



Libraries

Thesis Formatting Guidelines

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LAU Libraries – Archives Unit
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INTRODUCTION

The submission of a thesis is a mandatory component for graduation. This guide outlines the key requirements set by the Lebanese American University (LAU) for the preparation and submission of graduate theses. The primary objective of these guidelines is to maintain a standardized presentation style for all LAU theses, while allowing sufficient flexibility to accommodate the specific standards of each academic discipline.

Students are responsible of reviewing and adhering to these guidelines to ensure their work aligns with the standards of the Library Archives Unit. To streamline the submission process and support a consistent format, students are highly encouraged to use the official **Thesis Template**, available through the [provided link](#).

DEADLINES

At the beginning of each semester, students will receive an email from [<thesis@lau.edu.lb>](mailto:thesis@lau.edu.lb) outlining the submission deadline for their thesis.

Dear Faculty and Students,

The Archives Unit would like to inform you that the deadline for submitting the final (defended) thesis for the Spring 2026 semester is **May 14, 2026**.

Students are kindly required to review and follow the **Thesis Formatting Guidelines** and **Thesis Template** available on the **LAUR** homepage prior to final submission: <https://libraries.lau.edu.lb/research/laur/>

To support students throughout the submission process, the Archives Unit will be offering:

1. Individual consultations and one-on-one meetings

Schedule an online or in-person appointment with Ms. Rana Ghazi (Ext. 2285) via this link: <https://lau.libcal.com/appointments/ArchivesspecialCollections>

2. Thesis information sessions

Sessions will be held on both the Beirut and Byblos campuses. Dates and details will be announced soon.

For any further assistance or inquiries, please contact: thesis@lau.edu.lb

Best regards,

PROCEDURE

Students are required to upload the final (defended) thesis to [Laserfiche Forms](#) by the deadline specified in the email. Any submission made outside of Laserfiche Forms will not be accepted for review or revisions.

THESIS GUIDELINES

A. Order and Components

1. Preliminary Pages

- **Title Page (Mandatory)**

This page includes the following: **Name of the University, Full Title of the Thesis, Student's Name, Degree, School, Submission Date (Month & Year of defense)**. This page should not be numbered or included in the page count.

- **Copyright Page (Optional)**

If you choose to copyright your thesis, add a copyright page directly after the title page. The student's name must appear exactly as it does on the title page.

This page should not be numbered or included in the page count.

- **Signed Forms**

The following three forms must be printed in **color, at high resolution**, and signed before incorporated into the Thesis.

- **Thesis Approval Form** (Mandatory)

Ensure that all fields in the "Thesis Approval Form", including Student Name, ID., etc. are completed and that the form is signed by the advisor and all other committee members. Both Handwritten and electronic signature are accepted.

- **Thesis Copyright Release Form** (Mandatory)

This form grants LAU the right to use and reproduce fully or partially the submitted work. This form must include the student's name, signature, and date.

- **Plagiarism Policy Compliance Statement** (Mandatory)

This statement affirms your obligation to properly cite all sources of work that are not your own. This form must include the student's name, signature, and date.

- **Dedication (Optional)**

A dedication is a brief, honorary statement from the author, recognizing a person or group to whom the thesis is dedicated. It must include the title "**DEDICATION**".

- **Acknowledgment (Optional)**

This section, typically included in all theses allow the author to professionally recognize those who contributed to the completion of the work. It must include the title "**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**".

- **Abstract (Mandatory)**

The abstract provides a summary of the document and must include the full title and the author's full name. At the end of your "Abstract", include at least five "Keywords" that clearly identify and reflect the subject of your document. Capitalize the first letter of each keyword.

- **Table of Contents (Mandatory)**

The Table of Contents includes all sections.

- **List of Tables (If any)**

If your document includes tables, provide a List of Tables with each table's number, title, and page number, formatted to align with the Table of Contents.

- **List of Figures/Charts (If any)**

Similarly, include a List of Figures/Charts with each figure or chart's number, caption, and page number, formatted in the same style as the Table of Contents.

- **List of Abbreviations and/or Symbols (If any)**

Provide a list of all abbreviations and/or symbols used in the document, along with their full forms.

2. Thesis Body (Text)

The body of the thesis includes all chapters, sections, and subsections, as well as any parenthetical citations, footnotes, or references. Begin with an introduction that provides essential background and context. Each new chapter or new section should start on a new page.

