



FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY

Thesis Format and Timeline Manual

Office of Graduate Studies

Thesis Format

All students writing a thesis or formal project must follow the directions provided in this manual and the guidance of their advisor, where noted.

Structure

Section Name	Section Type	Required/Optional*	Numbering
Title Page	Front matter	Required	Count but do not number
Thesis Approval Page	Front matter	Required	Count but do not number
Dedication Page	Front matter	Optional	Lower case Roman numerals i. ii. iii. iv. etc
Acknowledgments	Front matter	Optional	Lower case Roman numerals i. ii. iii. iv. etc
Table of Contents	Front matter	Required	Lower case Roman numerals i. ii. iii. iv. etc
List of Tables	Front matter	If any tables are present	Lower case Roman numerals i. ii. iii. iv. etc
List of Figures	Front matter	If any figures are present	Lower case Roman numerals i. ii. iii. iv. etc
List of Abbreviations	Front matter	If any abbreviations are present	Lower case Roman numerals i. ii. iii. iv. etc
List of Symbols	Front matter	If any symbols are present	Lower case Roman numerals i. ii. iii. iv. etc
Abstract	Front matter	Required	Count but do not number
Introduction	Body content	Required	Arabic numerals
Literature Survey	Body content	Required	Arabic numerals
Research Methodology	Body content	Required	Arabic numerals
Results	Body content	Required	Arabic numerals
Discussion	Body content	Required (may combine with Results)	Arabic numerals
Conclusions	Body content	Required	Arabic numerals
Future Work	Body content	Optional	Arabic numerals
Appendices	Back matter	Required	Arabic numerals
References	Back matter	Required	Arabic numerals

