

Style Manual

Guidelines for Preparation of the Graduate Prospectus, Research Proposal, Thesis or Professional Paper, and Defense Seminar Announcement

Biology MS Program

Fisheries and Mariculture MS Program

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Purpose and Use of this Manual

Students seeking the Master of Science (MS) degree in either the Biology (BIOL) or Fisheries and Mariculture (FAMA) programs (Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, College of Science and Engineering, Department of Life Sciences) produce 2-4 official academic documents related to the research or internship(s) (FAMA only) they undertake during their matriculation. These documents fulfill specific requirements of the degree and are required of all students (Table 1). This manual provides detailed formatting guidance for the preparation of these documents and incorporates guidance from the College of Graduate Studies, [Master's Student Handbook](#) to provide students and advisors with a single reference. This manual also provides examples/templates of the required title pages and signature pages for the thesis/professional paper, etc. (Appendix A).

Each of the documents that are required of MS students in the BIOL or FAMA programs fulfill different requirements and represent milestones toward completion of the degree (Table 1). The *Prospectus* provides the graduate advisory committee (GAC) with a general overview of the student's intended research or internship experience; the *Proposal* provides a detailed plan for the research project (thesis track only); and the *Thesis* or *Professional Paper* is a report summarizing the results and interpretation of the research or, in the case of the FAMA internship track, an overview of the experiences and outcomes of the internship experience. The *Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement*, which includes an abstract, invites the campus community, and specifically the participating faculty and students in the program, to a public presentation of the student's research or internship experience.

Table 1. Required academic documents by degree track with relevant associated course numbers.

Document	Thesis Track	Professional Track	Course Number
Prospectus	Y	Y	None, submitted at first committee meeting
Proposal	Y	N	BIOL 5392 – Thesis Proposal FAMA 5392 – Thesis Proposal
Thesis	Y	N	BIOL 5393 – Thesis Research BIOL 5394 – Thesis Submission FAMA 5393 – Thesis Research FAMA 5394 – Thesis Submission
Professional Paper	N	Y	BIOL 5397 – Directed Research FAMA 5998 – Internship FAMA 5397 – Professional Paper Submission
Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement	Y	Y	BIOL 5102 – Graduate Defense Seminar FAMA 5102 – Graduate Defense Seminar ¹

¹ Some students in the FAMA Professional Program may not give a seminar, thus no announcement would be required. All FAMA students complete an oral examination whether or not there is a public defense.

Prospectus

The *Prospectus* is a brief summary of the student's intended area of research or internship focus. This document is relatively informal in format and is designed primarily to inform the student's graduate advisory committee (GAC) of the research/internship plan and to foster discussion of the plan in the first or second meeting of the student with their GAC.

For students in the BIOL professional track, the *Prospectus* is a very important document because it is the only document the student produces describing the research that they will undertake. As the professional research project tends to be very focused and limited in scope, the prospectus should essentially represent a proposal and should include a more detailed overview of the approach/methods for the GAC to discuss.

For students in the thesis track of either BIOL or FAMA, the *Prospectus* is a prologue to the formal *Research Proposal*. Since the *Prospectus* is only a prologue to the *Research Proposal*, input from the GAC is expected to be limited to general comments on research focus and direction, as opposed to editorial or methodological-focused comments.

For students in the FAMA professional (internship) track, the *Prospectus* should provide the GAC with an overview of the student's area(s) of focus, the expectations they have for their internship experience, and what agencies or companies are potential sources of their internships. This document is very important because it will provide a roadmap for the student to follow and will allow the GAC to provide input about the plan.

Preparing the Prospectus

The *Prospectus* is typically a **2-3 page document** (exclusive of references, timeline, and budget estimate, if required) that should be submitted to the GAC (either electronically or on hard copy depending on the preferences of the committee members) **no later than 3 days before the committee meeting** where it will be presented and discussed. Your GAC chair should approve the *Prospectus* prior to its distribution to the rest of the GAC. Your GAC chair may also ask you to prepare an oral presentation of the prospectus to be presented at the meeting. If you intend to use live vertebrate animals in your research, the *Prospectus* should include a brief statement regarding the need for preparation of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee ([IACUC](#) in the [Office of Research Compliance](#)) application. Submission of the IACUC application should be included in the timeline.

For students in the **thesis track** of both programs and in the **BIOL professional track**, the prospectus should include the following:

- Proposed title
- Student's name & program
- Explicit statement of the research question(s)
- A brief rationale for why the research question is relevant or in need of research (i.e., intellectual merit)
- A brief overview of the methods or approach (more detailed for BIOL professional

track)

- A brief statement of the expected or broader impacts of the research
- Literature Cited
- Proposed timeline – The timeline should include distinct milestones for completing the degree, including coursework, IACUC application preparation and submission (if needed), research, final defense and oral examination, and graduation.
- Estimated budget – at a minimum, prepare a brief budget justification that lists some of the items that will be needed and why they will be necessary. Include categories such as stipend, equipment/supplies, and travel.

