



The Dissertation: Top-10 Formatting Errors — and How to Avoid Them!

Each year, too many PhD students see their submitted dissertations rejected because of incorrect formatting. This costs the Registrar’s Office many hours, and it costs students the trauma of last-minute fixes, often against the clock. Avoid the problem — watch out for these common formatting glitches!

1. Missing Dissertation Acceptance Certificate

The first page of the PDF dissertation file should be a scanned copy of the Dissertation Acceptance Certificate (DAC), followed by a blank page. These should not be counted or numbered as a part of the dissertation pagination.

2. Conflicts Between the DAC and the Title Page

The DAC and the dissertation title page must match exactly, meaning that the author name and the title on the title page must match that on the DAC. The author name on both should appear as it does on the official GSAS record.

3. Abstract Formatting Errors

The advisor name should be left-justified, and the author name should be right-justified. Up to two advisor names are allowed. The Abstract should be double spaced and include the page title “Abstract,” as well as the page number “iii.”

4. Pagination

- The front matter should be numbered using Roman numerals (iii, iv, v, ...). The title page and the copyright page should be counted but not numbered. The first printed page number should appear on the Abstract page.
- The body of the dissertation should be numbered using Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, ...). The first page of the body of the text should begin with page 1. Pagination should not continue from the front matter.
- All page numbers should be centered either at the top or the bottom of the page.

5. Figures and Tables

- Figures and tables must be placed within the text, as close to their first mention as possible. Figures and tables that span more than one page must be labeled on each page. Any second and subsequent page of the figure/table must include the “(Continued)” notation. This applies to figure captions as well as images. Each page of a figure/table must be accounted for and appropriately labeled.
- All figures/tables must have a unique number. They may not repeat within the dissertation.



6. Horizontal Figures and Tables

- Any figures/tables placed in a horizontal orientation must be placed with the top of the figure/ table on the left hand side. The top of the figure/table should be aligned with the spine of the dissertation when it is bound.
- Page numbers must be placed in the same location on all pages of the dissertation, centered, at the bottom or top of the page. Page numbers may not appear under the table/ figure.

7. Supplemental Figures and Tables

Supplemental figures and tables must be placed at the back of the dissertation in an appendix. They should not be placed at the back of the chapter.

8. Permission Letters

Copyright permission letters must be uploaded as a supplemental file, titled ‘do_not_publish_permission_letters,’ within the ProQuest submission tool.

9. Original DAC and Surveys

The original Dissertation Acceptance Certificate as well as three required surveys must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the dissertation deadline. Dissertation submission is not complete until all documents have been received and accepted.

10. Overall Formatting

Check all formatting after all revisions and before submitting online, to make sure that all requirements are met.