**With approval from Thesis advisor, required sections may be adjusted.*

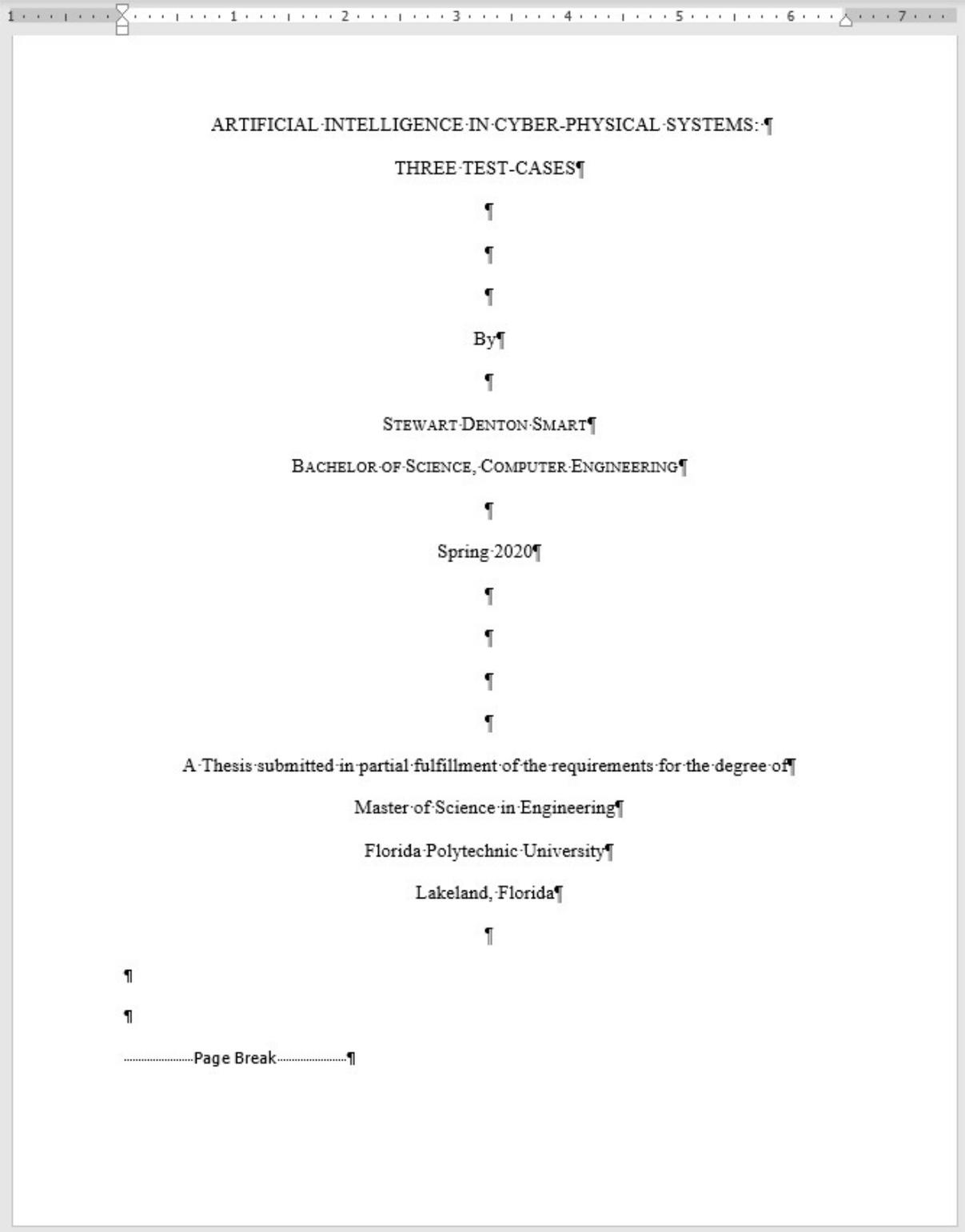
Front Matter

Title page [unnumbered]

This is the first page of the thesis, and it contains the following information:

- Thesis title (All uppercase)
- Student's name (All small uppercase)
- Student's existing/earned degree
- Semester and year thesis is submitted
- "A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of"
- Student's degree to be earned
- Florida Polytechnic University
- Lakeland, Florida

The title page should be double-spaced throughout. Please note margins, spacing, capitalization, and font - 12pt Serif (ex: Times New Roman).