For students in the **FAMA Professional track**, the prospectus should include the following:

- Student name
- Explicit statement of the field of study or focus of the internship(s)
- Rationale for the internship(s) – how will experiences in this field further the student’s career goals?
- A list and brief description of agencies or companies that could provide the experiences sought. Ideally this section will include contact information of a member of the organization that could serve as an internship supervisor or will provide more detailed information about internships that have already been set up.
- Proposed timeline – the timeline should include distinct milestones for completing the degree, including coursework, internships, final oral examination, and graduation

Formatting the Prospectus

The *Prospectus* should be formatted as follows:

- **Title/Author:** Centered, all caps, bold followed on the next line by the student’s full name, centered, title case
- **Maximum length:** 3 pages exclusive of references, budget, and timeline
- **Font:** Times New Roman (preferred) or another high quality, book face font; no smaller than 10 pt.
- **Margins:** 1” all around
- **Spacing:** single-spaced; leave 1 line between paragraphs and do not indent paragraphs (as in this document).
- **Justification:** left justify; do not fully justify
- **Headings:** centered, title case, bold (as in this document)
 - No subheadings
- **Page Numbers:** Center bottom in the footer; text should be the same font size/style as the rest of the document
- **Literature Cited:** Consult a journal that would be an appropriate outlet for the research and apply its formatting guidance (primarily for citations) consistently.
- **Timeline:** Develop a Gantt chart as if for the research proposal, using the example in Appendix A.1.

- **Estimated budget (if needed):** If the budget has been developed to the point that a detailed budget can be presented, format it as if for the research proposal using the example in Appendix A.2. Otherwise, provide a brief narrative as described above.

Thesis Proposal

The *Thesis Proposal* (typically no more than 10 pages of narrative) consists of the Literature Review (aka “Background and Relevance”) and “Methods” sections for the thesis. Students are required to develop a detailed research proposal before most of the research begins. The proposal must be approved by the entire GAC and signed by the Program Chair (see Title Page, Appendix A.3). The approved (i.e., signed) proposal should be submitted to Ms. Ronnie Emanuel, College of Science and Engineering academic advisor, **by the end of the second long semester (Fall or Spring)**. If you intend to use live vertebrate animals in your research, the completed Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) application or the approved IACUC protocol number and any permit numbers should be noted in the appropriate area of the Methods section. If you still have to submit or revise your application or permit, this should be included in the timeline. Research that includes vertebrate animals **cannot be started** until the application is approved by the IACUC. In addition, if scientific collecting permits are necessary, the application or the permit (if already acquired) should also be included as an appendix.

Preparing the Thesis Proposal

The research proposal should contain the following sections:

1. Title page (Appendix A.3).
2. Project Summary. Like an abstract, the Summary should be a synopsis of the proposed activity that is suitable for publication. **It should not be more than 1 page in length.** It should describe the activities of the project. The Summary must clearly address, in separate statements, the two merit review criteria that are used by national science programs: 1) the intellectual merit of the proposed activity; and 2) the broader impacts resulting from the proposed activity.
3. Introduction or Background & Relevance. This section summarizes the available scientific literature related to the problem or topic and explains why the proposed research is necessary.
4. Purpose, Objectives, and Hypotheses. This section explicitly states the purpose of the research project. The objectives provide the steps in the research (not explicit methods) that will be used to answer the question. Hypotheses provide the explicit questions and predictions that will be tested in order to answer the larger research question.
5. Study site. If field research is planned, then a description of the study area including a map must be included. The study site should be briefly characterized in terms of physical and/or biological attributes, particularly with regard to the suitability of the site for the proposed research.

6. **Methods.** This section describes in detail the experimental design, experimental methods for data collection, and statistical analysis you will use for each research objective or hypothesis. This is arguably the most important part of the proposal. Be sure to include how and when you will obtain any necessary permissions (e.g., permission to access study sites, if needed) and/or permits.
7. **Timeline (Appendix A.1).** The timeline or GANTT chart should be a table that shows the schedule for starting and finishing distinct milestones for both research and academic work. Milestones should include completion of coursework, submission/approval of thesis proposal, submission/revision of IACUC application (if needed), acquisition of collecting permits (if necessary), data collection for each objective or hypothesis, analysis of each objective or hypothesis, writing the thesis, submission to committee, thesis defense and oral exam, and graduation.
8. **Budget (Appendix A.2).** The budget should reflect an accurate assessment of the expenses that will be incurred during the research project and by whom they will be paid. Include financial or other support obtained from all sources.
9. **Literature Cited.** This section should contain all of the references used in the research proposal.
10. **Appendices (if needed).** Completed IACUC application or approved permit if already available; scientific collecting permit application or permit if already available. Other items may be necessary – consult your GAC.

Formatting the Thesis Proposal

The student and thesis advisor should mutually agree upon a peer-reviewed scholarly journal in the field of research that would be an appropriate outlet for the student's work when submitted for publication; this journal then becomes the **journal format model (JFM)** for the *Thesis Proposal*. It is usually a good idea to use the same JFM for both the proposal and final thesis manuscript. Make all narrative material of the *Thesis Proposal* clearly understandable to the reader through careful, well-organized writing and adequate utilization of references. Meaningful figures and tables can be incorporated when necessary.

While this style manual describes formatting pertaining to spacing, paragraph indentation, margins, title pages, etc. it does not address the formatting of headings and subheadings, unit abbreviations, text citations, literature citations (in the reference list), figure/table text callouts, figure captions, or table captions, column (including the stub column) headings, and gridlines. Students should consult the "Guide/Instructions for Authors" of the JFM, as well as a recent article that has examples of all of the elements of the paper. Students **should not follow** the final style of the journal such as the use of double columns on a text page, etc., nor should the typed manuscript duplicate every printing technique.

