

ETD Formatting Checklist

We understand that your thesis or dissertation is the product of years of intense work, and at this stage, dealing with nitpicky formatting requirements can be a bit overwhelming. The ETD review process is meant to help you format your file in a way that is consistent with the ETDs of other NC State graduates, but also to help you present your work as professionally as possible. We expect ETD submissions to meet some basic requirements, but the ETD Reviewer is here to help you catch those little issues that inevitably pop up when working on a document of this size. If there are any formatting tasks that are giving you trouble, please feel free to contact the ETD Reviewer (ETD-Reviewer@ncsu.edu). We've prepared this checklist to help you catch some common issues before submitting your first ETD, so that the process can go as smoothly as possible.

1. Does my file have all of the required pages?

- a. See the list of required pages on the ["Introduction to ETD Requirements" page](#). These are included in the available [templates](#).

2. Is my font and text size consistent?

- a. Body text should be the same font and size throughout the document. This includes the text on your abstract page, title page, table of contents, list pages, and all paragraph text.
- b. Page numbers should be the same font and size as your body text.
- c. Headers can be larger than body text, but header font and size should also be consistent throughout the document. Main headers, section headers, and subsection headers can vary in size, but should not vary in font.

3. Do my abstract and title pages look exactly like the examples?

- a. These two pages have the most specific requirements of any part of your ETD, because they need to be consistent for all students. Please pay attention to the specific spacing requirements that are described on the [abstract](#) and [title page](#) sections of the ETD Guide.
- b. On the Abstract page, your name/title lines at the top of the page should be single-spaced, and be formatted exactly like [the example](#), with your committee chair(s) name in the "Under the direction of" parenthetical.
- c. On the title page, your signature lines can vary depending on how many committee members you have, but the names and titles should be single-spaced beneath the associated signature lines. The block of text in the middle of the page should be single-spaced, and the amount of space between other lines should look exactly like the [example title page](#).

4. Do my Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures pages follow the expected formatting requirements?

- a. There are a few basic formatting requirements that are meant to improve readability of these pages.
 - i. All page numbers should be in a straight line. In Microsoft Word, you can only accomplish this by using the tab settings to create standard dotted leader lines (and enter the page numbers manually) or by using Word's

automated references function. The tab settings are already set up in the available [Word template](#).

- ii. Entry text should not overlap with the vertical line of page numbers. To move entry text to the following line without breaking up the entry, click before the text you want to move and hit “Shift” and “Enter” at the same time.
- iii. Your Table of Contents should have some sort of spacing hierarchy that reflects the structure of your document. For example, you can indent subsection entries. One way to do this is to use Word’s ruler bar; if you highlight the lines you want to indent and click the ruler bar where you want to create a new tab stop, this will create a little “L” notch below the ruler (only for the highlighted lines). After this tab stop is created, when you hit “Tab” before those lines, the text will be indented to the tab stop you created, without disrupting the dotted leader lines.
- iv. These guidelines apply to the List of Tables and List of Figures pages as well. See an example [here](#).

5. Does my text start at the top of the page throughout the document?

- a. It’s common for text to accidentally get bumped down from the very top of the page. An easy way to check for this is (in Microsoft Word) is to enable the “Gridlines” view, which covers the main body area of each page with a grid. If you scroll through your document with this view enabled, you can more easily notice when text doesn’t start on the first line of each page. To enable this view, go to the “View” tab and click the “Gridlines” box (in the “Show” panel on the left-hand side of the menu bar). You can find a visual reference [here](#).
- b. If there isn’t an extra line of space at the top of the page, but your text is somehow being pushed down (for example, if there seems to be space between the text and the top of the gridlines), it’s probable that your “Header from top” setting is too large. You can find that setting by double-clicking in your header area – this should open the “Design” tab, and you will find the “Header from top” setting on the far right of the menu. We recommend that you set it to .5, so that your page number is centered in the 1-inch margin, but anything .7 or less should be adequate to avoid pushing down the text.

6. Is my header spacing consistent?

- a. The space after the headers on your required preliminary pages should be exactly the same. If the header spacing seems to vary on these pages, check the “After” setting of the header and the “Before” setting of the first line of paragraph text. To change these settings, highlight the text you want to check and access the advanced paragraph settings (by clicking the diagonal arrow in the bottom right-hand corner of the “Paragraph” section of the menu bar).
- b. The spacing after section and subsection headers should be consistent throughout the document.

7. Do I have any margin violations?

- a. Using the “Gridlines” view in Word will also help you notice if any tables, figures, or text violate the right-hand margin. If you need more horizontal space for any reason, you can change the page orientation to landscape. You can find instructions for doing this on the ETD website’s [“Help” page](#).

8. Do I have any floating headers?

- a. As you scroll through the document, make sure you don’t have any headers floating at the bottom of the page. All headers should appear directly above their associated paragraph text. If you have a header at the bottom of the page, you can move it to the next page with “Enter” – it’s fine if that leaves a little extra space at the bottom of the previous page.

9. Are my tables and figures correctly formatted?

- a. All tables and figure captions should be the same font as paragraph text. They can, however, be smaller in size.
- b. Typically, table captions should be above the associated table and figure captions should be below the associated figure. However, some style guides have recently changed this requirement. If your style guide requires figure captions to be above the associated figure, that’s fine.
- c. If tables and figures span multiple pages, they need to follow the requirements listed on the ETD Guide’s [“Tables and Figures” page](#). If you are using Word, the multi-page requirements are explained in [this document](#). Again, if your style guide (APA, Chicago, MLA, etc.) requires a different approach, that is acceptable.