THESIS, DISSERTATION, & CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDE
Effective August 1, 2012

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For Summer 2012 graduates or later
It is the responsibility of the student to adhere to the instructions set forth in this guide.
All forms and information can also be located at www.highpoint.edu/graduate.
Purpose of Guide

The purpose of the following guide is to help assist students and faculty in the process of writing and submitting a written project to the Norcross Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the student’s degree.

The Norcross Graduate School establishes thesis, dissertation and capstone project deadlines and processes to ensure students, faculty and staff have adequate time to fulfill the work required of a high quality academic product. The work of the Norcross Graduate School, for ensuring that the thesis, dissertation or capstone project is of high quality and acceptable as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a masters or doctoral degree, necessitates that final submission deadlines occur earlier than the end of a term.

The thesis/dissertation (or written project) should be a written document that brings credit to the student, the thesis/dissertation Committee, the Department/School, the Graduate School, and High Point University. In addition, the thesis/dissertation should also add to the body of literature of the topic chosen. The student, the thesis/dissertation Chair and thesis/dissertation Committee Members share responsibility for its quality.

The capstone project should be a project in written, visual and/or media form that brings credit to the student, the capstone project committee, the Department/School, the Graduate School, and High Point University. In addition, the capstone project should also add to the body of literature of the topic chosen. The student, the Capstone Chair and Capstone Committee Members share responsibility for its quality. If the capstone project includes a written format, the thesis/dissertation/capstone project writing checklist should be utilized.
REGISTRATIONS

Thesis/Dissertation Registrations

M.A. in History:
A student must have a minimum of two thesis registrations, HST 5980 and HST 5990, which cannot occur in the same term. However, a student can expect to exceed two registrations for thesis to include continuation course registration. Also, a student must continue to register for a thesis course (fall, spring and summer) until the thesis/dissertation is approved by the Graduate School office.

- Required registrations for thesis include HST 5980 and HST 5990
- Uncertain number of registrations for HST 5990a; this registration must be repeated each term until the thesis/dissertation is approved by the Graduate School
- The 5 year time limitation to complete the degree remains

M.Ed. School of Education programs:
A student must register for EDU 5200. A student can expect to exceed one registration for thesis/dissertation to include a continuation course registration. Also, a student must continue to register for a thesis course (fall, spring and summer) until the thesis is approved by the Graduate School office.

- Required registration for EDU 5200
- Registration for EDU 5200a is on an as needed basis; this registration must be repeated each term until the thesis is approved by the Graduate School.
- The 5 year time limitation to complete the degree remains.

Capstone Project Registrations

Strategic Communication:
A student must register for COM 5900. A student can expect to exceed one registration for the capstone project. Also, a student must continue to register for a capstone project course (fall, spring and summer) until the project is approved by the Graduate School office.

- Required registration for COM 5900
- Registration for COM 5901 is on an as needed basis; this registration must be repeated each term until the thesis/dissertation is approved by the Graduate School.
- The 5 year time limitation to complete the degree remains.

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Ed.D. in Educational Leadership:

A student must register for EDU 8300 and EDU 8400, which cannot occur in the same term. A student can expect to exceed one registration for dissertation. Also, a student must continue to register for a dissertation course (fall, spring and summer) until the dissertation is approved by the Graduate School office.

- Required registration for EDU 8300 and EDU 8400
- Registration for 8300a is on an as needed basis; this registration must be repeated each term until chair of the committee has approved enrollment in EDU 8400.
- Registration for 8400a is on an as needed basis; this registration must be repeated each term until the dissertation is approved by the Graduate School.
- The 6 year time limitation to complete the degree remains.

*Summer registration is based on the 8-week graduate term only.*

GRADING

Thesis/dissertation/capstone project courses do not yield grades with associated quality points. Appropriate grading for thesis/dissertation/capstone project courses follows the grading scheme shown below.

**IN for HST 5980/EDU 8300:** which does not impact the student’s GPA

**IN for EDU 8300a- Subsequent Registrations:** until the thesis/dissertation chair approves the completion of work for the credit courses associated with the continuation courses

**IN for HST 5990/EDU 5200/COM 5900/EDU 8400:** which does not impact the student’s GPA. The “CR” can be submitted only when the thesis/dissertation chair receives notification of approval from the Dean of the Graduate School

**IN for HST 5990a / EDU 5200a/COM 5901/ EDU 8400a– Subsequent Registration(s):** which does not impact the student’s GPA. The “CR” can be submitted only when the thesis/dissertation chair receives notification of approval from the Dean of the Graduate School
TIMELINE AND DEADLINES

It is important for students and their thesis/dissertation/capstone project committees to adhere to the time frames for moving through the thesis/dissertation/capstone project process.