3. Concluding Pages

- **Bibliography/Reference (Mandatory)**

The bibliography or reference section should be placed at the end of the thesis and before any appendices and should include all cited sources, formatted consistently according to a standard citation style (e.g., APA, MLA).

- **Appendix or Appendices (Optional)**

Include supplementary materials, such as **IRB form**, survey instruments or data, in the appendices.

- **IRB Form:** Include the IRB Form signed by the **IRB** chair in **full color**, to your submission.

- **Glossary of Terms (If any)**

If needed, include a glossary of key terms relevant to the subject matter, listed in alphabetical order with their definitions.

B. Format Requirements

Headings & Subheadings

For disciplines where section numbering is typically used, adhere to the following guidelines for headings:

1. **Chapter Title:**
 - **Format:** Sequentially numbered by chapter.
 - **Style:** 18 pt. size, bold, and centered.
2. **Main Headings:**
 - **Format:** Numbered according to the chapter (e.g., 3.1 for Chapter 3, Section 1).
 - **Style:** 14 pt. size, bold, and left-aligned.
3. **Second Headings:**
 - **Format:** Follows a hierarchical structure (e.g., 3.1.4 for Chapter 3, Section 1, and Subsection 4).
 - **Style:** 12 pt. size, bold, and left-aligned.
4. **First Subheadings:**
 - **Format:** Further subdivided (e.g., 3.1.4.1 for Chapter 3, Section 1, Subsection 4, and Sub-subsection 1).
 - **Style:** 12 pt. size, regular, and left-aligned.
5. **Second Subheadings:**
 - **Format:** Preferably unnumbered.
 - **Style:** 12 pt. size, italic, and left-aligned.

Level	Description	Format	Sample
1	CHAPTER TITLE	18 pt. size, bold, centered	CHAPTER ONE
2	Main Heading	14 pt. size, bold, left-aligned	1.1
3	Second Heading	12 pt. size, bold, left-aligned	1.1.1
4	First Subheading	12 pt. size, regular, left-aligned	1.1.1.1
5	Second Subheading	12 pt. size, italic, unnumbered, left-aligned	Text

Text Font

- Use the same font throughout the entire paper.
- Acceptable fonts include, but are not limited to, Times New Roman 12, Helvetica 12, and Letter Gothic 12, as generated by word processing programs. The font provided through LaTeX¹ is also acceptable.
- Bold and italics should be used only when essential and applied sparingly.
- Colored text is not permitted.

Spacing & Indentation

- Double or one and a half spacing is required for the text throughout the thesis;

- except for the footnotes.
- The text throughout the thesis should be double-spaced or set to one and a half spacing, with the exception of footnotes.
- Each paragraph should be indented by four spaces.

Margins

- Use 2.5 cm margins on all sides of the page (top, bottom, left, and right).

Page Numbering

Preliminary Pages:

- Number all preliminary pages (those preceding the main text) using Roman numerals (e.g., i, ii, iii).
- Begin with the approval page, which is numbered as ii.
- Do not display the page number on the first page (i).

Main Text and Subsequent Pages:

- Number the main text and all subsequent sections (e.g., appendices, references) consecutively using Arabic numerals (e.g., 1, 2, 3).
- Start with number 1 on the first page of the first chapter.

Placement of Page Numbers:

- Page numbers must appear at the **bottom center** of the page.
- Only the number itself should be displayed (e.g., 9), without the word "**page.**"

¹ LaTeX is a document preparation system for high-quality typesetting. It is most often used for medium-to-large technical or scientific documents but it can be used for almost any form of publishing. LaTeX is not a word processor! Instead, LaTeX encourages authors not to worry too much about the appearance of their documents but to concentrate on getting the right content. <http://latex-project.org/intro.html>

Tables

- Tables must be numbered sequentially throughout the thesis (e.g., Table 1, etc.).

Table 1	Column Spanner		Column Spanner	
Title	Column Heading	Column Heading	Column Heading	Column Heading
Stub Heading	Table Spanner			
Row 1	123	234*	456	789
Row 2	123	987	543	876
Row 3	432	567	543	908
Row 4	256	849	407'	385

Figures

- Figures must be numbered sequentially throughout the thesis (e.g., Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.).

