

# WRITING REQUIREMENT OPTIONS

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## GRADUATE PAPER STYLE AND FORMAT

The thesis or seminar paper project should follow one of three adopted manuals:

- *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, Katie L. Turabian
- *Modern Language Association Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*
- *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*

or any style approved by the major department.

## THESIS

The thesis may be an outgrowth of a research course or may be developed independently within the program area. The thesis will report the results of original and independent student research on a given problem or topic, by systematic and impartial methods and will demonstrate the student's ability to use techniques customarily employed in the particular field of investigation. Although a thesis for the master's degree may not always be expected to make a significant contribution to existing knowledge, it should be a scholarly document that is accurate, verifiable, objective, and impartial.

There is a website with useful links to guide the graduate student in grammar, style, evaluating web resources, and formats. The thesis advisor will provide guidance regarding the site. The site may be accessed through the university's Karrmann Library.

## ORAL EXAMINATIONS

Oral examinations are required of all students who choose the option of writing a thesis. In consultation with their thesis advisors, students shall arrange an examination date. The thesis committee shall conduct the oral examination, with the thesis advisor serving as chair.

## EVALUATION OF ORAL EXAMINATIONS

The oral examination will be a defense of the student's thesis. The thesis advisor will submit the committee's evaluation, in writing, to the distance learning office. The distance learning office shall inform students of their performances.

## CHECKLIST FOR COMPLETION OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

- In consultation with the program advisor, the student proposes a committee of three faculty members. The committee normally includes the thesis advisor, an additional major department member and one faculty member from another department. In some instances, a student may prefer a thesis advisor who is different from the program advisor assigned at the time of admissions
- Prepare a thesis proposal. Typically, the thesis proposal includes the following:
  - a. An approval page to be signed by the advisor and committee members
  - b. An introduction
  - c. A statement of the problem
  - d. Purpose of the study
  - e. Hypothesis, if applicable
  - f. Significance or implications of the study
  - g. Assumptions necessary to undertake the study
  - h. Delimitation of the study
  - i. Method of approach including data sources, data gathering methods, and likely analyses
  - j. General plan of organization
- If the proposed research involves human subjects, obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research before the research is initiated.
- The thesis advisor submits the thesis proposal with signed approval page (and approval memo from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research, if applicable) electronically to the Center for Distance Learning.
- Register for "Thesis Research."
- Prepare the thesis with regular meetings with the thesis advisor.
- Submit the completed thesis electronically to the thesis advisor; the thesis advisor will submit the thesis for review to the committee.
- Thesis advisor, in consultation with the student, schedules the thesis oral examination.
- Thesis advisor certifies that the oral examination has been successfully completed. The certification is provided to the Distance Learning office.
- Thesis advisor submits electronically to the School of Graduate Studies office the completed thesis (with signature).

## SEMINAR PAPER

Unlike a thesis, the seminar paper need not be a report of original and independent research. It must demonstrate, however, the student's ability to survey a field of knowledge and assemble, organize, evaluate, interpret, and present evidence in a logical and intelligent manner. Although the seminar paper may originate from work done in connection with one of the student's graduate courses and be based upon a term paper or course project, it must be more comprehensive and complete in coverage and treatment. There is a website with useful links to guide the graduate student in grammar, style, evaluating web resources, and formats. The seminar paper advisor will provide guidance regarding the site. The site may be accessed through the university's Karrmann Library.

### CHECKLIST FOR COMPLETION OF THE MASTER'S SEMINAR PAPER

- In consultation with the program advisor, the student proposes a seminar paper and a seminar paper advisor.
- Prepare a seminar paper proposal. Typically, the proposal includes the following:
  - a. An approval page to be signed by the advisor
  - b. An introduction
  - c. A statement of the problem
  - d. Purpose of the study
  - e. Hypothesis, if applicable
  - f. Significance or implications of the study
  - g. Method of approach, if applicable, including data sources, data gathering methods, and likely analyses
  - h. General plan of organization
- If the proposed research involves human subjects, obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research before the research is initiated.
- Advisor submits the seminar paper proposal with signed approval page (and approval memo from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research, if applicable) electronically to the Center for Distance Learning.
- Register for "Seminar Paper Research."
- Prepare the seminar paper with regular meetings with the seminar paper advisor.
- Submit the completed seminar paper electronically to the seminar paper advisor for review.
- Advisor submits electronically to the School of Graduate Studies the completed seminar paper (with signature).

## CAPSTONE

Some programs require the completion of a capstone experience as a final project for the degree. This capstone course allows students to demonstrate their knowledge through a project that is a culmination of the experience gained in the program. Students must receive approval from their program coordinator for the capstone project.