

The Graduate School

Eastern Illinois University
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Manual for the Master's and Specialist's Thesis

Introduction

Advancing scholarship through original research and creative activity are hallmarks of graduate education at Eastern Illinois University. Research and creative activity are reflected in requirements for graduate theses, research courses, independent study programs, and related research activities with graduate faculty members who mentor graduate candidates through the process of scholarly inquiry and expression in their academic disciplines. The master's and specialist's thesis are designed to promote and support graduate research.

A thesis is a required component of some master's and specialist's degrees or options. The thesis is a scholarly contribution to knowledge in the candidate's selected area of study. Thesis research is conducted by degree candidates in consultation with a thesis committee and under the direct supervision of the thesis director who must be a Regular Member of the Graduate Faculty. The committee oversees and guides the research to ensure that the completed scholarship meets the standards for original research of Eastern Illinois University and the academic discipline.

The purpose of the Manual for the Master's and Specialist's Thesis is to provide graduate candidates with clear and concise guidelines to facilitate student success and to assist students in achieving a high quality thesis. Candidates are advised that graduate programs may establish additional guidelines for completing a thesis and should consult the Coordinator of Graduate Study regarding these requirements. Program contact information is available in the *Graduate Catalog* and on the Graduate School web site at <http://www.eiu.edu/~graduate/>. A checklist of the steps required for completion of the thesis can be found on page 9 of this manual.

Policies on Thesis and Non-thesis Options

- **Thesis Options:** As noted previously, the thesis is a scholarly contribution to knowledge in the candidate's selected area of study. Pursuing a thesis option may require multiple terms to complete. The thesis may be a requirement in some programs. In other program, the thesis may be one of several options of study. Earning credit on the transcript for the thesis requires that the candidate complete all of the requirements for the thesis that are outlined in this manual. Once the approved thesis is deposited with Booth Library as part of the degree completion process a student may earn credit on the transcript for the thesis.
- **Non-thesis Options:** Non-thesis options are programs of study that require completion of requirements that do not include completion of a thesis. Non-thesis options may include comprehensive exams, internships, research projects specialized to the field of study, or other requirements as part of the degree program.
- **Changing from Thesis to Non-thesis Options:** Candidates and research mentors may decide after initiating a thesis project that the thesis option is no longer the best option for the candidate. With approval of the program's administration (Chair and/or Graduate Coordinator) candidates may request a change of status to a non-thesis option. When a change is approved, candidates will retain the NC designation on their transcripts for the thesis hours in which they were enrolled.

Policies on Approvals *Prior to Initiating Thesis Research*

Prior to initiating master's or specialist's thesis research, the following approvals are required.

- **Approval of the Thesis Committee.** http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/facstaff_faculty.php: This web site provides a current member list of graduate faculty. Thesis committees are typically composed of three members of the graduate faculty including the thesis director who serves as chair. The number of committee members may vary. Degree candidates enrolled in degree programs or options which require a thesis should identify a prospective member of the graduate faculty who will serve as the thesis director. The candidate, in consultation with the director, should identify other qualified members of the graduate faculty who will serve on the candidate's

thesis committee. Committees must have at minimum two full-time EIU employees who meet graduate faculty criteria as voting members. Candidates should identify the thesis topic, question, or area of study to verify that the members of the committee have expertise appropriate to the topic. Regular and Adjunct Members of the Graduate Faculty may serve as committee members. The thesis director and committee are approved by the program's administrative processes *prior to* initiating the thesis research.

- **Approval of the Proposal.** Following consultation and input from the thesis committee, the candidate should develop a research proposal that should include enough information for committee members and other interested members of the University community to carefully examine the merits and quality of the project to insure that it meets the department's standards for rigor. Typically the proposal will include, but not be limited to, an introduction of the problem or question, a literature review which provides a summary of the current status of the problem, a method of study, and a proposed time line for the project. The proposal is typically reviewed in a formal presentation. The proposal should be circulated to committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the presentation or the review deadline; this requirement may be waived by committee members. The proposal should be approved by the committee according to the program's administrative processes *prior to* initiating the thesis research.
- **Approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).** Institutional policies require that all research conducted by faculty, staff, and students that involves human or animal subjects must be approved by the appropriate University compliance committee. Research involving living human subjects or data collected from living human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Research involving the use of living animals must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). It is the joint responsibility of the faculty sponsor and the candidate conducting thesis research involving human or animal subjects to obtain compliance committee approval *prior to* initiating the research. A letter from the compliance committee documenting the approval should be included in the thesis appendix. Contact the Graduate Coordinator or the Compliance Coordinator in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs for information regarding protocol review forms and the protocol review process. Instructions, forms, and information are also available on the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at www.eiu.edu/grants/

Best Practices for Initiating the Thesis Research

Candidates may initiate the thesis research following approval of the thesis committee, approval of the project by the committee and approval of the required University compliance committees. Candidates are advised to follow these practice guidelines when initiating their thesis research in order to insure the highest standards of scholarship in thesis research.