Footnotes

- 1. Placement:**
 - Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the same page where their reference is located in the text.
- 2. Numbering:**
 - Use Arabic numerals (e.g., 1, 2, 3) to number footnotes sequentially throughout the document.
- 3. Formatting:**
 - The footnote reference in the text should be superscripted (e.g., ...example¹).
 - At the bottom of the page, the footnote explanation should begin with the corresponding reference number.
 - Use a font size smaller than the main text (e.g., 10 pt).

C. Publication and Copyright Publication

Original work is automatically protected under copyright as soon as it is recorded in a tangible form. Theses do not have to be registered through the U.S Copyright Office for your work to be protected by copyright but doing so places your claim to copyright on public record, which will allow you to pursue suits if your rights are infringed.

For more information about copyright visit the U.S. Copyright Office at <http://www.copyright.gov>

Thesis Copyright Release Form

All students are required to sign the [Thesis Copyright Release Form](#), also known as the **Non-Exclusive Distribution License Agreement**, granting permission for their thesis to be held in the LAU repository. This agreement allows for the distribution and ongoing preservation of the thesis and related metadata.

By signing this form, the student grants LAU the right to use and reproduce the work fully or partially. Specifically, it authorizes LAU to post the material openly on the web and take necessary steps for preservation. Preservation may require converting the file to a different or updated format if the current format becomes obsolete due to technological advancements.

Copyright Retention

Authors submitting their work to LAUR retain full copyright, unless they explicitly transfer it to a third party. LAU Libraries do not claim copyright on any work submitted to LAUR.

The **Non-Exclusive Distribution License** means that authors can also distribute their work on other websites or through other channels without requiring permission from LAU. Additionally, they are free to formally publish the work, whether in its original form or in a revised version, without needing LAU's approval.

No Fees

LAU does not charge any fees for this service, nor does it collect revenue from the archive.

The **Copyright Release Form** represents the terms of the license agreement that authors must accept as part of the submission process for LAUR.

Creative Commons

Creative Commons licenses allow you to specify how your thesis may be used. All theses in LAUR are made available under the **Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 License**, which is the most restrictive license option. This license permits users to read and cite your thesis but prohibits commercial use or any modification of its content. Users are free to share the work by copying, distributing, and transmitting it, provided they adhere to the terms of the license.

For more information on Creative Commons licenses, visit: <http://creativecommons.org>

D. Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity can take many forms, with the most significant being:

Plagiarism

" Copying or closely imitating the work of another writer, composer, etc., without permission and with the intention of passing the results off as original work. In publishing, copyright law makes literary theft a criminal offense. At most colleges and universities, plagiarism is considered a moral and ethical issue, and instructors impose penalties on students who engage in it. Plagiarism can be avoided by expressing a thought, idea, or concept in one's own words. When it is necessary to paraphrase closely, the source should be documented in a footnote or endnote, in the same manner as a direct quotation."— ODLIS (c2014).

Submitting someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, is a serious offense and undermines the integrity of your research. Even if you are using information you have previously published under your own name, it is still necessary to cite yourself in your document.

For the official **Plagiarism Policy Statement**, refer to the Forms section.

To avoid plagiarism, you are required to use **Turnitin Software**.

Turnitin

Turnitin is a web-based service widely used by universities around the world. When a student's work is submitted to Turnitin, it is compared to millions of web pages, electronic journals, books, and a database of previously and concurrently submitted assignments. Turnitin generates an originality report that summarizes any matching or similar text found in the submitted paper.

Regardless of the results of the Turnitin originality report, it is essential that students ensure all copyright requirements are met and that the university's standards for avoiding plagiarism are followed.

Third-Party Copyright Materials

Previously, third-party copyrighted materials were often included in printed theses without the need for permission. However, this is no longer the case if the thesis will be made available through Open Access. Third-party materials can include graphs, figures, photographs, artworks, musical excerpts, and more. If permission cannot be obtained for these materials, the thesis cannot be made publicly available online.

You do not need permission for the following:

- Works that have entered the public domain (i.e., the copyright has expired, typically 70 years after the author's death).
- A brief excerpt from a work used for the purpose of critique or review.
- A short quotation from a published work.
- Materials that are licensed for your intended use, such as those under a [Creative Commons license](#).