☐ **Appointment of the Chair and Committee for either Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Project**
Before the student registers for the initial thesis/dissertation/capstone course, the Chair submits the Appointment of the Chair and Committee form to the Graduate School. Ideally, the committee should be selected and form submitted to the Norcross Graduate School a minimum of 2 semesters prior to planned defense of research.

☐ **Final approval for IRB should be completed for human subject’s research if needed.**

☐ **Apply for graduation**
The application for graduation should be submitted a maximum of one semester prior to, or a minimum of one month after, the start of the semester in which the student expects to complete their degree requirements.

☐ **Submission of almost final product manuscript submitted to committee.**
At least two week prior to defense or a timeframe arranged prior with committee and chair.

☐ **Schedule of the Defense**
Before the date of the defense, the Chair submits the Schedule of the Defense form to the Graduate School. The defense should be scheduled to allow the student to meet the deadline printed in the Graduate School Bulletin.

☐ **Defense Evaluation**
On the date of the defense or the first business day after the thesis/dissertation defense, the Chair submits the Defense Evaluation form to the Graduate School.

If the committee feels substantial changes need to be made, the chair of the committee will discuss these changes with the student. If the changes cannot be made in an acceptable amount of time, the expected graduation date for the student should be changed to the following semester.

☐ **Delivery of the revised and finished post-defense copy of the thesis/dissertation/capstone paper with the signed Checklist for Acceptance into the Graduate School**
If the defense was successful, the student submits the revised and finished post-defense, professional final copy of the thesis/dissertation (on regular paper) with the signed Checklist after the defense and before the date printed in the Graduate School Calendar for the last date to deliver copies of final thesis/dissertation to the Graduate School.

The single copy submitted should be printed on regular paper, one sided and submitted to the Norcross Graduate School. In addition, a pdf copy of the paper, in 1 document, should be submitted to the email address graduate@highpoint.edu the same day the hard copy is delivered. This will allow the reader to proof the paper both electronically and in print.

If the thesis/dissertation/written capstone project does not fully meet the standards of the Graduate School, it will be returned to the student; which may delay the student’s graduation.

*For Summer 2012 graduates or later*

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All forms and information can also be located at [www.highpoint.edu/graduate](http://www.highpoint.edu/graduate).
Time needed may vary from minor corrections to large formatting concerns. Significant errors may cause the student to graduate in a later term.

When possible, it is advisable to submit the thesis/dissertation to the Graduate School as early as possible prior to the deadline.

☐ **Corrections and resubmission of final product to the Norcross Graduate School**
It is advisable to make the corrections as soon as possible and resubmit the document to the Norcross Graduate School.

All corrections must be made to the satisfaction of the Norcross Graduate School. Students may be asked to make several rounds of corrections if not all are corrected by the student in the initial graduate school review.

☐ **Notification of approved final product communicated to student**
Once the final product is approved by the Norcross Graduate School, the student will be notified via email.

☐ **Submit final copies on bond paper.**
It is the student’s responsibility to then print a minimum of 3 copies of their product on bond paper once notified of the approval of the final product. The bond paper should be 8.5 x 11 inch, 20-pound weight, white or very light cream in color, acid free or a minimum of 25% cotton content paper. Bond paper is available in the university bookstore.

All copies must be free of streaks, smudges, marks, or other distractions. All printing must be aligned appropriately according to the writing style manual utilized.

The copies should then be submitted to the Norcross Graduate School office prior to the final graduation date for the semester. Copies should be complete with signature page signed by all parties listed. **Copies received after the final graduation date will cause the students graduation date to be moved to the next semester.**

☐ **Receiving credit for enrollments in the required thesis/dissertation/capstone courses**
After the thesis/dissertation is accepted into the Graduate School, the Dean of the Graduate School sends written notification to the Chair to change the IN grades to CR.

