



# Thesis & Dissertation Manual

## 2023

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Graduate School

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## **1. How to Use this Manual**

This comprehensive booklet serves as a guide for students pursuing an MS/PhD degree and undertaking the task of writing a thesis or dissertation. Its primary objective is to provide a thorough understanding of the essential requirements and methodologies involved in crafting such scholarly works. The guide offers a step-by-step explanation of the entire process, encompassing proposal submission, committee selection, defense, and the final step of uploading the work to an online repository.

Furthermore, the booklet includes a compilation of common errors and mistakes that have been identified by previous reviewers. This compilation aims to save valuable time for both students and committee members by highlighting pitfalls to avoid. The manual has been prepared by the Graduate School at Alfaisal University, with the aim of establishing standardized style and format guidelines while allowing sufficient flexibility to accommodate the practices of various academic disciplines.

## **2. Academic Supervisor/Advisor Selection and Thesis/ Dissertation Advisory Committee Appointment**

At the commencement of a graduate student's enrollment in a program, an academic supervisor/advisor is assigned to them by the program's director, with the approval of the College Vice Dean for Graduate Studies and Research. This supervisor plays a crucial role in guiding the student throughout their studies, aiding them in selecting a thesis topic, and preparing a research plan. These actions align with the rules approved by the University Council based on recommendations from the Research and Graduate Council (RGC) and the Permanent Committee for Graduate Studies (PCGS).

For each student, a Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee is formed by the College Program Director (FORM G09: Assignment of student thesis / dissertation advisory committee). In master's programs, this committee is known as the Thesis Advisory Committee, while in PhD programs, it is referred to as the Dissertation Advisory Committee. The committee comprises a minimum of three members, including a faculty member who serves as the primary academic advisor/supervisor and chair. The committee's responsibilities encompass assisting the student in formulating and gaining approval for the Thesis/Dissertation Proposal (outlined in FORM G10: Structure of Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal). Additionally, the committee provides guidance to the student during the research execution, the writing process, and aids in the preparation for the oral defense.

## **3. Submission and Defense of Thesis/Dissertation Proposal**

Before commencing the writing of a research proposal, a graduate student is required to seek approval from their supervisor regarding the chosen title for their research project. Once the title is approved, the student proceeds to submit a comprehensive research project proposal to

their supervisor. This proposal serves to provide a detailed overview of the research topic, highlight its significance, and outline the proposed plan and timeline for its execution. In the third semester of a master's program, specifically during the second year's first semester, a graduate student can enroll in Thesis A (9 cr) through the online system. To be eligible, the student must have passed at least 80% of the total courses and maintain a GPA of no less than "very good." During this semester, it is required for the student to submit and successfully pass a Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal (FORM G10). Once the student completes a draft of the research proposal, they are expected to present it to the Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee. The presentation, conducted in person, should last approximately 20 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer session with the committee. It is necessary for the student to submit the proposal to the committee at least seven days prior to the scheduled presentation date.

Based on the feedback and comments received from the committee, the student may need to revise the thesis/dissertation research proposal, if deemed necessary. Once the proposal receives approval from the Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee, the main supervisor is responsible for submitting the proposal, along with a completed FORM G10, to the College Vice Dean for Graduate Studies. For a PhD proposal, the candidate will have up to three opportunities to pass the Qualifying Exam, which is the Dissertation Proposal Defense.

#### **4. Procedures Following the Approval of the Thesis/Dissertation Proposal**

In the fourth semester of the master's program, specifically during the second year's second semester, the student is required to register for Thesis B (9 cr) in the system. Prior to registration, the student must submit a progress report detailing the advancements made in the thesis work. During this period, the student is expected to finalize the writing of the thesis and defend it. If the thesis remains incomplete by the end of the second year, the student must register for Thesis C (0 cr), indicating that the work is continuing. No credits are attached to Thesis C. The process for completing a master's degree typically spans a minimum of four semesters (two years) and a maximum of eight semesters (four years), as stipulated in Article 36, item 5 of the Rules and Regulations for Graduate Studies in Universities.

