Graduate School

EAST TEXAS A&M

THESIS AND DISSERTATION SUBMISSION GUIDE*

Effective for 2024-2025

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The Graduate School, with Thesis and Dissertation Services (TDS), provides this guide to assist students and faculty in the successful submission of a proposal, final thesis, or final dissertation.

The Graduate School uses a Laserfiche digital forms process for submission of forms for committee formations, defenses, and proposal and final document submissions. This guide provides instructions for using the digital forms process, as well as helpful information about the thesis and dissertation processes. Some of the pertinent information covered in this guide is (a) formation of advisory committees, (b) requirements for enrollment in 518 or 718, (c) process for submission of proposal and final documents, (d) the review process, (e) iThenticate instructions, and (f) copyright/plagiarism information.

It is important to note that departments may have additional requirements for the completion of the thesis or dissertation process, so be sure to check with your department. You will also want to become familiar with important submission dates and the East Texas A&M University's rules and procedures related to the thesis and doctoral process. Students and faculty are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following all university and A&M System rules and procedures.

As always, the final responsibility for timely submission of documents lies with the student.

For questions, concerns, or further clarification, please contact:

Thesis and Dissertation Services
Graduate School
(903) 886-5968
TDS@etamu.edu

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! The Graduate School, with TDS, offers this guide as a resource to help you and your advisor/committee members navigate the submission process for proposal and final documents. In addition, this guide provides information regarding formation of your thesis or dissertation advisory committee, enrollment requirements for 518 or 718 courses, conditions necessitating research committee approval, and characteristics of copyright infringement and plagiarism,

When you submit your proposal document or final document to TDS, it is reviewed for adherence to the formatting requirements as set forth in the applicable thesis/dissertation template and as further described in the Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide. It is up to you to work closely with your advisor and/or committee members to ensure your document meets all requirements of your chosen style guide.

Everyone in the Graduate School is working to ensure the success of our graduate students. If there are any questions or concerns not answered in this guide or the Formatting Guide, please feel free to contact the TDS office at (903) 886-5968 or through email, TDS@etamu.edu. If additional help is needed, students may make an appointment with TDS for an office visit or Zoom meeting.

On the TDS web page for thesis students (short link www.etamu.edu/thesis) and for doctoral students (short link www.etamu.edu/dissertation), TDS provides step-by-step directions to follow and provides links to applicable forms you will need when submitting your documents. It is recommended you bookmark the appropriate web page for convenient reference.

Other important information related to the thesis and dissertation process can be found on the left sidebar of the TDS web page. Below is a brief description of each of the resources TDS provides:

- Resources for Writing: TDS provides a number of resources to aid in the drafting of the proposal and final document. Below is a brief description of the resources made available to you.

  o Graduate School Templates and Guides: The Graduate School has an approved template for use when drafting your document (to be followed at both the proposal and final stages). When drafting your document, use the template provided because it has some of the required formatting built into the document. The template also provides commentary to guide you through setting up and formatting the document. The goal of the Graduate School/TDS review is for all final documents to look basically the same.

  Currently TDS offers the following templates. Most students will use the standard Graduate School thesis/dissertation template, but some departments have arranged for minor modifications to the original template so the resulting document is more applicable to that department's general style requirements:

- ▪ Thesis/Dissertation Template: the standard template used by the majority of students unless instructed to use one of the following other templates available.

- ▪ LaTex: available for use by Department of Physics and Astronomy, Department of Computer Science and Information Technology, and Department of Mathematics

- ▪ Biology Template and Guide: used by Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences

  The Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide and Thesis and Dissertation Submission Guide can also be found on this web page. The Formatting Guide provides more detailed information, instructions, and examples for formatting and setting up your document. There are two appendices to this document with Appendix A providing an example of a vita and Appendix B providing examples of the formatting of tables and figures. The Submission Guide provides detailed instructions on the Laserfiche digital submission process.

- o Commonly Used Style Guides: Each department and/or your advisor determines what style guide you should follow when drafting your document. In this section, TDS has provided links to the most commonly used style guides with helpful resources to various styles that can assist when drafting your document. **Remember, however, if the style guide conflicts with Graduate School formatting requirements, the Graduate School formatting requirements prevail.**

- o Graduate School Research Librarian: The Graduate School provides students access to a university librarian who is available to provide specialized one-on-one research assistance tailored to your advanced academic needs.

- o Writing Resources: This section provides links to sites that can help with grammar, Word formatting, and formatting Word on a Mac.

