MSCES THESIS/PROJECT REPORT WRITING GUIDELINES

**(For more details, please go to the Graduate Studies Office’s website:**

[**https://academicaffairs.sonoma.edu/student-success/graduate-programs/thesis-review**](https://academicaffairs.sonoma.edu/student-success/graduate-programs/thesis-review)**)**

**GENERAL FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS**

All master's theses/projects must follow certain basic style and format guidelines and also adhere to basic standards of clear, correct English and careful presentation. Students are encouraged to hire a professional typist or editor to assist in the preparation of the final draft.

Students are warned not to follow the style and format of a thesis completed earlier at Sonoma State University or elsewhere. It may not have been properly prepared, or what was previously acceptable may not meet present requirements. Students should be sure that they are using the current SSU Guidelines for Master's Theses and Projects and not a previous edition of this booklet. Students should check with the Graduate Studies Office or the Thesis Review Office to make sure they are working with the most recent edition.

**Basic Appearance**

**Computer/Printer:** Students are expected to use computer word processing software to prepare the thesis/project. Laser printers are preferred, but letter-quality dot-matrix and ink jet printers may be used. Students are encouraged to submit a sample of their printer quality to the Thesis Review Office for final approval. The following requirements and restrictions should be noted:

1. Corrections: Interlineations, strike-overs, excessively visible corrections, and smudged printing are not acceptable.
2. Type Face: The type size should be either 10 or 12 point. A common font such as Geneva, Helvetica, Palatino, or Times should be used, and it must be dark and uniform throughout.
3. Proportional spacing should be avoided. These type styles cause problems with centering, column alignment, and justified right margins.
4. **Bold** type should be used sparingly. Outline, shadow, or similar "trick" forms are not allowed anywhere in the thesis/project. Type used for charts, graphs, drawings, tables, etc., may differ according to format and space requirements but should always remain consistent.
5. Italics may be used for appropriate purposes, i.e., for foreign words or phrases, for book and journal titles, etc. Students may also choose to use underline in place of italics. In either case, consistency of form is required.

**Pagination:** Each page must have a number designation, though numbers may be left off the title page and pages of chapter headings if the student prefers. All pages must be numbered consecutively as follows:

1. Lower-case Roman numerals (i.e., i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, etc.) are used for preliminary pages. The numerals appear centered at the bottom of the page, approximately 1/2" above the bottom.
2. Arabic numerals (i.e., l, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc.) are used for the body of the thesis/project. The numerals appear in the upper right of the page, approximately 1/2" down from the top and 1/2"in from the right margin.
3. Material inserted after final typing should be numbered as in this example: 21, 21a, 21b, etc. This expedient should be used sparingly.
4. Appendices and the bibliography or reference list should be numbered consecutively with the rest of the thesis.

**Number of Copies:** Two copies of the thesis or project are required. (This applies to non-print media projects as well.) One copy should be on 25% cotton content paper and one copy on standard computer or copy bond paper. **Only one copy should be turned in to the Thesis Review Office for initial approval.** Corrections should then be made, if required, and then two final copies prepared. Both copies are then submitted to the Thesis Review Office for transmittal to the library for binding. Many departments, and some faculty, require a copy of the final thesis. Students should check with their advisors regarding the need for additional copies.

**Paper:** Theses are housed in the University Library archives, and must be on paper which does not deteriorate rapidly. Paper advertised as easily erasable will not be accepted either for the original or for the copy. The paper must be white bond with uniformly even edges (computer paper must be torn cleanly to provide straight edges), 16-20 lbs., and each sheet must be 8 1/2 X 11 inches. One of the copies submitted must be on paper with a minimum of 25% cotton rag content. Photocopies should be on copy bond available at most reproduction centers.

