**Guidelines for Proposing Thesis Research**

**What is a Thesis?**

* The thesis is a valuable learning experience that requires significant effort and a large commitment of time.
* The thesis is an original research project that should be unique and add to the body of knowledge but does not require a complicated design or a nomination for the Nobel prize!
* The thesis, as the capstone experience of the Master’s degree is an opportunity to become an expert in a specific area within your degree focus. It is an opportunity to better learn how to conduct and evaluate research critically.
* The thesis is essentially a requirement if you plan to pursue a doctoral degree
* The thesis is an original written work organized into chapters:
  + Chapter 1 Introduction & statement of purpose…
  + Chapter 2 Review of related literature
  + Chapter 3 Method
  + Chapter 4 Results & Discussion
  + Chapter 5 Summary & Conclusion

Students interested in choosing the thesis option for the MS degree in Kinesiology & Sports Studies are encouraged to follow the steps presented below in proposing a research project, selecting a committee and receiving approval to proceed with this option.

**The desire to complete a thesis is not a guarantee that permission will be granted**. A combination of factors including (but not limited to) the quality of the proposed project, faculty and department chair/graduate coordinator perception of your ability to successfully complete the thesis in a timely manner and faculty availability will all be considered in the decision.

***As early as possible in the Fall semester, identify a topic area of interest.***

***Use the research literature to investigate what is known at present and where there appear to be gaps in the body of knowledge to help refine your research ideas.***

* + Base this upon your interests and career objectives or what you have observed, heard, wondered about, questioned, and/or been asked about. An appropriate topic is NOT something you are determined to ‘*PROVE’*

***Identify faculty members who have an interest or expertise in a related topic area and discuss your interests and ideas with them.***

* + If a specific faculty member expresses interest in working with you on your project as thesis advisor, they must contact the KSS Department Chair to determine that there is room in their academic load to accept this responsibility.
    - Faculty acceptance of an invitation to serve as a student’s thesis advisor isNOT decided on a “First come – First served” basis. Their response may be any of the following:
    - *YES* 🡪 *They are interested in working on this project and feel they can contribute significantly*
    - *MAYBE* 🡪 *Possibly, they might be willing to work with you but the topic area is not a best fit for their expertise. It would be best if they advised someone else but might consider serving on your committee?*
    - *NO* 🡪 *Your topic is outside of their area of interest/expertise so feel that they would have little to contribute –or- they are unable to accept any additional thesis commitments. Do NOT take a ‘NO’ personally!*

***With the guidance of your faculty mentor, create a concise, yet descriptive research proposal to submit for approval. The proposal should include the following components:***

* General introduction to the research problem that you will be addressing.
* Sufficient background to show how your proposed study fits into the context of the current body of knowledge.
* Clear statement of purpose and testable hypothesis
* A well thought out description of the basic methodology that you plan to employ to test your hypothesis. Provide enough information about the proposed subjects or sources of data, procedures and instruments to allow a determination concerning the feasibility of your project.
* The proposal should be accomplished in approximately 2 pages of double spaced text with typical margin settings and font.

***Submit your thesis research proposal to the KSS Department Chair no later than the first Friday of November or at any time before this date.***

* + If you are unable to identify a faculty member to serve as your thesis advisor, you may ask a faculty member to read a draft of your proposal and offer suggestions for improvement. You will then submit this to the department chair by the above deadline. Based upon the input of the graduate faculty, a decision will be made concerning the acceptance of your request to conduct thesis research. If your project is approved, an advisor will be assigned to you.

***Together with your advisor, identify at least 2 additional graduate faculty members to serve on your committee. Write & Submit to your committee members, a formal research proposal***

* + (at least preliminary chap’s 1 & 3 – some include an abbreviated chap 2)

***Meet with all committee members together to refine your proposal and receive approval of your research plan that will have as a minimum, the following;***

* **Projected timeline for:**
* Submission of an application to the IRB for permission to carry out your research
* Data collection
* Data analysis
* Complete the writing of the thesis.

Once you and your committee deem your thesis complete, you will need to complete the following;

* Thesis Defense
  + Present your findings to your committee, other faculty members, and graduate students and be prepared to discuss/defend your findings and conclusions.
  + With your committee, discuss necessary revision (editing, additions, subtractions & changes)
* Deposit Final Copies – you are finished!

**What is required to successfully complete a thesis?**

* TIME
  + You will need to devote a considerable amount of time toward the completion of your thesis.
* ABILITY TO WRITE WELL
  + While your thesis advisor and committee members will assist you with your writing, you should **have sound technical writing skills** to consider the thesis option.
* ACADEMIC INTEREST
  + To be successful in completing a thesis, you should have an interest in learning and a curiosity about topics in your field of study.
* PEOPLE SKILLS
  + In many cases you will be required to interact with people as your subjects by speaking to them, measuring them or through written communication. You will recruit subjects to participate or contact individuals or institutions to access data.
* COMMITMENT
  + This project will require a great commitment of Time, Energy, Patience and Perseverance
* HEALTHY STRESS MANAGEMENT
  + While working on a thesis can be fun and exciting, this will be tempered with periods of significant stress, frustration and fatigue.
    - Your thesis committee will work to encourage you, to assist you with writing and thinking and at times help you deal with the above.
    - You must keep in mind that this is still an *independent* project. You are the one who must do the work that is involved!

**Characteristics Shared by Successful Thesis Students**

* Curious
* Interested & Enthusiastic
* Motivated
* Self-starter
* Works well independently
* Writes well
* Takes constructive criticism well
* Good time manager
* Able to set goals and priorities
* Desires to get the most out of their graduate education