- • iThenticate (for faculty only): iThenticate is a licensed program that is available for use by faculty and some administrators and staff only. The software compares the uploaded file against >7052 billion web pages and 74 million content items from leading academic publications. When the iThenticate comparison process is complete, a "similarity score" is generated. The purpose of this software program is to screen written material for originality and to check for instances of plagiarism in submitted documents.

- • Deadlines for Thesis and Dissertation Submissions: All the important dates and deadlines associated with the thesis and dissertation process can be found on this page. Be sure to add these dates to your calendar.

- • Frequently Asked Questions: If you have a question about the thesis or dissertation process or what to submit, take a moment to review the FAQs.

FORMS AND THE SUBMISSION PROCESS

The Graduate School uses a Laserfiche digital forms process for all forms submitted to the Graduate School. This digital process removes the onus of securing signatures for forms, but you are still expected to monitor the progress of the approval process and to take responsibility for ensuring the forms are approved by all parties in a timely fashion. Contact TDS to request a status of submitted thesis or dissertation forms.

All forms related to the thesis or dissertation process can be found on the TDS/Thesis or TDS/Dissertation web pages. Below is a list of the pertinent forms related to each process:

Thesis Process with short link: www.etamu.edu/thesis

- Thesis Committee Selection Form

- Thesis Proposal Submission Form

- Notification Form for the Final Thesis Defense

- Final Thesis Submission Form

Dissertation Process with short link: www.etamu.edu/dissertation

- Dissertation Committee Selection Form

- Schedule Form for the Proposal Defense

- Dissertation Proposal Submission Form

- Final Dissertation Defense Schedule Form

- Final Dissertation Submission Form

These forms can also be found on the Graduate School web page. Click on the link Graduate School Forms & Guidelines in the left sidebar.

Forms-General Instructions

When completing a digital form, you will input your Campus Wide ID (CWID) number; wait a few seconds for the form to partially populate with your name, email address, and, for some forms, your degree and document title. Be sure to check that all information is current and correct. If there are any errors, please report the error(s) to TDS (TDS@etamu.edu).

Blocks with a red asterisk indicate information you are required to provide. Some blocks have a drop-down arrow for you to select the appropriate information or name. For instance, when completing the committee form, click the drop-down arrow and select your advisor, the members of your committee, and the head of the department from the lists provided. If a member or administrator is not on the list, please contact TDS (TDS@etamu.edu). NOTE: do not repeat your advisor's name as a committee member. As advisor, he/she is automatically one of your committee members.

When a form is submitted, it will route first to your advisor and then to each of your committee members and then the administrators, as applicable. The faculty member or administrator will receive an email coming from either Laserfiche or Workflow (to committee members).

When a form has attachments, committee members will receive a Workflow email with three links. Advisors and administrators will only have one link to the form and can access the attachments within the form.

For committee members accessing Workflow emails for proposal or final submissions that have attachments, you follow the following instructions:

➢ University faculty should use the first web link to access the documents (instructions for how to log into that web link are below). Note, you must include "CTIS\" before your log in name.

➢ Non-university committee members must use the second web link. Please be sure to use the log in credentials noted.

➢ The last link is provided to all recipients and it provides access to the form itself for review and approval. Do not approve the form until the submitted documents have been reviewed.

Below is an example of what the Workflow email to committee members will look like.

Instructions for logging in to WebLink

Committee members: Log in using CTIS\ plus your computer/email credentials (Ex. CTIS\SmithJohn)

Alternative link (also for non-university committee members): Login using username **gradschool** and password **golions2022**

Click here to view the Dissertation Proposal Submission Packet documents via WebLink

Click here to view the Dissertation Proposal Submission Packet documents via WebAccess

Click here to open the Dissertation Proposal Submission Packet

If you have any issues accessing the WebLink or opening the document(s) provided, please contact Karin Thomas, Thesis and Dissertation Specialist at karin.thomas@etamu.edu or the IT HelpDesk.

Faculty and administrators will review the form and attachments for correctness and completeness. At the bottom of the form there is an "Approve" button and a "Reject" button, or for committee members, the approval button will read "Reviewed & Acknowledged." Clicking "Approve" or "Reviewed & Acknowledged" serves to indicate acceptance of the form and

attachments. <u>Be aware that the form will not advance through the approval process until each party reviews and approves the form</u>.

If there are errors in the form or if corrections need to be made to the attachments, the advisor or administrator should select "Reject" and provide an explanation for the rejection in the comments section. An email will be sent to the student advising them of the rejection. Due to limitations in the system, the committee members are not given an option to reject a form and are asked to let TDS know if the student's form needs to be terminated; the rejecting committee member should also send an email to the student to let them know they have requested the termination of their form and why. The student must then re-submit a corrected form.