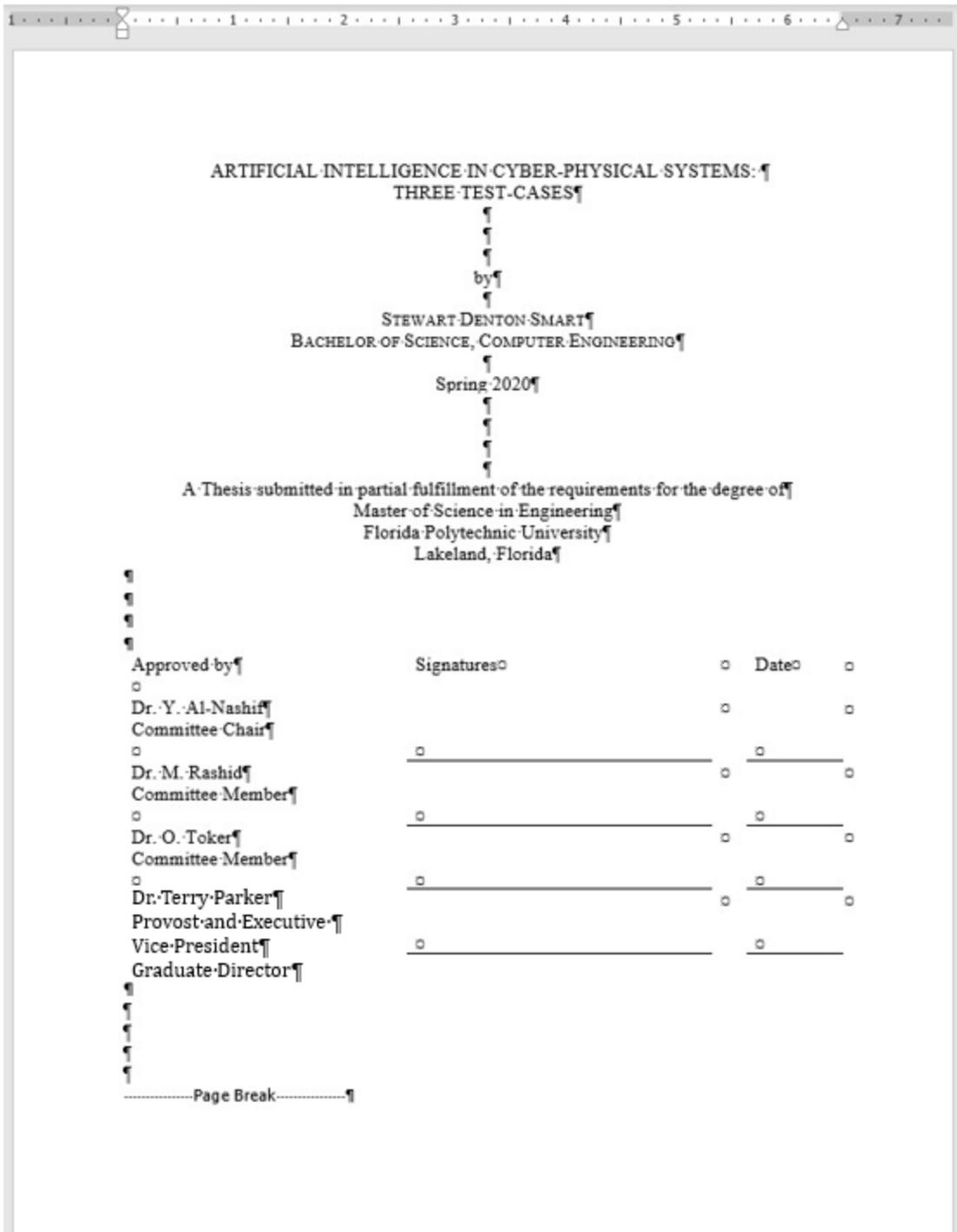


Thesis Approval Page [unnumbered]

- This page is similar to the title page with the signature from the committee and the graduate director.

- This should be *single-spaced* to leave room for signature block.
- Signature section is achieved with a 4-column table with grid-lines under signature and date columns only.

Please note margins, spacing, capitalization, and font - 12pt Serif.



Dedication Page [optional, roman number]

- This is a short message from the student in tribute to a person or a cause. The dedication page TITLE (“DEDICATION”) should be all uppercase, bold, and centered. Use a blank line to separate the title from the body.

Acknowledgment Page [optional, roman number]

- This is a page with a thank you statement from the student to recognize those who provided support or guidance or both. The acknowledgment page TITLE (“ACKNOWLEDGMENTS”) should be all small caps, bold, and centered. Use a blank line to separate the title from the body.

Table of Contents [Page Number: Roman Numerals]

- The TITLE (“TABLE OF CONTENTS”) of the table of contents should be all small caps, bold, and centered. Use a blank line to separate the title from the body.
- The entries for the table of contents must include the title of the major headings of the document, such as chapters, sections, subsections, acknowledgments page, dedication page, references, and appendices.
- The entries for the table of contents must include the page number for each heading.
- An optional and recommended formatting attribute is to make the entries for the table of contents as hyperlinks that take the reader directly to the page of the clicked heading.

List of Tables [Page Number: Roman Numerals]

- Each entry in the List of Tables should include the table number, the table caption, and the page number.
- The TITLE (“LIST OF TABLES”) of the list of tables should be all small caps, bold, and centered. Use a blank line to separate the title from the body.

List of Figures (and Illustrations) [Page Number: Roman Numerals]

- Each entry in the List of Figures should include the figure number, the figure caption, and the page number.
- The TITLE (“LIST OF FIGURES”) of the list of figures should be all small caps, bold, and centered. Use a blank line to separate the title from the body
- *Recommendation:* If possible, use graphs instead of tables.

List of Abbreviations [optional, Page Number: Roman Numerals]

- Each entry in the List of Abbreviations must include the abbreviation and its definition.
- List the abbreviations in alphabetical order.
- The TITLE (“LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS”) of the list of abbreviations should be all small caps, bold, and centered. Use a blank line to separate the title from the body.