How to Request Permission

To obtain permission, contact the rights holder, which may include the author, publisher, illustrator, photographer, or other relevant party. You can use the [Third-Party Copyright Materials Approval Form](#), available in the Forms section, to request authorization to include the material in your electronic thesis.

If permission is granted, the signed form must be included in the Appendices of your thesis. If permission is not granted, you must remove the third-party copyrighted material (e.g., a table or figure) from your thesis. Without permission, the full version of your thesis cannot be made publicly available online.

Involving Human Subjects in research

All research involving human subjects under the jurisdiction of the Lebanese American University and its affiliates (LAUMC-RH and LAUMC-SJH), or by its students at off-site locations must be submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and approval prior to initiation. <https://gsr.lau.edu.lb/irb>

IRB approval is based on ensuring that subjects voluntarily participate and are properly informed about their rights, safety, and welfare. The board also ensures that participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity are maintained. Ongoing monitoring of the study will be conducted to ensure participant protection. If a participant is injured or files a complaint (physical, psychological, legal, or economic harm), the advisor and IRB must be notified immediately.

IRB approval is valid from the date of the approval letter. To continue data collection beyond the approval expiration, an extension request must be submitted. All participants must be informed that their involvement is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time without affecting their services at the institution.

Research conducted as part of a thesis project is supervised by the thesis advisor. LAU will not be liable for any costs incurred during the research.

For more information on meeting schedules, submission requirements, and applications, visit:

- [Meeting Dates](#)
- [Submission Requirements](#)
- [FAQ](#)

The signed IRB approval letter must be included in your submission. Due to the time required for approval, plan ahead to ensure timely submission for review.

N.B. The approval letter **signed** by the **IRB** chair must be added, in **full color**, to your submission.

In case of research involving animals, the research project must pass through the approval of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The approval from the IACUC must be included in the thesis.

E. Submission and Embargo Period

Thesis Submission Process

Thesis students are required to submit their thesis to the Archives Unit for verification and correction at least two weeks before the final grade submission deadline. The submission must be made via the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) at <https://edms.lau.edu.lb/Forms>. Upon approval, the Archives Unit will use the final submitted PDF for verification and archiving. The submission must include the following three completed and signed forms: : [Thesis Approval Form](#), [Plagiarism Policy Compliance Statement and Thesis Copyright Release Form](#).

The Archives Unit will issue a Library Clearance once the EDMS processing is complete, and the thesis format is approved. The student will be notified once the final copy is approved, and the clearance will be issued at the end of the semester's final exam period.

Thesis Availability

Upon submission, the thesis will be subject to the following conditions:

- The full text of the thesis will be under a one-year embargo period, as determined during the CD meeting on March 23, 2023.
- Each thesis will be assigned a unique permanent URL.
- A complete metadata record will be created for the thesis.
- The thesis will be accessible via the library catalog, with a direct link to the full text in LAUR, as well as through LAUR and Google search.

Restricting access to your thesis known as “embargo period”

All newly submitted theses will be subject to a one-year embargo period, as per the decision of the Council of Deans (March 23, 2023). The embargo period may be extended up to a maximum of three years; after this period, the thesis will automatically be made publicly accessible. Any request for an extended embargo must be well-justified and submitted prior to the thesis submission to LAUR. Embargo requests must be submitted through your thesis advisor to the Dean of your School using the Embargo Form. (Please refer to the [Forms section](#) for more details.)

During the embargo period, individuals wishing to access your thesis may submit a request through the library. You will be notified by email and will have the option to grant or deny access.

You may request an embargo for your thesis under the following conditions:

Commercial Contract: Your research contract stipulates confidentiality for a specified period.

Patent Pending: The University or your sponsor has filed a patent application related to your thesis research.

Publication Pending: Publishers may request an embargo to restrict availability of your thesis prior to the publication of related papers or books.

Ethical Confidentiality: If your thesis involves human subjects, the Institutional Review Board may recommend an embargo for one or two years to protect participants' identities or ensure their safety.

Third-Party Copyright: If there are issues with clearing copyright or using material for which permission has not been granted.

For any thesis submission or other further assistance, you may contact us at thesis@lau.edu.lb

F. Forms

[Embargo Form](#)

[Plagiarism Policy Compliance Statement](#)

[Thesis Approval Form](#)

[Thesis Copyright Release Form](#)

[Third Party Copyright Materials Approval](#)