

chicago style dissertation formatting tutorial

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely adopted style guide for academic writing, and its application to dissertations requires meticulous attention to detail. This comprehensive chicago style dissertation formatting tutorial will guide you through the essential elements of preparing your doctoral work according to CMOS guidelines. We will cover everything from the initial structural components like the title page and abstract to the intricacies of citations, bibliographies, and appendices. Understanding these formatting rules is crucial for presenting a polished, professional, and publication-ready dissertation that adheres to academic standards and enhances your scholarly credibility. This tutorial aims to demystify the process, providing clear instructions and practical advice for navigating the complex world of Chicago style dissertation formatting.

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Title Page and Preliminary Pages

Title Page Requirements

The title page is the first impression of your dissertation, and in Chicago style, it requires specific elements. Your full dissertation title should be prominently displayed, centered on the page, and typically in all capital letters or initial caps, depending on your institution's specific preference. Below the title, you will include your full name, followed by the degree sought (e.g., "A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy").

Crucially, the title page must also state the department and university granting the degree. Include the month and year of submission. Ensure all text is double-spaced and centered. Avoid excessive ornamentation; the focus should be on clarity and the academic content of your work. Always consult your university's specific guidelines, as they may have minor variations from the standard Chicago Manual of Style.

Abstract Formatting

The abstract is a concise summary of your entire dissertation, typically ranging from 150 to 350 words. For Chicago style, the abstract should be a single, unindented paragraph. It should clearly state the research problem, methodology, key findings, and conclusions. The abstract does not include citations, even if your dissertation relies heavily on existing literature.

Begin the abstract with the heading "Abstract" centered at the top of the page, followed by a blank line. The abstract itself should be double-spaced, mirroring the rest of your dissertation's body. Its purpose is to give potential readers a quick overview of your research's scope and significance, encouraging them to delve deeper into your work. Ensure it accurately reflects the content and arguments presented in the main body of your dissertation.

Table of Contents Structure

The Table of Contents (TOC) provides a roadmap to your dissertation, listing all major sections and their corresponding page numbers. In Chicago style, the TOC should be meticulously organized, mirroring the hierarchical structure of your dissertation. Use the same headings and subheadings that appear in your text.

Each entry in the TOC should align with its respective page number, often using leader dots to guide the reader's eye. For example, Chapter 1 would be listed, followed by its title, then dots, and finally the page number. Subsections should be indented to indicate their relationship to the main chapter. Ensure that all preliminary pages (Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures) are also included in the TOC, usually numbered with Roman numerals.

Body of the Dissertation

Chapter Structure and Numbering

Dissertations are typically divided into chapters, each beginning on a new page. In Chicago style, chapter titles are usually centered and in all caps or initial caps, followed by a blank line before the text begins. Chapter numbers are generally placed above the title or integrated into it, for instance, "CHAPTER ONE" or "Chapter 1."

The body of your dissertation should maintain consistent formatting throughout. This includes double-spacing, standard margins (typically 1 inch on all sides), and a legible, standard font like Times New Roman or Arial, usually in 12-point size. Paragraphs should be indented on the first line, with no extra space between paragraphs.

Page Numbering Conventions

Chicago style dictates specific page numbering conventions for dissertations. Preliminary pages, including the title page, abstract, table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures, are typically numbered using lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.). The title page itself is usually counted as page i but the numeral is not displayed.

The main body of the dissertation, starting with the introduction or first chapter, is numbered using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). The page number should be placed in the upper right-hand corner, at least one inch from the top edge of the page. Ensure consistency in placement and formatting for all pages.

Running Heads (Optional but Recommended)

While not strictly mandatory by all institutions, a running head can enhance the professionalism of your dissertation. A running head is a shortened version of your title or a key chapter heading that appears at the top of each page, typically on the left side. This helps readers quickly identify the content of each section.

If you choose to use running heads, they should be consistent throughout the document. For the title page and preliminary pages, they might be omitted or formatted differently. Consult your department's specific style guide for their preferences on running heads in a Chicago style dissertation.

Citations and Footnotes/Endnotes

Choosing Between Notes and Author-Date System

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary citation systems: the notes and bibliography system and the author-date system. For dissertations, the notes and bibliography system, utilizing footnotes or endnotes, is more commonly preferred due to its ability to accommodate extensive scholarly engagement and intertextual references.

The author-date system, while common in some disciplines, is generally less favored for humanities dissertations where detailed textual analysis and engagement with source material are paramount. This tutorial will focus primarily on the notes and bibliography system as it is the de facto standard for many dissertation formats.

Footnotes vs. Endnotes

Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the citation is made, while endnotes are collected at the end of the chapter or the entire dissertation. For dissertations, endnotes are often preferred for clarity and to avoid disrupting the text's flow. Regardless of your choice, consistency is key.

Each note should begin with a superscript Arabic numeral corresponding to the citation marker in the text. The first citation of a source will be a full bibliographic entry, while subsequent citations of the same source will be shortened. Ensure that every piece of information or idea that is not your own is properly attributed.