Trouble-shooting when forms do not work: Sometimes forms are populated with incorrect information or do not have a faculty name available in the drop-down menu. Also, in some instances faculty are unable to access a form. Below are some ways to resolve these issues.

- If a form is not populating correctly or if a faculty name is not available in a drop-down list, please contact the IT HelpDesk (HelpDesk@etamu.edu) or call (903) 886-6000.

- For faculty who cannot access a form or documents, try the following:

    o Try a different browser(s);

    o Disable the web browser pop-up blocker; and/or

    o Clear the web browser history/cache and retry.

    If none of these approaches work, please contact the IT HelpDesk (HelpDesk@etamu.edu) or call (903) 886-6000.

Formation of Advisory Committees

Thesis Advisory Committee

The Thesis Committee Selection Form can be found on the TDS/Thesis web page (www.etamu.edu/thesis) under Step 1 of the processes. Click on the hyperlink, Thesis Committee Selection Form, to gain access to the form

- The thesis advisory committee should consist of the thesis advisor (sometimes referred to as the thesis chair) and at least two other graduate faculty members from the major department. A total of at least three committee members must be named, including the advisor.

- The advisor must have full graduate faculty status to serve as a thesis committee chairperson/advisor.

- The committee members must have either full graduate faculty status or temporary graduate faculty status.

    Faculty with temporary graduate faculty status must have Graduate School approval to serve on a student's committee. The Graduate School will work with the

department head to obtain approval for that faculty member to serve on the student's committee. Please allow extra time for this additional approval.

In order to gain temporary graduate faculty status, an Application for Temporary Graduate Faculty must be completed and the required documents submitted to the Graduate School. The Graduate Dean will review the application to determine approval status.

- In some cases, and with the department's approval, one of the committee members may be outside of the department. If an out-of-department member is selected, the member should have the knowledge and/or skills that allow him or her to make meaningful contributions to the thesis.

- In rare instances, an out-of-department committee member may be a non-university committee member, again, with the department's approval. Members who are non-university committee members require temporary Graduate Faculty status and will require prior approval by the Graduate School to serve on the committee. Please allow extra time for this additional approval.

Once the advisory committee is agreed upon, complete and submit the Thesis Committee Selection Form. The digital process removes the necessity for gaining individual signatures and allows faculty and administration to indicate their approval of the committee by reviewing and approving the form. The members and administrator who must approve the form will receive a Laserfiche or Workflow (to committee members) email indicating there is a form to review and approve.

When the Dean of the Graduate School has approved the thesis committee form, the student and his/her advisor will receive an email with a copy of the approved committee form attached. **This step must be completed before any other forms will populate correctly. If there are any changes to your committee, a new form must be completed and submitted for approval.**

Dissertation Advisory Committee

The Dissertation Committee Selection Form can be found on the TDS/Dissertation web page (www.etamu.edu/dissertation) under Step 1 of the processes. Click on the hyperlink, Dissertation Committee Selection Form, to gain access to the form.

- The dissertation advisory committee consists of the dissertation advisor (sometimes referred to as the dissertation chair) and at least one other graduate faculty member from the department and one committee member outside of the department. A total of at least three committee members must be named, including the advisor and out-of-department member.

- The advisor must have full graduate faculty status to serve as a dissertation committee chairperson/advisor.

- Committee members must have either full graduate faculty status or temporary graduate faculty status.

If a faculty member has temporary graduate faculty status, the Graduate School will work with the department head to obtain approval for him or her to serve on the student's committee. Please allow extra time for this additional approval.

In order to gain temporary graduate faculty status, an Application for Temporary Graduate Faculty, must be completed and the required documents submitted before the Graduate School will review the application to determine approval status.

- The out-of-department member should have knowledge and/or skills that allow him or her to make meaningful contributions to the dissertation.

The out-of-department committee member may be a non-university committee member, with the department's approval. Members who are non-university committee members require temporary Graduate Faculty status and will require application for temporary Graduate Faculty status and prior approval by the Graduate School to serve on the student's committee. Please allow extra time for this additional approval.

Once the advisory committee is selected, complete and submit the digital Dissertation Committee Selection Form. The digital process removes the necessity for gaining individual signatures and allows faculty and administration to indicate their approval of the committee by reviewing and approving the form digitally. The members and administrator who must approve the form will receive a Laserfiche or Workflow (to committee members) email alerting them that there is a digital form to review and approve.

