

Senior Thesis Formatting Guidelines

Department of Economics

Revised Feb. 2024

THESIS DUE DATE

One bound, hard copy and a PDF file of the thesis are due by **5pm ET, Wednesday, March 6, 2024**. Please **deliver the hard copy** to the Economics Undergraduate Office (Littauer 112). Please **upload the PDF [here](#)**. Your file should be named using the convention **Last Name_First Name_Thesis24**. If the average grade of the thesis is Magna Minus or above, the hard-bound copy will be sent to the Harvard Archives. Theses, thesis grades, and reader comments will be handed back in early May. Please note that **we will not discuss your thesis readers with you** at any time.

PAPER AND PRINTING

The hard copy of the thesis must be printed single-sided on acid-free, **letter-sized (8.5" x 11") paper** using laser printing (most paper these days is acid-free, but please double check your paper to be sure). Please plan ahead so that you have enough time to print the thesis. **Note:** The Department will not grant any extensions due to technical difficulties, computer/printer problems, and so on.

BINDING

The hard-copy must be in a spring binder (but not bound; e.g., no punch holes, no spiral binding). **The Department will provide free binders at the Thesis Relaxation event (date TBA)—first come, first served.**

FORMAT

- **Title Page:** See the following page for the *Title Page* format.
- **Abstract:** Please include a 150- to 200-word abstract. The abstract should provide a brief description of the thesis question and findings, as well as highlight the importance of your research.
- **Margins:** Top, bottom, right-hand, and left-hand margins should be one inch. These measurements should be consistent on every page (including Table/Figure pages). (If you wish to bind a hard-copy of your thesis for yourself, please note that you may want to have a 1.5 inch left-hand margin to allow for a small remaining margin once pages are put in the binder.)
- **Spacing:** The thesis must be double-spaced (except footnotes).
- **Binder Cover:** Please print a copy of the *Title Page* for the binder cover and tape it to the front of the binder.
- **References/Bibliography:** There is no established format that is required by the Economics Department, but we do require that the author choose a format and maintain it consistently throughout the thesis. We highly recommend using a style typical of economics journals, as outlined in the [Writing Economics handbook](#). The American Economic Association also has a helpful document [here](#). Additionally, various formats can be found in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*; and in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.
- **Tables and Figures:** Tables and Figures should be numbered consecutively. Each Table and Figure needs a title at the top of the Table/Figure (e.g., Table 1: Average Per-Capita Income, by state) and, when applicable, a source at the bottom of the Table/Figure (e.g., Source: US Census Bureau, 2010).
- **Font:** Times New Roman 12 point or another serif font comparable in size.
- **Thesis assembly order:** Title Page, Abstract, Acknowledgements (optional), Table of Contents (optional), Main Text, Tables and Figures (if not included in the main text), Appendices (if applicable), References.
- **Electronic copy:** Please name your thesis PDF file as Lastname_Firstname_Thesis24.pdf and upload it [here](#).
- **Your thesis should also have:** numbered pages, single-spaced footnotes, numbered equations.

LENGTH

Theses of any length will be accepted; however, the Economics Faculty recommends a limit of 100 pages of text and tables for a senior honors thesis. Students are strongly encouraged to comply with this limit, and graders may penalize a thesis in excess of 100 pages if they feel the length is not justified. If, however, the substance of the student's research merits discussion in excess of 100 pages, there is no automatic penalty. There is no minimum length. Depending on the topic, most theses range from 45 to 75 pages.

Writing a Senior Honors Thesis:
Why Harvard Students Write Theses

Your Name

Presented to the Department of Economics
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for a Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors

Harvard College
Cambridge, Massachusetts
March 6, 2024