Formatting Footnotes and Endnotes

In the notes and bibliography system, the first note for a source includes full bibliographic information: author's full name, title of the work (italicized for books, in quotation marks for articles), publication details (place, publisher, year), and page number(s). For example:

- 1. Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 115.

Subsequent notes for the same source are shortened, typically including the author's last name, a shortened title (if needed to distinguish from other works by the same author), and the page number. For example:

- 2. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 130.
- 3. Scott, 145. (If only one work by Scott is cited in the bibliography)

Ensure that note numbers in your text precisely match the corresponding entries in your endnotes or footnotes. Pay close attention to punctuation, capitalization, and the italicization or quotation of titles.

Bibliography or Works Cited Page

Structure of the Bibliography

The bibliography, or Works Cited page, is an alphabetical list of all sources consulted and cited in your dissertation. It serves as a comprehensive record of your research and allows readers to locate the sources you have used. In Chicago style, the bibliography typically includes all works cited, and often, works consulted but not directly cited, though your department may have specific requirements.

The bibliography should be titled "Bibliography" and centered at the top of a new page. Entries are arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. If a source has no author, it is alphabetized by the first significant word of the title.

Formatting Bibliography Entries

Bibliography entries are typically formatted with a hanging indent, meaning the first line of each entry is flush with the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented. This improves readability and distinguishes individual entries. The Chicago Manual of Style provides detailed guidelines for formatting various types of sources, including books, journal articles, websites, and more.

General formatting for a book entry in a bibliography looks like this:

- Author's Last Name, First Name. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year.

And for a journal article:

- Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume, no. Issue (Year): Page Numbers.

Remember to be consistent with capitalization, punctuation, and the use of italics or quotation marks for titles. Double-check every entry against your notes and the CMOS guidelines.

Tables and Figures Formatting

Numbering and Titling Tables and Figures

Both tables and figures (illustrations, charts, graphs, images) need to be clearly labeled and numbered. Chicago style requires that tables and figures be numbered consecutively and separately. For example, the first table would be "Table 1," and the first figure would be "Figure 1."

Each table and figure should have a clear, descriptive title. For tables, the title usually appears above the table. For figures, the title typically appears below the figure. Ensure that the numbering and titling are consistent throughout your dissertation.

Placement and Referencing

Ideally, tables and figures should be placed as close as possible to where they are first discussed in the text. If a table or figure is very long, it may be placed in an appendix. When referring to a table or figure in your text, use its number (e.g., "as shown in Table 3," or "Figure 5 illustrates...").

If you are including an image, ensure it is of high resolution. For any borrowed images or data presented in tables, proper attribution is crucial. Include a note below the table or figure indicating the source, formatted similarly to a footnote or endnote citation.

List of Tables and List of Figures

Similar to the Table of Contents, you will need separate lists for your tables and figures. These lists should appear after the Table of Contents and before the main body of your dissertation. They should include the number, title, and page number for each table and figure.

For example, a List of Tables would look like this:

- List of Tables
- Table 1: Demographic Breakdown of Study Participants..... 45
- Table 2: Correlation Coefficients of Key Variables..... 62

Ensure these lists are accurate and meticulously formatted, reflecting the exact titles and page numbers as they appear in your dissertation.

Appendices and Supplementary Material

Purpose and Content of Appendices

Appendices are used to house supplementary material that is relevant to your dissertation but would disrupt the flow of the main text. This can include lengthy questionnaires, raw data sets, interview transcripts, detailed methodological descriptions, or permissions to reproduce copyrighted material.

Each appendix should be placed at the end of the dissertation, after the bibliography. They should be clearly labeled, usually as "Appendix A," "Appendix B," and so on, with descriptive titles. If you have only one appendix, it can simply be titled "Appendix."

Formatting Appendices

The formatting of each appendix should generally follow the same standards as the main body of your dissertation (double-spacing, font size, margins). Each appendix should begin on a new page, with its label and title centered at the top. If an appendix contains multiple distinct items, they can be further sub-labeled (e.g., Appendix A.1, Appendix A.2).

Reference appendices in the main body of your dissertation where they are relevant. For instance, you might write, "See Appendix C for the complete interview protocol." Ensure that all material included in the appendices is properly cited if it originates from another source.

General Formatting Guidelines for Chicago Style Dissertations

Margins and Spacing

Consistent margins are a cornerstone of professional dissertation formatting. For Chicago style, the standard is typically 1-inch margins on all four sides of the page. Some institutions may require slightly different margins, particularly for the left margin to accommodate binding.

Double-spacing is the standard for the main body of the text, including chapter introductions, body paragraphs, and notes. Single-spacing might be used for block quotes, certain elements of the bibliography, or captions, but the overall document should maintain double-spacing for readability.

