

THESIS MANUAL

(APA 6th Edition Formatting and Style Guide)

**Office of Graduate Studies
Alcorn State University**

Engaging Possibilities, Pursuing Excellence

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FOREWORD

Alcorn State University Office of Graduate Studies requires that all students comply with the specifications given in this document in the publication of a thesis or non-thesis research project.

Graduate students, under faculty guidance, are expected to produce scholarly work either in the form of a thesis or a scholarly research project.

The thesis (master or specialist) should document the student's research study and maintain a degree of intensity.

The purpose of this manual is to assist the graduate student and the graduate thesis advisory committee in each department with the instructions contained herein. This is the official approved manual by the Graduate Division.

Formatting questions not addressed in these guidelines should be directed to the Graduate School staff in the Walter Washington Administration Building, Suite 519 or by phone at 601.877.6122 or via email: graduatestudies@alcorn.edu or in person.

The Graduate Studies
Thesis Advisory Committee

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INTRODUCTION

This manual has been prepared by the Office of Graduate Studies Advisory Committee at Alcorn State University to provide uniform standards and guidance to students in the preparation and formatting of the thesis or non-thesis research project to complete requirements for graduation.

Graduate students, under faculty guidance, are expected to produce scholarly work either in the form of a thesis or a scholarly research project. This expectation is achieved through the enrollment in six (6) credit hours in Thesis or Research Project. Thesis and Non-Thesis requirements will be addressed in this document which have been prepared to help graduate students prepare their manuscript for acceptance by Alcorn State University. The guidelines contained within have been updated and, in some cases, clarified for the benefit of students, faculty advisors, departments, and the Graduate School. Appendices have been expanded to give students models to guide the production of their finished product for review. Any questions about the contents of this guide should be directed to the Graduate Studies staff. It is the Advisor's responsibility to make certain that any thesis or research project submitted in partial fulfillment of a graduate degree at Alcorn State University conforms to the regulations outlined in this guide. The master's thesis or research project is a carefully argued scholarly manuscript of an average 40-80 page document. The thesis must have a substantial research component and a focus that falls within the scope of a well-written, thoroughly researched topic. This lends itself to the student demonstrating expertise in the chosen research area. Responsibility for the content of any manuscript remains with the student and the faculty advisor(s).

A thesis advisory committee (TAC) is selected prior to commencing any thesis work by the student. (See Section B)

Advisory Committee (TAC) and Process

- Select thesis topic and chair.
- A timeline should be developed with the guidance of the thesis chair.
- Select committee members.
- Develop draft of Thesis Proposal (first three chapters).
- Finalize thesis proposal.
- Present proposal defense to TAC and receive approval to continue.
- Obtain Alcorn State University (ASU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and external institution approval if needed.
- Attach copy of the IRB approval letter as an Appendix in the final copy of the thesis.
- Implement study, collect data.
- Analyze data.
- Develop final two chapters.
- Submit thesis only after the final approval has been sanctioned by your thesis advisory committee.

The Graduate School recommends the following book as a supplement to the information provided in this manual. A copy is kept in Graduate Studies for reference purposes.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. 6th ed. American Psychological Association: Washington, DC, 2010.

The approved copy that has been reviewed by the TAC is the final copy that the student should submit to the Graduate Office electronically in pdf format. Consequently, the original approval/signature pages (4) must be submitted to the Graduate Office. Only after all corrections have been made to the thesis will approval be given by signing the signature pages. After the document is reviewed and approved, only then can the student proceed to prepare the requested number of copies.

SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

A thesis advisory committee (TAC) is selected prior to commencing any thesis work by the student. Development of the thesis effort should proceed in an orderly fashion. The student who anticipates graduating in a timely manner needs to adhere to the following schedule of activities:

Early topic selection

Students on the Thesis/Non-Thesis Research Project Academic Track should be thinking about your topic from the first semester of enrollment. The topic selection should be based on a clear focus of your research interest.

Selection of Thesis Chair

The thesis chair must be a member of the graduate faculty in your discipline. A time line should be developed with the guidance of the thesis chair.

The thesis committee members should be selected under the guidance of the thesis chair (a minimum of two members in addition to the chair).

Selection of Thesis Committee Members

Thesis members should hold a minimum of a master's degree. Two of the three TAC members should be in your discipline, including the chair.

A third member may be chosen from any qualified Alcorn State University faculty, or a qualified community member holding a master's degree or higher*. If a student selects a member outside of the university, a letter of explanation regarding why a thesis member outside of the university was chosen needs to be sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies, along with the proposed member's curriculum vita. A letter of approval for the proposed committee member should be obtained from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The student must be enrolled for thesis in order to hold conferences with the TAC.

Appointment of Thesis Advisory Committee Form

An "Appointment of Thesis Advisory Committee" form with committee member signatures should be completed and turned in to your thesis chair. (See Appendix A)

Invitation to Prospective Committee Members

Invitation to prospective committee members should be issued in writing by the student.

TAC Committee Selection

The TAC committee selection will be submitted to the Department Chair of the student's discipline which will then be forwarded to Graduate Studies.

The TAC chairperson is responsible for student guidance regarding scheduling of activities for thesis development. Although the student is ultimately responsible for his or her own work, all TAC members are accountable for the quality of the thesis.

CHOICE OF SUBJECT

Students have the autonomy to self-select a topic of interest that will be best suited for a research study. This topic should be discussed with your thesis advisor to ensure a comprehensive approach is possible in the investigation. The length of the manuscript depends on the magnitude of the investigation and the time given to thoughtfully and thoroughly discuss the topic under study. In this guide, there is no specific page limit to the content to be included. All work of the student should be under the supervision and advisement of the thesis chair and thesis committee.

PROPOSAL DEFENSE AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL TO ASU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Thesis Proposal Defense:

The student is responsible for coordinating with the TAC chair and members regarding scheduling of the thesis defense, scheduling the room, and obtaining needed equipment for the presentation. The student will provide all committee members a copy of the proposal one week in advance of the meeting. It is recommended that the proposal defense be scheduled during the first 2 or 3 hours enrollment in Thesis.

The proposal must be an oral defense in which the student can use visual electronic formats such as PowerPoint to enhance the presentation. This should be decided by the TAC Chair in consultation with the student. The student is expected to present the defense in the presence of the thesis committee and other audience members in a coherent and cohesive manner. Notification of the thesis defense should be sent to the Graduate School in advance of the scheduled defense presentation.

Following the formal defense, the TAC will make a determination regarding the thesis to approve as acceptable or pending modifications. Specific changes to be made will be specified, the student will make the recommended edits and resubmit to the thesis chair for review and final approval. Once the research proposal is approved, the student and committee are committed to that thesis proposal as it is written. Except for extraordinary circumstances, after acceptance, no substantive changes will be made to the proposal, only minor editorial changes should be made.

Once the research proposal has been accepted. The "Thesis Proposal Approval Form" (Signature Page) is to be signed by all TAC members and given to the Dean of their discipline (Appendix C).

A copy of the TAC approved thesis proposal is forwarded the Graduate Studies Administrator, along with a copy of the Thesis Proposal Approval Form, by the Chair of the specific Discipline.

Institutional Review Board Application:

Every thesis must have clearance from the ASU Institutional Review Board prior to implementation. Students are required to submit an application and Informed Consent Form.

The Informed Consent form must be submitted with the IRB Application. This form is to include a description of the study procedures; purpose; risk/benefits; time required of participants; assurance of confidentiality; withdrawal allowed at any time; and a signature space for the participant.

In some situations, the study must also have IRB approval within the institution where the study is conducted. The student needs to allow sufficient time for IRB approvals that may take up to four weeks.

After approval of the thesis proposal, the TAC chair will direct the student through the procedures for IRB approval of the research plan. The student is to complete the IRB Application and return the form to the TAC chair (See Appendix Q).

If you place the form in your computer for completion, put the questions in bold and clearly set the answers apart from the questions.

- Do not bind the application;
- Include a title page in the proposal.

The TAC chair provides the following to the chair of their discipline (or discipline secretary), *to be forwarded to the Institutional Review Board Chair.

- One copy of the proposal.
- The appropriately completed IRB application.
- A cover letter from the TAC chair to the IRB chair requesting the proposal be reviewed by the IRB.

The TAC chair will notify the student when the IRB approval is received. A copy of the IRB decision form, with signatures, is given to the discipline chair (or secretary) to place in the student's file. The original is given to the student for inclusion in the final copies of the thesis.

Following IRB approval, data collection can begin. The student is to communicate any problems in this phase of the research study to the TAC chair. A full TAC meeting may be called if necessary.

Upon completion of data collection, the student will write the finding and discussion sections of the thesis. The student will then prepare for thesis defense. A student must be submitted to candidacy and must obtain approval of the entire TAC committee prior to scheduling the thesis defense. The defense is to take place no sooner than the final semester of course work. Students should check with their thesis advisor regarding deadlines for Scheduling the Oral Defense.

PARTS OF THE MANUSCRIPT

A thesis ordinarily has three main parts: preliminary pages, the text, and supplementary material. The information included in this section lists the order of the content and gives guidance as to the style and formatting of each section. If Optional pages are not used in the Preliminary section, start with the next logical page number.

