

Northeastern  
University

Graduate School of  
Engineering

# **[COE STYLE GUIDE FOR THESES AND DISSERTATIONS]**

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## Format Requirements

### Paper Requirement

- Standard 8½“ x 11” white paper must be used for the submitted copy to the Graduate School of Engineering.

### Font

- All text, page numbers, table numbers, figure numbers, captions, references, and footnotes as a rule must be in the same font. For general text, type size should neither be less than 10 point font nor more than 12 point font. Headings can be larger. **Be consistent throughout text with regards to font and font size.** Font and font size may be varied for symbols or emphasis when appropriate (e.g., for scientific or mathematic terms).

### Spacing

- Spacing of all text within the thesis, including references, should be either 1.5 or double-spaced. Be consistent with regards to spacing.
- Long quotations, headings, and captions may be single-spaced. Multi-lined and subdivision headings, figure and table captions, footnotes, and endnotes are normally single-spaced.

### Page Margins

- Left: 1.5“; Right: 1”; Top: 1.0”; Bottom: 1.0”. The margin requirements are standard for a bound thesis.
- Avoid ending pages with one-line paragraphs or with only the first line of text from a paragraph continuing on the following page. Paragraphs ending pages of text must contain at least two lines of text or be moved to the top of the following page.
- All tables and figures, including their captions, must conform to margin requirements.

### Page Numbers

- All pages containing text or figures/tables are numbered. Except for the title page and the cover page, page numbers must be placed on each page of the thesis.
- Preliminary pages (e.g., abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, etc.) are numbered consecutively in lowercase Roman numerals. Text and all reference pages, including appendices, are numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals beginning with “1” on the first page of text.
- Page numbers should be placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page. Page numbers must be in the same font and font size as your text.
- Title pages are technically the first numbered pages (Roman numeral “i”). However, the numeral “i” does not appear on the title page. The first page following the title page (usually the dedication or acknowledgments) is numbered “ii.”

### Title Page

- This section is required.

- The title page must include the full, official title of your thesis, your full name as it appears in the Northeastern University records, the full title of the degree awarded, the date the degree is to be conferred, the University name and the city/state of the campus. Be sure to spell out “Massachusetts” when listing location of the degree-awarding campus.
- The degree title for all doctoral candidates is “Doctor of Philosophy.” The degree title for all master’s students is “Master of Science.” The date shown on your title page is the month (May, August, or December) and the year the degree is to be conferred (not your defense date).
- Title pages are not numbered but are technically counted as page “i” of the preliminary pages.
- Information is centered between the left and right margins (not the edges of the document).
- See the title page example for spacing, capitalization, and punctuation formatting.

## Acknowledgements

- This section is optional.
- Acknowledgements include brief statements of appreciation or recognition.
- Do not include the acknowledgments page in the table of contents.
- The heading “ACKNOWLEDGMENTS” (in capital letters) is centered between the left and right margins, without punctuation or underlining, two inches from the top of the page, with the text beginning three single-space lines below.
- Vertical spacing of the text must be the same as in the rest of your thesis (e.g., 1.5 or double-spaced).
- Page numbers should be in lower case Roman numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

## Preface

- This section is optional.
- Prefaces are not listed in the table of contents.
- The heading “PREFACE” (in capital letters) is centered between the left and right margins, without punctuation or underlining, two inches from the top of the page, with the text beginning three single-space lines below.
- Vertical spacing of the text must be the same as in the rest of your thesis (e.g., 1.5 or double-spaced).
- Page numbers should be in lower case Roman numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

## Table of Contents

- This section is required.
- Each chapter should be numbered. In addition, each section and sub-section should be numbered.

- The heading “TABLE OF CONTENTS” (in capital letters) is centered between the right and left margins, without punctuation or underlining, two inches from the top of the page. The list begins at the left margin three single-space lines below the heading.
- All material following the heading “TABLE OF CONTENTS” is listed. No preceding material is listed.
- Headings of parts, sections, chapters, and their principal subdivisions are listed in the table of contents and must be worded exactly as they appear in the body of your thesis. When listing the heading/sub-headings, list the same levels of headings and subheadings consistently for each chapter.
- Dotted leaders are required between headings and page numbers.
- If your table of contents continues beyond one page, allow a one inch top margin on successive pages.
- Page numbers should be in lower case Roman numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

### List of Tables

- This section is optional, but strongly recommended
- The heading “LIST OF TABLES” (in capital letters) is centered between the left and right margins, without punctuation or underlining, two inches from the top of the page. The list begins at the left margin three single-space lines below the heading.
- Dotted leaders are required between captions and page numbers.
- This section contains exactly the same numbers and captions appearing below the figures in the text and appendices.
- If your list of tables continues beyond one page, allow a one inch top margin on successive pages.
- Page numbers should be in lower case Roman numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