- **Thesis Director.** Candidates should establish a weekly meeting with the thesis director to review progress, verify that the project continues to meet the academic standards of the program, and to address concerns or other issues that would impede progress.
- **Thesis Committee.** Candidates are expected to meet regularly with their thesis advisors to discuss the progress of the project. Candidates are encouraged to meet regularly with the committee so that the committee is informed of any changes, concerns, or interruptions in progress. Committee members should receive revised chapters to ensure the committee's continued support and commitment to the project and to incorporate review information from the committee into the project.
- **Accuracy in Execution.** Candidates have an obligation to execute the project as approved by the thesis and compliance committees. Substantial departures from the original project require that candidates review and determine with the advisor and committee members if new review and approval is required.
- **Citation of Literature.** Thesis authors should confirm with programs the preferred form of reference citation. For convenience, a list of preferred styles is included with this Manual. Consistently following the program's selected citation style and ensuring that each text citation is matched within the list of references is an expected standard of thesis scholarship.
- **Use of Materials Protected by Copyright.** Copyright is the legal right of an owner of created material to control copying and ownership of that material. Eastern Illinois University is

committed to using copyrighted material in ways that are consistent with the federal Copyright Act (Title 178 of the U.S. Code). http://castle.eiu.edu/auditing/048_4.php is the University web site that provides information on compliance with copyright law and fair use of copyrighted material. Additional information is available at <http://castle.eiu.edu/copyright/>. In addition, graduate candidates may contact Booth Library for staff assistance with copyright issues.

- **Permission to Reprint:** Use of artwork, graphs, or photographs from another author requires written permission from the original author and acknowledgment in the thesis.

Policies on Intellectual Property and Dissemination by Booth Library

Completion of the requirements for the degree in a thesis option also requires that you deposit the completed and approved thesis with Booth Library. For candidates in the thesis option, depositing the thesis with Booth Library is required to certify degree completion by the Graduate School Certification Officer. The Library holds responsibility for maintaining the scholarly works produced by the institution and to distribute those works to others. The Library will make the thesis available to other scholars via print and technology methods. The Thesis Manual serves as your notification prior to completing the thesis, that by choosing a thesis option in a graduate program you are also agreeing to deposit the thesis and to allow distribution of the thesis according to the distribution procedures established by the Library in order to earn the degree. These policies relate to copyright and dissemination of intellectual works.

- **Copyright Ownership:** Eastern Illinois University follows standard protocol of colleges and universities and provides that students own the copyright of their thesis.
- **Deposit of the Thesis:** In order to have the graduate degree certified to the transcript, the approved thesis must be deposited with Booth Library.
- **Standard Thesis Dissemination Policies:** The mission of Booth Library is to preserve and provide access to works of scholarship. In service to that mission, the library will provide access to all master's theses produced at Eastern available for personal study, research, and other not-for-profit educational purposes. At the time that a thesis is deposited with Booth Library, candidates give permission for the library to maintain and share the thesis with other academic institutions. This makes the scholarly work immediately available to other scholars.

Policies on Withholding the Graduate Thesis from Public Release

In some cases, the master's thesis might result in marketable intellectual property or may be part of a larger funded or unfunded project leading to publications including articles, books, or related scholarly work. In these cases, the candidate or the director may require that the work be temporarily withheld from open access until these processes are initiated. This must be done through the formal selecting an embargo period through Booth Library's online thesis submission process.

- **Deposit of the Thesis:** In order to have the graduate degree certified to the transcript, the approved thesis must be deposited with Booth Library.
- **Withholding the Graduate Thesis Criteria:** Candidates and their thesis directors provide evidence that the thesis will be withheld to protect a contractual obligation such as a grant or sponsored research, that the work is under consideration for publication, or that the work includes a potentially patentable invention by selecting the appropriate embargo period during the online thesis submission process. Request to withhold publication for other reasons than those noted above will not be considered.
- **Period of Withholding:** Candidates may request that the master's thesis be withheld for one year and may request an additional extension of one year. After two years, the master's thesis will be made accessible.
- **Withholding by Candidate or Director:** The graduate candidate, the thesis director, or both may request that a thesis be withheld.

