



GUIDE FOR PREPARING THE PROSPECTUS

**The Graduate School
F.P. Whiddon Administration Bldg.
Room 340
251.460.6310**

February 2019

Dear Graduate Student:

I wish to congratulate you on initiating work on a thesis or dissertation for a graduate degree. This will be a significant undertaking but one which you will take pride and satisfaction in accomplishing. The conduct of your study and the process of writing a thesis or dissertation constitute the heart of the professional skills of a graduate education.

The contents of a thesis or dissertation are very important. You, your major professor, and your committee are responsible for the accuracy and the validity of the content of a thesis or dissertation. You and they are also responsible for the form, and we in the Graduate School wish to assist you. That is the purpose of these guidelines. Form is critical, because errors in writing and formatting distract the reader, and may suggest that this lack of attention to detail affected the results and conclusions of your study. There is a practical consideration also; the document is electronically published. Every page must meet the exact standards for these processes.

Dissertations and theses are published and distributed through ProQuest Information and Learning. Several professional societies include theses and dissertations in bibliographies, so wide dissemination is likely. You, your major professor, your committee, and the Graduate School must necessarily be concerned that your professional reputation appears in the best light and that the quality of your work enhances the image of the University.

English is an expressive and flexible language, but its richness creates pitfalls. Clarity in written communication is most certainly an important skill necessary in scholarly endeavors. I hope you will look upon writing your thesis or dissertation as an opportunity to perfect your use of this skill. It is, and will be, of great importance to you both personally and professionally.

As you prepare to present the results of your research, the Graduate School wishes you well. I encourage you in your intellectual enterprise and look forward to the day when I can recommend you to the President of the University of South Alabama for the degree toward which you are now working.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold Pardue".

J. Harold Pardue, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

I. GETTING STARTED

A. **Expectations:** Your thesis or dissertation is a significant and time-consuming undertaking that must reflect a mastery of your field, contribute to the existing body of knowledge of your field and demonstrate the level of high quality expected by the Graduate School and University.

B. **Thesis/Dissertation Committee form:** Completion of this form is **REQUIRED** and is the first step in this process. Further details on this form are in Section II of this guide.

C. **Prospectus:** Prospectus approval **MUST** be granted before a research project is initiated, as well as before data collection, if your study involves human research. Further details on developing your prospectus are in section III.

D. **IRB Approval:** If your study involves human research, you must obtain USA Institutional Review Board (IRB) **approval** prior to data collection.

II. APPOINTMENT OF GRADUATE FACULTY TO A DISSERTATION OR THESIS COMMITTEE

A. Completion and submission of the **Thesis/Dissertation Committee form** is **REQUIRED**. A detailed description of the administrative roles on this form is explained in the Thesis/Dissertation Guide.

III. PROSPECTUS

A. The prospectus is a written document that contains key elements:

1. Problem/topic
2. Review of existing body of knowledge
3. Description of study (must include subjects, procedures, equipment, materials, schedule, and other pertinent information)
4. Anticipated nature of results
5. Description of anticipated method of analysis
6. Implications and impact on existing body of knowledge

B. You must present your prospectus to your committee. Your department may require an oral defense. The prospectus signature page must be signed by the chair of the committee, the members of the committee, the department chair and the College/School director of Graduate Studies.

C. An example of a prospectus signature page is at the end of this document.

E. Any subsequent deviations in the conduct of the study from those presented in your approved prospectus MUST be approved by your committee and the IRB as appropriate.

F. After the study has been completed, the prospectus is used to form the basis for your thesis or dissertation.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

TITLE OF PROJECT

By
Student's Name

A DISSERTATION or THESIS PROPOSAL

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of South Alabama in
partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the Degree of _____

in

Name of Department

Date

Approved:

Date:

Chair of Dissertation/Thesis Committee: Type Name w/degree or Dr.

Member of Committee: type name w/degree or Dr.

Member of Committee: type name w/degree or Dr.

Member of Committee: type name w/degree or Dr.

Chair of Department: type name w/degree or Dr.

Director of Graduate Studies: type name w/degree or Dr.