If the student encounters difficulties, for example, one of the references cited is a government report, and the JFM does not provide any guidance, the student should consult recent editions of other style manuals, such as *Chicago Manual of Style* or *CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* for help.

The *Thesis Proposal* should be formatted as follows:

- **Title and Signature Page:** Format using example in Appendix A.3. The title page is not numbered but is counted as page 1 of the document.
- **Maximum Length:** 10 pages exclusive of references, budget, timeline, appendices, and any figures or tables (these should be appended rather than embedded, if they are included).
- **Font:** Times New Roman (preferred) or another high quality, book-type font
 - **Font size:** no smaller than 10 pt (12 pt preferred)
- **Italics:** must be used for scientific names; consult JFM “Guide/Instructions for Authors” for use of italics for Latin or other foreign language words or phrases, or for statistics
- **Units:** Consult JFM “Guide/Instructions for Authors” for unit abbreviations
- **Margins:** 1” all around
- **Spacing:**
 - double space the narrative
 - single space figure and table captions and references
 - references should be separated from one another by 1 line
- **Justification:** left justified; do not fully justify
- **Indentation:**
 - Paragraph – 0.5” indentation from the left margin
 - References – No left margin indentation; each entry should be formatted with hanging indentation, 0.5”
- **Headings and Subheadings:** follow JFM “Guide/Instructions for Authors”
- **Page Numbers:**
 - Center bottom of the footer, should be the same font size/style as the rest of the document, Arabic numerals
 - The title page is not numbered, but is included in the page count. The “Project Summary” which appears right after the “Title and Signature Page” is page 2
 - All pages except the title page must be numbered.
- **Literature Cited:** follow JFM “Guide/Instructions for Authors”
- **Timeline:** Develop a Gantt chart using the example in Appendix A.1.
- **Estimated Budget:** Develop a budget table using the example in Appendix A.2.
- **Figures/Tables (optional):**
 - Appended rather than embedded
 - One per page and follow JFM for captions, gridlines, etc.
- **Appendices (if required):** Add a title to each appendix and continue the page numbering.

Thesis

The *Thesis*, a written report of the results of the student's research, should reflect a careful, organized, and logical approach to presenting the material. It should be written with the reader in mind. The narrative of each component of the thesis should be concise, but complete, and be written so that it presents a logical argument as to why the hypotheses were or were not supported by the data that were collected. It must incorporate appropriate citations from the relevant literature, and contextualize the results obtained within the larger body of related work. The use of meaningful figures and tables are vital to accomplishing this goal. The steps for completing the *Thesis* are:

1. Completion of the rough draft of the thesis (Thesis Research [BIOL 5393 or FAMA 5393]). To receive a grade for this course, a **complete** rough draft of the thesis must be submitted to the GAC chair/thesis advisor for review, typically **by no later than the last day of classes** in any semester (check with your advisor for his/her preferred deadline). This draft should be complete in every way and include front matter (i.e., preliminary pages), narrative (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion), figures, tables, appendices, reference list, etc.
 - a. Once the GAC chair/thesis advisor is satisfied with the thesis draft (this may take several rounds of review and revision), the student will be permitted to distribute the revised draft to the rest of the GAC for approval. **The student must not submit drafts of the thesis to the other members of the GAC until the GAC chair/thesis advisor has approved a draft for distribution.**
 - b. Members of the GAC will review the thesis draft and provide the student with feedback and revisions to be incorporated in the final submission. Members of the GAC must have a **minimum of 2 weeks to review** the thesis draft prior to the deadline to defend the thesis. Don't assume that 2 weeks is enough; as you approach this milestone, check with each GAC member to see how much time they will need. Final approval of the draft by **all** GAC members may take several weeks and several rounds of edits.
2. Completion of the thesis defense seminar and oral examination. After all members of the GAC have approved the thesis and deemed it ready for defense, the thesis defense and oral examination (Graduate Defense Seminar [BIOL 5102 or FAMA 5102]) must be completed prior to the deadline set for the semester (check with College of Graduate Studies). The *Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement* must be posted to list-servs **no less than 1 week** prior to the event (contact LSCI Senior Administrative Assistant for posting to listserv). **The deadline** must be adhered to for scheduling and completing the defense and oral examination. Deadlines are announced by the College of Graduate Studies prior to each academic year.
3. Submission of the *Thesis* (Thesis Submission [BIOL 5394 or FAMA 5394]). There are very strict guidelines for formatting the final version of the thesis and deadlines for submission that must be adhered to (deadlines are announced by the College of Graduate Studies at the

beginning of each academic year). This is the final document that has been approved by your entire GAC. It **must be** submitted electronically via [ProQuest](#) and the thesis approved by the College of Graduate Studies before the submission is complete. Create an account at [ProQuest Online Thesis Submission](#) in the Master's Students section at the College of Graduate Studies website.

Completion of the *Thesis*, and ultimately graduation, cannot be hurried. Approval of the final *Thesis* requires several steps (not including multiple revised drafts during the review/revision process). **Be sure and check at least 1 semester ahead of your planned submission semester to make sure that you understand the guidelines, know the dates of all relevant deadlines, and are fully informed of the process.** It is your responsibility and not that of your supervisor or GAC to ensure that deadlines are met.