Thesis Plan

Preliminary pages (in the following order)		
Title Page	Required	Page i, Not numbered
Approval Page (Signatures of Committee members)	Required	Page ii, Not numbered
Copyright Page	Optional	No page number
Dedication Page	Optional	Page iii
Acknowledgements	Optional	Page iv
Abstract	Required	Page v
Table of Contents	Required	Page vi
List of Tables	If Needed	Page vii
List of Figures	If Needed	Page viii
Text (sections in the following order)		
Chapter 1 – Introduction		Starts with page 1
Chapter 2 – Review of Literature		
Chapter 3- Methodology		
Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion		
Chapter 5 – Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations		
Supplementary Pages (in the following order)		
References	Required	
Appendix or Appendices	If Needed	Pagination follows last References page

Non-Thesis/Research Project

Preliminary pages (in the following order)		
Title Page	Required	Page I, Not numbered
Approval Page (Signatures of Committee members)	Required	Page ii, Not numbered
Copyright Page	Optional	No page number
Dedication Page	Optional	
Acknowledgements	Optional	Page iv
Abstract	Required	Page v
Table of Contents	Required	Page vi
List of Tables	If Needed	Page vii
List of Figures	If Needed	Page viii
Text (sections in the following order)		
Chapter 1 - Introduction		Starts with page 1
Chapter 2 – Review of Literature		
Chapter 3- Methodology		
Supplementary Pages (in the following order)		
References	Required	
Appendix or Appendices	If Needed	Pagination follows last References page

Title page

- Is not numbered
- NOTE: the date is the date of graduation
- Margins: 1.5” left: 1” top: 1” right: 1” bottom
- Select a title that summarizes the main idea of the study
- Do not exceed 10-12 words in the title
- Title typed in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered
- Avoid abbreviations
- See example in Appendix B

Title Page (see Appendix B)

The title page summarizes the content included in the manuscript to give the reader an idea of the main idea of this document. It should be a concise statement which consists of not more than a maximum of 10-12 words. There are some exceptions depending on the research topic that may allow for a longer title. All text on the title page should be centered. The title of the thesis, which is listed at the top of the page, must be the final, complete title of the thesis and should be the exact title used on the approval page. The title page should also include the student’s degree title, the University name, and the month date and year that the degree is to be awarded (e.g., May 10, 2016). This page should not be listed on the table of contents. The title page is technically page “i” of the preliminary pages. Since the title page is not numbered, the next page in sequence is “ii”. Refer to Appendix B for a sample of how the title page should appear.

Approval page (Signatures of Committee members):

- Thesis title typed in capital letters
- Title worded same as on title page
- No page number on approval page
- NOTE: the date is the date of thesis defense
- Margins: 1.5” left:1” top: 1” right: 1” bottom
- Four (4) copies required
- Original signatures of all Thesis Committee members
- Signatures in **black ink only**
- Each member must sign the approval page only once in the space allotted

The student’s name included on this page must be the student’s legal name and must not include initials. No recognition or designation of terminal degree, professional or military rank, or marital status is to be included. The name of each thesis committee member must be typed under each signature line. It is the duty of the student to secure original signatures of all committee members for each of the four copies of the thesis.

Copyright page (optional)

- Is not numbered
- Margins: 1.5” left: 1” top: 1” right: 1” bottom

Copyright Information

Theses are considered as legally classified publications. Therefore, if a student decides to copyright his/her thesis, it is advisable that the student use a formal copyright vendor resource. If the student decides to include in the thesis copies of illustrative tables, charts, graphs, etc. from copyrighted sources, permission must be obtained prior to this inclusion. An original release letter must be submitted to the original copywriter and permission granted.

Dedication page (optional)

- Start numbering, center, bottom of page, small Roman numeral, count the first 2 or 3 pages that do not have page number appearing.
- Margins: 1.5" left: 1" top: 1" right: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix D

Dedication Page (see Appendix D)

This page is optional. If the student desires to dedicate his or her thesis, the student may do so using this page. The text is to be brief and pagination is in lower case Roman numerals. Please refer to Appendix D for a sample of how the dedication page should appear. This page is not listed in the student's table of contents.

Acknowledgments (optional)

- Margins: 1.5" left: 1" top: 1" right: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix E

Acknowledgments Page (see Appendix E)

This page is optional and can be used to include brief statements of appreciation or recognition. This page has the heading "ACKNOWLEDGMENTS," and the heading should be in all capital letters. Pagination is in lower-case Roman numerals. This page, if included, should not be listed on the table of contents. Please refer to Appendix E for a sample of what this page should look like.

Abstract (the first numbered page, iii)

- Begin on new page
- Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered, at the top of the page
- No paragraph indentation
- A brief and concise summary of the study: Purpose, results, conclusions.
- **No more than 250 words.**
- Margins: 1.5" left: 1" top: 1" right: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix F

Abstract (see Appendix F)

Every thesis is required to include an abstract. This should be no more than 250 words for theses. The student and his or her committee will determine the content that is to be included in the abstract; however, the page is to be titled "Abstract," and the title should appear in upper and lowercase letters. The abstract should include a brief summary of your research and findings. The pagination is lower-case Roman numerals. Please refer to Appendix F for a sample of what this page should look like. Do not include your name, degree, or title on this page. This page should be listed in the table of contents.

Table of Contents

- Use the same heading system that is used in text
- Single space within each section; double space between sections.
- Margins: 1.5" left: 1" top: 1" right: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix G

Table of Contents (see Appendix G)

Every thesis is required to include a table of contents. The heading for this page is "TABLE OF CONTENTS" and should appear in all capital letters. All headings, sections, chapters, and the first set of subdivisions/subchapters need to be listed within the table of contents (subsequent sets of subdivisions/subchapters need not be listed). Preliminary pages such as Abstract, List of Tables and List of Figures are to be listed in the table of contents. Dedication and Acknowledgements are listed if you include them in your manuscript. Pagination for this section is lower case Roman numerals. Do not include an entry for "Table of Contents" on your table of contents page.

The Table of Contents indicates the major divisions (i.e., chapters or sections) and principal subheadings of the thesis and the beginning page number of each section. **The format is left up to the program chair's discretion.**

All major divisions of the narrative text (i.e., chapters or sections) and principal subheadings (when appropriate) within each chapter or section must be listed in the Table of Contents. The subordination of the subheadings should be indicated by appropriate spacing and indentation.

All supplementary pages (reference section, appendices if any, and Vita) must be listed in the Table of Contents.

The numbering, wording, and pagination of titles and headings must be exactly the same in the Table of Contents as they are on the pages of the thesis. **All page numbers are right-hand justified in the Table of Contents.**

List of Tables (if more than one table is used)

- Tables are numbered Table 1, Table 2, etc.
- Margins: 1.5" left: 1" top: 1" right: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix H

List of Tables

Tables and figures should be formatted according to the style manual APA 6th edition. Each table must be identified in the text by using an Arabic number (e.g. Table 3). **The table number and title must be typed above the table.** The top of the table should be at the left-hand, binding side of the page. The font should be the same as the rest of the thesis. List of Tables should be located at the beginning of the thesis, following the table of contents and before the text (body) of the paper. Page numbers should be lowercase Roman numerals. If a table is taken from another source, you must cite that source below the table or figure.

Table components consist of Table & number, title in italics, the table of information, and the caption. The caption begins with the word Note in italics, followed by descriptive note(s) for the table, then the source of the table (if not created by the author). The caption appears immediately underneath the table proper. Everything is double-spaced.

Tables are numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals throughout the paper in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text, beginning with Table 1.

Table title is typed flush to the left of the margin, 2 lines above the body of the table.

The table is to be inserted in the text as soon after it is mentioned as possible.

Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) for additional information on the structure of tables.

List of Figures (if more than one figure is used)

- Figures are numbered: Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.
- Margins: 1.5" left: 1" top: 1" right: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix I

List of Figures

Figure numbers and captions must be typed below the figure using Arabic numbers (e.g. Figure 2).

Figures are to be numbered consecutively throughout the paper, beginning with Figure 1.

Figure title is typed flush to the left of the margin, 2 lines below the body of the figures.

The figure is to be inserted in the text as soon after it is mentioned as possible.

Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), for additional information on the structure of figures.

Text

Quoting and Paraphrasing – If quotes are used in the text of a chapter, the following formatting should be used. If the quotation consists of fewer than 40 words, the text should be enclosed inside double quotation marks. If the quotation consists of more than 40 words, use a freestanding block of text and omit the quotation marks. (Refer to page 170 in the APA Manual, 6th edition)

Citing Sources – Cite references in text with the author and date. Each reference cited in the text must appear in the reference list. The citations used in the text of a chapter should be listed alphabetically in the references section.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction – introductory information

Statement of the Problem – statement of the problem should include the basic difficulty, area of concern, and/or perceived need for the study. It includes a description of the background of the problem (these are factors that caused this to be a problem) and the justification for studying the problem.