Best Practices for Graduate Directors

King (2003) and DeNeef and Denecke (2008) note that best practices for faculty members who agree to direct the master's thesis includes an honest discussion with the graduate candidate prior to initiating the thesis research regarding the potential for withholding access of the completed thesis project. In this way, the candidate will understand prior to initiating the research the reasons for withholding standard publication of the thesis. Because many master's degree candidates pursue additional graduate degrees or pursue careers in industries that require evidence of research experience, delaying access may have

implications for the future aspirations of the candidate. King states: "If there are constraints on publication, the student should be made aware of them before choosing to participate in the research, and both the faculty member and the student must consider the impact of such delays on the student's career prospects." (King, 2003, p. 15.)

Thesis Registration Policies

Candidates register for two types of credit while completing a thesis. These include Thesis and Non-credit Thesis.

- **Thesis [Program Prefix (ART, BIO, CHM, etc.) 5950¹]**. A student in a thesis option may enroll for thesis credit. Thesis credit is earned by pursuing a scholarly contribution to knowledge in the candidate's selected area of study. Thesis may be repeated so that a maximum of six semester hours of thesis may be applied to a degree and a maximum of nine semester hours of credit in a combination of independent study, research, or thesis may be applied to a degree. Candidates typically register for thesis hours during the semesters or terms in which they pursue the thesis; however, candidates are advised to consult with programs regarding specific procedures for thesis registration.
- **Non-Credit Thesis [Program Prefix (ART, BIO, CHM, etc.) 5951¹]**. A student in a thesis option must remain continuously enrolled during the fall and spring terms until the approved thesis project is completed in order to retain access to library, technology, and related services required to support completion of the thesis. If a student has completed enrollment in the maximum number of hours of credit for thesis [5950], or independent study [5990] allowable, then registration in 0 credit hours of Non-credit Thesis [Program Prefix 5951] as an auditor is required. Enrollment in 5951 after meeting the maximum number of hours for thesis, research, and/or independent study allows a student access to services required to complete the thesis. Students who are registered only for 0 credit hours of 5951 are not eligible to apply for financial aid, will not be able to defer payment on student loans, cannot work on campus under student employment, cannot apply for emergency short term student loans, and will not qualify for student health insurance.

¹The Master of Science in Communication Disorders and Sciences uses CDS 5890 for Thesis and CDS 5891 for Non-Credit Thesis.

Earning Thesis Credit

- **DC or Deferred Credit:** Thesis research requiring work of a continuing nature over several terms before the final project is completed may receive the grade "DC" or "Deferred Credit." Deferred Credit designates that the student remained enrolled for credit throughout the term and that the project is continuing into another term.
- **CR or Earning Thesis Credit:** Upon completion of the final project, the instructor will file a Grade Correction Form with the Records Office no later than four days prior to the official close of the term published in the Class Schedule. Only after the thesis is complete may a candidate earn credit for the thesis hours. There is no option for earning "partial credit" for a thesis. The entire project must be completed in order for any of the thesis hours to earn the CR designation.
- **NC or Nor Credit:** If a Grade Correction Form is not submitted then any "DC" grades remaining on the transcript will be changed to "NC" at the time the degree is completed or within the six year time limit or approved time limit extension. This signifies that the thesis was not completed. Graduate students admitted on or after the Fall of 2003 may not be certified for degree completion if any grades of "DC" remain on the transcript.
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Resources to Support Graduate Research/Creative Activity

http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students_awards_competitivestudent.php: This web site provides application materials, guidelines, timelines, selection procedures, and award levels. The Graduate School sponsors a broad range of competitive awards programs to promote and support graduate research/creative activity. All candidates selected for any of the Graduate School research awards are required to present their proposal or completed projects during the Annual Graduate Student Exposition.

- **Graduate School Research/Creative Activity Awards Competition.** This program provides financial support for outstanding graduate research and creative activity projects that include opportunities for graduate candidates to partner with external businesses, industries, or educational agencies to foster improvements and development of new creative ideas.
- **Williams Travel Awards Competition.** Named in honor of a former Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Larry Williams, Williams Travel Awards provide travel support for graduate candidates who have papers or creative works accepted for presentation at regional, state, or national conferences.
- **Robert and Kathryn Augustine Distinguished Master's Thesis Award and EIU Award of Excellence Competition.** The Distinguished Master's Thesis Award Competition provides recognition of the highest achievement in master's degree research. The EIU Master's Thesis Award of Excellence provides recognition of the second highest achievement in master's degree research based on those candidates who are nominated for the Distinguished Master's Thesis Award Competition.
- **Graduate Exposition and Distinguished Graduate Students Awards Ceremony:** Co-hosted by the Graduate Student Advisory Council, the Council on Graduate Studies and the Graduate School, the Graduate Exposition and Distinguished Graduate Students Awards Ceremony provide a forum during the spring term to showcase the research creative activity of graduate students. The Awards Ceremony provides formal recognition of the achievements of graduate students who have distinguished themselves through scholarship, research, or leadership.