### List of Figures

- This section is optional, but strongly recommended. The heading “LIST OF FIGURES” (in capital letters) is centered between the right and left margins, without punctuation or underlining, two inches from the top of the page. The list begins at the left margin three single-space lines below the heading.
- Dotted leaders are required between captions and page numbers.
- This section contains exactly the same numbers and captions appearing below the figures in the text and appendices.
- If your list of figures continues beyond one page, allow a one inch top margin on successive pages.
- Page numbers should be in lower case Roman numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

### Lists of Symbols, Abbreviations, Nomenclature, or Glossary

- This section is optional.
- Lists of symbols, lists of abbreviations, nomenclature, or glossary may be appropriate for some theses. If needed, these appear after lists of tables and figures. One and a half or double-spacing, is used between entries and single-spacing within entries. Be consistent with regards to spacing.
- Page numbers should be in lower case Roman numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

## Abstract

- This section is required.
- The abstract must not exceed 350 words, and must appear immediately following the title page.
- You will upload the abstract to the ETD Administrator along with your thesis.
- The heading “ABSTRACT” (in capital letters) is centered between the left and right margins, without punctuation or underlining, two inches from the top of the page. The first paragraph begins three single-space lines below the heading, is single-spaced, and begins at the left margin.
- The first paragraph should be a statement of the thesis problem, a brief description of the research and a summary of your findings.
- Mathematical formulas, diagrams, and other illustrative materials should not be used in your abstract.
- The vertical spacing must be the same as the spacing in the rest of your text.
- Page numbers should be in lower case Roman numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

## Body Content\*

- This section is required.
- The body of the thesis is the substance of your thesis, the comprehensive statement of your research.
- The body of your thesis follows the preliminary sections. A standard, and consistent, organizational scheme must be adopted and used throughout your thesis.
- Sections should be numbered consecutively throughout your thesis.
- MS Word has a tendency to add extra spacing after tables and figures, which, in turn, pushes down text on subsequent pages. Please watch for pushed down text and correct accordingly.
- Page numbers should be in Arabic numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

*\*Consult your department guidelines for precise components and sections of the body (if applicable).*

- [Chemical Engineering Graduate Guidebook](#)

## References

- This section is required.
- The list of references contains sources utilized during the course of your research.
- The heading “REFERENCES” (in capital letters) should appear two inches from the top of the page, centered and without punctuation or underlining.
- Vertical spacing of the text must be the same as in the rest of your thesis (e.g., 1.5 or double-spaced).
- Reference entries must not be divided between pages. In order to avoid dividing reference entries, you should either extend the bottom margin to accommodate the entire entry or shift the entire entry to the top of the next page and leave the bottom of the previous page blank.
- For questions regarding reference examples, students should consult the [\*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association\*](#).
- Page numbers should be in Arabic numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

## Appendices

- This section is optional.
- Appendices are used for supplementary illustrative material, original data, computer programs, and other material not necessarily appropriate for inclusion within the text of your thesis.
- The heading “APPENDIX” (in capital letters) should be listed in the table of contents as a major heading.
- Within the appendix section, the heading “APPENDIX” is centered and placed two inches from the top of the page.
- Appendix headings are centered on the page.
- Appendix tables and figures must be included in the list of tables and the list of figures. They are numbered and are uniquely captioned. Appendix tables and figures are subject to the same rules covering tables and figures in your text.
- Page numbers should be in Arabic numerals and placed in the upper right corner, ½ inch below the top edge of the page.

## Notes and Footnotes

- This section is optional.
- The main requirement for the notes and footnotes is consistency.
- When footnotes are used, begin and end them on the same page. If necessary you can slightly reduce the font size, use single-spacing, or slightly extend the bottom page margin to accommodate the entire note on one page.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS



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TITLE OF DISSERTATION

A Dissertation Presented

By

(full name, including middle name of author)

to

The Department of (department name)

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the field of

(field name, e.g. Environmental, Computer Engineering)

Northeastern University  
Boston, Massachusetts

(month and year of degree conferral)

TITLE OF MS THESIS

A Thesis Presented

By

(full name, including middle name of author)

to

The Department of (department name)

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Master of Science

in the field of

(field name, e.g. Civil Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering, etc.)

Northeastern University  
Boston, Massachusetts

(month and year of degree conferral)

**SAMPLE PAGES**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The acknowledgments section is optional. Most theses include a brief statement of appreciation or recognition. The formatting must be consistent with the body content of your thesis.

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REFERENCES

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