Purpose of the Study – discuss the goal; emphasize practical outcomes or products.

Research Question(s) – research problem posed as a question which serves as the focus of the researcher’s investigation. The research question(s) should dictate the research type and paradigm (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods).

Significance of the Study – a part in the thesis that tells the importance and purpose of the study under investigation. It tells how the study will be beneficial to society and/or a specific person or improve the human condition.

Limitations of the Study – this subtitle section focuses on the impact of the findings from your research. This section also describes the boundaries that you have set for the study.

Definition of Terms – only include terms that may not be well understood by a layperson outside of your field. Information in this section is formatted in paragraphs just like information in any other sub-heading. Bold all terms, but not their definitions. The use of bold for each term is for emphasis, not to indicate the beginning of a new subheading. Treat each definition as if you were quoting from a dictionary.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of Literature page – no subheadings indicated for this chapter because they will vary considerably based on the research. The format of headings and subheadings depends upon the way you have organized your thoughts via the use of heading levels in your paper. Place headings in their appropriate spot on the page and use boldface formatting as indicated. For more information about headings, see the APA Manual (6th edition).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Methodology page– begin with an introduction; some suggestions include reiterating the statement of the problem and briefly discussing what this chapter will include; suggested sections listed below.

Design – describe the specific type of research design used in the study.

Subject Selection and Description – discuss the sample and population.

Instrumentation – talk about the survey used, if applicable; try to answer the question, “Was it created for this purpose, or did you find it somewhere?”

Data Collection Procedures – Example: “a 57 question survey was administered.”

Data Analysis – respond to such questions, “How was the data analyzed?” Example: A number of statistical analyses were used in this study. The Statistical Program for Social Sciences version 10.0 (SPSS, 2002) was used to analyze the data. Independent t-Test analyses were conducted...

Limitations – discuss methodological limitations or procedural weaknesses.

Summary

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis page – start with another introduction; briefly reiterate the purpose of the study and how it was conducted, e.g., a survey was given...; subheadings for this chapter also will vary considerably; some people use each question as a subheading and some don't; if you use each question as a subheading, write out the question rather than just “Question 1”; the purpose is to provide with *at-a-glance* information about the nature and scope of your paper.

Item Analysis – use tables when appropriate, but don't overuse them or discuss the whole tale in text; discuss the high points in text, providing the table for further details; all tables should conform to the APA style manual; tables are different than figures-name and refer to them appropriately; there is no hard rule as to whether a summary at the end of this chapter should be provided since chapter 5 is often a summary; discuss this with your advisor.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations – start with an introduction; summarize what has happened in your paper so far; chapter will also vary considerably in headings and organization; suggestions of possibilities are below.

Limitations – state them again.

Conclusions – hit the high points of your findings; there should be a relationship to the literature review: Did your study correlate with previous research or did you find something different?

Recommendations – recommend some further research or a change in practices.

Each chapter or section begins on a new page. The title of the chapter or section is typed in capital letters and is centered at the top of the page. They are designated both by upper case Roman numerals used consecutively throughout the thesis and by a chapter title

NON-THESIS/RESEARCH PROJECT

The main distinction between the thesis and the non-thesis research project is the number of chapters. In the thesis, the format includes five chapters and in the non-thesis research project, only three chapters are included, CHAPTER I – Introduction, CHAPTER II – Review of Literature, and CHAPTER III – Methodology. The thesis is a hardbound document and the non-thesis/research project does not require a hardbound cover. Each department with a Non-thesis Track has specific binding guidelines that should be followed.

The non-thesis research project describes the research which the student intends to conduct. A thorough investigation should communicate the subject under consideration, literature related to the study, and the research method to conduct the study.

If your research includes using human subjects, you must include an IRB approval letter. In the reference section of your research project, you must show evidence of the use of peer reviews and journal citations to support the proposed research. The use of Wikipedia is prohibited as major citations for this effort.

SUPPLEMENTARY PAGES (in the following order)

References, Bibliography, or Literature Cited Resources – make sure that everything you cite in the text is also in the reference list and vice versa; the *APA Manual* describes the correct format for each type of reference; be especially careful about how you reference and format online sources; **each entry should be in a hanging indent format**; (See Appendix O)

Appendix/Appendices (if needed)

FORMAT AND STYLE STANDARDS

Formatting the manuscript according to APA specifications enhances clarity and readability. The following instructions will assist the writer in preparing a well-prepared document. All preliminary page titles, chapter or section designations, and all supplementary page titles are centered at the top of the page, and are typed in all capital letters. This format overrules any differences in format or layout followed by the journal model.

Margins – Set margins 1 inch on all sides except the left margin. The left margin should be set at 1.5 inch.

Alignment - Text should align evenly on the left margin but ragged on the right margin. The first line of each entry should align with the left margin. All subsequent lines should be indented 5 spaces or set a hanging indent at 1/2 inch.

Line Spacing - Double space between all text lines of the manuscript. Double-space after every

line in the title, headings, quotations, references, and figure captions. Never use single-spacing or one-and-a-half spacing except in tables or figures. No widows- this is when a paragraph carries over only one line to the top of the next page; No orphans-this is when a heading or subheading occurs at the bottom of a page and is not followed by text.

- Single space table of contents
- One space between words
- Indent at beginning of each paragraph

Line length and alignment – The length of each typed line is a maximum of 6 ½ in. Do not justify lines. Use the flush-left style, and leave the right margin uneven, or ragged. Do not divide words at the end of a line, and do not use the hyphenation function to break words at the ends of lines. Let a line run short rather than break a word at the end of a line.

Paragraphs and indentation – Indent the first line of every paragraph. For consistency, the writer can use the tab key to automatically indent the same amount of characters to begin each paragraph. The remaining lines of the manuscript are uniform and should be flushed evenly with the left margin. The only exceptions that do not follow this formatting are abstract, titles and headings, table titles, figure captions, and block quotations.

Pagination - All page numbers using Arabic numerals should be 1 inch from the top right edges of the page. Every page should be assigned a number with the following exceptions, the title page approval page and copyright page, which are counted, but not numbered. The Title Page is considered as page ‘i’ and the Approval page ‘ii’, etc. The page number should be centered at the bottom of the page on the following pages using small Roman numerals (i.e., “iv”, “v”, etc.): Dedication page, Acknowledgements, Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures.

Pages should be numbered sequentially throughout the manuscript.

Beginning with Chapter 1, pages are numbered with Arabic numbers 1” from top of page and 1” from right margin and continuing throughout, including text, illustrative materials, references, and appendices.

Font - The standard font for student papers is **Times New Roman size 12**. Do not use underlining or all capitals unless your thesis committee specifies these. Use boldface for headings and captions with discretion. Keep the font the same throughout the paper; mixing various font styles is not acceptable.

- Use *italic* font only for book or journal titles or special emphasis. Use *italics for headings* according to the APA Manual (6th edition).
- Tables and figures may have 10 point fonts

Headings

If a heading appears on the bottom of a page, there must be at least two lines of text following.

Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) for the selection of headings to use. Consistently use Level 1 headings for the title of each major section

Paper – The final or approved thesis for binding should be printed on 8-1/2” x 11 white 25% cotton bond paper, 20 lb. weight. All manuscripts should be printed one side only.

- Drafts for the Office of Graduate Studies review may be printed on any type of paper.
- All required copies for publishing must be printed on white 8.5 X 11 inch paper, 20 pound – 25% cotton bond, printed on one side only.
- The approval/signature page cannot be copied; it must have original signatures in black ink. Four (4) original signature pages must be submitted to Office of Graduate Studies for the Provost’s signature.

Hardcover Book Binding – A reputable printing company should be used to bind the manuscript. The standard cover should be black to bind the letter size 8 ½ x 11” manuscript on long edge (portrait). The title, student’s name, and date should be embossed

In-Text and Parenthetical Citations

Quote with author’s name in text	Smith (2006) states that, “...” (p. 112).
Quote with author’s name in reference	This is quoted as, “...” (Smith, 2006, pp. 112-4).
Paraphrasing with author’s name in text	Smith (2006) stated these facts, too.
Paraphrasing author’s name in reference	This fact has been stated (Smith, 2006).
No author – give title of work abbreviated to first major word	This book is true (<i>Long</i> , 2005).
Italics for books, “quotation marks” for articles	This article is true (“Long,” 2005).
Citing entire website – put URL	This has evidence (www.pubmed.gov).
Quote from website – use paragraph number	According to, “...” (Smith, 2000, para. 4).
More than one author with same last name	P. L. Smith (2003) and J. M. Smith (2005)
Source has more than one author in text	Smith and Lee agree that (2006)
Source has more than one author in reference	This is agreed upon (Smith & Long, 2006).
Citing more than one work	We all agree (Smith, 2006; Lee, 2004).

