Projects, Theses, and Dissertations

Requirements

In terms of Projects, Theses, and Dissertations:

1. Students wishing to write a thesis must first petition the graduate faculty in writing. Once a student receives approval, he or she can proceed with the thesis process.

2. Before beginning a project, thesis, or dissertation, MA/MS students must have 3 committee members and PhD students must have 5 committee members who have agreed to serve on the student’s committee.

3. Students must schedule proposal meetings with their committees to review their written proposals for the project, thesis, (MA/MS) or dissertation (Ph.D). It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the proposal meeting. Materials for the proposal meeting should be given to faculty at least 2 weeks before the scheduled meeting.

4. If the student is planning on conducting research, he or she should contact the Institutional Review Board to become certified to conduct research on human subjects. This certification can be done on-line and is available through the University's Office of Research website: [http://research.missouri.edu/cirb/index.htm](http://research.missouri.edu/cirb/index.htm).

5. Once the student is IRB certified, he or she must receive written approval from IRB before beginning his or her project, thesis, or dissertation.

6. When the project, thesis, or dissertation is completed, the student needs to schedule a defense meeting. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the defense meeting. Materials for defense meetings should be given to faculty at least 2 weeks before the scheduled meeting.

7. Students writing theses and/or dissertations should review the Graduate School policies regarding theses and dissertations at [http://gradschool.missouri.edu/etd.htm](http://gradschool.missouri.edu/etd.htm).

8. Master's students who have successfully defended their projects or theses need to have their committee members sign the M-3 form. Doctoral students who have successfully defended their dissertations need to have their committee members sign the D-4 form.

Doctoral students should take a minimum of 12 dissertation research credit hours (HDFS 9090). Students who have finished their coursework, but have not yet finished their projects, theses, or dissertations need to be enrolled in University credit until their projects, theses, or dissertations are completed. The amount of credit varies depending on status.
Format

8090 Project (MA)

Students who plan to complete their master's degree with the HDFS 8090 research Project must assemble a committee consisting of 3 faculty members (their advisor and two other faculty). (Students should work with their advisor to select the other committee members).

The HDFS 8090 Project can take many forms (e.g., course development, training manual for a social services agency, instructional video, professional workshop or training, integrated review of literature, curriculum development, journal manuscript, and so forth). Before embarking on the Project, the student should provide the following items to the committee for approval:

- Project proposal (approximately 10 pages) that includes the following components:
  - Brief literature review
  - Methods section (description of how the project will be developed)
  - An outline of how the project will be analyzed or evaluated

The final written work the student will submit to the committee shall involve a final paper (approximately 25 pages) that shall include:

- A comprehensive literature review, similar to what is done for a thesis, although it might include more clinical work.
- A methods section, describing the steps taken in developing and implementing the project. For example, if the student was developing a course, we would want to know how she or he went about it, how she or he selected textbooks, how she or he made selections of topics and readings, and what theories drove her or his thinking.
- An evaluation or results, and discussion component (as applicable).

This final paper, along with a sample or copy of the Project (if applicable), will be submitted to the student’s committee for review 2 weeks prior to the oral defense of the Project. The student is responsible for coordinating a time and securing a location for the defense. The student’s defense of his or her Project may be conducted via video conferencing (e.g., Skype) when face-to-face meetings are not practical.

Once the student has successfully presented his or her Project to the committee, the M3 form will be filed.

Thesis (MS) and Dissertation (PhD)

Theses and dissertations will be in the form of a typical journal article manuscript with the exception that it must be divided into chapters (this is a Graduate School requirement: visit [http://gradschool.missouri.edu/etd.htm](http://gradschool.missouri.edu/etd.htm) for more information). APA format will be used throughout (see APA Publication Manual 5th Edition). Appendices should include
copies of instruments or questionnaires used, letters of informed consent used (when appropriate), and other materials deemed pertinent by the student and/or the student’s committee.

**Thesis Defense**
The student’s committee will meet with the student to quiz him or her over his or her research. After successfully defending the thesis, the student will make any needed adjustments in the format and corrections/clarifications based on input from the committee. For the thesis to be successfully defended, the student’s thesis committee must vote to pass the student on the defense with no more than one dissenting or abstaining vote. If failure is reported, the committee will provide written recommendations to the student and work with the student to establish a timeline for a second and final defense. Failure to successfully defend a thesis after a second attempt will terminate a student’s master’s degree program.

**Dissertation Defense**
The student’s committee will meet with the student to quiz him or her over his or her research. For the dissertation to be successfully defended, the student’s doctoral committee must vote to pass the student on the defense with no more than one dissenting or abstaining vote. If failure is reported, the committee will provide written recommendations to the student and work with the student to establish a timeline for a second and final defense. Failure to successfully defend a dissertation after the second attempt will terminate a student’s doctoral degree program.