Master's and doctoral theses are written in the language of instruction that has been approved for the program by the Permanent Committee and the University's Council. However, if the thesis/dissertation is written in a language other than Arabic, it must include a summary in Arabic. This ensures that the research findings are accessible to the broader academic community and promotes inclusivity within the university's scholarly endeavors.

#### **5. Evaluation and Preparation for Defense of Thesis/Dissertation**

Upon completion of the student's thesis/dissertation and its approval by the Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee (refer to FORM G11: Thesis/Dissertation Submission for Defense), the College Vice Dean for Graduate Studies forwards the manuscript to an External Evaluator

(FORM G13: External Evaluator's Report). The evaluator is given a three-week period to review the thesis/dissertation and provide recommendations for any necessary changes. Once the External Evaluator approves the work, the College Vice Dean for Graduate Studies schedules a date for the thesis/dissertation defense.

In accordance with Article 51 of the Unified Laws, the Program Coordinator may propose the names of the voting members for the Thesis/Dissertation Examination Committee to the College Vice Dean for Graduate Studies for approval. The committee consists of a minimum of four members, with a non-voting chair appointed by the respective College Vice Dean for Graduate Studies and three voting members recommended by the same office. The Major Advisor is required to be one of the committee members, while an External Evaluator from an external university may serve as another member. Proposed committee members from outside the university must submit their CV to the College Vice Dean for Graduate Studies for approval. It is essential to consult with the main advisor before inviting someone to join the thesis/dissertation advisory committee.

All the relevant forms can be found in Table 1 and Appendix A. The thesis/dissertation process flowsheet, detailing the responsibilities of the College Vice Dean for Graduate Studies, Graduate Program Director, Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee, External Evaluator, College Graduate Office, and the Graduate School, is described in Figure 1. This flowchart illustrates the sequence of responsibilities and actions involved in the thesis/dissertation process, starting from the assignment of the Advisory Committee to the approval of the proposal, followed by the review conducted by the external examiner, the defense, and ultimately the submission of the completed and signed thesis to the ProQuest System. It highlights the key stakeholders and their roles in ensuring a smooth progression throughout the thesis/dissertation journey.

**Table 1:** Forms Related to Thesis Master's and Dissertation Doctorate Programs

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FORM G09: ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENT THESIS / DISSERTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FORM G10: APPROVAL OF THESIS / DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL

FORM G11: THESIS /DISSERTATION SUBMISSION FOR DEFENSE

FORM G13: EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT

FORM G14: CHAIR'S REPORT ON THESIS / DISSERTATION DEFENSE

FORM G15: THESIS / DISSERTATION DEFENSE SIGNATURE SHEET

FORM G16: THESIS, PROJECT, DISSERTATION RELEASE FOR LIBRARY

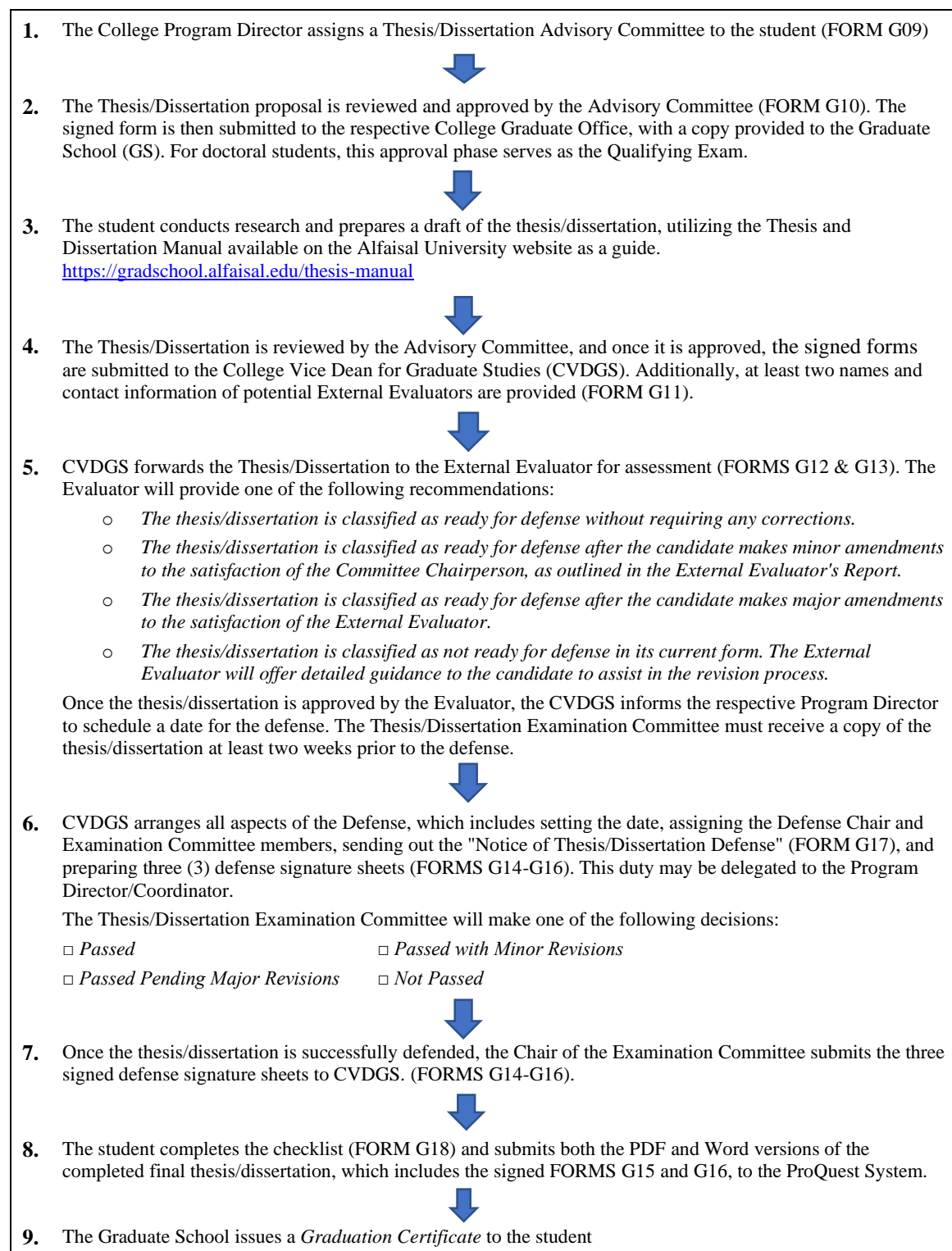
FORM G17: NOTICE OF THESIS / DISSERTATION DEFENSE

CHECKLIST TO COMPLETE BEFORE A CERTIFICATE CAN BE ISSUED

CHANGE IN THESIS / DISSERTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PERMISSION TO TAKE GRADUATE COURSES

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**Figure 1:** Thesis/Dissertation Process Flowchart - Responsibilities of College Vice Deans for Graduate Studies, Program Directors, Advisory Committee, External Evaluator, College Graduate Offices, and Graduate School (GS).

## **6. Thesis / Dissertation Defense and Examination Committee**

The process of evaluating and defending the thesis/dissertation involves several steps. Firstly, the thesis/dissertation supervisor or program manager contacts an External Evaluator/Examiner and provides them with a copy of the thesis/dissertation along with FORM G13. The External Evaluator is given three weeks to review the thesis/dissertation.

Once the thesis/dissertation is approved by both the Advisory Committee (Form G11: Thesis/dissertation submission for defense) and the External Evaluator (FORM G13: External evaluator's report), the College Graduate Office or the Program Coordinator/Director convenes the Examination Committee.

The Examination Committee for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation must meet the following requirements:

- The number of committee members must be an odd number, including the supervisor.
- The committee must consist of at least three members from the faculty.
- The committee includes a member from within the department, a member from outside the department for a master's degree, and a member from outside the university for a doctoral degree, in addition to the main supervisor and the assisting supervisor, if applicable.

During the defense, the Chairperson, who is non-voting, ensures that proper procedures are followed. The initial part of the defense is open to the public, including a brief question period. A presentation of 15-20 minutes is suggested, followed by 5-10 minutes of questions from the audience. After this, the public is asked to leave the room at the discretion of the Chairperson. The Examination Committee continues to ask questions for up to 30 minutes. The candidate is then asked to leave the room by the Chairperson. The Committee deliberates and makes a decision by majority vote, which can be one of four options: Pass, Pass with Minor Revisions (corrections to be confirmed by the Chair/Supervisor), Pass Pending Major Revisions (corrections to be confirmed by the Advisor & the Chair), or Not Passed. Decisions are based on a majority vote (i.e., at least 2/3).