Expressing Numbers

The most common questions regarding numbers relate to whether numerals or words should be used. In APA style, numerals are used in the following situations:

- To express numbers 10 and larger.
- To express any number in the document's abstract or any graphical display.
- To express numbers below 10 that are grouped with numbers 10 and larger (5 of 44 participants in the study).
- To express numbers preceding a unit of measurement (8 miles, a 25 mg dose).
- To express numbers in mathematical or statistical functions, decimals, fractions, percentages, and ratios (multiplied by 9, 46% of participants).
- To express units of time, dates, ages, sample or population size, numbers of participants in a study, scores and points on a scale, and sums of money (in 4 years; December 15, 2009, \$88 billion).
- To express page numbers or parts of a table or figure (page 16; Table 2).

Note that any time a number begins a sentence, it should be written out, or the sentence should be rephrased so that the number does not begin it. Words should be used in the following situations:

- Use words to express numbers below 10.
- Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), for additional information.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Generally, abbreviations and acronyms should be used if they will be easy for the reader to remember and if using them will eliminate unnecessary repetition. Specifically, do not introduce an abbreviation or acronym if it will be used fewer than four times in the document. The first time you use the item to be abbreviated, place the acronym after it in parentheses:

**membership in the National Association of Education for Young
Children (NAEYC)**

Once you have explained the acronym the first time, use it throughout the rest of the document, without explanation. There are several exceptions to this rule:

- Do not use acronyms in a table or figure.
- Some acronyms can be used without explanation, as they are commonly accepted as words (i.e., REM, HIV/AIDS).
- Do not use "U.S." as an abbreviation of "United States," unless it is being used as an adjective. For example, "U.S. Senate" is correct, while "resident of the U.S." is not.

Statistical Symbols

- Use the term instead of the symbol.
- Percent (%): use the symbol only if preceded by a number.
- Number of subjects can be expressed as $N = 30$.

Use of Copyrighted Material

The student must document and acknowledge any part of the thesis obtained from other sources. Limited use of copyrighted material may not require any permission. The student must obtain necessary permission to quote or reproduce copyrighted materials.

Permission to Reprint

- Obtain permission to reprint from the publisher if you have reprinted more than five hundred words or for tables (or other figures) to clearly state your sources.
- Place the source for a table or other figure directly beneath it.
- Obtain permission in writing and keep it for proof.
- Three acceptable places for acknowledging permission to reprint:
 1. On the copyright page (if you are copyrighting your thesis)
 2. On the first page of the reprinted material
 3. On a special list of acknowledgements (use this method if there is more than one reprint in excess of five hundred words).
- Use phrase such as "reprinted by permission of author" should be used (with an asterisk if it appears in the form of a footnote on the first page of the reprinted material).
- Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), for additional information on the structure of figures.

Grammar

- Active voice used throughout manuscript
- Past tense used to express an action or condition that occurred at a specific time in the past
- Use present perfect tense to express action or condition that did not occur at a specific time or describe action beginning in past and continuing to the present (i.e. Since that time, several investigators have used this method)
- Subject and verb agreement
- Spelling is correct
- Correct use of homophones
- Words used correctly throughout manuscript

FINAL DISPOSITION OF THESIS AND RESEARCH PROJECT

Each student is required to submit two copies of the bound theses to the Graduate Office by the published dates each semester. One copy is housed in the Theses Archives and one copy is for the J. D. Boyd Library. The remaining two copies are dispersed by the student as follows: one copy to the student's department, and one personal copy for the student.

Prior to binding and disbursement of theses, copies are not accepted by the Graduate Office until after the defense and all necessary corrections have been made as recommended by the thesis committee. Manuscripts reviewed after submission to the Graduate Office resulting in multiple corrections needed will be flagged and returned to the student or the thesis committee advisor electronically. The necessary corrections will have to be made before another review is conducted. Students must include in their electronic transmission their local telephone number where they can be reached during business hours.

Students completing the research project are required to submit one copy to the Graduate Office to be housed in the Archives Library. The remaining three copies are disseminated according to the student's research advisory committee.

HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

Research that involves human subjects must be conducted in compliance with Alcorn's Institutional Research Board policy to protect the rights of human subjects. If the researcher decides to include human subjects in the study, the student must collaborate with his/her thesis advisor before any research activities are conducted. The application and supporting documentation should be submitted to the Office of Sponsored Programs.

ANIMAL SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

The use of animal subjects in research must comply with the University's policy on using animals in research studies. Once the decision is made to include animals and the proper consultation has occurred with the thesis advisor, resources should be consulted on the care of the animals while in the care of the researcher.

CONCLUSION

These guidelines are intended to answer general questions concerning format, style, and submission. For more specific questions or answers, please consult your major professor, committee members, or the Graduate School. Finally, it is the student's responsibility that the thesis and non-thesis research project meets all requirements and standards.

Plagiarism - All academic work included in the manuscript must be the student's own unique thoughts and words. If a student's work is not deemed his/her own, the student has committed plagiarism. Disciplinary action will be taken if it is determined plagiarism has occurred.

A Graduate Thesis Committee is assigned to read all theses for content and final formatting approval. The thesis, following the committee's approval, should be submitted to the Graduate

Office electronically in pdf. If the student's thesis requires edits, the thesis will be returned to the student for corrections. This process will be repeated as many times as is deemed necessary until the thesis is error free and ready for binding. The final approved copy will be returned to the student electronically.

A checklist is provided at the end of this manual (Appendix Q) for the student's use to assist in evaluating the thesis or research project before submission. It is up to the student to use this checklist and make corrections in a timely manner. The following are some common errors students should avoid in their manuscript.

- Incorrect margins
- Grammatical errors
- Headings and page numbers not consistent with Table of Contents
- Incorrect spacing
- Incorrect style and spacing listing references
- Sources noted in manuscript but not listed in references and vice versa
- Numbering pages correctly following the title page

The student is required to submit the original signature pages to Graduate Studies in person or by mail. Once the thesis is approved by the graduate office administrator, the signature pages will be signed and the student will be notified to pick them up.

APPENDIX A

Sample Cover Page for Bound Thesis

Title of Thesis or Project, Centered,

ALL CAPS and Double-Spaced

Nine line spaces from title

JANE DOE, B.S.

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY

MAY 10, 2016

(Appendix B: Title Page)

Title is spaced 1.5 - 2 inches from the top of the page

**Title of Thesis or Project, Centered.
Upper and lowercase letters, and
Double-Spaced**

return at least four single line spaces between this line and the Thesis/Research Project Title

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN AGRICULTURE

Degree should be styled in ALL CAPS

return at least three single spaces between name of degree/department and name of university

JANE DOE, B.S.

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, RESEARCH, EXTENSION AND APPLIED SCIENCES

Six line spaces between school and university name

LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI

MAY 10, 2016

(No page number on the actual title page)

(Appendix C: Approval Page / Signature Page)

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

March 2, 2016

To the Graduate Studies Administrator:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by John Doe entitled "TITLE OF THESIS." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Biology.

Marlon Berry, Ph.D.
Thesis Advisory Committee Chair

We have read this thesis and
recommend it for acceptance:

Mary Sue White, Ph.D.
Committee Member

John Alto, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Jan Blackmore, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

Graduate Studies Administrator

(Appendix D: Dedication-OPTIONAL)

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my loving sister, Beth Jamison, who always believed in me. She was my muse for choosing this subject for my thesis. It is also dedicated to my mother for her untiring patience and endurance during my long hours of information gathering and asking for feedback and technical assistance.

The dedication page is optional. If a student elects to include a dedication page, the following should be adhered to.

- **No heading appears on the page except the Dedication heading.**
- Text is double-spaced.
- The dedication page is numbered in lowercase Roman numerals at the bottom of the page and centered.

(Appendix E:
Acknowledgements)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and give praise to my advisor for his expertise in advising me through completion of this thesis. His encouraging words helped me navigate through the APA process in keeping the faith that I could get the job done and done well.

I thank the Graduate Studies staff for their technical assistance to ensure that this document was publication ready.

The acknowledgements page is optional. If used, it allows the student to thank supporters, mentors, advisors, and other individuals who have supported the student's research and end product, the thesis.

The following formatting should be adhered to:

- The word acknowledgements should appear in all caps and centered on the page.
- Text is double-spaced.
- The acknowledgements page is numbered in lowercase Roman numerals at the bottom of the page and centered.

(Appendix F: Abstract Page)

Abstract

The number of non-traditional adult learners participating in e-learning in higher education has rapidly grown in the past decade to meet their career and personal needs. E-learning has become a trend in the education pursuits of this atypical population of students that is inundating the enrollment on most college campuses. Interactive distance teaching and world wide access of educational instruction through Internet services offer non-residential education instruction and services which are more compatible with student lifestyles and needs. Efforts have been organized to use best practices to educate non-traditional learners to ensure satisfaction and academic success. The purpose of the study was conducted to better understand the factors that influence academic success of non-traditional learners participating in distance learning courses. Research is limited in guiding practitioners to best practices that increase engagement and retention of these students in flexible learning environments to ensure success. This study also examined key factors that educational professionals should consider in the development, administration and review of distance learning programs that enroll non-traditional adult learners. Qualitative data were collected from graduate students. The findings showed that there were key factors attributed to the academic success of students identified as non-traditional and constructs for future study.