Preparing the Thesis

As with the *Thesis Proposal*, the student and thesis advisor should mutually agree upon a peer-reviewed scholarly journal in the field of research that would be an appropriate outlet for the student's work when submitted for publication; this journal then becomes the **journal format model (JFM)** for the *Thesis*. Typically, it will be the same JFM chosen for the *Thesis Proposal*. If the student and thesis advisor agree that the student's thesis should be prepared using the journal manuscript model (more information below), the same JFM should be used for all sections or chapters of the thesis even if chapters will be submitted to several different journals. The thesis should be in a proper format for publication (within the formatting limits described by TAMU-CC and ProQuest) and can be made more concise by use of appendices for non-essential information.

Students may choose between two models of organizing the thesis, the traditional model and the journal manuscript model:

1. The traditional model presents the thesis research in a single, cohesive manuscript. Information is presented sequentially and no section stands alone as a publishable document.
2. The journal manuscript model presents thesis research as several discrete articles (i.e., Chapters), each appropriate for submission to a journal, bound together as the thesis document. In the journal manuscript model, information may be repeated as necessary between articles so that each can stand alone as an academic work.
 - a. The journal manuscript model must include an overarching Introduction (Chapter 1) with a Summary/Conclusions section that brings the entirety of the research into context.
 - b. The Literature Cited section encompasses the entirety of the manuscript; each chapter **does not** have its own reference list. In addition, an overarching Study Area section may be included if all the work was completed within the same study area(s).

Regardless of whether the traditional or journal manuscript model is chosen, the entire document

must be submitted in one journal style. In other words, in the journal manuscript model, even though it is likely that articles will be submitted to several different journals, the entire thesis must be presented in the style of only one journal. Headings and subheadings, punctuation, reference citations, and other details should follow the single chosen JFM exactly with few exceptions.

The thesis is a complete document that will be filed using standard University library formats. It must include certain accessory pages and front matter. An annotated list appears below, presenting the order of appearance in the manuscript of all sections of the thesis/dissertation. There are three main parts: front matter (aka preliminary pages), narrative (sections or chapters), and supplementary pages, organized as follows:

1. Front Matter (aka Preliminary Pages): this includes the title, copyright, and signature pages, abstract, table of contents, lists of figures, lists of tables, lists of appendices, and acknowledgements. The order of these elements in the Front Matter is:
 - a. Title Page (Appendix A.4)
 - b. Copyright Page (Appendix A.5)
 - c. Approval Page (Appendix A.6)
 - d. Abstract
 - e. Dedication (optional)
 - f. Acknowledgements
 - g. Table of Contents (Appendix A.7)
 - h. List of Figures (if more than 1, Appendix A.8)
 - i. List of Tables (if more than 1, Appendix A.8)
 - j. List of Appendices (if more than 1; format similarly to List of Figures or List of Tables depending on the appended material type)

2. Narrative
 - a. Introduction: This is the overall introduction for either thesis model and should provide sufficient background on the research problem and a rationale for the body of work that is presented, regardless of the model chosen. For the journal manuscript model it will be “Chapter I” and should show the basic relationships between the different components of the research (i.e., chapters). In the journal manuscript model, subsequent chapters will have a brief introduction (as in a journal article) and may repeat information from the overall introduction as necessary in each section.

 - b. Study Area: If you are presenting the results of a field study, include this section as a separate section if supported by the JFM. In the journal manuscript model, regardless of JFM guidelines, it may be more efficient to include the description of the study area as “Chapter II,” if all of the data presented in subsequent sections were collected in the same place, rather than repeating the information within each subsequent chapter.

- c. **Materials and Methods:** The main focus of this section is a description of the experimental design, how you collected the data (field and/or lab), how you described/summarized the data, and how you analyzed (e.g., statistical evaluations) and presented the data. This section may also include a description of the study area as a subheading depending on the dictates of the JFM. This section, including the study area, can be repeated as necessary within subsequent chapters in the journal manuscript model.
 - d. **Results:** The focus of this section is the outcome(s) of your research. It should include a summarization of the data and the results of all analyses, including appropriate and meaningful figures and tables. This section may be repeated as necessary in the journal manuscript model.
 - e. **Discussion:** The goal of this section is to provide the reader with an interpretation of the data, including implications, inferences, and conclusions that may be drawn from the study. This **does not** mean that you only present your ideas about what the data mean. It means that you must summarize the data and then put it in the context of the wider body of work related to the research question examined. You must use the relevant literature to provide evidence to support (or not) your interpretations, conclusions or both. You should return to the themes that you reviewed in the introduction that your study expands upon, provides new data to support (or not), and/or augments existing understanding. The Discussion should be a synthesis of previous work and its bearing on the outcomes of the investigations reported in the *Thesis*. It may be repeated as necessary in the journal manuscript model.
 - f. **Summary and Conclusions.** This section may be omitted in the traditional model if the JFM does not include it but it is a required final chapter in the journal manuscript model. In a thesis formatted according to the journal manuscript model, this section provides the reader with a summation of the chapters and their linkages or relationships to one another. This section is more than a bulleted or numbered list; it is the place where the project is brought together into a cohesive unit and the opportunity to assess and contextualize the overall implications complete body of work.
 - i. In the traditional thesis model, some advisors may ask the student to provide a summary and conclusions section as a subheading in the Discussion or may suggest the student include a heading or subheading in the Discussion such as “Management Implications,” “Future Directions,” or “Recommendations.”
 - g. **Literature Cited or References**
3. **Supplementary Pages**
- a. **Appendices (if appropriate).** Inclusion of data and lengthy statistical treatments and other metrics not deemed suitable for submission to a journal is strongly

recommended. This provides the graduate committee with data to confirm analyses, and also serves as a permanent record for the student or other interested parties.

