

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF NURSING

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE
GRADUATE PROGRAM

TITLE OF POLICY: THESIS DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLETION

ORIGINAL DATE: JANUARY 1981

LAST REVIEW/REVISION DATE: February 2016

POLICY: A thesis is optional for students enrolled in the Master's Program. (See Policy No. 223 - Credits taken for Master's Thesis) "The master's thesis must demonstrate the candidate's ability to make use of appropriate research procedures, to organize primary and secondary information into a meaningful whole, and to present the results in acceptable prose. The length of the thesis is not important so long as these ends are fulfilled." An acceptable thesis could include replication studies, spin offs of faculty research and secondary analyses of previously collected data.

PROCEDURE:

1. The student selects a faculty member in the student's area of specialization to guide his/her research and to chair the thesis examining committee.
2. In consultation with the committee chairperson, the student selects a minimum of two additional faculty to serve as committee members. The majority of the members must have faculty appointments in the School of Nursing. It is recommended that one member be appointed from outside the students' area of specialization.
3. The committee chairperson is responsible for approving the committee members.
4. As the student proceeds with the development of the thesis proposal, she/he has the privilege and responsibility to seek guidance from the committee members. The committee is responsible for:
 - a. advising the student throughout the research process,
 - b. insuring high quality research, and
 - c. insuring that the thesis meets acceptable standards. Committee members may request the revision of all or any portion of the thesis.
5. The committee chairperson informs the student when she/he is satisfied that the thesis proposal is ready for review by the committee.
6. The student is responsible for contacting the committee members for feasible dates for the initial (overview) meeting and then to confirm the date and place of the meeting after obtaining the approval of the committee chairperson.
7. The student will submit a copy of the thesis proposal to each member of the committee for review at least two weeks prior to the scheduled overview meeting.

8. At the agreed upon time, the committee will meet with the student to review the thesis proposal. Committee members will have the opportunity to obtain clarification of the proposal content and to recommend changes in all or any portion of the thesis proposal.
9. At the conclusion of the overview meeting, the committee chairperson is responsible for informing the student of the decisions and recommendations of the committee, completing the "Record of Overview for Thesis," and insuring that it is signed by the committee members. This form will be retained in the student's file.
10. If the thesis proposal is approved and does not require human subjects' clearance, the student can proceed with the research study. If the proposed thesis involves the use of human subjects, approval from the appropriate University Institutional Review Board and the agency where the study will be conducted must be obtained prior to initiating the study. The student must obtain the human use guidelines of the appropriate University IRB and the agency, and, after obtaining the approval of the committee chairperson, prepare and submit a proposal to the appropriate IRB and agency committee for clearance. Scientific review, facilitated by the Center for Nursing Research, is required before the protocol can be sent to the IRB.
11. The student is responsible for consulting with the committee members during the data collection and analysis phases of the research process. After completion of the research, the student will submit a draft of the thesis to the committee chairperson for review and approval.
12. When, in the opinion of the thesis committee chairperson, the thesis is ready for examination by the committee, the student is responsible for contacting the committee members for feasible dates for the thesis defense. After obtaining approval of the committee chairperson, the student will confirm the date and place of the thesis defense.
13. The student will submit a copy of the thesis to each committee member for review at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense meeting.
14. During the defense meeting, any member of the thesis committee can request that the student revise any portion of the thesis that does not meet with her/his approval.
15. If revisions are required, committee members may request to again review the thesis before signing the Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) Approval Form or may sign and defer the responsibility for the revisions to the committee chairperson. In either event, the chairperson of the thesis committee has the responsibility of insuring that the thesis is in final form and that all signatures have been obtained on the ETD Approval Form before the student submits the thesis to the Student Affairs and Alumni Relations Office.
16. Upon completion of the thesis, the student submits one electronic document via the ETD Online System.
17. Upon completion of the thesis, the student is responsible for submitting to the Student Services Office:
 - a. Two copies of the title page
 - b. Two copies of an abstract which is not to exceed 350 words. Both copies must be initialed in the upper right hand corner by the committee chairperson.
 - c. Receipt for the processing fee.
 - d. If material copyrighted by others is included in the thesis, the copyright permission letter(s) from the copyright owner(s) must be attached
 - e. If the thesis contains executable software owned by another party, the letter from the owner of the software license granting permission to use it must be attached.
18. The committee chairperson is responsible for completing and forwarding the following documents to Student Affairs and Alumni Relations Office:
 - a. ETD Approval Form

b. Change of Status Form

19. The form and style of the thesis must be in accord with the specifications outlined in the ETD Format Guidelines Manual. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) should be followed for any aspects not covered in the ETD Format Guidelines Manual.
20. Word or LaTeX templates are available for writing the thesis.
21. If the chairperson of the committee and the student agree, the thesis can be indexed in CINAHL by submitting the student's name, thesis title, degree the thesis is for, university name, and abstract to cinahl@cinahl.com.

1 Mauch, James E. & Berch, Jack W. (1989). Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation. Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, pg. 2.

Approved by Total Faculty Organization: 6/92, 01/10, 01/13

Approved by Graduate Faculty Organization: 1/81

Revised: 91-92, 94-95, 04-05

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