**Preliminary Pages of the Thesis/Project (in order of appearance):**

**Guard Sheets:** A blank page must be placed at the beginning and end of each thesis copy.

**i - Title Page:** This page includes the approved title for the thesis and must be signed by all three members of the committee and dated. (see Appendix A)

**ii - Copyright Page:** Under the 1976 Copyright Law, unpublished theses are protected by statutory law against unauthorized copying, publication, or use. When a bound thesis has been shelved in the University Library, it has been published. The student should include a copyright notice on the page following the title page in order to protect his/her rights. (See Appendix A)

Although the law does not make registration a condition of the copyright protection, a student may wish to register his/her thesis promptly with the Copyright Office. Registration is a prerequisite to an infringement suit and certain rights and remedies for infringement depend on registration. Registration forms are supplied free of charge by:

Copyright Office  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.

**iii - Authorization Form:** This form enables a student to decide whether or not to allow reproduction of all or part of the thesis and accompanying material. Students should remember that if the work is a project, it should read "project" on this page. (See sample at the end of this write-up.)

**iv - Abstract:** The Abstract must be signed by the student's committee chair. It consists of a brief statement of the nature of the study, the method and design used, and the findings or conclusions. It may not exceed two pages and must be single-spaced. The title of the thesis/project and author's name must match exactly with the title and author's name as it appears on the title page. Five copies are required, one in each copy of the thesis/project for the Library, plus three copies (unnumbered) for distribution by the Graduate Studies Office. The two copies in the thesis are to be numbered, the three copies submitted outside the thesis should not be numbered, since the Abstract stands as a separate document. (See sample at the end of this write-up.)

*Note: The sample format in Appendix A is appropriate for most theses and many projects. However, some projects, especially creative projects, may not lend themselves to this form of abstract. In those cases, a statement of intent, scope, and approach or methodology will be sufficient.*

**v - Preface or Acknowledgement:** This page should acknowledge and/or thank individuals for their assistance and may cite reasons for the study. (Optional)

**vi - Table of Contents:** Titles and subtitles are to correspond exactly with those in the text. (See sample at the end of this write-up.)

**vii - List of Tables or Figures:** This is separate from the Table of Contents. The tables/figures are numbered in the order in which they appear. Titles are to correspond exactly with those in the text.

**viii - List of Illustrations:** This is also a separate page. Illustrations are numbered in the order in which they appear in the entire thesis/project, not within each chapter or appendix. Again, titles must correspond exactly with those in the text.

**Body of Thesis/Project**

Margins: For binding purposes and ease in copying observe the following:

1. Left: ONE AND ONE HALF inches (1 1/2").
2. Top, right, and bottom: ONE inch (1").

Particular care must be made to see that all tables, figures, and appendix materials meet the margin requirements as well.

**Line Spacing:** Double space using either six lines per inch (three lines of text) or eight lines per inch (four lines of text) except in those places where conventional usage calls for single spacing, e.g., abstracts, footnotes, block quotations, or tables. More than two spaces between paragraphs in one section of the thesis is unacceptable.

**Indentations:** The first line of every paragraph should be indented. Block quotations (more than four typed lines) must be indented ten spaces from the left margin. NOTE: This may contradict a department's style guide or manual; students must follow the SSU Guidelines for Master's Theses and Projects in this matter.

**Consistency:** In capitalization, treatment of numbers, spellings, etc., consistency is required. For the sake of uniformity, regardless of what style manual or form book used, students should adopt the American (as opposed to British) custom of placing all commas and periods inside quotation marks. "The comma and period go," say American manuals, "inside every time." "How about double quotes?" "The answer is, 'Inside both.'"

**Page Breaks:** In the body of the thesis, the concluding words of a paragraph less than half a line long should not be carried over to the next page. If it is perceived that a page will end with a few words of the paragraph left over (half a line or less), the page may be broken off a little short and a line and a half carried over. Or the page may be made a little longer in order to put the extra half line at the bottom. The prescribed margins are given as guidance; an occasional extension for a very short distance into top or bottom margins is permitted.

**Word Spacing and Division:** Hyphenation of words is permitted if done correctly and not excessively. The last word on a page should never be hyphenated. If the right margin is justified by use of a word processor or other device, proportional spacing must be used. More than two spaces between words is not allowed, nor is a regular alternation of one and two spaces. If your printer does not meet these guidelines, do not program it to justify the right margin. (It is, however, recommended that students not use a justified right margin because of the difficulties with word spacing, centering, alignment, etc.)