Keywords: distance education, non-traditional student, learning styles, online learning, asynchronous learning, synchronous learning, best practices, adult learners, reflective learning.

Abstract

Begin the Abstract on a new page. The label *Abstract* should appear in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered, at the top of the page. Type the abstract itself as a single paragraph without paragraph indentation (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).

Beginning with the next line, write a brief and concise summary of the key points of your research. (Do not indent.) Your abstract should be accurate, non-evaluative, coherent, readable and concise. Your abstract should be a single paragraph double-spaced. Do not exceed the word limit of 250 words.

You may also want to list keywords from your paper in your abstract. To do this, center the text and type *Keywords:* (italicized) and then list your keywords. Listing your keywords will help researchers find your work in databases.

i.e. *Keywords:* aging, attention, emotion

Double space the text and use the same 1 inch margins as in the balance of the paper. Consult the APA Manual (6th edition) for some tips regarding the qualities of a good abstract. Pay close attention to grammar and spelling; papers with misspellings and typographical errors will be returned as will abstracts that do not follow the format as illustrated in this document.

(Appendix G: Table of Contents Page)

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NOTE: This thesis template is meant to guide you in formatting your paper according to APA (6th ed.). Students should work closely with their adviser when creating the manuscript for their thesis.

(Appendix H: Tables Page)

List of Tables**TABLES – start each on a separate page**

Table 1: Stats, Stats and More Stats.....10

Table 2: Stats, Stats and More Stats. The title of this table is more than a single line; indent the second line just like his.....13

Table 1

Enrollment in local four-year colleges, 2015

College	New students	Graduating students	Change
	<i>Undergraduate</i>		
Cedar University	110	103	+7
Elm College	223	214	+9
Maple Academy	197	120	+77
Pine College	134	121	+13
Oak Institute	202	210	-8
	<i>Graduate</i>		
Cedar University	24	20	+4
Elm College	43	53	-10
Maple Academy	3	11	-8
Pine College	9	4	+5
Oak Institute	53	52	+1
Total	998	908	90

Note: Retention Loadlist

If you've constructed more than a couple of tables and plan to place them in the body of your paper, include a list of them in a List of Tables. List the table number, name and page on which the table can be found (example above). If you only have a couple of tables, do not construct a List of Tables, simply include the title of the table and its page number in the Table of Contents in the appropriate place in the pagination order.

Note 1: Not all papers will have a List of Tables (see above).

Note 2: Pay close attention to the purpose and format of your tables and figures. Tables and figures are meant to provide a quick graphical reference to the textual discussion within your paper; as such, they should be concise. For a quick visual reference for formatting a variety of tables consult the APA Manual. Below is information about producing tables as well as an example of APA table format.

How to Make a Table in APA Style Using Word XP

- Click on *Table*, then go to *Insert* and follow it right to *Table*.
- Figure out how many rows and columns you need. If you aren't right the first time, you can add or delete them later by going to *Insert* and *Delete* under *Table*.
- Click on *Auto Format* in the lower right side of the pop-up.
- Find *Simple 1* (which is green and toward the end of the options) and click on it.
- Where it says "Apply special formats to" toward the bottom of the screen unclick (i.e., get rid of the check mark in the box) all but "heading rows."
- Hit okay.

(Appendix I: Figures Page)

List of Figures**FIGURES – start each on a separate page; include caption on page with figure**

Figures are graphical representations of data (not including tables). If you've included more than 1 or 2 figures in your paper, list them here. List the number, name and page on which the figure can be found (same format as for Tables). If you only have 1 or 2 of figures, include them in the Table of Contents in their appropriate place in the pagination order.

Example

Figure 1: List title here.....	14
Figure 2: List title here.....	18
Figure 3: List title here.....	19

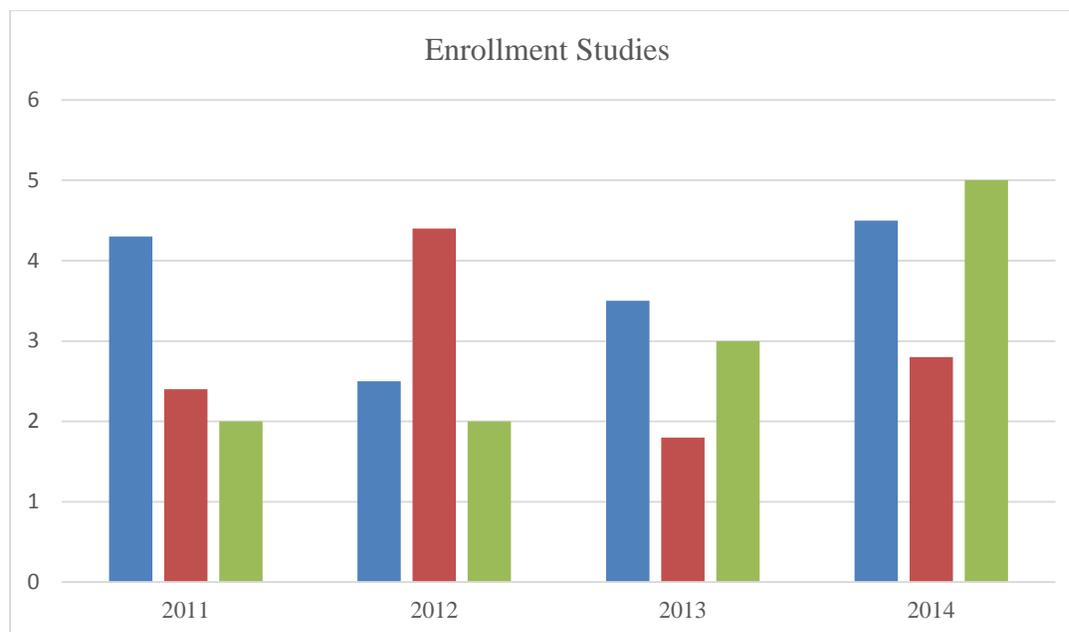


Figure 1. Enrollment trends over a four-year period to forecast trends for future planning.

Note: Not all papers will have a List of Figures; consult the APA Manual for more information regarding the use of figures.

(Appendix J: Introduction Page)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

(Centered Title)

College campuses across the nation have been inundated in recent years with an influx of adult learners seeking to pursue a college degree or attain skills to enhance their careers. With this surge in enrollment of diverse students ages 24-50, colleges are rethinking curriculum options to meet their needs. Distance learning has been the preference of this group of students whose attributes have been defined as non-traditional students.

A non-traditional student is an American term referring to a category of students at tertiary educational institutions. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) acknowledges there is no precise definition for non-traditional student, but suggests that part-time status and age are common elements. In a 1996 study, the NCES included anyone who satisfies at least one of the following as a non-traditional student:

- Delays enrollment (does not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year that he or she finished high school)
- Attends part-time for at least part of the academic year
- Works full-time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled
- Is considered financially independent for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid
- Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children, but may also be caregivers of sick or elderly family members) does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not fi

Introduction

Introductory information here.

Statement of the Problem

Statement of the problem should include the basic difficulty, area of concern, and/or perceived need for the study.

Purpose of the Study

Discuss the goal - emphasize practical outcomes or products.

Research Question

Significance of the Study

Limitations of the Study

Definitions of Terms

Terms and definition here. Only include terms that may not be well understood by a layperson outside of your field. Information in this section is formatted in paragraphs just like information in any other sub-heading. Bold all terms, but not their definitions. The use of bold for each term is for emphasis, not to indicate the beginning of a new subheading.

Definition of Terms

It is important for the sake of the research in this study to include theoretical definitions to assist in understanding the topic under investigation. A variety of terms are used in this paper specific to distance learning such as e-learning, virtual environment, and online. Below is a brief and concise list of terms with their definitions to assist the reader in gaining understanding about the research topic considered. *See example below.*

Adult learner - An adult learner (North America) or mature learner (UK) (sometimes also called adult student, returning adult, adult returner, and student) is a person who is 18 years and up who is involved in forms of learning.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adult_learner

(Appendix K: Literature Review Page)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The researchers in conducting the literature review, exhausted an extensive list of resources to decipher the key ones that would support the key factors that affect non-traditional distance learners' academic success. Although there is an abundance of resources that augment various factors that impact the performance of adult learners engaged in distance learning environments, there is limited current literature available for review that researches the current landscape of students to further highlight insight into this question. The review was limited to college campuses in order to advance knowledge of instructionally designing distance learning courses and programs to support successful matriculation of non-traditional learners and completion of their program. Over the past several years with distance learning programs growing in demand as a popular trend to meet the needs of adult learners desiring to enhance their professional skills, a broad range of factors can positively or adversely affect the learning environment and success of non-traditional students. Experts have posed concepts about factors that affect the success rate of adult learners. Thierry Volery (2000) has based his findings about the factors that affect the success of students participating in distance education classes. He concludes there are three factors that should be considered. Technology (ease of access and navigation, interface design and level of interaction); the instructor (attitudes towards students, instructor technical competence and classroom interaction); and the previous use of technology from a student's perspective or students' previous computer knowledge (Volery, 2000).