All Examination Committee Members sign two report sheets (FORM G15: Thesis/dissertation defense signature sheet and FORM G14: Chair's report on the defense). The candidate is then invited back into the room and informed of the decision. The Chairperson submits the reports to the Graduate School. If necessary, the Chairperson may add a page of comments.

## **7. Steps After Oral Defense: Uploading Thesis/Dissertation through ProQuest**

After successfully defending the thesis/dissertation, students are required to submit a PDF version of the completed document, which includes the signed FORMS G15 and G16, online to ProQuest. To upload their thesis, candidates can use the following link: [https://www.etdadmin.com/login?siteId=681&request\\_uri=%2Fstudent%2Fmylist%3FsiteId%3D681](https://www.etdadmin.com/login?siteId=681&request_uri=%2Fstudent%2Fmylist%3FsiteId%3D681). The thesis will undergo a review by administrators to check for any format errors. If any format changes are necessary, the administration will provide a list of required changes that should be made and resubmitted as soon as possible. The format review process will continue until the thesis meets the acceptable format criteria.

In the case of a "Not Passed" outcome, students have the opportunity to repeat the defense one more time. However, the second defense cannot take place earlier than two months after the first defense.

The process of the graduation clearance form follows a specific order: Student > Graduate School > Finance > Library > Graduation Department > IT. The Graduation Department will not proceed with the graduation request unless the student has completed the clearance e-Forms (<https://eforms.alfaisal.edu/login>) through the Finance and Library departments. Additionally, graduate students are required to complete an AU Graduate Office Exit Questionnaire, which will be available for completion during the semester when the student registers as a candidate for graduation.

The student can collect the graduation certificate from the Graduate School office.

The Alfaisal University Graduate School mandates the deposit of a digital copy of the thesis/dissertation in both a Microsoft Word file and a PDF format file. The student should convert the thesis/dissertation from the original format to PDF using PDF conversion software. Adobe Acrobat is available on all computers at the Open Access Labs.

## 8. Thesis/Dissertation Write-up

### 8.1. Standards and Requirements

Alfaisal University has established specific standards and requirements for the preparation of a thesis for master's candidates opting for the thesis option, and a dissertation or record of study for doctoral candidates. These documents should be presented in a scholarly, well-integrated, and properly documented manner, reflecting the original work conducted by the student under the guidance of the advisory committee.

### 8.2. Thesis/Dissertation Structure and Format

#### a. Paper

Durable A4 80gr high quality paper should be used for printing out the Thesis/Dissertation. Please note that in case the Thesis/Dissertation includes maps, tables or illustrative material which is an integral part of the document, and which requires oversized paper, it is acceptable to include those in the final print out of the Thesis/Dissertation. Please print the oversize material on 80gr., and use the larger than A4 size, as appropriate.

#### b. Ink

The ink used must be black, except for any colored illustrations which are an integral part of the Thesis/Dissertation. The Thesis/Dissertation must be laser-printed.

#### c. Font

Please use *Times New Roman* typeface for English, and the *Simplified Arabic* typefaces for Arabic. For the body of the text, **Font size** should be **12** for **English** and **14** for **Arabic**. For major title headings and for preliminary pages headings, the **font size for capital letters** should be **16** for **English** and **20** for **Arabic**. **Do not use bold face** in preliminary pages and major headings, e.g., chapters, appendices, and bibliography.

#### d. Margins

The margins in text pages should have the following dimensions:



- Left side margin: 3.5 cm.
- Right side margin: 2.5 cm.
- Top of the page: 3 cm.
- Bottom of the page: 3 cm.

Illustrative materials, tables, charts, graphs, etc., should not be placed closer than 2 cm from the top, right and bottom edges of the paper, and 2.5 cm from the left. The **text** of the thesis should be **left aligned**, and **not justified**.