List of Symbols [optional, Page Number: Roman Numerals]

- Each entry in the List of Symbols must include the symbol and its definition.
- The TITLE (“LIST OF SYMBOLS”) of the list of symbols should be all small caps, bold, and centered. Use a blank line to separate the title from the body.

Abstract

- The abstract should be less than 450 words (check with advisor)
- The abstract is a summary of the thesis' purpose, hypothesis, methods used, and results.
- The abstract section's title ("Abstract") should be title case, bold, and centered. Use a blank line to separate the title from the advisor(s) line.
- The advisors' line contains the list of advisors and co-advisors separated by commas. Use a blank line to separate the advisors' line from the body.

Content - The Chapters

Introduction [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- The introduction chapter should emphasize the purpose of the study and summarize the background and importance of this research. This chapter should also clearly state the hypothesis and the objectives of the research. Finally, this chapter should introduce the user to the outline of the thesis.

Literature survey [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- The literature review will summarize the existing research in the field with references to these research studies and their authors. At the end of the literature review, clearly state the identified gaps in the existing research solutions and address these gaps by this thesis. In other words, you are introducing the reader to your work in the next chapter.

Research Methodology [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- This chapter will provide details on the chosen methods, designs, measures, and philosophy behind these choices. In addition, this chapter should include a description of any experiment conducted.

Results [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- This chapter contains the result of the thesis. If possible, organize the thesis's results into figures. Otherwise, organize the results into tables. Finally, divide the results into sections and subsections based on the research questions they address.

Discussions [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- This chapter contains the analysis, explanations, and discussions of the results. It should also include statements whether the results support the hypothesis or not, with some reasoning if it does not.

Conclusion [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- This chapter should be a summary of the study indicating whether the study met its goals or not.

Future Work [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- This chapter is a recommended optional chapter. It will present the possible future research paths that will build on this study.

Back Matter

Appendices [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- Move any material that is not essential for the thesis to the appendices. Each appendix should have a number and a title-examples of the material to move to appendices: code, long tables, etc.

References [Page Number: Arabic Numerals]

- Accurately and correctly generate a formatted list of all cited references in the text. Note that the bibliography is the list of general references, including the uncited references. As a recommendation, use only cited references and set the title of this section to be “REFERENCES.”
- If you need to include a list of uncited references in the thesis, then set the title of this section to “BIBLIOGRAPHY.”

Important Note: The number of pages per chapter or section depends on the type of research that you are doing. However, usually, the background or literature review chapter will take the most considerable portion of the thesis, followed by the results analysis and discussion chapter.

Formatting

Thesis formatting requirements must be observed throughout the entire manuscript, and all chapters must use the same formatting.

- All pages, unless otherwise stated below, should be single-column double space.
- Margins –
 - 1 inch all around. Add one extra inch on the top margin of the first page of each chapter, title page, the first page of the table of contents, acknowledgments page, dedication page, the first page of references, and the first page of each appendix.
- **OR**
- 1 inch all around, all pages.
- The body font is Serif font with size 12 pt. No less than 10pt font for any subscript or superscript text.
- The text must have left justification or fill justification, but not right justification.
- Headings should not appear by themselves at the end of a page.

Page Numbering

- The numbering of all the front matter pages should be in lowercase roman numbers except for the title page and the thesis approval page. The title and thesis approval pages don't have numbers. Use Arabic numerals as the page number for the rest of the pages. Start the page numbering with the first page of chapter 1 to be page number 1.

Paragraph

- Every paragraph's first sentence must start with an indentation of 0.5 inches except for the first paragraph following each heading (chapter, section, subsection, and title).

Captions

- All caption numbers for tables, figures, and illustrations use Arabic numerals.
- The caption of any figure should be directly below the figure and on the same page as the figure. The table's caption should be directly above that table and on the same page as the table.
- The captions should be centered.

Quotations

- Quotations should be limited. Paraphrase what you want to quote in your own words, and make sure to include the reference.
- If eliminating the quotation is not possible, then use the double quotes (") to surround the quotation if the quotation's size is less than three lines or use the block quotation the quotation is more than three lines. For block quotation, use a separate paragraph or paragraphs with a single indentation for the whole quotation without surrounding it with double quotes.

