

Dissertation Formatting Checklist (APA 7 and Chicago Style)

Printable PDF for Master's and PhD Students

1. General Document Formatting

- Font: Times New Roman 12pt (or approved by university)
- Line spacing: Double-space throughout (including references and block quotes)
- Margins: 1 inch (2.54 cm) on all sides
- Alignment: Left-aligned, not justified
- Page numbers: Top-right corner (Arabic numerals for main text, Roman for front matter if required)
- Consistent heading hierarchy (APA: 5 levels; Chicago: follow your chosen system)

2. Title Page

- Full dissertation title
- Student name
- University name
- Degree program
- Submission date
- Supervisor details (if required)
- Check spacing, capitalisation, and alignment

3. Preliminary Pages

- Abstract (max word count as per university)
- Acknowledgements (if required)
- Table of Contents (auto-generated preferred)
- List of Tables and Figures (if applicable)
- Page numbering consistent with style (APA/Chicago)

4. Main Body

- **Introduction:** Clear purpose and research questions
- **Literature Review:** Logical flow, properly referenced
- **Methodology:** Detailed and reproducible
- **Results / Findings:** Data clearly presented (tables, figures labeled correctly)
- **Discussion / Analysis:** Relates results to literature and research questions

5. Headings and Subheadings

- APA 7: Five heading levels, check for correct format
- Chicago: Consistent use of major headings and subheadings
- Avoid skipping heading levels or inconsistent formatting

6. Tables and Figures

- Numbered sequentially (Table 1, Figure 1, etc.)
- Titles/captions above tables, below figures (APA/Chicago check)
- Referenced in text accurately
- Consistent font, spacing, and alignment

7. References and Citations

- APA 7: Author–date style
- Chicago: Footnotes/Endnotes or Author–Date as required
- Check every source for punctuation, italics, capitalisation
- Include all cited works; no missing references
- Verify DOI or URL for online sources

8. Appendices

- Each appendix starts on a new page
- Properly labeled (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.)
- Include only relevant supplementary material

9. General Checks Before Submission

- All chapters start on a new page
- No inconsistent spacing or fonts
- Page numbering continues correctly throughout
- Table of Contents matches actual headings and page numbers
- Check for typos, spelling, and grammar
- Verify formatting against university guidelines
- Optional: Use [plagiarism check](#) or [AI plagiarism checker](#)

10. Bonus Tips for 2026-Ready Dissertation

- Use Microsoft Word's **Heading Styles** for auto Table of Contents
- Ensure **tables/figures are readable** in both digital and print versions
- Back up your document frequently in multiple formats (DOCX, PDF)
- Consider using professional [dissertation proofreading and editing services](#) before final submission