Formatting the Thesis

This manual (which includes and consolidates the relevant information from the College of Graduate Studies Master's Student [Handbook](#)) should assist you with formatting issues pertaining to spacing, paragraph indentation, margins, title pages, etc. The JFM is the authority with regard to the formatting of headings and subheadings, unit abbreviations, text citations, literature citations (in the reference list), figure/table text callouts, figure captions, or table captions, column (including the stub column) headings, and gridlines, etc. Students should consult the "Guide/Instructions for Authors" of the JFM, as well as a recent article that has examples of all of the elements that will be used in the thesis manuscript. Students **should not follow** the final style of the journal such as the use of double columns on a text page, etc., nor should the typed manuscript duplicate every printing technique.

The *Thesis* should be formatted as follows:

- **Font:** Times New Roman (preferred) or another high quality, book-type font
 - **Font size:** no smaller than 10 pt (12 pt preferred)
- **Italics:** must be used for scientific names; consult JFM "Guide/Instructions for Authors" for use of italics for Latin or other foreign language words or phrases, or for statistics
- **Units:** Consult JFM "Guide/Instructions for Authors" for unit abbreviations
- **Margins:**
 - Left margin = 1" all around
 - Top, bottom, right margins = 1"
 - If landscape pages are included, the top margin must be the same size as left margin (1").
- **Spacing:**
 - double space the narrative (1.5 spaces is acceptable but not encouraged)
 - single space figure and table captions and references
 - Table captions should be separated from the table header by 1 line and the closing line of the table, if embedded, should be separated from continuing text on the same page by 2 lines (i.e., the next line of text should start on the 3rd line after the closing line of the table).
 - The captions of embedded figures should be separated from continuing text on the same page by 2 lines (i.e., the next line of text should start on the 3rd line after the end of the caption) references should be separated from one another by 1 line
- **Justification:** left justified; do not fully justify
- **Indentation:**
 - Paragraph – 0.5" indentation from the left margin
 - References – No left margin indentation; each entry should be formatted with

hanging indentation, 0.5”. **Do not** use tabs to format the references!

- **Headings and Subheadings:** follow JFM regarding font style (underlined, italicized bold, title case, sentence case, uppercase, small caps etc.) and placement (centered, left margin, etc.). The font type should be the same as the rest of the document (i.e., Times New Roman).
 - Major headings (e.g., “Results”) may start within a page, but should not appear alone as the last line on a page (“orphan”). If a major heading is the last line of text, start it on the next page.
 - Subheadings should fall naturally within the text but should never appear alone as the last line on a page (“orphan”). If a subheading is the last line of the text, start it on the next page

- **Page Numbers:**
 - Front Matter (see below for additional pagination instructions specific to the Front Matter)
 - center bottom of the footer
 - same font size/style as the rest of the document
 - lowercase Roman numerals
 - All other narrative text and supplemental materials
 - center bottom of the footer
 - same font size/style as the rest of the document
 - Arabic numerals
 - If landscape pages are included the page number must appear on those pages in the **SAME POSITION** as the rest of the page numbers in the document; in other words, on the landscape page the page number would appear in the left margin.

- **Front Matter**
 - Title Page. Format using the example in Appendix A.4. The title page is not numbered but is counted as page i of the document.
 - Copyright Page. Format using the example in Appendix A.5. The copyright page is not numbered but is counted as page ii of the document.
 - Approval Page. Format using example in Appendix A.6. The approval page is not numbered but is counted as page iii of the document.
 - Fillable Word templates for the Title Page, Copyright Page, and Approval page can be downloaded from http://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/current_students/dissertation_thesis.html. Be sure and save the form(s) to your computer first.
 - Abstract. The abstract is where pagination begins (see below for formatting of the page numbers). The abstract is page 5 (v) of the document to allow automatic insertion of UMI Proquest publisher page. **DO NOT** add a blank page between the Approval Page and the Abstract.
 - The word “ABSTRACT” is uppercase and centered at the top of the page
 - Text of the abstract should typically not exceed 300 words. Use the “word count” tool to determine the length of your abstract.

- Text of the abstract begins on the second line below the heading “ABSTRACT”
 - Text is double spaced
 - There is no paragraph indentation
- Dedication (optional). A dedication is a very short acknowledgement “This thesis is dedicated to my mother, who was always there when I needed her,” or “To my loving wife, Dolores.”
 - The word “DEDICATION” is uppercase and centered at the top of the page
 - Text is double spaced
- Acknowledgements. In this section you must acknowledge and thank all funding sources, including grants and scholarships. You should also thank those who helped you through your thesis, including your committee members, other mentors, friends, family.
 - The word “ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS” is uppercase and centered at the top of the page
 - Text is double spaced
 - Try to keep it to 1 page, but no more than 2 if really needed
- Table of Contents. There are many ways to compile a table of contents, including built-in functions in many word processing programs (there are some cryptic instructions in this regard in the College of Graduate Studies “Master’s Handbook”). If you are able to use those functions, good for you. If not, an easy approach is to use the “Table” function in a word processing program and add the headings and the page numbers by hand (Appendix A.7). Regardless of how you make the table, the following guidelines must be adhered to:
 - The heading “TABLE OF CONTENTS” is uppercase and centered at the top of the page
 - Within the table, the headings “CONTENTS” and “PAGE” are used to denote the respective components
 - List the preliminary pages beginning with the abstract and including the table of contents and include all headings and subheadings used in the thesis, exactly as they appear in the body of the text
 - Chapter numbers should be denoted by uppercase Roman numerals
 - The table of contents should be double-spaced, 12-pt font and should not include bold, italicized or underlined font (regardless of the actual font style and type of the headings within the document). Obviously, if a species name is part of a heading, the species name should be italicized
- Lists of Figures, Tables and/or Appendices (if needed). These lists are only necessary if you have **more than one** figure, table, or appendix. Like the Table of Contents, there are many ways to compile these lists, including built-in functions in word processing programs; the downside of these functions is that if you have captions that are more than 1 sentence long there may be difficulties in shortening the caption so that the list contains only the first sentence (cryptic instructions can