When the Dean of the Graduate School has approved the dissertation committee form, the student and his/her advisor will receive an email confirming approval of the committee with a copy of the approved committee form attached. This step must be completed before moving forward in the dissertation process. Proposal defense and submissions will not be accepted until there is an approved committee form on file. **This step must be completed before any other forms will populate correctly. If there are any changes to your committee, a new form must be completed and submitted for approval.**

Defense and Submission of the Thesis Proposal Document

As a thesis student, a proposal defense is not scheduled through the Graduate School, but rather it is held according to the requirements of your major department. However, before a proposal defense is held, you must have an approved Thesis Committee Selection Form on file with the Graduate School. See the section of this document entitled Formation of Advisory Committees for more information regarding formation of a Thesis Advisory Committee.

The proposal document should be drafted using the applicable thesis/dissertation template. Detailed information about the formatting requirements is provided in the template and in the Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide. Templates and the Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide are both found on the TDS/Resources for Writing web page under the selection for Graduate School Templates and Guides. The proposal must adhere to all of the Graduate School's formatting requirements and should be as complete as possible.

You and your advisor will determine when to schedule the defense of your proposal and then work with the committee members to determine a date, time, and location (or mode, i.e., via Zoom) that is convenient for everyone.

The committee may request changes to the proposal, which you must make before moving to the proposal submission stage. When you and your advisor agree that all of the needed changes have been made and that the proposal is ready for submission to the Graduate School/TDS for review, you will complete the digital form and include all required documents. The form, Thesis Proposal Submission Form, is found under item 2 on the TDS/Thesis web page. Documents required to be included with the proposal submission form are as follows:

1. Thesis proposal document (in Word format or as a PDF if using LaTex);

2. A current iThenticate report generated by your advisor;

3. CITI training reports (RCR, plus additional as required by the Research Compliance section of the Office of Sponsored Programs); and

4. IRB/IBC/IACUC approval letter, as applicable (your advisor will provide you a copy if needed).

Ultimately, you are responsible for submitting to TDS all required materials by the relevant deadline. Be sure to allow time for the approval process when submitting your proposal documents; the Graduate School recommends submitting your form no less than 3-5 days before the applicable deadline. Submissions received by TDS after the relevant deadline will be processed for the following semester. The following is a link to the Academic Calendar, which includes all deadlines:
http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/academicCalendars/default.aspx

The Graduate School/TDS retains the right not to reject incomplete submissions.

Defense of and Submission of the Dissertation Proposal

As a dissertation student, you are required to schedule your proposal defense through the Graduate School. To receive clearance to hold the defense, you must have an approved Dissertation Committee Selection Form on file with the Graduate School (see the section on Formation of Advisory Committees).

You and your advisor will determine when to schedule the defense of your proposal and then work with the committee members to determine a date, time, and location (or mode, i.e., via Zoom) that is convenient for everyone.

To obtain Graduate School approval for the scheduled defense, you must complete and submit the digital form, Schedule Form for the Dissertation Proposal Defense, found under item 2 on the TDS/Dissertation web page. The Graduate School <u>must</u> receive the schedule form **by the 20th of the month prior to the defense date**. Include a copy of the proposal document with your submitted form.

Once the Graduate School clears you to hold the defense, TDS will assign a Graduate Faculty representative to attend the defense. A copy of the proposal is provided to the representative when he or she is assigned. The representative attends the defense, asks questions as appropriate, and provides an evaluation form to the Graduate School stating whether the defense was conducted professionally.

The committee may request changes to the proposal, which you must make before moving to the proposal submission stage. When you and your advisor agree that all of the needed changes have been made and that the proposal is ready for submission to the Graduate School/TDS for review, you will use the digital form, Dissertation Proposal Submission Form, found under item 3 on the TDS/Dissertation web page, to submit all required proposal documents by the applicable deadline. Documents required to be included with the proposal submission form are as follows:

1. Dissertation proposal document (in Word format);

2. A current iThenticate report generated by your advisor;

3. CITI training reports (RCR, plus additional as required by the Office of Sponsored Programs); and

4. IRB/IBC/IACUC approval letter, as applicable (your advisor will provide you a copy if needed).

Ultimately, you are responsible for submitting to TDS all required materials by the relevant deadline. The Graduate School recommends beginning the submission process no less than 3-5 days prior to the deadline. Submissions received after the relevant deadline will be processed for the following semester. The following is a link to the Academic Calendar, which includes all deadlines:
http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/academicCalendars/default.aspx

The Graduate School/TDS retains the right not to accept incomplete submissions.

