Preparing Your MS Thesis

The following instructions are provided to help you in the preparation and completion of your thesis. Throughout these instructions the term Thesis will refer to an M.S. thesis. These are basic guidelines to be used in the preparation of your thesis; however, if you have a concern that is not covered here, please contact your graduate school coordinator for clarification.

University Requirements
The University catalog should be consulted for complete details on requirements for the M.S. degree. Some programs allow for other paths to completion such as comprehensive exams, special projects or coursework. These choices are program specific and the pathway must be approved and registered with New York State Department of Education. If that choice is available within a program, the choice should be made in consultation with your advisor. Please refer back to the Graduate Catalog for those requirements. If a thesis is required, it must be defended orally to a committee consisting of a minimum of three faculty members; the committee is approved by the chair of the candidate’s department.

Thesis Advisor
If you will completing in the thesis track for your major you will be assigned a thesis advisor during the first semester in residence.

Preparation of the Thesis
In this day of electronic documents and “Your Paper Your Way” requirements for submission of manuscripts for many journal publication, the University allows a range of formats for M.S. Theses that represent the best practice for professional reports and manuscripts in each discipline. Consult your Department’s Graduate Handbook for any specific requirements in your degree program.

- Paper: Use any good quality copier paper.
- Print: Thesis copy should be printed on a laser printer.
- Spacing: Text of the thesis can range from single to double space. Space between paragraphs or use of indented paragraphs is recommended.
- Margins: One and one-half (1½) inch margin on the left side and one (1) inch margin on all other sides.
- Siding: Thesis should be printed double-sided. (Note: the document must always have 1.5” margin on the side of the paper that is bound (e.g., use “mirrored” margins in MS word)
- Numbering:
  - Each page should be assigned a number
  - Page numbers may appear on the top right corner or bottom center of each page
  - Preliminary pages generally use small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii).
  - Remainder of thesis (including text, illustrations, appendices, and bibliography) should be numbered in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3).
  - Numbering will begin with ii – the title page counts as i, but the number should appear on the page.
  - Numbering should be consistent throughout the document.
- Title page: A specific format is required for the title page of the thesis – see sample at the end of this document.
• Signature page: A signature page is required in all M.S. theses, which will be signed by the appropriate committee members – see sample at the end of this document.
• Figures & Tables: Numbers and captions/titles for any figures, pictures, etc. should appear under the figure or above any tables. If your figure or table appears horizontally, the top should be along the inside (bound) edge of the thesis.
• The reference list needs to include complete bibliographic information in a consistent format throughout. The specific format should be appropriate for your discipline and advisors discretion.

Common Order of Thesis Contents
• Title page
• Committee signature page
• Abstract
• Acknowledgements
• Table of Contents
• List of Tables
• List of Illustrations
• Text
• References
• Appendices

Thesis Defense
You or your advisor/department are responsible for making arrangements for a room and advertising your thesis defense. Thesis copies (electronic) should be submitted to committee members approximately two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled defense date so a proper review can be made (see your department handbook for specific requirements).

Submitting Your Thesis
Two printed copies of the final thesis (once a successful defense has taken place and all corrections have been made) should be submitted to your graduate school coordinator for the signature of the Dean of the Graduate School.
The thesis must be bound in a two or three hole binder of the Acco punch type. Your name and thesis title should appear on each cover of the submitted thesis, as follows:

CLARKSON UNIVERSITY

Thesis Title

A Thesis by Student Name

Several forms should accompany your submitted thesis – please see your graduate coordinator for details.

Sample Title Page for M.S. Thesis

CLARKSON UNIVERSITY

<TITLE>

A Thesis by

<Name>

Department of ____________________________

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

<Major>

Date

Accepted by the Graduate School

Date   Dean
The undersigned have examined the thesis entitled ___________________________________________
presented by __________________________________________, a candidate for the degree of
________________________________________, and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

____________________________________________________________
Date   Advisor

____________________________________________________________
Examiner Committee*

____________________________________________________________
Examiner Committee*

*Please type each committee member’s name under their signature line.