

Style Errors on Professional Doctoral Papers

Grammar:

- 1.) Be careful about passive statements. “As it was realized that change was needed in the community of...” Change to “As the director realized that the community needed change...” Changing passive statements to active makes the material more academic in nature and easier to read.
- 2.) Avoid using forms of the phrases “There is” or “It is.” Those phrases are wordy and take up space. Also avoid using the vague wording “this is”. One example of a way to change this form is: “There must be an outside influence that brings peace in life” to “An outside influence must bring peace in life.”
- 3.) Main comma usage: A comma is used with a coordinating conjunction (and, for, but, so, nor, or, yet) that combines two complete sentences. It is also used in a series following every element of that series. “I like dogs, cats, and turtles.” It also follows an introductory clause. “As the hurricane approached, the students went surfing.” Following these three rules will assist in the catching the majority of the comma errors that I see.
- 4.) Review the rules for numbers 2.29-.37.
- 5.) Pronoun- Antecedent Agreements. Example: “The group decided that their purpose was to...” A group is one entity, so the antecedent should be “its”.

Mechanics (according to the library committee):

- 1.) Margins. Top, bottom and right margins should be one inch and the left margin should be 1 and ½ inches.
- 2.) Date. The date on the title page should be the month and year only.
- 3.) Vita. Vitas of expert evaluators should be included in an appendix. Students may or may not include their own personal vita in the “vita” appendix.
- 4.) Page numbering. Numbers should be in a consistent font and all appendices should be numbered.
- 5.) Margins part 2. Supplemental material found in the appendices are not exempt from the margin rule. Documents, e-mails, photos, certificates, examples and PowerPoint slides (with or without notes) should be shrunk to the correct margins.
- 6.) Order of elements. Make sure that you are aware of the proper order of elements. Review the information in the manual 1.36-38 concerning contents and their ordering.