Graduate School/TDS Approval of Proposal

TDS will conduct a one-time review of the submitted proposal document for adherence to the Graduate School's formatting requirements and basic adherence to your chosen style guide. Once the thesis or dissertation proposal is approved by the Graduate School/TDS, you will receive email notification from TDS (via myLeo email account) with a Reviewer's Checklist that contains corrections to make and important information regarding the drafting of the final document. **It is imperative that you continue editing your document.**

Defense and Submission of the Final Thesis Document

Although thesis students are not required to schedule their final defense through the Graduate School, you are required to notify TDS when a final thesis defense has been scheduled. Notification must be received by TDS **no less than seven days** before the date of the final thesis defense. When you and your advisor are ready to schedule the final defense, you will work with your committee members to determine a date, time, and location (or modality, i.e., Zoom) that is convenient for everyone. When a date is set, complete and submit the digital form, Notification

Form for the Thesis Defense, found under item 4 on the TDS/Thesis web page. The form will route to your advisor, committee members, and the head of the department before going to TDS. To be cleared to hold the final defense, you must have an approved proposal on file. Submitting the form lets the Graduate School know you intend to graduate. This form is also required before the final thesis submission form will populate correctly. Please note, you cannot submit your final thesis in the same semester in which you gain proposal approval.

The committee may request changes to the final thesis, which you must make before submitting your final thesis to the Graduate School/TDS for review and approval. When you and your advisor agree that all of the needed changes have been made and that the final document is ready for submission, you will use the digital form, Final Thesis Submission Form, found under item 5 on the TDS/Thesis web page, to submit all required documents. Documents required to be included with the final thesis submission form are as follows:

1. Final thesis document (in Word format or as a PDF if using LaTex); and

2. A current iThenticate report generated by your advisor.

Ultimately, you are responsible for submitting all the required materials so that TDS receives your submission by the relevant deadline. Submissions received after the relevant deadline will be processed for the following semester. The following is a link to the Academic Calendar, which includes all deadlines:
http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/academicCalendars/default.aspx

The Graduate School/TDS retains the right not to accept incomplete submissions.

Defense of and Submission of Final Dissertation
Doctoral dissertation students are required to schedule their final defense through the Graduate School. When you and your advisor determine you are ready to schedule the final defense, you will work with your committee members to determine a date, time, and location (or modality, i.e., Zoom) convenient for everyone. When a date is set, you will complete and submit the digital form, Final Dissertation Defense Schedule Form, found under item 4 of the TDS/Dissertation web page, to be received by the Graduate School no later than **the 20th of the month prior to the defense date**. To be cleared to hold the defense, you must have an approved proposal on file with the Graduate School. Please note, you cannot defend and submit your final dissertation in the same semester in which you gain proposal approval. The Graduate School does not assign Graduate School representatives to attend final defenses.

The committee may request changes to the final dissertation, which you must make before moving to the final dissertation submission stage. When you and your advisor agree that all of the needed changes have been made and that the final document is ready for submission to the Graduate School/TDS for review, you will use the digital form, Final Dissertation Submission Form, found under item 5 on the TDS/Dissertation web page, to submit all required final dissertation documents. Documents required to be included with the submission form are as follows:

1. Final dissertation document (in Word format);

2. iThenticate report; see the section on iThenticate for more information;

3. Dissertation Information Sheet (sent to you in an informational email from Vicky Turner, Doctoral Coordinator); and

4. Survey of Earned Doctorates Certificate (for PhD students only; sent to you in an informational email from Vicky Turner, Doctoral Coordinator).

Ultimately, you are responsible for submitting all the required materials so that TDS receives your submission by the relevant deadline. The Graduate School recommends beginning the submission process no less than 3-5 days prior to the deadline. Submissions received after the relevant deadline will be processed for the following semester. The following is a link to the Academic Calendar, which includes all deadlines:
http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/academicCalendars/default.aspx

The Graduate School/TDS retains the right not to accept incomplete submissions.

Graduate School/TDS Approval of Final Document

TDS will review your final document for adherence to the Graduate School's formatting requirements and basic adherence to your chosen style guide. The final document will be reviewed as many times as necessary until the final document meets the Graduate School's approval. Requested edits will be communicated via the Reviewer's Checklist sent to your myLeo email. When your final document is approved, you will be notified by TDS via your myLeo email with a final Reviewer's Checklist and a copy of your final submission form indicating all approvals received. The email will contain important information regarding final steps to take in order to finalize your document and to prepare it for publication with ProQuest.

