Things to Think About Before Writing the Thesis or Dissertation

Congratulations! By visiting this document, it means that you are now thinking about the writing process—one step closer to completing your thesis or dissertation and graduating! Before beginning to write, we have a few things for you to keep in mind, which will ultimately make the final formatting stage of your thesis or dissertation easier.

1.) Before you start, make sure you have completed the following:
   a. [Appointment of Advisory Committee Form](#)
   b. [Prospectus Approval Form](#)

2.) After your prospectus defense but before you start writing, sit down with your committee and decide on your style guide. If you department or discipline does not have an assigned style guide, sit down with your committee and agree on what style elements you will use for your thesis or dissertation. After you have settled on how you will site references, format your bibliography or reference section, format tables and figures, and the font choices for your chapter headings, headings and subheadings use these choices consistently throughout your document.

3.) Consistency matters! Be consistent with your:
   a. Font style (only one font, i.e., Times New Roman, Arial, Garamond, etc.)
   b. Font size (consistent throughout document as well as between tables, figures, and other item titles and descriptions)
   c. Heading sizes and styles throughout the text

4.) Document text must be in black. The only exception are items that appear with a figure or image and elements of documents that are listed in your appendix (IRB approval forms, consent forms, surveys, etc.) that were given to you with color text or that you distributed to participants with color text.

5.) The document must be **double spaced**. The only exceptions are captions, footnotes, long quotations, bibliographic references, table titles and descriptions, figure titles and descriptions, inserted materials such as tables, images, diagrams, graphs, etc., and the author's curriculum vitae

6.) Set your margins before you start writing. It will prevent mishaps with your page numbering as you get closer to your final paper. One inch (1") on the right, left, bottom, and top margins for all pages.

7.) When numbering your document, remember that there are three major sections:
   a. <u>Section 1</u>: Pages **without numbers**. There are two pages in this section:
      i. The cover page (mandatory)
      ii. The copyright statement (optional).
   b. <u>Section II</u>: Pages with **lower-case Roman numerals.** These precede the body of your document and include all materials before the first chapter or section of your thesis or dissertation. Pages that should have Roman numerals include:
      i. Approval page (ii)
      ii. Abstract (starts on page iii)
      iii. Acknowledgements (optional)
      iv. Dedication (optional)
      v. Preface (optional)
      vi. Table of Contents
      vii. List of Tables (if applicable)
      viii. List of Figures (if applicable)
      ix. Any other lists, including: List of Definitions, List of Algorithms, List of Equations (if applicable)
   c. <u>Section III</u>: Pages with **Arabic numbers.** This section is the rest of your document and includes:
      i. Main body of your text
      ii. Appendix or appendices (optional)
      iii. Bibliography (or appropriate name of this section as prescribed by chosen style manual)
      iv. Curriculum Vitae

8.) Page numbers are continuous through the document. All pages with the exception of the title page and copyright page should have page numbers.

Instructions on how to change your page numbers between sections with examples and screenshots from word can be found in **Tab 5: Organization of the Thesis and Dissertation** under **Main Body of Your Text**.