Sections Comprising the Master's or Specialist's Thesis

The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is the preferred thesis style of many programs. Some programs prefer other thesis styles including the Modern Language Association (MLA), Council of Biological Editors (CBE), or Turabian. Program thesis style preferences are listed at the back of this Manual. Candidates should verify with Coordinators of Graduate Study the preferred thesis style of the degree program. The sections outlined below are based on APA style. While brief definitions of each section are provided, candidates are advised to consult the APA Manual for detailed definitions of each manuscript section.

- **Title Page.** Thesis titles should be succinct and reflect the variables or issues represented by the research. The title page also includes the name of the author, the degree program, and year the thesis was completed.
- **Copyright Page.** All candidates may include a Copyright Page that provides the following information centered both vertically and horizontally on the page: Copyright [Year] by [Author's Name].
- **Abstract.** The abstract is a synopsis of the project that provides a comprehensive summary of the whole project and its findings. Well written abstracts are precise and clearly written with sufficient content to independently represent the most important findings.
- **Dedication Page.** A dedication page is optional but when included recognizes people who have supported or assisted the candidate during the project.
- **Acknowledgments.** An acknowledgments page recognizes individuals who have been instrumental in the completion of the project.
- **Table of Contents.** The Table of Contents is a navigational tool that allows readers to quickly find the pages of the major parts of the manuscript.
- **List of Figures or Tables.** The List of Figures and Tables is a second navigational tool that allows a reader to quickly locate a visual image. All figures and tables should be concise and well-focused to further enhance the quality of the manuscript.
- **Introduction.** The introduction section presents the question or problem to be investigated and links the problem to the research strategy.

- **Literature Review.** The literature review provides a summary of the current status of the problem being studied. There should be a logical relationship between prior investigations and the current research.
- **Methodology.** The methodology section provides details on how the investigation was conducted.
- **Results.** The results section offers a summary of the data collected and its interpretation.
- **Discussion.** The discussion offers an evaluation and explanation of the findings of the study and offers guidance for additional research.
- **Conclusions.** The concluding section of the project provides an opportunity to state the author's confirmation of the original question or failure to confirm the original problem.
- **References.** The References section includes an alphabetical listing of all of the literature citations that were used within the content chapters of the thesis.
- **Appendices.** The use of appendices is indicated when a detailed description or summary of an issue or entity is important to understand or evaluate the project.

Production and Formatting Guidelines for Final Deposit

- **Font.** A minimum font size of 10 points is required. Standard fonts such as Arial, Times New Roman, or Courier are recommended.
- **Margins.** Margins for typed text must be one-and-one-half inches on the left and one inch on the remaining sides. Copies of recorder tracings and spectra in technical fields may exceed the top, bottom, and right margins; however, a one-and-one-half inch left margin must be provided to insure sufficient space for binding of the thesis.
- **Spacing.** Standard double spacing is required for the entire document including the References section. Exceptions include materials appearing in tables, figures, or appendices.
- **Photographs.** Quality digital photographs are required.
- **Digital Image Output.** A digital image output must contain all of the information required for the project. A black-and-white or color output is acceptable
- **Tables and Figures.** Tables and figures must be within the specified page margins. Table headings are normally placed on the top of the table. Figure captions are typically placed at the bottom of the figure. Both tables and figures must be legible. If color is used in figures or charts, then print copies must also be color.

Completing the Thesis—Program Requirements

Programs have individualized requirements for completing the thesis and candidates should review these requirements with the thesis director.

- **Oral Defense.** The candidate may be required to formally present the completed project to the committee or to members of the program or university community during an oral thesis defense. Guidelines for preparation and completion of the oral defense should be reviewed with the director.
- **Examinations.** The candidate may be required to complete comprehensive examinations or other program requirements in addition to completion of the thesis project. Candidates should verify all final requirements with the director.
- **Completed Thesis.** The candidate typically fulfills the program's requirements for completion of the thesis project upon completion of the final draft with all required changes, the oral defense, and/or the examination. Departments may require signature approval on a specific form prior to submission of the Certificate of Comprehensive Knowledge

Completing the Thesis--Graduate School Requirements (refer to the Graduate School web site for information related to the online thesis submission process)