Font Choice and Size

A clear, legible font is essential. Standard choices for academic writing include Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri. The font size should consistently be 12-point for the main text. Headings and subheadings can be in the same font but may be styled differently (e.g., bold, larger size, all caps) as per your departmental guidelines.

Avoid decorative or overly stylized fonts, as they can detract from the scholarly nature of your work. Consistency in font choice and size throughout the entire document is paramount.

Block Quotes and Dialogue

When quoting more than four lines of text, Chicago style requires a block quotation. Block quotations are set apart from the main text by indenting them from the left margin, typically by 0.5 inches or 1 inch, and are single-spaced. They do not use quotation marks.

A block quote is introduced by a colon or a full sentence. For example:

As Foucault argues:

The "author-function" is not a purely descriptive notion, but relates to the control of discourse, the division of discourse, and the attribution of discourse. It is a set of operations that define certain functions of discourse.

Ensure that all block quotes are properly introduced and formatted, and that the citation following the quote is accurate.

Final Review and Submission Tips

Proofreading and Editing

Before submission, a thorough proofread and edit are indispensable. This goes beyond checking for typos; it involves scrutinizing grammar, punctuation, syntax, and the overall clarity of your arguments. Read your dissertation aloud to catch awkward phrasing and grammatical errors.

Consider having a peer or a professional editor review your work. A fresh pair of eyes can often spot mistakes that you might have overlooked. Pay special attention to consistency in formatting, citations, and terminology. Ensure all your references are correctly formatted and that there are no discrepancies between your notes and your bibliography.

Adhering to Institutional Guidelines

While the Chicago Manual of Style provides a robust framework, your university or department will likely have its own specific formatting requirements. These can include preferred margins, specific title page layouts, rules on front matter, or preferred citation styles (e.g., requiring endnotes over footnotes). It is imperative that you obtain and meticulously follow your institution's dissertation formatting guide.

Submit a draft to your advisor or committee for review before the final submission. They can provide valuable feedback on both content and formatting. Do not underestimate the importance of these final checks; a well-formatted dissertation reflects professionalism and respect for the academic process.

File Format and Submission Process

Most universities require dissertations to be submitted electronically, often as a PDF file. Ensure that your PDF is searchable and that all fonts are embedded correctly. Check your institution's submission portal and guidelines for specific instructions on file naming conventions, submission deadlines, and any associated forms or documentation.

It is also wise to save multiple backups of your dissertation in different locations. The submission process can sometimes be complex, so familiarize yourself with it well in advance. A flawless presentation of your research is the final step in a long and rewarding academic journey.

FAQ

Q: What are the essential preliminary pages for a Chicago style dissertation?

A: The essential preliminary pages for a Chicago style dissertation typically include the title page, abstract, table of contents, list of tables (if applicable), and list of figures (if applicable). These pages are usually numbered with Roman numerals.

Q: How should I format my citations in a Chicago style dissertation if I choose the author-date system?

A: If you opt for the author-date system in a Chicago style dissertation, your in-text citations will consist of the author's last name and the year of publication (e.g., (Smith 2020, 45)). Your reference list at the end of the dissertation will be a comprehensive list of all cited works, alphabetized by author's last name, with full publication details.

Q: What is the difference between a footnote and an endnote in Chicago style?

A: Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference is made, while endnotes are compiled at the end of the chapter or the entire dissertation. Both serve the same purpose of citing sources, but endnotes are often preferred for dissertations to avoid cluttering the main text.

Q: How do I format a block quotation in a Chicago style dissertation?

A: A block quotation, used for quotations of more than four lines, is set apart from the main text by indenting it from the left margin (typically 0.5 or 1 inch). It is single-spaced and does not use quotation marks. The citation follows the quotation.

Q: Can I use different fonts for headings and the main text in my Chicago style dissertation?

A: While the main text should use a consistent, legible font (like 12-point Times New Roman), headings and subheadings can be styled differently for emphasis. This might include using a larger font size, bolding, or capitalization, but it's crucial to maintain consistency throughout your document according to your department's guidelines.

Q: What are the typical margin requirements for a Chicago style dissertation?

A: The standard margin requirement for a Chicago style dissertation is usually 1 inch on all sides. However, some institutions may require a larger left margin (e.g., 1.5 inches) to accommodate binding. Always consult your university's specific formatting guide.

Q: Is it mandatory to include a running head in a Chicago style dissertation?

A: A running head is not always strictly mandatory by the Chicago Manual of Style itself, but many universities require it for dissertations. If used, it typically appears at the top of each page, often in the upper right-hand corner, and includes a shortened version of your title or chapter name. Check your departmental guidelines.

Q: How should I handle citing online sources in my Chicago style dissertation?

A: Citing online sources in a Chicago style dissertation follows similar principles to citing print sources, but you will need to include specific information such as the URL and the date you accessed the material. The format varies depending on the type of online content (e.g., website, online article, e-book). Always refer to the latest edition of The Chicago Manual of Style for precise formatting.

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