Footnotes

- Use Arabic numerals for the footnotes.
- Footnotes should appear on the same page as their citers.

- Footnotes, like the rest of the text, must follow the margins restriction.
- A solid line separates the footnotes from the text.
- On each page, the footnotes should not exceed two inches.

References and Citations

- Use a style consistent with your discipline and approved by your committee (ex: [IEEE](#), [APA](#), [ASME](#)).
- References section should begin at a new page.
- Use single-spaced lines for the entries of the references. Use an empty line to separate them from each other.

Intellectual Property and Copyright Information

Students should review and familiarize themselves with Florida Polytechnic University policy **FPU-1.0061P**. This Intellectual Property policy details how the ownership of intellectual property is assigned at the University. Sections I and J reproduced below, Student Intellectual Property and Student Sponsored Projects, are particularly relevant for graduate students working on theses and projects:

Student Intellectual Property

The University respects the long-standing tradition that students own their academic work. In general, any Intellectual Property (including theses and dissertations, inventions, discoveries, creations and new technologies) conceived or first reduced to practice by a student at the University as a work product (e.g., homework assignments, laboratory experiments and special and independent study projects) of a “for credit” course will be owned by the Student Creator. Generally, undergraduate and graduate Students own any Intellectual Property that they create through enrollment in a University course for academic credit. However, the University owns such Intellectual Property when one or more of the following apply:

1. When there is collaboration between a Student and University employee(s) to create works as part of a sponsored research project or faculty development activities.
2. In certain courses or special projects where a Student is presented with the opportunity to participate in a project or activity in which the ownership of any resulting Intellectual Property must be assigned either to the University or to a sponsoring entity as a condition of the Student’s participation.
3. When the Student is employed by the University, in which case the terms applicable to University employees shall apply.

Although a student retains copyright ownership to his/her thesis or dissertation or other Student-created Works, the Student grants the University permission to use, reproduce and publicly distribute copies of those Works.

Sponsored Student Projects

1. Students are never obligated to participate in projects or activities that require the assignment of the Student’s Intellectual Property to the University or another entity. In these situations, Students must always be presented with two options to choose from:
 - a. participate in a project or activity that does not require the Student to assign his/her Intellectual Property; or
 - b. participate in a project or activity that requires the Student to assign his/her Intellectual Property.
2. A Student’s grade and/or evaluation of performance in a University course shall not be affected by the Student’s decision to participate or not to participate in projects or activities requiring the assignment of the Student’s Intellectual Property. Students should consider that the assignment of Intellectual Property is a binding legal agreement and that they have the right to seek independent legal advice at their own expense prior to signing any agreement.
3. Student project results are not the work of the University and any references either internally or to third parties shall clearly identify the source of the student project results as student research performed at the University without subsequent independent evaluation.

Because manuscript PDFs are archived and ultimately made available on the Internet, written permission is needed for use and electronic publication of copyrighted text, figures, tables, and objects. Please see Appendices for a sample copyright permission request. Also, it is wise to include a copyright page in all electronic theses or project reports. The copyright page should appear immediately after the title page. Proper format of this page is shown in the [Copyright Page](#) section of this manual. While it is not necessary to register copyright, students may do so through the [U.S. Copyright Office](#).

Using Previously Published Or Pre/In-Press Work as Body Chapter

Sometimes, the student's thesis research or project work is conducted as part of a major research grant or contract, or even as part of some collaborative program. The faculty advisors are likely to encourage these students to report their results as soon as possible, the result being that students may have the opportunity to publish material prior to preparing the thesis or project report. In such cases, pre-press, in-press or previously published materials may be incorporated into the thesis or project report if approved by the Thesis Committee or Project Advisory Group and formatted in accordance with all requirements specified in this manual. This format may include one or more full-length papers (published and/or to be published) that are joined through introductory and/or transition sections.

