Dissertation Defense Guidelines

Refer to the Electronic Theses and Dissertations website for general instructions on formatting.

https://library.gwu.edu/etd

You must summarize your findings in an Abstract. This abstract should be a miniature version of your dissertation, stating the reason for undertaking the project, the basic methods used, the major findings, and a conclusion.

Your dissertation should next contain an Introduction that establishes the background and reviews the literature on which your project is based.

You must have a Materials and Methods section. Alternatively, you can have individual Materials and Methods sections for each chapter if different techniques or approaches are used.

The next few chapters are the Results, and describe your own findings. It is NOT ACCEPTABLE to paste in published papers, submitted papers, or planned submissions. You must reformat these into identifiable chapters. This means no chapter has a title page with multiple authors, corresponding author information, keywords, abstract, etc. While it is understood that much work in biomedical science is performed by a team, you must identify what portion of the work you yourself performed. Other findings may be attributed to, for instance, “other members of the lab”, “my colleagues”, etc. It is recommended that figures be placed near to the text that describes them. Each figure should have a legend that, with the figure, is generally comprehensible able without reference to text sections.

Each chapter should have a summary at the end.

The last text section is the Discussion, in which your own work should be placed within the literature of the field. This section must be an interpretation of your findings, not a restatement of the Results sections.

If you have questions about the formatting or content of the dissertation, please consult with your program director. Work closely with your research advisor on the writing of the document. It is recommended that sections be shown to the advisor as they are written such that you receive continual guidance during the process.