lay abstracts for theses and dissertations

**Type of Action:** Add a requirement for all theses and dissertations and theses to include a lay or public abstract in the preliminary pages of the document—a short abstract that explains the key goals and contributions of the scholarly work in terms that can be readily understood by the general public.

**Rationale for Proposed Change:** It is important that students be able to communicate effectively their research/scholarly contributions to a general audience. It is common for research ethics boards to require abstracts or research summaries that are accessible for the lay public. Funding agencies, as well, typically require grant and fellowship proposals and project reports to include a lay abstract; some academic journals require it as well. University scholars must be able to communicate effectively with the communities they serve and to demonstrate the relevance of their scholarship to the public good. This is an important component of knowledge transmission and community engagement. And, finally, crafting a lay abstract provides an educational and professional development opportunity for students by ensuring they can see their work not only through the refined lens of their particular field, but also as a part of the greater knowledge of the broader community.


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**Structure of Theses and Dissertations**

This document describes UBC's structural and formatting requirements for both master's theses and doctoral dissertations. For brevity, the term “thesis” is used here to include both types of document.

1. **Title page (required)**

2. **Abstract (required – maximum 350 words)**

   The abstract is a concise and accurate summary of the scholarly work described in the document. It states the problem, the methods of investigation, and the general conclusions, and should not contain tables, graphs, complex equations, or illustrations. There is a single **scholarly** abstract for the entire work, and it must not exceed 350 words in length.
3. Lay Abstract (required – maximum 150 words)

The lay or public abstract explains the key goals and contributions of the research/scholarly work in terms that can be understood by the general public.

4. Preface (required)

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5. Table of contents (required)

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