The rise of non-traditional students seeking career enhancement and educational opportunities beyond the work-day has prompted universities to expand the e-learning offerings

as a means of curriculum delivery for this atypical population. Adult learners also choose the Online environment based on their lifestyle, family, and other responsibilities.

No sub-headings are indicated for this chapter because they will vary considerably from research paper to research paper. The format of headings and sub-headings depends upon the way you have organized your thoughts via the use of heading *levels* in your paper. Place headings in their appropriate spot on the page and use boldface formatting as indicated. For more information about headings, refer to the APA Manual (6th edition).

(Appendix L: Methodology Page)

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

This chapter will describe the research methodology utilized in this study. Specifically, this chapter will deliberate the following components of this research study:

- 1) Research Sample
- 2) Survey Instrument
- 3) Data Collection Methods
- 4) Data Analysis and Synthesis
- 5) Limitations

The intent of this chapter is to give researchers insight as to why this study was conducted and the implications of the data.

Research Sample

This research study draws its sample from one institution of higher learning non-traditional population. The survey will be administered to Graduate students at Alcorn State University in a variety of courses. The universities' current Graduate enrollment is 633 students. The average age of the graduate student is 35 years old. The gender distribution is 74% female and 26% male. Ninety percent of the graduate enrollment is Black/African American and 10% classified as non-black. The survey will be administered at the end of the spring semester in which participants are enrolled in an Online (OL) or Distance Learning (DL) course. Currently, the Graduate School offers 63 OL or DL courses during the spring term and all classes will be included in the survey, asynchronous and synchronous. The courses include the following disciplines: advanced technology, agriculture, applied sciences, biology, business administration, computer science, education, and nursing. The online population will include 865 surveys as a result of students enrolled in multiple classes. Since the survey is designed to

garner feedback to answer the research questions, students will only be asked to take the survey one time, and not per course.

Instrument

Several questionnaire models were studied to determine the best fit for answering the research questions on the factors influencing academic success of non-traditional students enrolled in online courses. In making a selection, factors were considered as to the instrument that would help the researchers gain a better understanding of key factors affecting academic success. In our study we asked for permission to adopt a survey on students' perceptions of distance learning. The survey, Distance Learning Online Learning Survey, was adopted from work done by O'Malley and McCraw (1999). They used a seven point Likert scale with strongly agree and strongly disagree as anchoring points. The survey contains 31 paired items (total of 62 items) where the same question was asked regarding Online Learning (OL) and Distance Learning (DL).

Data-Collection Methods

The data collection process will proceed in two phases in this research study. Graduate students enrolled in online courses at the university will be surveyed. Blackboard will be used to post the announcement to students and give access to the confidentiality statement and survey. First, they will be provided the confidentiality document giving instructions for participation via email. The actual survey will reside on a secure network server that is manned by the technology department network administrator at the university. Student login will be restricted to completion of one survey per student to eliminate duplication. A timeframe will be given in the cover email to instruct students of the window for completing the survey electronically. Once the window closes, the data will be aggregated and analyzed based on using two distance learning

platforms, asynchronous and synchronous. Collaboration will be arranged with the systems administrator of Blackboard and technology to collect the data in each of the courses surveyed. Efforts will be implemented to encourage participation in order to get at least 30% of the surveys for data analysis. The results will be graphed on a histogram to show the ratio of each response to each question.

Ethical considerations were utilized in this study in adherence to the Institution Review Board (IRB) guidelines to ensure no harm would come to any participant. Appropriate approval was obtained from the IRB for the informed consent that is required in this process for each participant. The informed consent will be distributed electronically to each student with a read receipt sent to the database for each student setup in the tracking system in Blackboard. The system will match the consent form to the survey to validate the student received and read the assurances before engaging in the survey. Safeguards will be part of the hierarchy structure which requires students to read the informed consent before they can access the survey. The consent form outlines the purpose of the research study, confidentiality and data security.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The data will be aggregated using the Advanced Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) application software to get a distribution of the variables that will help to answer the four research questions:

- Which factors do non-traditional distance learners believe affect their academic success?
- What role does distance learning play when it comes to non-traditional distance learners' academic success?
- What role does technology play when it comes to non-traditional distance learners' academic success?

- What are some possible solutions for addressing key factors that hinder success for non-traditional distance learners?

The analysis will report the outcome of paired items that reflect a positive or negative perception to the questions under study, and if this number is significant. The analysis will also be used to determine if the sample was reflective of the graduate students' perception as a whole of the course design (best practices, relevance and expectations, autonomy, adaptation for learning styles, technology platforms, interaction and communication in the online environment at Alcorn State University. Once the data has been analyzed and reported, it will be maintained for a period of three years on the secure server before purging.

Once the data has been analyzed, the results should be able to show if the results are representative of the entire population of graduate students and if the nature of the study can be replicated at other universities in their quest to success of their non-traditional student population.

Methodology begins with an introduction. Some suggestions include reiterating the statement of the problem and briefly discussing what this chapter will include. Sections to be addressed might include subject selection and description, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations.

Research Sample

Discuss the sample and population.

Instrumentation

Talk about the survey used, if applicable. Was it created for this purpose or did you find it somewhere?

Data Collection Procedures

A 57 question survey was administered....

Data analysis and synthesis. How was the data analyzed? Example: A number of statistical analyses were used in this study. The Statistical Program for Social Sciences version 10.0 (SPSS, 2002) was used to analyze the data. Independent T-Test analyses were conducted...

Limitations

Discuss methodological limitations or procedural weaknesses.

(Appendix M: Data Analysis)

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Start with another introduction, you might briefly reiterate the purpose of the study and how it was conducted, e.g. a survey was given.... Your sub-headings for this chapter also will vary considerably: some people use each question as a sub-heading and some don't. If you do use each question as a sub-heading, write out the question rather than just "Question 1." The purpose is to provide the reader with *at-a-glance* information about the nature and scope of your paper.

Item Analysis

Use tables when appropriate, but don't overuse them or discuss the whole table in text. Discuss the high points in text, providing the table for further details. All tables should conform to the APA style manual (see pages 125-150). See pages 6 and 7 of this document for more information about tables as well as an example. Tables are different than *figures*, name and refer to them appropriately. Information about *figures* can be found beginning on page 150 of the APA manual.

There is no hard rule as to whether a summary at the end of this chapter should be provided since chapter 5 is often a summary. Discuss this with your advisor.

(Appendix N: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Again, start with an introduction. Summarize what has happened in your paper so far.

This chapter will also vary considerably in headings and organization; what follows is a suggestion or possibility.

Limitations

State them again.

Conclusions

Hit the high points of your findings. There should be a relationship to the literature review: did your study correlate with previous research or did you find something different?

Recommendations

Recommend some further research or a change in practices.

(Appendix O: References Page)

References

Make sure that everything you cite in the text is also in the reference list and vice versa. The *APA Manual* describes the correct format for each type of reference. Be especially careful about how you reference and format on-line sources. **Each entry should be in a *hanging indent format*. This paragraph is typed using hanging indent format.** See examples of types of references below. **Avoid hyperlinks in blue. All online links should be displayed in black in the list of references when used.**

American Psychological Association. (Producer). (2000). *Responding therapeutically to patient expressions of sexual attraction* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.apa.org/videos/>

Bormann, C. A., & Stone, M. H. (2001). The effects of eliminating alcohol in a college stadium: The Folsom Field beer ban [Electronic version]. *Journal of American College Health, 50*(2), 81-88.

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(Appendix P: Appointment of Thesis Advisory Committee)

APPOINTMENT OF THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thesis Topic: _____

Student: _____

Committee Members:

Chair: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Outside Member(s) (if any): _____

Date

Signature (Department Chair)

(Appendix Q: Institutional Review Board Application)
<http://www.alcorn.edu/offices/programs/sponsored-programs/index.aspx?>

IRB Number: _____
 (IRB Use Only)



Institutional Review Board

1000 ASU Drive #210
 Lanier Hall 114
 Lorman, MS 39096-7500
 Tel: 601-877-3964 Fax: 601-877-2327
 E-mail: IRB@alcorn.edu

Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

Federal regulations and the Alcorn State University policy require that all research involving humans as subjects to be reviewed and approved by the ASU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Any faculty, staff, student, or other persons wishing to conduct research involving humans as subjects of research at or through ASU must receive written approval from the IRB before beginning the research.

All forms must be completed, signed by the RPI, and submitted by FAX, Email, or single-sided hard copy.

Research Training): Yes No If Yes, please attach a copy of verification.

1. RESPONSIBLE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (RPI) The individual who has lead responsibility for conducting the research. The RPI may be a ASU employee or external individual. Whenever the responsible principal investigator is not a ASU faculty or staff member, the research must be supervised by a non-visiting ASU faculty or staff member, who will be designated as the Responsible Research Supervisor (RRS).