be found in the College of Graduate Studies “Master’s Student Handbook”). And like the Table of Contents, sometimes it is just easier to use the “Table” function and add the captions and page numbers by hand (Appendix A.8). Regardless of how you make the tables, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Center the title of the list (e.g., LIST OF FIGURES) at the top of the page
 - The name of the list should be uppercase
 - The headings FIGURES (or TABLES or APPENDICES) and PAGE are used to denote the respective components
 - Typically, only the first sentence of the caption should appear in the lists
 - The lists should be double-spaced, 12-pt font and should not include bold, italicized or underlined font. Obviously, if a species name is part of a caption, the species name should be italicized
- **Citing Literature in the Text:** All literature used in the narrative text of the thesis must be cited and the citations in the text must be correctly formatted.
 - The name-date system must be used, i.e., Stilt (2000) or (Heron 1995; Seagull 1996; Seagull and Plover, 1996). Preferentially, choose a JFM that uses this system; **do not cite sources by number**.
 - Follow the JFM exactly to format in-text citations
 - Adhere to the JFM’s directives with regard to the number of author’s names that are listed before the list of authors is collapsed to a single name and “et al.” Many journals have increased the numbers of authors that are listed in the in-text citation from 2 to 3 or more.
 - If you use or adapt a figure from another author, cite the source in the figure caption. See Page 22 of the College of Graduate Studies “[Master’s Student Handbook](#)” about copyright issues to determine if you must get permission from the copyright holder to include the material in your thesis
 - **Tables & Figures:** The following instructions apply to both figures and tables; guidance specific to each follows. In both cases, follow exactly the format and style for figures and tables as prescribed by the JFM
 - Each figure and table must be numbered and have a caption
 - Figures are numbered sequentially starting with “1”
 - Tables are numbered sequentially starting with “1”
 - At a minimum, the first sentence of the captions for each figure and table must be transcribed exactly into the “List of Figures” or “List of Tables”
 - Make captions as concise as possible, but they must clearly describe the content of the figure or table
 - Must be embedded in the text unless they are so large that they require a full, or nearly full page
 - Should appear as soon as possible after the text callout – but should not break the text or be placed at the bottom of a page below narrative text.
 - More than 1 figure and/or table can appear on a page if appropriate
 - There must be room for both captions and for there to be 2 lines between the caption and the top of the next figure.
 - The figure must be sized so that the text within the figure is no

- smaller than 9 pt (see specific figure formatting instructions below)
- Multiple pages that contain only figures/tables between pages of narrative text are permissible when necessary
 - Should appear only at the top of a page. Narrative text can appear below a figure or table, if there is sufficient space for at least 5 lines of double-spaced text; in other words, there should be **NO LESS** than 5 lines of double-spaced text appearing below a figure or table.
 - If formatted in landscape, the top of the figure or table must be on at the top of the landscape page, which is the left-hand margin for the rest of the document.
 - As noted previously, figure and table captions are single spaced
 - Table captions should be separated from the table header by 1 line and the closing line of the table, if embedded, should be separated from continuing text on the same page by 2 lines (i.e., the next line of text should start on the 3rd line after the closing line of the table).
 - The captions of embedded figures captions should be separated from continuing text on the same page by 2 lines (i.e., the next line of text should start on the 3rd line after the end of the caption)
 - **Tables:** Must have a minimum of 2 columns and 4 rows; otherwise the information can likely be related in the text
 - Must be constructed using the “Table” function found in all word processors
 - Horizontal rules must mimic the JFM.
 - Vertical rules should not be used
 - If a table requires multiple pages, each page of the table should have a caption (“Table #. Continued.”) and a header row; only the last page of the table should have a closing line
 - Multiple page tables always begin on a new page; in other words, the first few lines of a multipage table should not appear embedded within the text
 - Tables must be referred to in the narrative text (“called out”) and the formatting of the call-out must conform to the JFM.
 - Table captions must be formatted to conform to the JFM
 - A single line should separate the table caption from the header row of the table
 - **Figures:** Figures consist of graphs, maps, drawings, photographs and other illustrations.
 - All visual material must be neat, clean, and professional in appearance; hand-lettering is unacceptable
 - Color should not be used. Use black, white, a single shade of gray, and patterned fills because most journals charge extra for color plates and photocopies of color do not turn out well
 - Figures may have multiple panels or components that are lettered or numbered, however, figures should not be formatted to require multiple pages
 - Figures must be sized
 - So that the figure text, once the figure is embedded, is still easily readable. Figures should be prepared using larger-than-normal lettering/numbering, so that when the figure is embedded and reduced in size, the

