

# MASTER'S THESIS

## **Thesis Committee**

The thesis committee is composed of at least three members. The thesis director will be selected by the student and, with guidance from the thesis director; the student will select the other two committee members. The thesis committee must then be approved by the chair of the major department and the appropriate academic dean.

## **Thesis Courses and Continuous Enrollment**

*You must have a chair and have permission from your thesis chair to enroll in thesis courses.*

Students must be enrolled in PSY 6398 during the semester in which they propose their thesis. Students must then enroll in PSY 6399 the following semester and take PSY 6399 each semester until their thesis is completed and approved by the library for binding. For summer sessions, students who are taking *no courses* do not need to enroll in PSY 6399 unless they want to work on or defend their thesis. Students who take any credit hours during summer and have already taken PSY 6399 must enroll in PSY 6399 in the summer.

## **Thesis Course Grades**

Thesis courses (PSY 6398 and 6399) are graded as Credit or No Credit or In Progress (for PSY 6399 only). Although grades in these courses are not used to calculate your GPA, the Graduate School considers a grade of No Credit to be equivalent to a grade of C for the purpose of eligibility for continuing in a graduate program. Two grades of No Credit, two grades of C, or one grade of No Credit and one grade of C will result in you being dismissed from the program. (see p. 84 for an explanation of when NC grades will be assigned).

## **Proposal**

The candidate, in consultation with the chair of the thesis committee, will select a subject of investigation and determine the availability of the required resources, facilities, materials, and equipment for the research and the writing of the thesis. The student will prepare a thesis proposal which will specify the thesis topic, detail the purpose of the proposed investigation, describe the proposed method(s) of investigation, indicate the relationship of study to relevant

research and findings of scholars in the student's area of concentration, and provide a commentary on source materials and/or facilities available for the successful completion of the research.

## **Prospectus**

A prospectus is an abstract of the proposed thesis which consists of a two-page summary of the literature review, rationale, methods, and proposed data analysis. After the committee has approved the proposal and signed the prospectus, it is submitted to the appropriate academic dean for final approval. Any major changes in the project must be approved in writing by the thesis committee and submitted for approval to the academic dean (see Appendix A for helpful information about writing a thesis).

## **Thesis Preparation**

To facilitate the preparation of the thesis, the candidate should procure a copy of the *Directions on Form, Preparation, and Submission of the Final Copies of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations*. These guidelines are available from the appropriate academic dean's office or the University's Office of Graduate Studies.

## **Thesis Procedure**

Please see Suggestions and Policies Regarding Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations at SHSU (in this Handbook) for detailed information about thesis and dissertation procedures. Your work on your thesis and dissertation is likely to include these particulars:

- When you are preparing a proposal or a finished thesis, you will ordinarily submit *several drafts* of your work to your Chair before submitting your material to the other members of your committee. No one, anywhere, has ever written an entirely suitable report in one take. You will receive several rounds of helpful criticism and prepare several different versions of your work before your Chair is completely satisfied.
- When your Chair is content, the other members inspect your work. They are independent critics, and several *more drafts* may be required to satisfy their concerns.
- Each round of review during this process of revise-and-resubmit will take at least one week. When you present written matter to a committee member, correspond with him or her to set a

target date for receiving feedback on your work. Expect such feedback *no sooner than one week* from the day the member acknowledges receipt of your materials; a member may sometimes need up to two weeks to give your work the attention it deserves. Do not put yourself into the position of having to depend on faster turnaround; the faculty will typically be unable to rearrange their many other commitments in order to provide you instant feedback.

- Permission to schedule a defense requires the consent of every member of your committee. Do not seek to schedule a proposal defense or a thesis defense until every member of your committee has had ample, sufficient opportunity to inspect your work *and* has informed you that he or she is sufficiently satisfied with your written work to consent to a defense.
- Plan on staging your defense one week after permission is granted. You will be expected to provide the Department one week's advance notice of the event.
- Except in exceptional cases in which approval has been granted by all the committee members, your proposal must be successfully defended before it is submitted to the SHSU Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Moreover, CPHS approval *must* be obtained *before* any data is collected from human participants. If your procedure requires a review by the full Committee, expect this approval process to take at least one month.
- After the examination is passed and the thesis is approved and signed by the committee, the typed original shall be submitted to the academic dean at least two weeks prior to the date on which the candidate expects to graduate. **[See the academic calendar each semester for the exact deadline of submission.]**
- Upon receipt of approval of the academic dean, routing continues to the Dean of Graduate Studies and then to the Newton Gresham Library. Students should be aware that Library process takes some time. Upon approval of the Director of the Newton Gresham Library, the original and the required number of acceptable copies of the thesis are submitted to the Newton Gresham Library by the candidate. (Reproduction of the thesis is the responsibility of the candidate.) The candidate will pay the Newton Gresham Library for the binding costs. The original copy of the thesis will remain in the library collection.
- The student takes the completed Thesis Route Sheet to the Registrar

### **Thesis Process Checklist (Forms and Approvals)**

1. Complete and send Appointment of Thesis Committee Form to the Dean's Office, prior to proposing your thesis.
2. Defend proposal. Send Proposal/Prospectus Defense Form to Dean's Office.
3. Submit IRB application (human subjects approval). You must have IRB approval before collection data.
4. Take draft to Library for approval of basic style and format (6 weeks prior to graduation).
5. Defend thesis. Send Thesis Defense Form to Dean's Office. This must occur before thesis will be accepted for signatures.
6. Secure signatures of thesis committee on approval page (on bonded paper) and Thesis Director's signature on the Route Sheet.
7. Take thesis, signed approval page (on bonded paper), and route sheet to Dean's Office. Director's signature should be on the Route Sheet and approval page.
8. Make recommended changes and return corrected copy to Dean's Office for signature.
9. Take final copy (on bonded paper), approval sheet (on bonded paper), extra abstract (on bonded paper) and Route Sheet to the Library for signature.
10. Make any changes requested and return final copy plus all extra copies, approval sheet, extra abstract, and Route Sheet to the Library for final signature.
11. Take Route Sheet to Graduate Studies Office.
12. Take signed Route Sheet to the Registrar's Office.

## Thesis Forms

There are a number of forms that students need to complete during the thesis process. These include forms for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Graduate School. Each of these forms requires a number of signatures. Students are encouraged to check with the Dean's Office and the Graduate School to make sure that they have the most up-to-date versions of these forms completed and signed.

Forms that need to be completed for the Dean's office include:

- Appointment of Thesis Committee (completed before thesis proposal)
- Thesis Prospectus (form and prospectus submitted after successful proposal)
- Thesis Defense (signed by committee after successful thesis defense)
- Thesis Route Sheet

The current version of the Thesis Route Sheet can be obtained from the Graduate Studies website: [http://www.shsu.edu/~grs\\_www/documents/ThesisRouteSheet\\_000.doc](http://www.shsu.edu/~grs_www/documents/ThesisRouteSheet_000.doc)

The Psychology Department webpage provides a link to copies of the CHSS forms (<http://www.shsu.edu/~clinpsy/Forms.html>), but students should check with CHSS to ensure that they are using the most up-to-date versions.