After TDS approves your finalized document for uploading to ProQuest, you will be provided a link to the ProQuest web page with instructions for uploading the final document to the site. ProQuest will provide additional instructions as needed as you move through the submission process. The Graduate School requires you to purchase one (1) copy of the thesis or dissertation for the university (for your advisor) at a cost of $30. ProQuest charges a fee of $75 for copyrighting. You may order extra copies at your own cost. To be cleared for graduation, your document must be uploaded to ProQuest and all Graduate School fees paid. Graduate School fees to be paid are the graduation fee ($40) and the thesis/dissertation fee (for thesis, $63, for dissertation $73) applied to your student account when your final submission was accepted by TDS.

A SUMMARY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL/TDS REVIEW PROCESS

You will submit your thesis or dissertation documents to the Graduate School/TDS at two different stages of your program:

1. at the proposal stage; and
2. at the final document stage.

The primary purpose of the TDS review is to assist you in meeting the Graduate School formatting requirements. The TDS staff does not serve as editors or proofreaders; that responsibility lies with you. **You are expected to perform line-by-line proofreading and editing prior to submitting your proposal or final document for review by TDS.**

Please be aware that if the initially submitted document is not in the basic Graduate School format found in the thesis/dissertation template, the document will be returned for proper formatting before it is reviewed. This means that your place in the review order will be forfeited. When the revised document is returned to the TDS and it is deemed to be in basic Graduate School template format, your document will be placed next in line for review, based on when it was received by TDS.

Please see the Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide for more details on format requirements.

Proposal documents are reviewed one time. You will receive an email to your myLeo email from TDS with a copy of the Reviewer's Checklist. The Reviewer's Checklist is used to indicate and explain formatting errors found in the proposal document, and, in some cases, to note style errors that need to be corrected. When the Reviewer's Checklist is sent to you, a copy is also provided to your advisor. You will make the revisions noted in the checklist in your document and incorporate those revisions as you complete your final document. If an editor is recommended, a list of editors will also be included with the email. You may also contact TDS to request an appointment for assistance with the changes requested in the Reviewer's Checklist.

Final documents are reviewed as many times as needed to meet the Graduate School's formatting requirements. You will receive an email to your myLeo email from TDS with a Reviewer's Checklist attached. A due date will be included in the email by which the revised document must be submitted to TDS for another review. You will incorporate the changes noted throughout the entire document. Please do not resubmit your document until it has been thoroughly revised and reviewed. If an editor is recommended, a list of editors will also be included with the email. You may also contact TDS to request an appointment for assistance with the changes requested in the Reviewer's Checklist.

ITHENTICATE

iThenticate is a licensed program that is available only to faculty and some administrators and staff. The software compares the uploaded file against >7052 billion web pages and 74 million content items from leading academic publications. When the iThenticate comparison process is complete, a "similarity score" is generated. The purpose of this software program is to screen written material for originality and to check for instances of plagiarism in submitted documents.

Your advisor will review the results of your document's iThenticate report with you to discuss ways to reduce the amount of similarity found in your document. The Graduate School allows for up to 12% similarity in reports submitted to TDS. If all efforts to reduce the score to 12% or less are unsuccessful, the student's advisor must submit to TDS via email an explanation for the high score (e.g., terminology, formulas, etc.). The Dean of the Graduate School will review the report and either provide recommendations to improve the score or accept the paper as submitted.

How Faculty Can Get Access to iThenticate

The Office of Academic Technology creates and maintains iThenticate licensed accounts on behalf of faculty. All faculty supervising thesis and dissertation students can obtain access to iThenticate by obtaining a license through the Office of Academic Technology (online@etamu.edu). Once you have been granted access, click the following link for access to the iThenticate website: https://www.ithenticate.com/

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS/DISSERTATION PROCESS

Advisory Committee

All thesis and dissertation students are required to form a thesis or dissertation advisory committee. A dissertation proposal defense cannot be held without a dissertation committee in place. Thesis and dissertation proposal submissions will not be accepted (and will not populate correctly) until there is an approved committee form on file with the Graduate School.

Enrollment in 518/718 Course Requirements

518 Course Requirement

Each master's degree program has a 518 course in which all thesis students are expected to enroll. You must complete a minimum of 6 hours of 518 to fulfill the thesis requirements of your degree. You will not receive credit for more than 6 semester credit hours of 518.