- Submission Guidelines for Thesis. The candidate will submit a digital copy of the completed thesis to Booth Library's Online Repository: *The Keep*. Submission guidelines can be found at <https://thekeep.eiu.edu/>.
- **Upload Fee.** The candidate must pay a one-time submission fee to cover the cost of processing and maintaining a digital copy of the thesis. Additional bound copies may be purchased from thesisondemand.com.
- **Thesis Deposit Certificate.** Booth Library will notify the Graduate School once the thesis submission is approved; the candidate will receive an email confirmation that the Graduate School received the submission.
- **Thesis Maintenance and Reproduction Approval or Thesis Withholding Request.** As part of the online submission process, the candidate agrees give the University a royalty-free license to maintain the thesis as part of its Booth Library collection. The candidate's electronic approval gives the University Library permission to lend the thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings. The candidate may choose to not permit distribution of the thesis at this time. If this option is selected, the candidate may select an embargo period, which permits the library to withhold access to the thesis for a designated period not to exceed two years. After the designated period, the Library has permission to make the thesis available to other scholars via print and technology methods.
- **Thesis Committee Notification.** The candidate will identify thesis committee members during the online submission process. An electronic notification will then be sent to the thesis director regarding the online submission. The thesis director in consultation with the other committee members will indicate approval of thesis completion

Program Thesis Style Preferences

Art	Master of Arts in Art and Option in Art Education and Community Arts	APA ¹
Biological Sciences	Master of Science in Biological Sciences	CBE ²
Business	Master of Business Administration	APA
Chemistry	Master of Science in Chemistry	APA
Communication Disorders	Master of Science in Communication Disorders & Sciences	APA
Communication Studies	Master of Arts in Communication Studies and Option in Community College Pedagogy	APA
Counseling and Higher Education	Master of Science in College Student Affairs Master of Science in Counseling	APA
Teaching, Learning and Foundations	Master of Science in Education in Curriculum and Instruction	APA
Economics	Master of Arts in Economics	APA
Educational Leadership	Master of Science in Education in Educational Leadership Specialist's in Educational Leadership	APA/Turabian APA/Turabian
English	Master of Arts in English	MLA ³
Human Services & Community Leadership	Master of Science in Human Services Program Admin Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics	APA APA
Geology/Geography	Master of Arts in Aging Studies Professional Science Master's in Geographic Information Sciences	APA APA
History	Master of Arts in History	Turabian ⁴
Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation	Master of Science in Sports Administration Master of Science in Exercise Physiology	APA APA
Mathematics	Master of Arts in Mathematics Option Elementary/Middle School Education Option Secondary Mathematics Education	APA APA APA
Music	Master of Arts in Music Option in Music Education	APA
Political Science	Master of Arts in Political Science	APA
Psychology	Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology Master of Science and Specialist's in School Psych	APA APA
Special Education	Master of Science in Education in Special Education	APA
Technology	Master of Science in Technology Master of Science in Sustainability Master of Science in Cybersecurity	APA APA APA

1APA: American Psychological Association

2CBE: Council of Biological Editors

3MLA: Modern Language Association

4Turabian: Chicago Style

References

- Carlin, D., and Denecke, D., (2008). *Best Practices in Graduate Education for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Washington D. C.: The Council of Graduate Schools.
- DeNeef, L., and Denecke, D. (2008). *Research Student and Supervisor*. Washington D. C.: The Council of Graduate Schools.
- Denecke, D., Kent, J., and Allum, J. (2012). *Research and Scholarly Integrity in Graduate Education: A Comprehensive Approach*. Washington D. C.: The Council of Graduate Schools.
- King, M. F. (2003). *On the Right Track: A Manual for Research Mentors*. Washington D.C.: Council of Graduate Schools

Thesis Checklist

- _____ Identification of the Thesis Director
 - _____ Approval of the Thesis Committee
 - _____ Approval of the Proposal
 - _____ Approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Human Subjects)
 - _____ Approval of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) (Animal Subjects)
 - _____ Registration for Credit or Non-credit Thesis
 - _____ Completion of the Required Thesis Sections
 - _____ Title Page
 - _____ Copyright Page
 - _____ Abstract
 - _____ Dedication
 - _____ Acknowledgments
 - _____ Table of Contents
 - _____ List of Figures or Tables
 - _____ Introduction
 - _____ Literature Review
 - _____ Results
 - _____ Discussion
 - _____ Conclusions
 - _____ References
 - _____ Appendix
 - _____ Oral Defense
 - _____ Completion of Examinations
- _____ Submission of IRB and IACUC (as appropriate) to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Approval

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