Last Name:		First Name:		Academic Degree(s):	
Dept. or Unit:		Office Address:		Mail Stop:	
Street Address:		City:		State:	Zip Code:
Phone:		Fax:		E-mail:	
ASU Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty		<input type="checkbox"/> Academic professional/Staff		<input type="checkbox"/> Student	

1A. Responsible Research Supervisor (RRS) A member of the ASU faculty or staff (i.e., an employee of ASU) who has supervisory responsibility for the protection of the subjects and the conduct of the human subjects research described in the research protocol submitted for review under the ASU policy and procedures for human research protection. ASU students and graduate assistants cannot serve as RRS.

Last Name:		First Name:		Academic Degree(s):	
Dept. or Unit:		Office Address:		Mail Stop:	
Phone:		Fax:		E-mail:	
ASU Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty		<input type="checkbox"/> Academic professional/Staff		<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

1B. List all other ASU Co-Researchers

4. SUMMARIZE THE RESEARCH. In **LAY LANGUAGE**, summarize the objectives and significance of the research.

All boxes are expandable so please use as much detail as possible.

5. Data Collection (mark all that apply)

- From existing data, documents, or records that are **publicly available**.
- From existing data, documents, or records that are **confidential**. Access to the documents or records is restricted and can occur by permission only.
- From existing biological, diagnostic, or pathological specimens that are **confidential**. Access to the specimens is restricted and can occur by permission only.
- By directly or indirectly **interacting with subjects individually or in groups**.
- From the **observation of public behavior**.
- Other (please explain) _____

5A. TYPE OF RESEARCH (mark all that apply)

(Data collected from schools, institutions, organizations, etc., research must have written approval, on letterhead, from those organizations.)

- A. Research conducted in a school setting that focuses on the following normal educational practices:
 - Instructional strategies, techniques, or curricula for regular education
 - Instructional strategies, techniques, or curricula for special education
 - Classroom management methods for regular education
 - Classroom management methods for special education
- B. Research that involves the use of educational tests (diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), surveys, interviews, and/or observation of public behavior.
- C. Research that involves the collection or study of existing data, documents, pathological specimens, and/or diagnostic specimens.
- D. Research that involves the collection of biological samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture.
- E. Research that involves the collection of data by non-invasive means using one or more of the following procedures:

- voice, video, digital, or image recordings
- weighing or testing sensory acuity
- moderate exercise
- muscular strength testing
- physical sensors applied to the surface of the body or at a distance, and the procedure does not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy
- flexibility testing
- magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)
- electrocardiography (ECG)
- electroencephalography (EEG)
- finger nail or hair clipping
- mouth or skin swab

F. Research that is conducted by or subject to the approval of a department or agency head and is designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine a public benefit or service program, its procedures for obtaining benefits of services, possible changes in or alternatives to the program or its procedures, or possible changes in methods or levels of payments for benefits or services provided.

G. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies in which wholesale foods without additives are consumed, and the food consumed contains food ingredients at or below the level known to be safe and for a use known to be safe.

5B. ANTICIPATED NUMBERS How many subjects, including controls, will you study in order to get the data that you need?

If you plan to study disproportionate numbers of a given sex, race, or minority group, provide scientific rationale in 11. Please list and describe each performance cite separately.

Performance Site		Total
1.		
2.		
3.		
TOTALS		

List anticipated numbers for additional performance sites on an attachment and mark here:

5C. AGE RANGE Mark all that apply. Researchers planning to include children in research projects involving *more than minimal risk* must provide written documentation of the benefits that are likely to accrue to a child participating in the project. This should include information gathered on adults, if it exists, or an explanation about why it does not exist.

- 0–7 years
- 8–17 years
- 18–64 years
- 65+ years

→ If applicable, written documentation of benefits for including children in *more than minimal risk* research is attached.

5D. Research Will Focus on Specific Subject Groups

Eligibility for participation in this research will be restricted based on the following criteria:

- Gender or sex
- Race/Ethnicity
- Religion
- Socioeconomic status
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- English as a first language
- Other (please describe) _____

5E. Adults (persons 18 years of age and older)

- ASU students Adults in the community (not ASU students)
 Pregnant women Adults in treatment ASU faculty and staff
 Adults having legal representatives (guardians)
 Adults with limited civil freedom (prisoners, parolees, probationers)
 Adults with psychological, cognitive, neurological, or intellectual impairment
 Adults with a life-threatening illness
 Adults with known history of trauma or victimization
 Elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office

5F. Minors (children and adolescents under 18 years of age)

- ASU students Non-ASU minors Juvenile detainees
 Minors with known history of trauma or victimization
 Minors with known physical or psychological conditions

5G. Financial Interests: Indicate below if any investigators or any members of their immediate families have any relationships, commitments, or activities with the sponsor of this research that might present or appear to present a conflict of interest with regard to the outcome of the research. (If a financial conflict of interest exists, please submit the ASU approved conflict management plan. If you have questions about conflict of interest contact the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost at 217.206.6614.)

- Ownership, equity or stock options
 Has been disclosed to the ASU campus **OR** has not been disclosed to the ASU campus
- Personal compensation such as royalties, consulting fees etc. has been disclosed to the ASU campus **OR** has not been disclosed to the ASU campus
- Intellectual property such as patents, trademarks, copyright, licensing, etc. has been disclosed to the ASU campus **OR** has not been disclosed to the ASU campus
- Other conflict of interest:
 Has been disclosed to the ASU campus **OR** has not been disclosed to the ASU campus
- No conflicts exist

6. RECRUITMENT

6A-1 RECRUITING PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY describe the systematic procedures for finding and recruiting subjects or requesting pre-existing data or materials. 1) State whether any of the researchers are associated with the subjects (e.g., subjects are students, employees, patients). 2) Name any specific agencies or institutions that will provide access to subjects or subject data. 3) Who will contact the prospective subjects? 4) Who gives approval if subjects are chosen from records? 5) Describe solicitation through the use of advertising (e.g., posters, flyers, announcements, newspaper, radio, television, Internet), face-to-face interaction, direct mail or phone contact, classrooms, subject pools, health care registries, patient referrals, and institutional "gatekeepers," as applicable.

6 A-2 Attach final copies of recruiting materials including the final copy of printed advertisements and the final version of any audio/taped advertisements and mark here: Attached Not applicable

6 A-3 Attach written approval from agency, organization, or facility giving permission to conduct research at their location. Approval must include reference to a full understanding of the nature of the research and degree of their participation.

Attached Not applicable Institutional Research

6B. WITHHELD INFORMATION Do you propose to withhold information from subjects prior to or during their participation?

Yes No

If yes, describe what will be withheld, justify the withholding (address risks, provide rationale), describe the debriefing plan, and attach a labeled copy of a written debriefing form, to be provided to subjects. Debriefing attached

7. RESEARCH PROCEDURES:

7A. Subjects will be asked to: (Mark all that apply)

- complete an online survey or questionnaire
- complete a paper survey or questionnaire
- complete a face-to-face interview with without audiotaping/videotaping
- complete a telephone interview
- perform research tasks such as viewing pictures or listening to a presentation
- provide biological samples (e.g., hair or nail clippings, saliva, etc.)
- other (please explain) _____
- does not apply -- data will be collected from existing records or documents only.
- does not apply -- data will be collected through behavioral observation only.

7B. Data will include: (Mark all that apply)

- private information about each subject (i.e., age; income; health status; psychological, educational, or physical test scores; grades; biological specimens; audio, video, or photographic records; etc.).
- the subject's personal opinions, beliefs, perceptions, views, values, experiences, and/or behaviors.
- the subject's professional opinions or expertise.

7C. The data collected will be: (Mark only one)

- coded for research purposes but the research data include codes or demographic identifiers that would permit **the researcher** to identify individuals either directly or indirectly, through links to individual subjects. In other words, the subject could be identified either directly or indirectly through demographic data or a master code list linking names and research code numbers.
- recorded in a way that does not allow the subject to be identified, either directly or indirectly by anyone (including the researcher), through coding, demographic information, or other identifiers linked to the subject cases.

7D. Data will be: (Mark only one)

- Anonymous. The researcher will not know who gave what answers. No identifying information will be collected. No links between subject names and research code numbers exist.
- Confidential. Research coding will allow the researcher to match subject identifiers with the data; however, the researcher will store the data securely and will not disclose any individually identifiable information collected.
- Confidential, unless the subject provides explicit written permission, on the consent form, indicating that his or her identifying information can be included in the research.
- Not confidential. Potential participants will be informed, on the consent form, that confidentiality will not be maintained.

7E. Using LAYPERSON'S LANGUAGE, specifically describe what the participants (treatment groups and controls) will do and where the research activities will take place. Give approximate dates and durations for specific activities, including the total number of treatments, visits, or meetings required and the total time commitment. (for schools-based research where class time is used, describe in detail the activities planned for nonparticipants and explain where (e.g., in a classroom, in a private area) both participants and nonparticipants will be located during the research activities. Include a concise description of procedures, locations, time commitments, and alternate activities on the relevant consent and assent forms.)

- Attach final copies (survey, consents, protocols, power points, transcripts of oral presentations, etc.)