- lettering/numbering is at least 9 pts.
 - So there is enough room for 1 line below the figure before the caption begins, and the entire caption can be accommodated by the remaining space on a page.
 - Figures must be referred to in the narrative text (“called out”) and the formatting of that call-out (e.g., “Figure 1” or “Fig. 1”) must conform to the JFM.
 - Formatting of figure captions must conform to the JFM
- **Reference List (aka Literature Cited):** With few exceptions (e.g., some web-based material, personal communications/observations, etc.), in-text citations must have a corresponding entry (“citation”) in the Reference List.
 - Cross-check the in-text citations in the narrative of the thesis with the reference list to ensure
 - All in-text citations have a corresponding entry in the references list
 - That there are no “orphan” references, i.e., references for which there is no corresponding in-text citation
 - Follow the JFM exactly to develop the Reference List
 - Use the same system of abbreviations, punctuation, underlining, and italics
 - If you use web-based materials, check the JFM’s guidance carefully, since some journals treat these as references whereas others reference them only in the text.
 - If there is no guidance provided for the citation of a particular type of reference (for example, a government report or a poster or oral presentation at a conference), consult the most recent edition of *Chicago Manual of Style* or *CSE Scientific Style and Format*. Use the general style that is suggested, with modifications in punctuation etc. that will make the final citation conform the JFM.
 - Do not rely on the formatting provided by reference manager software. Although you choose the JFM from the available formats in the software, it is not unusual for the software to produce a reference list that contains errors. Check it carefully before you submit the final version of the thesis.

Professional Paper

The content and approach to the *Professional Paper* can vary from a small original research project bolstered by a significant literature review of the problem or question, to a very focused research project that results in a paper that is essentially a manuscript suitable for publication, to a more technical report or development of an SOP (standard operating procedure) to a portfolio of short papers or records of internship experiences, to a brief article suitable for submission to a trade journal, to an article suitable for publication in a magazine or other “non-science” outlet (e.g., *Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine*). For a student pursuing the professional track in BIOL or FAMA, it will be critical that all members of the GAC agree on the focus of the deliverable. Beyond that, the actual sections of the manuscript and its formatting, with regard to a “journal format model” (JFM) will also vary widely. The student and GAC chair will need to work closely to ensure that both parties have a clear understanding of the expectations for the final product.

Regardless of the content of the professional paper, the components must include

1. Title/Signature Page (Appendix A.9)
2. Abstract
3. Acknowledgements
4. Table of Contents
5. Lists of figures, tables, appendices, if needed
6. Introduction or Overview
7. Narrative – portfolio components or traditional headings such as “Methods,” “Results,” “Discussion”
8. Literature Cited

Formatting of the front matter (abstract, table of contents, lists, acknowledgements) should follow the guidelines outlined for the *Thesis* in the previous section and are the same for all types of professional papers. The title/signature page is formatted differently (Appendix A.9) but its pagination etc. are the same as for the *Thesis*.

Generally speaking, the more research-focused projects will result in documents that are very much like a thesis, thus, with the exception of the title/signature page (Appendix A.9), the formatting guidelines, including the components of the manuscript (see page 10), and use of the JFM can be followed.

For a professional paper that is essentially a “portfolio,” an overview of the subsequent material, explaining the rationale for the various components, and how they are linked with one another (or not) should be the first “chapter” of the narrative. For these types of products, the use of the JFM may not be appropriate. In these cases, follow a standard format, either what is used by the target company or agency, or style manuals such as *Chicago Manual of Style*, *CSE Scientific Style and Format*, or *US Government Publishing Office Style Manual*.

Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement

The final document you must produce (some FAMA students will not present a seminar although they will complete an oral examination) is the *Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement*. As noted previously, the project defense and oral examination must be completed prior to deadlines that are set by the College of Graduate Studies for each academic year. For thesis track students, these deadlines **are not flexible** because of the deadlines associated with the submission of the *Thesis*. For professional track students, these deadlines are slightly flexible; currently, submission of the *Professional Paper* is typically set at the “last day of classes” in any given semester. Professional track students should work to meet the published deadlines, however.

Regardless of the deadline for submission of the paper, the *Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement* must be distributed **no less than 1 week** prior to the event. The graduate defense seminar cannot be scheduled until the **entire** GAC is satisfied with the thesis or professional paper. Keep this fact firmly in mind as you approach this milestone.

The format of the *Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement* is shown in Appendix A.10. The announcement is limited to **1 page**. Be prepared to shorten the abstract that you have prepared for the *Thesis* or *Professional Paper* considerably to meet this limit. The shortened abstract should still contain adequate information for potential audience members to have a modest understanding of the work you will present. The font type/style/size is Times New Roman, 12 pt.

Appendix A

- A.1 – Example Timeline (Prospectus, Proposal)
- A.2 – Example Budget Table (Prospectus, Proposal)
- A.3 – Example Thesis Proposal Title/Signature Page
- A.4 – Example Thesis Title Page
- A.5 – Example Thesis Copyright Page
- A.6 – Example Thesis Approval Page
- A.7 – Example Table of Contents (Thesis, Professional Paper)
- A.8 – Example Lists of Figures, Tables, or Appendices (Thesis, Professional Paper)
- A.9 – Example Professional Paper Title/Signature Page
- A. 10 – Example Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement (Thesis, Professional Paper [in most cases])

Appendix A.1 Format of the Prospectus and Research Proposal Timeline

Figure #. ^{1,2} Example Gantt chart showing the timeline for completion of the milestones necessary to complete the master's degree and graduate.

