

MFA WRITING GUIDELINES

Style Guide References

Capstone papers written for the MFA program follow the editorial style of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Recommended reference manuals include Diane Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* and *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

The responsibility for writing and editing the paper is the student's. Matters of style, content, the arrangement of contents, and length are decided by the student and committee. Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling are the student's responsibility. All references and documentation are to be accurate and complete.

Format

All pages are to be (8.5 inches x 11 inches), double-spaced, one reproduction process, and one type of paper unless prior approval of variance is granted by the student's committee chair. Standard word processing practices, including spacing (one space only between sentences) and punctuation, must be consistent throughout the manuscript.

Pages should be printed double-sided.

The typeface must be a standard, bookface type (e.g. Times Roman).

The only acceptable font size is twelve points.

Double spacing is mandatory, except for poetry manuscripts.

Black toner should be used to ensure a sharp, high-contrast black-on-white copy.

All pages must be clearly and consistently numbered.

Italics may be used in conjunction with the typeface as a substitute for underlining titles or foreign terms, provided it used consistently.

Holes are not permitted in any of the margins.

The margins for each page-preliminaries, text, reference material-must be sufficiently ample to allow for easy reading. Here are some suggested guidelines:

left (binding edge) 1.5 inch; right 1 inch; top 1.25 inch; bottom 1.25 inch

Additional Considerations

Photographs or other images must be scanned onto the final copies of the text. Photo mounting corners, rubber cement, transparent tape, and staples are unacceptable mounting materials.

Very large maps, charts, and blueprints not reducible to a size for binding are folded for insertion in a pocket at the end of the text. Each item is numbered and captioned according to the instructions for figures. In some cases, these large maps or charts are labeled as “Plates” in which case a LIST OF PLATES must be prepared and placed in the preliminaries.

Components of the Capstone Project

In general, the capstone consists of three parts—the preliminaries, the text, and the reference material. The preliminaries are arranged in the order listed below. (Many of the sections are designated optional and will not be included in every capstone paper.) Formatting questions should be directed to the administrative advisor.

Preliminaries

The Committee Signature Sheet is signed by committee members at the conclusion of the defense and by the administrative advisor or committee chair after all revisions have been completed. It will be inserted by the graduate program office into its proper place in the manuscripts before they are bound.

Title Page (See template)

The capstone project title appears, as does the author’s name stated as it appears on the Statement of Intention to Graduate. No reference is to be made to academic or other degrees or titles.

The submission statement is printed in upper and lower case letters, single-spaces, and centered. In the submission statement, the project title is “Capstone.”

Hamline University, Saint Paul, Minnesota, and the month and year of the completion of the project is printed below the submission statement, double-spaced, in upper and lower case letters, and centered.

The person who directly supervised the capstone is cited as the committee chair. Include only the academic title, but not academic degrees, of the faculty member (e.g. Professor Joan J. Jones).

Copyright Page (See example below)

Copyright of the capstone project is at the discretion of the student. Students wishing to copyright their work may file the claim to copyright by corresponding directly with the U.S. Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 02540. Alternatively, students may include a copyright notice without official filing.

If the paper is to be copyrighted, the official copyright notice is centered left to right and slightly above center on this page, single or double-spaced, with the current year.

Example:

Copyright by
YOUR NAME IN CAPITAL LETTERS
year
All Rights Reserved

Dedication (optional)

The dedication is brief and centered on the page. It customarily begins with the word “To.”

Epigraph (optional)

The epigraph is centered on its own page. The source of a quotation used as an epigraph is given below the epigraph. Bibliographic information is usually limited to author’s name and title of the work.

Acknowledgments (optional)

The text on this page is limited to thanks for or recognition of special assistance, but may also include recognitions of permissions granted to the author to use published and/or copyrighted material.

Table of Contents (required)

Beneath the heading TABLE OF CONTENTS, all titles in the capstone following-but none preceding-the Table of Contents are listed. These include major divisions, and at least first-order subheads must be listed. Listing chapter breaks in a novel or memoir is optional.

Artist Statement (required)

Think of this, as “The Conscious Artist Statement” required of all graduating MFA students. This is **10-20 pages** in which the writer deeply explores and conscientiously conveys what s/he has learned as an artist in the process of completing the thesis manuscript. The Artist Statement serves ideally as a kind of self-recognition and closure in which insights and lessons are arrived at that can benefit future writers in the MFA program. This Artist Statement should not be essential to the reader’s comprehension of the thesis. It is a separate document.

Text (required)

Each chapter and appendix is a major division, and each is to be captioned and its materials handled consistently throughout the paper. Each major division begins on a new page, but subdivisions must always follow each other immediately without gaps in text.

Reference Material

Reference material includes the appendices and bibliography, and provides supporting and supplementary information to the text.

Appendix (or Appendices)

Examples of material that may be appropriate for the appendices include explanations helpful to a reader but too long for inclusion in footnotes or text, texts of original documents such as letters, laws, questionnaires, listings of material, original data, and computer programs.

Bibliography, References, Notes/Footnotes

Every capstone project that makes use of other sources either by direct quotation or by reference must have a bibliography or listing of these sources at the end.

The MFA program follows the editorial style of the Modern Language Association (MLA).

NOTE: Thoroughly read the *Timeline for Thesis* portion of the Thesis Packet for more specific information on the Artist Statement, length requirements, advisors and readers, and deadlines.