**e. Spacing**

Double spacing is required in the body of the manuscript, and in the acknowledgments and abstracts. Tables, footnotes, appendices, and block quotations may be single-spaced. The table of contents, list of tables, list of figures and nomenclature may be single or double spaced. However, keep the goals of professional presentation in mind.

**f. Indentation**

All paragraphs should be indented 1.5 cm from the margin. Subheadings are not indented.

**g. Numbering of Pages, Figures and Tables**

The preliminary pages are numbered in lowercase Roman numerals centered at the bottom of the pages and placed 2 cm from the bottom edges of the paper. The first numbered page will be the "ACKNOWLEDGEMENT" page, numbered "v", or the first page which appears after the release form. Numbering will continue sequentially, thereafter, and all Arabic numerals must be placed in the center, and at the bottom of the page. Figure and table numbering must be either continuous throughout the Thesis or by chapter that is 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2.

**h. Major Headings and Subheadings**

Major headings, e.g., the titles in the preliminary pages: "CHAPTER's title, "NOTES", "REFERENCES" or "BIBLIOGRAPHY" should all be typed in capital letters, size 16, centered and not bold. If a chapter's title runs on more than one line it should be **single spaced**. The heading CHAPTER and its TITLE should be double-spaced.

Each subheading is preceded by its number as it appears in the Table of Contents of the Thesis.

Each subheading has a higher attention value than any subsequent ones. These are designated as first-, second-, third- and fourth-level subheadings, and are differentiated as follows:

- First-level subheadings are in bold, regular typefaces: e.g.,  
**A. First-Level Subheading**
- Second-level subheadings are in bold, italics typefaces: e.g.,  
**1. *Second-Level Subheading***
- Third-level subheadings are in regular typefaces, underlined: e.g.  
a. Third-Level Subheading
- Fourth-level subheadings are in regular typefaces, underlined with dashes: e.g.,  
i. Fourth-Level Subheading

Please note that boldface may be used for major headings. Bold or italics may be used

for subheadings and for emphasis in the text. The use of italics for *et al.*, *in vivo*, *in vitro*, and other Latin and foreign words is determined by the style guide being followed or common practice in your field of study. Consistency is needed in the thesis/dissertation (exception: keep the original style (italic or not) of foreign words in a publication title listed in the reference section of the thesis.) To list items, major points, or ideas, use bullets at the beginning of the line, after an indentation of 1.5 cm for a new paragraph. You can further subdivide the bullets using dashes.

**i. Preliminary Pages**

The Thesis/Dissertation includes the following three parts: Preliminary pages, body or text, and end pages which include appendices, endnotes, if any, and references or bibliography. Each of these parts may be subdivided into sections and subsections. These should be clearly reflected in the table of contents.

The preliminary pages should be ordered as follows:

- **A Mandatory Blank page** (Not numbered. Considered i). The first and last pages of the thesis/dissertation are blank.
- **A Mandatory Title page** (Not numbered. Considered ii).

This page includes the name of the University, the full title of the Thesis/Dissertation, the full name of the student, as well as the title of the degree conferred, the name of the Department, the name of the Faculty, College or School, the place, and the date of submission.

N.B. The student's name should include their First name, Father's name (if applicable) and Family name.

- **A Mandatory Thesis/Dissertation Approval page** (Not numbered. Considered iii).

The signatures of the Committee members should be **original** and in **black**. Please scan and include this page in the PDF file submitted to Graduate School.

- **A Mandatory Thesis/Dissertation Release form** (Not numbered. Considered iv).

This form must be signed and dated when the thesis/dissertation project copy is submitted to ProQuest. Please scan and include this page in the PDF file submitted to ProQuest only if you choose option (a) below:

- a. I authorize the Alfaisal University to supply copies of my thesis/dissertation entitled (*add manuscript title*). It authorizes the Alfaisal University to provide copies of the thesis/dissertation upon demand.

or

- b. I do not authorize the Alfaisal University to supply copies of my thesis/dissertation entitled (*add manuscript title*) for 2 years. It prohibits photocopying of thesis/dissertation for a period of two years starting with the date of the thesis deposit.

