Formatting Basics

This is not a complete list of formatting rules. It lists major rules and is meant to be used as a supplement to the CSULB University Style and Format Guidelines and your departmental style guide. For more information, contact the Thesis and Dissertation Office—call (562) 985-4013 or email: lib-thesis@csulb.edu

Font size: Use **12 point** font size for all material in front pages, text, table titles and notes, figure captions, footnotes and page numbers.

Font style: You may choose between one of two font styles: **Times New Roman** or **Courier New**

Margins: Use **1 inch** for all margins—top, left, bottom and right.

Order of sections: Each section begins on a new page. Arrange sections in this order: (1) **title page**, (2) **copyright page** (inclusion not required), (3) **abstract**, (4) **acknowledgements** (inclusion not required), (5) **table of contents**, (6) **list of tables** (only required if document contains numbered tables), (7) **list of figures** (only required if document contains numbered figures), (8) **other lists** or preliminary material (inclusion not required), (9) **chapters** (each chapter begins on a new page), (10) **appendices** (inclusion not required), and (11) **references list**

Signature page is not included in the PDF: It is submitted to the Thesis Office separately.

Page number location: Page numbers are **centered at the bottom of the page** and positioned between .75 inch and 1 inch from the bottom of the page.

Type of page numbers to use: (1) no page number for title page, (2) lowercase Roman numeral page numbers for preliminary pages (first page of abstract begins with ii), and (3) Chapter 1 begins with page 1 (Arabic numeral) and page numbers follow in sequence after page 1 to the last page.

Bold font for titles, including subheads, table titles and figure captions: For table of contents, list of tables, list of figures and any other lists, use bold font for the title of that section only (as an example, LIST OF TABLES) and not for anything listed within it (as an example, 1. Demographic Characteristics).

Information must match on title page and abstract: Be sure the wording and line breaks of the title of your document, your name and the semester and year match exactly. Use months for semesters:

- Fall = December
- Winter = January
- Spring = May
- Summer = August

For title page and abstract, **title of document should be in all caps, in bold font, centered, and use inverted pyramid format.** For inverted pyramid format, the first line is the longest line, followed by progressively shorter lines.

For title page, use 5 “blocks of information” with blank lines in between. Use double line spacing within these blocks (except single line spacing for the names of committee members) and use blank lines between blocks to arrange the blocks of information evenly on the page.

For abstract and acknowledgements section and table of contents and other lists, use uniform double line spacing. Select text and set line spacing to Double with Line Spacing boxes (marked Before and After) set to “0 pt”

For the table of contents, these sections are included: Abstract, list of tables, list of figures and any other lists or preliminary sections, each chapter title (beginning with number and period), each appendix title (begin with a letter and period for more than one appendix) and references list. Use all caps for each item.
For table of contents and other lists: (1) page numbers are aligned along the right margin ("Justify" setting can be used for alignment), (2) dot leaders extend from the last word of each item to the page number, (3) the default indentation of Microsoft (MS) Word can be used for numbered items, (4) the "Table of Contents" feature from MS Word can be used to create a table of contents, (5) if an item is longer than one line, do not extend words into column of page numbers and indent the second line more than the first line, and (6) wording matches in text and list

For text in chapters, use uniform double line spacing and use "Left align" only for paragraphs. Use half inch indent for first line of each paragraph. Recommendations about use of block quotes, acronyms, and other formatting are included in the University Guidelines

For subheads: (1) use bold font, (2) 1st level subheads are centered and use headline style caps, (3) 2nd level subheads begin at left margin and use headline style caps, and (4) 3rd level subheads are on the same line as text, use sentence style caps and end in a period

For tables and figures: (1) use 1-3 blank single line-spaced lines to separate them from text—use blank space above if text is above and/or use blank space below if text is below, (2) use the same amount of blank space above and below them if they are placed on a page with no text (that is, centered on the page), and (3) do not leave blank space more than 2 inches at the bottom of a page of text because a table or figure will not fit in that space—fill the space with text (from the same chapter) that follows the table or figure

For tables: (1) table title is above the table and uses bold font, (2) table title begins at left margin with TABLE (all caps) and number and period, (3) table title uses headline style caps, (4) use the same font for all tables and use font size no smaller than 10 point for data within table, (5) use a horizontal line above and below column headings and at end of table (other grid lines may be used as well), (6) all words of a table title should be listed in the list of tables, and (7) a table can only be split onto two pages if the table is longer than one page in length

For figures: (1) Figure caption is below the figure and uses bold font, (2) figure caption begins at left margin with FIGURE (all caps) and number and period, (3) figure caption uses sentence style caps, (4) a period is used at the end of figure caption, (5) only the words up to the first period of a figure caption are used in the list of figures, (6) all font within a figure should be legible, and (7) a figure must be complete on one page

For footnotes: (1) use a separator line of about 2 inches between last line of text and footnotes, (2) use single line spacing within footnotes with one blank line between footnotes, (3) indent first line of each footnote (including the footnote number), and (4) the superscript number in the text that marks a footnote is placed after a comma or a period

For numbered citations (in brackets or parentheses): (1) citations are numbered to indicate the order in which they are first cited in the text, (2) citation number comes before period or comma, and (3) citation number is not used as a word in a sentence (This format is INCORRECT: In [6], the hypothesis did not work. This format is CORRECT: In Smith’s work [6], the hypothesis did not work.)

For appendix and references list, use introductory title pages before the first page of each appendix and references list. If there is more than one appendix, use an extra title page with the word APPENDICES centered on the page before the title page for Appendix A. Refer to the page numbers of the introductory title pages in the table of contents

For the references list: (1) the title is used as the first line of the first page (that is, repeat the title used on the introductory title page on first page of the list), (2) use single line spacing within each citation with a blank line between citations, (3) use hanging indent for each citation (first line of each citation begins at left margin and other lines are indented), (4) all citations cited in the text should be listed in the references list, and (5) citations are not split onto two pages