☐ **Requesting additional copies.**
If additional copies are requested to be bound, the graduate office will notify the student when they are available for pick up. Students or their authorized designee must pick up the copies as no copies will be shipped.
THE COMMITTEE

Role of the committee

The role of the committee has many facets, all of which will be not listed in this guide. Some areas for consideration are:

The Committee Chair

- is the student’s primary advisor in the process of completing the research to fruition.
- ensures all protocols are followed by the department, graduate school, and IRB if necessary.
- ensures the student has been informed of all deadlines and milestones in the process towards completion of the research project.
- reads, evaluates, critiques, and provides guidance for drafts of the research project.
- reviews drafts for honor code violations.
- works with the committee with their opines and comments for drafts and/or moving forward with project.
- schedules the defense.
- chairs the defense.
- handles all paperwork related to the grading of the defense and if necessary any follow-up/corrections needed.
- signs off on the formatting checklist the student submits with their initial final draft to the graduate school.
- ensures the student corrects, changes, or revises any suggestion as a result of the defense before submitting to the graduate office.
- submits the final grade for the project course once the project has been approved by the graduate school.
- approves the methodology and subject of the written research project.

Committee Members

- provide ideas and suggestion for research or direction of project.
- read, evaluate, critique, and provides guidance for drafts of the research project as necessary.
- read and evaluate the final draft.
- participate in the defense of the research project.
- contribute to the project the knowledge of procedure as well a written standards for the project to be accepted into the graduate school.
- review drafts for honor code violations.

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Role of the student

The student

- must make every attempt to follow the guidance of the committee chair and members.
- should not rely on the committee chair or committee to rewrite documents, perform spell check or other basic grammatical/spelling issues. It is assumed the student is aware of basic writing skill.
- should take on the responsibility of the research project as their own unique research to contribute to their area of learning.
- should follow the honor code guidelines.
- takes on responsibility to submit the final research project within the guidelines the graduate school has established in the current guidebook.
- meet the deadlines established for the proposal, defense and final submission dates
- quality and accuracy of text, graphics, tables, and figures.
- ultimately responsible for all aspects of the written research project.

Setting up your Committee

Early in your graduate program (possibly before you enroll), you should discuss with your advisor your anticipated research interest. Your research interest may help guide the direction of who to select as your chair and committee members. The committee should consist of a minimum of three faculty members from High Point University, one of which is the committee chair. The committee chair should be a faculty member who holds a terminal degree and teaches in the department your degree is held. The remaining two members of the committee should be a minimum of 1 faculty member who teaches in the department in which your degree is held and one other faculty member of the HPU community. Exceptions will be made for the third member to include a respected member of the community in your field of study, or a scholar employed at another 4-year higher education regionally accredited institution who teaches in the field relevant to the students research topic.

A few points to consider when selecting the chair and committee members:

☐ Determine the research area of interest.
☐ Meet with a graduate faculty member to discuss general ideas about your research and if it is a plausible area to consider.
☐ Ask a graduate faculty member to be the chair of your committee.
☐ Once a chair is selected, ask the chair to assist in selecting the remaining committee member spaces.
☐ Discuss your timeframe for completion. Some faculty may be unavailable during certain summer months.
The “Appointment of Chair and Committee” form must be submitted to the Norcross Graduate office prior to registering for initial thesis/dissertation/capstone course. See appendices for forms.

**Research Involving Human Subjects**

“High Point University (hereinafter "University") recognizes the importance of research in the academic environment and to this end established the human participants institutional review board (hereinafter "IRB") to ensure the ethical treatment of human participants. The IRB shall review all research involving human participants performed under University auspices, for compliance with federal guidelines and with ethical standards as set forth by The Belmont Report and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Research" is defined as a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. All University faculty, staff, and students whose research involves human participants must be familiar with and conform to this policy for all activities that fall under this definition.” (High Point University Website, [http://www.highpoint.edu/academics/IRB/](http://www.highpoint.edu/academics/IRB/), 2012)

Students conducting research with the anticipated involvement of human subject must adhere to the standards and protocol set forth by the university IRB. Updated guidelines can be located on the university website – [www.highpoint.edu/academics/IRB](http://www.highpoint.edu/academics/IRB).

Once approved for research by the IRB, an approval letter will be copied to the Norcross Graduate School for your file.

**Manuscript Preparation**

The final written portion of the research project should represent the result of an independent research project conducted by the student in the field to which they are enrolled as a graduate student. The written portion should be written in English and conform to the research guidelines as detailed in the Norcross Graduate School guide as well as the department expectations set forth by the director of the students graduate program. The written portion must meet the requirements of the most recent edition of the writing style manual which is approved by the director of the graduate program. Students should check with their committee chair to determine the writing style manual in which their written project should be written. Commonly used style manuals include:


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All forms and information can also be located at [www.highpoint.edu/graduate](http://www.highpoint.edu/graduate).
Writing Style resources are available through Smith Library -
http://library.highpoint.edu/reference/citation_guides.html

Additional Resources:
The Norcross Graduate School offers workshops to enhance the learning experience for every graduate student. Schedules can be found on the graduate website. Workshop topics include several areas which relate to writing, research, citations, and other ways to help you with your writing process. All graduate students are encouraged to RSVP and attend the workshops throughout their enrollment.