- j. Acknowledgments**, (if any) (Numbered v). **The Acknowledgements** recognize the assistance of the thesis/dissertation advisor and other members of the faculty and staff. Other specific contributions by professional people or institutions, such as librarians, correspondents, and research foundations, should also be acknowledged. If financial

support was provided, it is appropriate to recognize such assistance.

- k. **A Mandatory Abstract:** The Abstract summarizes the Thesis' main points: It is a short and concise statement of the problem and solution dealt with in the *thesis/dissertation*. It should be written in English on the Abstract form, of no more than one page in length and exclusive of any references or citations.
- l. **Preface:** Optional.
- m. **A Mandatory Table of Contents:** It should be prepared after the manuscript has been completed. The table of contents should identify and locate by page number, the list of tables, list of Figures, Abstract, Chapters and subdivisions within the Main Body, Appendices, Nomenclature, References and Vita. All titles in the table of contents must correspond with the titles as they appear in the text.
- n. **List of Illustrations,** Diagrams, graphs, maps, photographs, or other illustrations should be unshaded and follow immediately their first mention in the body of the text. They should always be on a *separate page and* be numbered consecutively throughout the entire text. The caption should read "Figure 1, 2, 3, etc." followed by a brief legend in sentence form. This line should appear directly above the bottom margin of the page (2.5 cm above the bottom). Do not incorporate the legend in the illustration itself or combine line drawings and photographs in one illustration.
- o. **List of Tables,** if any. It identifies and locates each table by page number appearing in the Main Body and Appendix. The tables are to be numbered, using Arabic numerals in the order that they appear in the thesis/dissertation.
- p. **List of Abbreviations,** if any.
- q. **Glossary,** if any.
- r. **Dedication** (Not numbered and not counted in the pagination of the preliminary pages). Optional and placed before chapter 1 and without the word "dedicated".

## 8.3 Style and Bibliography

### a. Writing and Citation Style

For all matters not discussed in the present Thesis & Dissertation Manual, theses must follow the form and style described in the latest edition of K.L. Turabian: *A Manual for writers of research papers, theses & dissertations* (University of Chicago Press) which is available for consultation in the Reference Dept. of Al-Faisal University Library. You may also use any other form specified by your college such as AAA, APA, and MLA using Microsoft-Word or LaTeX, and others, provided it conforms to all specifications laid out in this Manual for preliminary pages.

### b. Citation Management

To help you organize your bibliography, footnotes, references, and citations, it is recommended that citation manager software be employed such as **RefWorks** and **EndNote**. For more information, please contact the Library at Tel: 215-7942.

### c. Footnotes and Illustrative Matter

Footnotes are typed at the bottom of the page and are separated from the text by a separator. They are indented (1.5 cm) and preceded by the appropriate number (size 12) or (size 10 superscript) assigned to each in the text above. They are single-spaced if they run on more than one line and double-spaced between two notes.

For the formatting of figures and tables and their titles check Turabian's Manual or any other manual specified by your department or Program. Separate maps, if any, should be numbered.

#### **d. Bibliography**

For the bibliography, please follow the Turabian Manual or any other style manual as required by your Department/College, such as AAA, APA, etc., or simply use RefWorks or Endnotes.

### **8.4 Thesis/Dissertation Templates**

[Blank page](#)

[Sample of Title Page](#)

[Sample of Thesis/Dissertation Approval Page](#)

[Sample of Project Approval Page](#)

[Sample of Thesis/Dissertation/Project Release Form](#)

[Sample of Acknowledgments](#)

[Sample of Abstract](#)

[Sample of Table of Contents \(A\)](#)

[Sample of Table of Contents \(B\)](#)

[Sample of List of Illustrations](#)

[Sample of List of Tables](#)

[Sample of Text Page with subheadings, bullets and dashes](#)

[Thesis/Dissertation template](#)

[Project template](#)

## **9. References**

Jafet Memorial Library, American University of Beirut, Thesis Guidelines, 2022

King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals, Deanship of Graduate Studies. A Comprehensive Guide for MS/PhD Theses/Dissertations and Graduation Process, 2018.

The Graduate School, Purdue University, A Manual for the Preparation of Graduate Theses, 2006.

University of Southern California Regulations for Format and Presentation of Thesis and Dissertations. Office of University Publications, Los Angeles, 1970.