the reader through the material to be presented; it should make the reader aware of the logic, organization, and goals of the text to follow, whether that text is a single paper or a series of papers.

c. *Alternative to traditional introduction.* With the approval of your thesis/dissertation committee, the requirement for an introduction can also be met by writing an article for popular press outlining your research and its significance or relevance.

V. Chapters as Papers

a. *A brief one-page or one-paragraph "bridge"* may be presented with (before or after) each paper to tie the separate papers together. **This is optional**, to be determined at the discretion of the Thesis/Dissertation Committee.

b. *Paper(s).* The intact papers should be as self-sufficient as possible and should be ready to submit, already submitted, or reprints. Your dissertation committee will determine if a paper that has not yet been submitted can be used as one of your chapters. Please confer with them beforehand to establish whether or not they will accept a non-submitted paper as a chapter.

VI. Summary. This section is optional, to be determined at the discretion of the Thesis/Dissertation Committee. The summary should synthesize the dissertation chapters. This section should not cut and paste summaries from individual chapters, although it can include a summary paragraph about individual chapters. The focus of the summary should be an over-arching synthesis of the entirety of the dissertation. The summary may contain elements in common with the general summary for lay audiences written as a component of the dissertation proposal. However, this is not just a summary for lay audiences and should capture key scientific findings that are of a broad nature.

VII. Bibliography. This section is optional as a separate Bibliography; alternatively, a "Literature Cited" section can be included with the separate papers in the usual way.