718 Course Requirement

Each doctoral degree program has a 718 course in which all doctoral students are expected to enroll. After you have doctoral candidacy and have completed your comprehensive examinations, you must be continuously enrolled in a 718 course each fall and spring semester until your dissertation is completed. The Graduate School requires enrollment in a 718 course for the semester in which you defend and submit your proposal documents to TDS and again the semester in which you defend and submit your final dissertation documents to TDS. If a proposal or final dissertation is submitted during the summer, **you must be enrolled in one summer semester of 718**. You must complete a minimum of 9 semester credit hours of 718 and will receive credit for no more than 12 semester credit hours. Please note that grades of U now impact academic standing, including U's earned in 718.

If a medical or personal emergency prevents you from making satisfactory progress on your dissertation, your advisor and/or the Graduate School must be notified, and the proper steps completed for a leave of absence to avoid earning a grade of U for the 718 course.

The Student's Responsibilities

For both the proposal and the final document, you are expected to follow the instructions provided in the applicable Graduate School template. Read and follow the more specific guidelines provided in the Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide. Both templates and guides can be found on the TDS/Resources for Writing web page under **Graduate School Templates and Guides**.

In addition, the Graduate School and TDS ask that you study and become familiar with your chosen style guide and, if the library does not have a copy or it is not available online, , purchase a copy of the style manual you are following. You are responsible for completing the editing of the thesis or dissertation, or for securing a professional editor, if needed. TDS maintains a list of student-recommended editors and will provide you a copy of this list at your request. You may also contact TDS (TDS@etamu.edu) to request a one-on-one meeting regarding requested formatting revisions. Maintain regular contact with your advisor and committee members. Follow the guidance of your advisor to ensure all university and A&M System rules and procedures are followed.

The Advisor's and Committee's Responsibilities

Ultimately, students are responsible for ensuring all required materials are submitted by the relevant deadlines. The advisor and the committee members are responsible for ensuring their students' studies meet the departmental and discipline requirements for good scholarship. Additionally, they are responsible for guiding their students through the thesis or dissertation process and ensuring students follow their chosen style guide. Advisors and committee members should also be familiar with the Graduate School's template and formatting guidelines. Advisors should ensure that their students are familiar with all university and A&M System rules and requirements for conducting research. Each department may have additional requirements and expectations for students, advisors, and committee members. Students and faculty are responsible for knowing and fulfilling requirements set by the department.

Deadlines

Proposal approval must be received *at least one semester prior to submitting the final document for graduation.* To graduate in a given semester, you must meet the scheduled deadline for defending your final thesis or dissertation and the deadline for initial submission of the final thesis or dissertation. Deadlines are posted on the Academic Calendar and on the right side of the TDS/Thesis web page and the TDS/Dissertation web page. Please keep in mind that a complete submission of materials must be received by TDS by or before the deadline for the submission to be considered on time. When TDS receives a submission, you will receive an email to your myLeo email confirming receipt and verifying completeness of the submission.

REMINDER: You may not schedule your final defense without having received proposal approval from the Graduate School/TDS.

Final Thesis Defense

➢ Thesis students must submit a Notification Form for the Final Thesis Defense to be received by TDS *no less than 7 days prior to the date of the final defense*. Thesis proposal defenses are not monitored by TDS.

Dissertation Defenses—Proposal and Final

➢ Schedule forms for either the proposal or final defense are due to the Graduate School the 20th of the month prior to the defense date. If the 20th of the month falls on a weekend or university holiday, the form is due the last working day prior to the deadline. The Graduate School recommends beginning this process no less than 3-5 days prior to the deadline to ensure time for the schedule form to move through the approval process.

➢ For the final defense, please note the deadline to defend for that semester and submit the schedule form by the 20th of the month prior to the month of that deadline. For example, the deadline for a fall final defense is the 4th Friday in October, so a schedule form must be submitted by the 20th of September. Again, the Graduate School recommends beginning this process no less than 3-5 days prior to the deadline to ensure time for the schedule form to move through the approval process.

  o For fall graduation, doctoral students must defend their final dissertation on or before the 4th Friday in October.

  o For spring graduation, doctoral students must defend their final dissertation on or before the 4th Friday in March.

  o For summer graduation, doctoral students must defend their final document on or before the 3rd Friday in June.

A summary of the deadlines for submissions to TDS is listed below.

Proposal Submission Deadlines

Fall

➢ A complete proposal submission for students who wish to graduate the following spring or later, proposal submission must be received by TDS no later than the 4th Friday in November (often moved to the Monday after because of the Thanksgiving holiday).

Spring

➢ A complete proposal submission for students who wish to graduate the following summer or later, proposal submission must be received by TDS no later than the 4th Friday in April.