	2015		2016												2017												
	Jul	Oct	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Coursework																											
Thesis Proposal																											
Field Sampling																											
Sample Processing																											
Data Analysis																											
Thesis Draft																											
Thesis to Committee																											
Thesis Defense & Submission																											
Publication Preparation																											
Graduation																											

¹ The timeline should be the LAST figure in the research proposal.

² The format of the caption should follow the journal format model (JFM).

Appendix A.2 Format of the Prospectus and Research Proposal Budget Table

Table #.^{1,2} Example proposed budget for thesis research.

Budget Item	Cost (\$)		
	TAMU-CC	Personal	Other*
Equipment			
Cryostat	1900.00		
Photographic light meter		30.00	
Spotting Scope, 45x		110.00	
Expendables			
Petri dishes	60.00		
Photographic film (10, 36 exposure rolls Ektachrome, with mailers)			76.00
Microslides, cover glasses			27.00
Reagent grade ethyl alcohol			80.00
Operational Expenses			
Travel, data collection		320.00	
Boat Rental	40.00		
Document Preparation			
Thesis expenses		200.00	
Publication and reprints	300.00		
Totals	\$2300.00	\$660.00	\$180.00

*For example, Funds provided by student Grant-in-Aid-of Research from Sigma Xi

¹ The budget table should be LAST table in the research proposal.

² The header lines and closing line of the table as well as the format of the caption should follow the journal format model (JFM).

Appendix A.3: Format of the Research Proposal Title/Signature Page

TITLE SHOULD APPEAR IN ALL CAPITALS AND BE CENTERED

prepared by

YOU A. STUDENT

MONTH, YEAR

for

The Graduate Committee

Biology [or Fisheries and Mariculture] Program

Department of Life Sciences

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi, Texas

Approved:

Dr. A, Chairperson

Dr. B, Co-Chair or Member

Dr. C, Member

Dr. D, Member

Dr. E, Program Coordinator

Format: *Title of Journal* used as format.

Appendix A.4. Format of the Thesis Title Page.

THIS IS THE TITLE OF MY THESIS

A Thesis

by

JANE A. STUDENT

Former degree(s), e.g., BS, Harvard University, 2012

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

BIOLOGY [or FISHERIES AND MARICULTURE]

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi, Texas

Graduation Month, Year (Example: August, 2016)

Appendix A.5. Format of the Thesis Copyright Page.

© Your Full Legal Name

All Rights Reserved

Month and year of graduation (Example: August 2015)

Appendix A.6. Format of the Thesis Approval Page.

THIS IS THE TITLE OF MY THESIS

A Thesis

by

JANE A. STUDENT

This thesis meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

Jonathan L. Seagull, PhD
Chair

Ima Finch, PhD
Co-Chair or Committee Member

Ichabod Crane, PhD
Committee Member

Jack Sparrow, PhD
Committee Member

Graduation Month, Year (Example: December 2016)

Appendix A.7. Format of the Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
Introduction	1
Study Area	4
Materials & Methods	7
Results	14
Discussion	37
REFERENCES.....	48

Appendix A.8. Format of the Lists of Figures, Tables, and/or Appendices.

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES		PAGE
1	Map of the study area in Copano Bay, Texas	5
2	Mean salinity by month, 1 April 2013 – 1 April 2014	15

Appendix A.9. Format of the Professional Paper Title/Signature Page

THIS IS THE TITLE OF MY PROFESSIONAL PAPER

by

John A. Student
Graduation Month, Year

A Professional Paper Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOLOGY [or FISHERIES & MARICULTURE]

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI
Department of Life Sciences
Graduate Biology [or Fisheries and Mariculture] Program
Corpus Christi, Texas

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____

Dr. Veronica W. Xavier, Chair

Dr. Y. Zebulon Anderson, Member

Ms. Beatrice C. DeSalle, Member

Dr. Eduardo F. Gonzalez, Jr., Member

Dr. Ex Ample, Program Coordinator

Format: *Bulletin of Marine Science*

Appendix A.10. Format of the Graduate Defense Seminar Announcement

GRADUATE SEMINAR NOTICE
BIOLOGY [or FISHERIES & MARICULTURE) PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF LIFE SCIENCES
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI

SUBJECT: Official Title of Your Thesis or Professional Paper
SPEAKER: You A. Student
DATE: Day of week, Month Day, Year
TIME: Pick a time
PLACE: Location

ABSTRACT

The abstract of your graduate project should appear here (shortened version if necessary). An abstract of 50-200 words length is recommended for inclusion in the *Graduate Seminar Notice*.

NOTE: This announcement **must** be distributed **NO LESS THAN** 1 week prior to the event. Students should send this notice to the appropriate administrative assistant for posting electronically to the relevant faculty and graduate student list-servs. In addition, students should print several copies and post them in buildings, such as Center for the Sciences, which are frequented by graduate and undergraduate students who may be interested in attending. One printed announcement must be posted on the bulletin board outside the Department of Life Sciences administrative offices.