Previously written theses or dissertations should only be referenced for information, not utilized as a writing guide. Previous written works may have used a previously published writing style guide. A written final research project submitted to the Norcross Graduate School must use the most recent writing style guide published, regardless of admission date to the graduate school or enrollment of writing project course(s). In the event any writing style guide has been updated and the graduate school guide has not, the most current writing style guide must be utilized. Utilizing a previously published writing style guide, will result in the graduate school returning the written project for corrections, which could result in a delayed graduate date.

Citing Sources
All sources must be cited appropriately. The High Point University honor code is enforced with all graduate student work and should be taken into account when preparing the written research project.

Writing Center Assistance
The university writing center is available to all students at all levels of writing abilities. For one-on-one attention to your writing at any stage of your manuscript, schedule an appointment by emailing writingcenter@highpoint.edu. The Writing Center is located on the 4th floor of the Smith Library.
Checklist for Acceptance of a Thesi...
Required Pages

The following pages should be included in the written project, unless stated as optional. See the sample pages for a visual aid of the required format for each page. Incorrect formatting will result in the writing project returned to the student for corrections, which could delay the graduation date.

Thesis/dissertation/Written Capstone Project Checklist Items

Typing
- Typeface is a standard font (e.g., Times New Roman) and 11- or 12- points in size.
- Selected font is used consistently.
- Print is laser quality.
- Black ink is used; nothing is in color, with the exception of pictures in figures if needed.
- Printing should be single sided.
- A page should not begin or end with only one line of a paragraph, this is the exception to the 1-inch margin rule.

Spacing
- Double spacing is used consistently.
- Single spacing is used only for long quotes, tables, and figures.
- Spacing is consistent between the top page number and the first line of typing on each page.
- Consistent spacing scheme is used.

Margins and Justification
- Left margins are 1.5 inches.
- Top margins are one inch.
- Right margins are one inch.
- Left margins are justified.
- Right margins are ragged.
- No page is short because of a table or figure.
- Figures, pictures, graphs and other such materials must conform to the margins set.

Division of Words and Abbreviations
- All words fit in their entirety on a line. No word is divided.
- Abbreviations are avoided.

Running Head
- A running head should be utilized.

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Pagination
- Each page, except the title page and the approval page, is assigned a typed number.
- No typed page number is on the title page.
- No typed page number is on the approval page.
- Page number count begins with the title page.
- Lowercase Roman numerals are used on preliminary pages.
  - Title page
  - Approval page
  - Copyright page
  - Dedication page
- Typed Roman numerals begin with the approval page.
- Roman numerals are typed and centered one inch from the bottom edge of the page.
- Arabic numerals are typed flush with the right-hand top margin.
- First page of the text begins with “1”.

Tables and Figures
- Each table or figure is incorporated at the appropriate place in the text.
- Short tables or figures are placed on a page with some text.
- All tables and figures are referred to by number.
- When more than one table or figure is introduced on a page of text, each follows in the order mentioned. Table or figure schemes are consistent.
- Table or figure schemes are consistent.

Citations
- Works by the same author(s) with the same publication date are consistently differentiated by a suffix after the year (e.g., 2005 for one publication and 2005a for the other publication).
- Both authors’ names are included in every citation when referring to a work by two authors.
- Write authors’ names without any titles (e.g., Dr., Mr., Mrs. or Ms.).

Organization of Thesis/dissertation
- Title Page (page i, but not printed on the page)
- Signature Page (page ii, but not printed on the page)
- Copyright Page (page iii, but not printed on the page)
- Dedication Page (Optional)
- Acknowledgments (Optional)
- Abstract (300-350 words)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- List of Figures
- List of Maps
- Text, divided into chapters
- References
- Appendix (includes materials too bulky or distracting for the text)

Title Page Arrangement
- The Title should be 2 inches from the top of the page
- Full title of the thesis/dissertation is centered automatically between the margins.

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Roman numeral is typed and centered one inch from the bottom edge of the page.
Should not be longer than two pages.
Should include statement of problem, methodology or procedure, conclusion or major finding(s).