Summer

➢ A complete proposal submission for students who wish to graduate the following fall or later, proposal submission must be received by TDS no later than the 4th Friday in July.

Final Thesis/Dissertation Deadlines

Fall

➢ A complete final submission for students who wish to graduate in the fall semester must be received by TDS no later than the 1st Friday in November.

Spring

➢ A complete final submission for students who wish to graduate in the spring semester must be received by TDS no later than the 1st Friday in April.

Summer

➢ A complete final submission for students who wish to graduate in the summer semester must be received by TDS no later than the 4th Friday in June.

If a submission is received after the deadline, the submission will be reviewed for approval for the following semester. Documents are reviewed only after the submission file is considered complete.

RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

Students must follow the institutional and federal guidelines for conducting ethical research. To remain in compliance, you must complete research ethics trainings and, in some cases, seek approval from the applicable institutional safety committee prior to beginning data collection. Please read all information provided below to understand the legal and ethical obligations related to research.

Approval received from one of the research compliance committees is not the same as Graduate School approval of a proposal document.

Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) Training
Training for Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship must be completed before data collection can begin. This training is required of all thesis and dissertation students and is good for three (3) years. Training may be taken online through CITI or in-person. See the Research Compliance website for more information:
http://www.etamu.edu/research/compliance/training/Responsible-Conduct-in-Research.aspx

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval:
If your research involves collecting data about or from living humans (e.g., surveys, online questionnaires, emails, etc.), the research may qualify as involving human participants and,

therefore, will require review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). As part of the review process, you will need to complete additional training through CITI (human subjects training, plus additional training as assigned by IRB and/or your advisor).

- If research involves human subjects, all required trainings **must** be completed and approval from IRB received prior to collecting data. If this requirement is violated, you will not be permitted to use the collected data in your final thesis or dissertation.

- The IRB reviews applications on a set schedule. When creating a thesis or dissertation timeline, you should consider the IRB meeting schedule. All IRB application materials must be submitted by your advisor, as explained on the IRB webpage. Final approval for the inclusion of human participants in a study rests with the IRB. IRB has the right to request changes prior to approving your study. If you are conducting research using human subjects, you may begin data collection only after the IRB has provided your advisor with a letter approving the project.

  - Visit the IRB website (hyperlink provided) for additional information.

Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC) Approval

If your research involves collecting data about or from living vertebrate animals, your research may qualify as involving animal participants and, therefore, require review by the Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC). As part of the review process, you will need to complete additional training through CITI (animal subjects plus additional training as assigned by IACUC and your advisor).

- If your research involves animal subjects, all required trainings **must** be completed and approval received from IACUC prior to collecting data. If this requirement is violated, you will not be permitted to use the collected data in your final thesis or dissertation.

- IACUC reviews applications on a set schedule. When creating a thesis or dissertation timeline, you should consider the IACUC meeting schedule. All IACUC application materials must be submitted as described on the IACUC website. Final approval for the inclusion of animal participants in a study rests with the IACUC. IACUC has the right to request changes prior to approving your study. You may begin data collection only after IACUC has provided your advisor with a letter approving the project.

  - Visit the IACUC website for additional information.

Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) Approval

If your research involves use of biological agents, the research may require review and approval from the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). Use of any of the following will require IBC approval:

1. Pathogens and potential pathogens of humans, animals, or plants;
2. Materials potentially containing human pathogens (including human and non-human primate blood, tissue, and cell lines

3. Recombinant DNA and RNA including creation or use of transgenic plants and animals;
4. Select agents and toxins listed by the CDC; and
5. Any material requiring a CDC license to import, or a USDA permit.

- If you are conducting research involving use of biological agents (as defined above), all required trainings **must** be completed and approval received from IBC prior to collecting data. If these requirements are violated, you will not be permitted to use the collected data in your final thesis or dissertation.

- IBC reviews applications on a set schedule. When creating a thesis or dissertation timeline, you should consider the IBC meeting schedule. All IBC application materials must be submitted as described on the IBC website. Final approval for the use of biological agents in a study rests with the IBC. IBC has the right to request changes prior to approving the study. You may begin data collection only after IBC has provided your advisor with a letter approving the project.

- Visit the IBC website for additional information.

TDS **will not** review a paper if proof of compliance with the applicable research committee requirements (i.e., an approval letter) is not provided. Questions concerning the training or protocols should be directed to the Office of Sponsored Programs (ResearchCompliance@etamu.edu). Please contact TDS at TDS@etamu.edu or (903)886-5968 with questions about the type of proof accepted.