**Formatting Help for Dissertation Writers**

Tips from the Writing Center

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Formatting a thesis or dissertation can feel like an overwhelming task, but here are some resources to help make the process more efficient for you:

**Department Colleagues and Faculty**

Your departmental colleagues and faculty should be your first stop for help as your department may have specific guidelines for you to follow. They may also have tips, tricks, and other advice that may be of help.

**The Graduate School**

The Graduate School offers dissertation formatting workshops twice a year, with both sessions usually taking place in March. You can find the list of Graduate School events here: <https://gradprofdev.unc.edu/events/>. The Graduate School’s dissertation guidelines can be found here: <http://gradschool.unc.edu/academics/thesis-diss/guide/>.

**The Undergraduate Library**

The Undergraduate Library’s Design Lab can be a resource for help with Microsoft Word. They are not experts on the particular rules and expectations for the formatting of theses, but they can help you with getting Word to do the formatting you already know you need. If you have a quick formatting question, you can stop by the UL Research & Design Desk. If you want to sit down with someone for a longer consultation, you can make an appointment here: <http://library.unc.edu/house/designlab/>.

**Help for Hire**

The Writing Center maintains a “Help for Hire” list of local editors as a professional courtesy—these editors aren't affiliated with the Writing Center in any way. However, some of these editors work with students on formatting-type issues. If you are interested, you can view the list, including each editor’s rates, here: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/about/help-for-hire/>.

**Can the Writing Center Help with Formatting?**

The Writing Center is an instructional service that focuses on helping writers learn new skills and strategies. We are happy to give feedback on thesis and dissertation drafts—we can talk about whether something makes sense to us and ask questions about it, as well as show students strategies for working on things like organization, proofreading, and conciseness. We cannot help with questions about word processing (e.g. how to get Word to format a table of contents or insert page numbers in a particular way). We also cannot help with questions about the specifics of the Graduate School's requirements for submitting theses and dissertations.

**Conclusion**

Congratulations on reaching this stage of the writing process! Formatting a large document can be challenging and time-consuming, but soon you will be happily submitting your thesis or dissertation.