Table of Contents
- Typing is double-spaced.
- All parts of the manuscript are noted.
- List of Tables is included, if used.
- List of Figures is included, if used.
- Appendices are included, if used.

List of Tables
- Each table has a number and title that corresponds to the number and title in the text.
- Each table has a page number that corresponds to page in the text.

List of Figures
- Each figure has a number and title that corresponds to the number and title in the text.
- Each figure has a page number that corresponds to page in the text.

References
- Reference list appears after the conclusion of the paper, before the appendices.
- Center the word “References” at the top of a page.
- Reference list appears on a separate page--not on the same page as the conclusion.
- All citations in the thesis/dissertation appear in the reference list.
- All references are cited in the thesis/dissertation.
- Personal communications do not appear in the reference list.
- There is double spacing between entries.
- Authors’ surnames are followed by their first initials.
- Reference list entry includes all authors and their initials.
- Reference list entries are arranged in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author.
- Two or more references by the same author(s) lists the earlier study before the later study.
- References with identical authors and dates are arranged in alphabetical order by the first letter in the title of the work.

Appendix
- Appendix follows the References.
- Center the word “Appendix” at the top of a page and then continue typing the text for the appendix.
- Material in the Appendix must match the font in the text; copying and pasting is unacceptable.

Appendices (if more than one)
- Appendices follow the References.
- Center the word “Appendix” at the top of a page; no other words are typed on this page.
- Center the word Appendix and the capital letter (e.g., A, B, C, etc) at the top of a page and then continue typing the text for the associated with the Appendix; continue this scheme with subsequent appendices.
- Each appendix begins on a separate page.

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We affirm that the named student’s thesis/dissertation is high quality, adheres to an acceptable manuscript styles and meets the requirements of the Graduate School.

________________________________________________________________________

Signature of Student

Date

________________________________________________________________________

Signature of Chair

Date

Submit signed checklist with final draft to the Norcross Graduate School office for approval.
Appointment of the Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Course Chair and Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Course Committee

It is the responsibility of the thesis/dissertation/capstone course Chair to return this completed form to the Graduate School prior to the student registering for the first thesis/dissertation/capstone course. All requested information must be provided.

Student’s Name ____________________________________________________________

Degree Program ____________________________________________________________

Proposed Term/Year of Registration in the First Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Course _________

Proposed Title of Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Project

________________________________________________________________________

Approval Signatures

____________________________________________________

School Dean Date

Department Head Date

Chair Date

Committee Member Date

Committee Member Date

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Scheduling of the Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Project Defense

It is the responsibility of the Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Chair to complete and return this form to the Graduate School prior to the date of the thesis/dissertation/capstone project defense.

Student’s Name ________________________________________________________________

Degree Program ______________________________________________________________

Title of Thesis/dissertation/Capstone Project
__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

By signing below, we confirm that the thesis/dissertation is fully written and fully acceptable for delivery to the Graduate School immediately after the thesis/dissertation/capstone project defense.

Approval Signatures

_________________________________________ Date
School Dean

_________________________________________ Date
Department Head

_________________________________________ Date
Chair

_________________________________________ Date
Committee Member

_________________________________________ Date
Committee Member

_________________________________________ Date
Student

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It is the responsibility of the Thesis/dissertation Chair to complete and deliver this form to the Graduate School on the day of or the day after the defense of the thesis/dissertation.

Student’s Name _________________________________________________

Degree Program _________________________________________________

Title of Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Project

___________________________________________________________________

Defense: Date __________ Time __________ Location ____________

Committee’s Evaluation of the Thesis/dissertation/Capstone Project Defense

☐ Pass

☐ Fail (List Reason)

Chair ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Committee Member ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Committee Member ___________________________ Date ___________________________
FULL TITLE OF THESIS/DISSERTATION
(all letters capitalized)

A Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Project
Submitted to Norcross Graduate School
of
High Point University
in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the
[Name of Degree Program]

[Full Name of Student]
[Graduation Month and Year]
To the Graduate School:

We, in the School/Department of [name of the department], are submitting a thesis/dissertation written by [name of the student as it appears on the title page] titled “[complete title of thesis/dissertation as it appears on title page].” We have examined the final copy of this thesis/dissertation for format and content, and we recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the [name of degree program; e.g., Master of Arts in History or Master of Education in Elementary Education].

__________________________________________
(Name), Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Chair

__________________________________________
(Name), Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Committee Member

__________________________________________
(Name), Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone Committee Member

Accepted for Norcross Graduate School:

______________________________
Dean of Norcross Graduate School

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