**Illustrative Material:** The student's departmental style manual should be consulted for proper format and placement of tables, figures, graphs, drawings, photographs, etc. These materials should be oriented so they are bound on either the left edge or along the top edge. Graphs and colored drawings must be in a format which can be reproduced with clarity (color xeroxes are acceptable). Material smaller than 8 1/2" x 11" must be attached to a standard page through a dry mounting process. Material larger than 8 1/2" x 11" may be reduced as long as it can still be read. If computer printouts are used, they must meet the general standards of graphic quality expected of other materials. Microfiche should be enclosed in an envelop and fastened to a standard page.

**Footnotes/Endnotes**

IEEE or ACM style should be used for format. Footnotes/endnotes are used to document sources, to amplify or qualify a statement, or to make acknowledgments.

**Appendix**

The title page bears only the centered word APPENDIX (or APPENDICES). Page numbers are continuous with the text. The Appendix contains material which is of interest to the reader but not an integral part of the thesis. If items protected by copyright are to be included, written permission from the author or publisher must be obtained and so noted.

**Bibliography**

Both theses and projects should include a bibliography or list of literature cited, consisting of references to original literature relevant to the area of inquiry. A bibliography must include, but is not limited to, all works cited in the text. Students should follow the IEEE or ACM format of the Bibliography, Works Cited or Reference List. Page numbers are continuous with the text.

Each entry in the bibliography is single spaced with a double space between entries. Note: This may contradict a department's style guide or manual; students must follow the SSU Guidelines for Master's Theses and Projects in this matter.

A SYSTEMATIC AND ECOLOGICAL STUDY

OF DELPHINIUM LUTEUM HELLER

by

Edward O. Guerrant, Jr.

A thesis (project) submitted to

Sonoma State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Computer and Engineering Science

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Dr. xxxxxxxxxxxxx, Chair

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Dr. xxxxxxxxxxxxx

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Dr. xxxxxxxxxxxxx

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Date

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A SYSTEMATIC AND ECOLOGICAL STUDY  
OF DELPHINIUM LUTEUM HELLER

Thesis [or Project] by  
Edward O. Guerrant, Jr.

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study:

Delphinium luteum, the yellow-flowered larkspur, is a narrlowly restricted endemic consisting of two small populations near Bodega Bay, Sonoma County. Early workers suggested that this taxon is most closely related to the widespread red-flowered D. nudicaule. Munz and others report that the blue-flowered D. decorum occasionally hybridizes in nature with D. nudicaule, giving rise to individuals with flowers ranging from purple to yellow.

The purpose of this study is to determine evolutionary position of D. luteum within the tuberiform series of the genus Delphinium.

Procedure:

To determine the evolutionary affinities of D. luteum, this study has used a combination of ecological, chemical (nectar constituents, floral and foliar pigments), and morphological information. In addition, chromosomes were counted, hybridation and pollinator exclosure experiments were conducted, and pollen vector activity was monitored.

Findings:

Delphinium luteum was found to be intermediate between D. nudicaule and D. decorum in almost every morphological character measured in both absolute values and in the ratios between characters. The three taxa have many nectar constituents, and floral and foliar pigments in common, with D. luteum occupying an intermediate condition. It also occupies a habitat intermediate in many ways between those of D. nudicaule and D. decorum.

Conclusions:

The two most likely hypotheses to account for the origin of D. luteum are that it was derived solely from D. nudicaule, or that it was derived from hybridization between D. decorum and D. nudicaule. The data do not support the first hypothesis, and offer strong circumstantial evidence that D. luteum had its origin in a series of hybridizations between D. nudicaule and D. decorum.

Chair:

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MSCES Program: Engineering Science Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preface or Acknowledgement page

(Optional)

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THE FIRST PAGE

The first page of the main body may have several styles such as:

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------Title of the Thesis/Project

1. Introduction

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OR

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- Title of the Thesis/Project

**Chapter 1**

Title of Chapter 1

OR

Any other standard format acceptable to your Advisor and the Department.