- All articles/chapters to be included in a manuscript must have a common thread and must study a common problem; collections of unrelated papers are not acceptable.
- The inclusion of any articles that are previously published, in press, or accepted for publication requires that the student obtain permission from the copyright holder. The copyright release/permission letter(s) should be included with the manuscript, in an appendix (see Appendix D for an example).
- A statement disclosing previous publication must be placed at the beginning of or in a footnote on the first page of each chapter or section with previously published content.
- The statement should include the author name(s), publication name, edition, and date of publication; pending publications should list anticipated edition and/or dates.

Co-authored material will only be considered if

- The Graduate Thesis Committee agree that the student is primarily responsible for the article's content;
- Those portions and materials contributed by the student are identified;
- Permission is granted by the co-author(s); and
- The program or department approves the inclusion of the articles in question.
- No multiple-authored theses are acceptable.
- Only articles that the student prepared while working as a Florida Poly student will be acceptable for inclusion in a manuscript.
- A single abstract and introduction chapter for the manuscript are required, even if individual chapters have their own abstract and introduction.
- References for previously-published sections can be collected by chapter or in one reference section at the end of the document.

Example Copyright Permission Letter

Letterhead stationery or return address

Date

Name and address of addressee

Dear _____:

Optional beginning sentence: This letter will confirm our recent telephone conversation. I am completing a master's thesis/project at Florida Polytechnic University entitled "____." I would like your permission to reprint in my thesis/project report excerpts from the following:

Insert full citation and description of the original work.

The excerpts to be reproduced are: *insert detailed explanation or attach copy.*

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my thesis/project report, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your signing of this letter will also confirm that you own *or your company owns* the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,
Your name and signature

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

By: _____
Typed name of addressee below signature line

Date:

Timeline and Procedures

Timeline

The following timeline is a *guide* to help you plan your path to thesis completion. Each department or advisor may have additional (or earlier) procedures and deadlines for the following activities.

Semester 1: Exploration

Throughout the semester:

- Explore research topics and potential thesis advisors (if not already selected).
Your department may ask for a thesis pre-proposal prior to end of fall term.

Semester 2: Proposal and Committee

No later than 2nd week:

- Identify your thesis advisor.

No later than end of term:

- Defend your thesis proposal.
- Submit an approved [Thesis Proposal Form](#) and [Thesis Committee Form](#) to Registrar's Office. Submission of these two forms is required to register for Thesis 1.

Summer

Throughout the semester:

- Coordinate with thesis advisor on research efforts.

Semester 3: Research and Writing

Throughout the semester:

- Enroll in Thesis 1.
- Meet regularly with your thesis advisor and provide progress reports as appropriate.

Semester 4: Defense, Format Review, and Submission

Throughout the semester:

- Enroll in Thesis 2.
- Apply for graduation (Reference Academic Calendar)

At least 4 weeks prior to the date of the thesis defense, no later than the Monday of Week 11:

- Submit a draft to your advisor and committee in preparation of the thesis defense.

At least 2 weeks prior to the date of the thesis defense, no later than the Friday of Week 13:

- Submit final draft to the thesis committee.
- Submit final draft to ogs@floridapoly.edu for format review and feedback.
- Submit an announcement request (after committee approval) to ogs@floridapoly.edu for distribution of your defense date to all faculty, students, and staff in the Weekly Phoenix.

By the last day of classes:

- Defend your thesis. Committee will provide notes and required edits, if needed.

By the last day of finals:

- Submit final thesis PDF to committee for signature.
- Submit final thesis PDF to Graduate Director for final approval/signature (ogs@floridapoly.edu).

Committee

Students must have a Graduate Thesis Committee and a Thesis Advisor, who is their Committee Chair, as part of their thesis requirements per [FPU 5.0123AP](#). Prior to the assignment of the Thesis Advisor, the department may provide interim advising for the student.

Thesis Advisor/Committee Chair

Requirements:

- Full-time faculty member (not adjunct, nor visiting, nor courtesy).
- Employed within the department which houses the master's degree, and an expert in the subject matter of the proposed thesis.

Responsibilities include, but may not be limited to:

- Advising the student's course of study,
- Forming the committee in consultation with Department Chair, and
- Supervising the students' research.
- Review and approval for the thesis content and format and working with the student and committee to schedule a defense.