8. INFORMED CONSENT: University policy requires the execution of a comprehensive, written document that is signed by the subject (or the subject's authorized representative) as the principal method for obtaining consent from subjects. The language in the document must be understandable to the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative. ([Attach informed consent and checklist](#))

Children must assent (or, voluntarily agree) to participation and a parent must separately consent on behalf of their child (*i.e.*, two different forms are generally required). Children under age 8 may assent either orally or passively, depending on their level of maturity. Children 8–17 years old should sign a written form unless the ASU IRB approves a different process.

8A. TYPE OF CONSENT Mark all that apply and attach one copy of each relevant form, letter, or script on university letterhead. Include translations, if consent will be obtained in a foreign language. Use headings, headers, or footers to uniquely identify each document and associate it with the subject group for which it will be used.

Informed consent (assent) with an online document.

Written informed consent (assent) with a document signed by

adult subjects parent(s) or legal guardian(s) adolescents aged 8–17 years

Waiver or alteration of informed consent (attach request for waiver form.)

adult subjects parent(s) or legal guardian(s) adolescents aged 8–17 years

Waiver of documentation (signature) of informed consent (attach request for waiver form.)

adult subjects parent(s) or legal guardian(s) adolescents aged 8–17 years

8B. USE OF PROXY Will others (*e.g.*, next of kin, legal guardians, powers of attorney) act on behalf of adult subjects in giving consent to participate in this research? Yes No If yes, describe

8C. USE OF PROXY OUTSIDE Mississippi If a proxy is used in research conducted outside Mississippi and/or the United States, provide justification (*e.g.*, statement of an attorney or copy of applicable law) that the proxy is authorized under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the research will be conducted to consent to the procedures involved in this protocol.

8D. CONSENT PROCESS Describe when and where voluntary consent will be obtained, how often, by whom, and from whom. If cognitively impaired subjects (including children under age 8) will be involved, explain how the subject's understanding will be assessed and how often; include the questions that will be asked or actions that will be taken to assess understanding.

Describe any waiting period between informing the prospective subject and obtaining the consent. Describe steps taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence. Indicate the language used by those obtaining consent.

Indicate the language understood by the prospective subject or the legally authorized representative.

If the research involves pregnant women, fetuses, or neonates, indicate whether consent will be obtained from the pregnant woman, mother, father, or all. If the research involves children, indicate whether consent will be obtained from: Both parents and legal guardians unless one parent is deceased, unknown, incompetent, or not reasonably available, or when only one parent has legal responsibility for the care and custody of the child; or from one parent regardless of the status of the other parent.

9. RISKS

9A. DESCRIPTION Specifically describes all known risks to the subjects for the activities proposed and describes the steps that will be taken to minimize the risks. Include any risks to the subject's physical well-being, privacy, dignity, self-respect, psyche, emotions, reputation, employability, and criminal and legal status. Risks must be described on consent forms.

9B. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Determining risk related to research is not always an easy task. Risks can be physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, or unknown. The probability (likelihood) as well as the magnitude (i.e., severity, duration, and reversibility) of potential harm must be considered. When evaluating research risk, it is also important to focus on the immediate or reasonably foreseeable risks of the research, as separate from potential risks or benefits associated with the consequences of applying the knowledge that might be gained from the research. The potential benefits of a study do not alter the risk classification. The risk/benefit assessment only refers to the acceptability of the risk, not the level of the risk.

A commonly accepted definition of minimal risk is a level of risk no greater than that typically encountered in the daily lives of healthy individuals in the general population. Thus, the researcher should consider (a) the likelihood of potential harm; (b) the magnitude of potential harm; (c) whether the likelihood and magnitude of potential harm are greater than those encountered in the ordinary daily life of a healthy person; (d) what research procedures are in place to minimize the probability and/or magnitude of harm to subjects; and (e) the extent to which those research procedures are adequate to diminish the risk of harm. For example, a breach of confidentiality is a serious risk, but protections such as restricted access (locked files, stand-alone computers, password protections, and certificates of confidentiality) reduce the absolute risk significantly and may thereby make the overall risk to the subject minimal.

Please consider the immediate or reasonably foreseeable risks of the research rather than the risks associated with the long-term outcome or consequences of applying the knowledge gained from the research.

9C. RISK LEVEL: **No more than minimal risk**
(the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated for participation in the proposed research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests).

More than minimal risk

9D. Data Monitoring Plan: Must describe the provisions for monitoring the data to ensure the safety of subjects (List who will periodically have access to the data, and monitor harms and benefits experienced by subjects? How often will monitoring occur? Where will the data be stored (locked cabinets, password protected files etc)? If appropriate, what criteria will be used to stop the research based on monitoring of the results?)

10. BENEFITS Describe the expected benefits of the research to the subjects.

11. BENEFITS Describe the expected benefits of the research to society.

If additional risk/benefit information is attached, mark here:

12. INVESTIGATOR ASSURANCES: The signature of the responsible principle investigator is required (scanned or faxed signatures are acceptable). Other investigators are also responsible for these assurances and are encouraged to sign.

I certify that the information provided in this application, and in all attachments, is complete and correct.

I understand that I have ultimate responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, the conduct of this study, and the ethical performance of this project.

I agree to comply with all ASU policies and procedures, the terms of its Federal Wide Assurance, and all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research.

I certify that

- The project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the ASU IRB-approved protocol.
- The equipment, facilities, and procedures to be used in this research meet recognized standards for safety.
- No change will be made to the human subjects protocol or consent form(s) until proposed changes approved by the ASU IRB.
- Legally effective informed consent or assent will be obtained from human subjects as required.
- Unanticipated problems, adverse events, and new information that may affect the risk–benefit assessment for this research will be reported to the ASU IRB Office (601.877.3964) and to my Departmental Dean.
- Student and guest investigators on this project are knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing this research, including any confidentiality and safety requirements.
- I agree to meet with the investigator(s), if different from myself, on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
- If I will be unavailable, as when on sabbatical or other leave, including vacation, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence. I will advise the ASU IRB by letter of such arrangements.

I further certify that the proposed research has not yet been done, is not currently underway, and will not begin until IRB approval has been obtained.

Responsible Principal Investigator	Date	Investigator	Date
Investigator	Date	Investigator	Date
Responsible Research Supervisor		Date	
(if RPI is a student, or otherwise applicable)			

(Appendix R: Thesis Form Format Checklist)

Thesis Formatting Checklist

Use the suggested checklist below to evaluate the formatting of your document before submission to the Graduate Office. If your document follows this prescribed checklist, you should experience a successful submission. Remember to submit your thesis/thesis research project electronically in pdf format.

STUDENT'S NAME:

THESIS/RESEARCH TOPIC:

NUMBER OF TIMES REVIEWED: 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____

Title, Submission Information

- Parts of the thesis organized in the correct order
- Titles on title page, signature page, and abstract are identical
- Title includes no more than 12 words
- Four original copies of approval/signature pages submitted for review with thesis document; white 25% cotton bond, 20 lbs. weight paper
- Signatures of thesis/thesis research project committee signed with black ink
- Thesis/non-thesis research proposal presented to committee members for review

Title Page

- No page number is displayed on this page
- No abbreviations used in title
- Matches sample in Appendix
- Title is typed in upper and lower case
- Title is centered vertically and horizontally on page

Table of Contents

- Table of Contents is centered on the page and formatted in bold
- Page numbers are preceded by ellipses (...) and are right justified
- Each entry must appear exactly as it is written in the text
- Each Appendix has a title in the Table of Contents

Page Numbering

- Roman numerals on preliminary pages
- Arabic numerals used in main body, begin on page 1 on first page of Chapter 1

Margins

- Right margin, top and bottom margins 1"
- Left margin 1.5"

Fonts

- Style: Times New Roman
- Size: 12 - point type
- Same font and point type used throughout the text
- All primary text should be in black

Line Spacing

- Double spacing in body text

Abstract

- Brief and concise summary of the research study
- Length no more than **250** words or less (must not exceed more than 350 maximum)

Body of the Work

- Paragraphs are indented at the beginning of the sentence
- 12 - point font used for all text (Tables and Indices may contain 10 pt.)
- Manuscript double-spaced
- Each Chapter, List, and Appendix begins on a new page
- First line of each paragraph is indented
- No blank pages
- No excess white space on pages

Citations (in-text)

- Every citation in text follows APA style
- Citations in body of manuscript match the references

References

- Starts on new page
- All references listed in alphabetical order from A to Z, with a hanging indent format
- Double space between references
- One space after each period inserted that separates each part of the sentence
- All web pages appear in black type- not blue

Tables and Figures

- Tables and figures are labeled and numbered correctly
- All charts, graphs, and other illustrations are legible
- Tables and figures appear on separate pages
- Captions are single spaced and placed directly below the figures and above the tables

Reference List

- Only the references cited in the body of the thesis are included in References cited

Appendices

- Page numbers of appendices are sequenced and positioned as those used in the body
-

ASSURANCES

In submitting this thesis/non-thesis research project, I verify I have utilized this checklist in concert with my thesis committee to submit a credible manuscript for review and approval by the Graduate Studies Administrator.

I further attest to the fact that my document does not contain any plagiarized content and have followed all the guidance in the thesis manual.

Student _____

Date _____