Committee Members

Requirements:

- Comprised of at least three full-time faculty members (not adjunct, nor visiting, nor courtesy) which includes the thesis advisor.
- One member should be from outside the department but with experience relevant to the student's research area.
- Department Chair must approve the makeup of the Committee.
- Note about External Members:
 - In appropriate cases, industry partners may serve on the Committee as members in *addition* to minimum required full-time faculty by approval of department chair. These members will be referred to as Outside Committee Members and must have experience relevant to the student's research area. If students wish to include Outside Committee Members in their committee, they will need to submit a non-remuneration form along with their Thesis Committee Form, which can be requested from ogs@floridapoly.edu.

Changing the Committee Membership

Committee membership may not be changed at the student's request in the last semester before graduation, without chair approval. Committee membership may be changed and approved, including the committee chair, by submitting an updated committee form.

Procedures

Additional details on rules and deliverables are detailed below. Students should consult with their Thesis advisor for any additional requirements.

Thesis Proposal

Thesis proposals must be approved and submitted **by the end of the second term of graduate study**. Each department may choose to include a more formal review process for thesis proposals, but all thesis proposals must be approved by, at minimum, the Thesis Committee and the Department Chair. The thesis proposal usually includes:

1. An abstract that provides a brief description of the problem statement and expected solution;
2. A survey of current literature regarding the problem statement that demonstrates why the problem statement is important and how it aligns with the student's research interest and course of study (students are encouraged to use reference management software such as Zotero to make additions of references and generation of bibliography easy);
3. A description of the work to be performed, and how and where it will be performed. This section should convince the reader that the student has considered the problem and has a research plan that can be executed with the available resources and in the time that is appropriate for a master's thesis.
4. A Gantt chart of tasks, milestones, or overall project schedule.

Approved proposals must be retained by the thesis committee.

Thesis Defense Announcement

After advisor approval in the final semester, students may announce their oral examination (defense), due **at least two weeks prior to the defense date**.

Prepare your announcement in consultation with your Thesis Advisor. Most students simply use their abstract for the body of the announcement. The announcement should include:

1. Date, time, location, and thesis/report title.
2. Brief summary of the thesis (3-4 sentences).
3. The student's current major course of study.
4. A list of all members of the Thesis Committee.
5. Note that the public is welcome to attend.

Oral Examination - The Defense

Thesis students must perform a public defense of their work in their final semester in order to graduate. The defense date must be completed **by the last day of classes**. All committee members should be present at the defense and the thesis must have been submitted to the committee **at least two weeks before the defense**. Thesis advisors are responsible for working with the students to ensure that all committee members receive the thesis in an appropriate time.

Signatures and Submission

Upon successful completion and defense of the thesis report, the student must obtain all Committee signatures, then send to the Office of Graduate Studies by emailing ogs@floridapoly.edu **by the last day of finals**. The Office of Graduate Studies will obtain the Graduate Director's signature on the student's behalf. Upon receiving the final signature, the Office of Graduate Studies will submit to the University Registrar (cc:ing the student and committee members) to finalize requirements for the degree and to the degree granting department.

Acceptance

A thesis is formally accepted at the discretion of the Thesis Committee, Thesis Advisor, Department Chair, and the Graduate Director upon signing the thesis. Students should thoroughly read and abide by the Thesis Format Manual, as format is a requirement for acceptance. Once all signatures are received, the Office of Graduate Studies will submit to the University Registrar to finalize requirements for the degree conferral.

Thesis Terms and Definitions

Program Advisor: a student's initial faculty advisor upon entering the program.

Thesis Advisor/Committee Chair: the student's faculty advisor who takes over from the program advisor once established as the committee chair or advisor for the student's thesis. The thesis advisor/committee chair directs the student's research and advises on course selection and other aspects of the program.

Committee Member: a faculty member who serves on the student's thesis committee.

Outside Committee Member: A member of the student's thesis committee who is not from the department offering the student's selected track but provides external evaluation of the student's thesis and research.