Thesis Option Requirements

Students who select the thesis option will earn the requisite credit hours in the degree program, including 6 credit hours of Thesis Research, and complete a thesis project that applies the theories and methods of a given approach to communication research.

The Graduate Faculty have approved the following guidelines for completing the thesis option:

At the completion of 9 credit hours, students should select a chair and declare their intent to take complete the thesis option by completing the “Preliminary Decision for IPFW Professional Communication M.A. Degree Requirement Options” form.

After selecting a chair, candidates should work with their chair to identify committee members and file a Plan of Study. The plan of study should be submitted by the close of the first 15-18 credit hours.

Faculty suggest the following benchmarks for moving through the writing process:

➢ Submit proposal to Chair for initial review by the 4th week of classes in the semester prior to graduation. If you plan to graduate in fall, this should be completed in the prior spring; if you plan to graduate in spring, this should be completed in the prior fall.
➢ Submit proposal to Committee for review by the 8th week of classes (Fall: by end of October; Spring: by the end of March) in the semester before graduation. Committee should provide feedback within two weeks of receiving the proposal. There is no defense requirement associated with the proposal process, but the candidate should, along with their chair, attempt to arrange a meeting if necessary among the committee members.
➢ Develop writing plan with advisor. Upon committee approval of their proposal, the candidate will submit a writing plan to the chair. The chair, in consultation with the committee, will amend or approve the plan. This can be as fluid or structured as the chair and candidate prefer. All committee members should be notified of the timeline of the project and any specialized work the candidate may need from each committee member.
➢ Submit full draft of thesis to Chair for review no later than the 6th week of classes (Fall: by early October; Spring: by early March).
➢ Submit full draft of thesis to Committee for review no fewer than 10 working days before your scheduled defense date in the semester of anticipated graduation. We suggest defenses be scheduled for no later than early November for fall graduation and early April for spring graduation.
➢ If students need to take time off of the program while they are in the writing phase, the same departmental standards will apply. If you are gone for more than three consecutive semesters (including summer) you will need to reapply to the program. If you stop out for five or more years, your plan of study and courses will expire.

Formatting
The thesis should be completed in the citation style most appropriate to committee expectations (in most cases this will be APA, but in others Chicago, AP, etc.). In addition to concerns about citation style, candidates will also need to format the document according to the standards established by the Purdue University Graduate School in *A Manual for the Preparation of Graduate Theses*. (when/if in conflict, candidate should defer to the Graduate School expectations for formatting). Candidates will work with Dr. LeBlanc, the Departmental Formatting Specialist to ensure the formatting is correct for final deposit with the Purdue Graduate School. Formatting must be approved before a defense can be scheduled.

Purdue’s Thesis and Dissertation Office has several templates for [thesis formatting](#) (follow the link and scroll to the bottom of the screen for both mac and pc ms word templates).

**Thesis Defense**
All members of the committee should have a completed, defensible draft of the thesis no fewer than 10 working days before the defense date. It is the responsibility of the candidate to check with committee members in the case they prefer the document further in advance.

All thesis defenses must be scheduled at least 4 weeks before the final submission deadline (specific date varies by semester). For example, the thesis submission deadline for Fall 2017 is December 8th. If the candidate planned on graduating in Fall 2017, they would need to schedule the thesis defense before or on November 10th. This gap ensures enough time for revisions (both major and minor) as well as appropriate formatting of the document and final deposit of the thesis.

*Defense Decisions:* The committee will evaluate both the candidate’s document and the oral defense of the research. At the close of the defense, the committee may deliver the following decisions: pass, pass with revisions, or fail.

- If the candidate passes they may initiate the final deposit process below.
- If the candidate passes with revisions, they must revise the thesis document to the satisfaction of the committee and then may begin the final deposit process below.
- If the candidate fails the defense, they may file a formal appeal of the decision if they feel they have been treated unfairly. If that appeal is not resolved in their favor, they will be dismissed from the program. To file an appeal refer to Section IX. Graduate Student Responsibilities and Rights of the [Policies and Procedures for Administering Graduate Student Programs](#). Failing the defense will result in dismissal from the program.

**Final Deposit**
Once the final revisions have been completed to the satisfaction of the committee, candidates will collect signatures on GS-Form-7 “Report of Master’s Examining Committee”. Deliver the completed form for the graduate program director.

All thesis projects must be run through iThenticate software to check for plagiarism and any issues identified by the software addressed prior to deposit of the final thesis or dissertation with the Graduate School. Satisfaction of this requirement will be certified by both the candidate and their advisor by certifying the following statement on the [Electronic Thesis Acceptance Form](#):

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“Further, I certify that to the best of my knowledge this document is the original work of the author and all content from other authors appearing in the thesis/dissertation has been properly quoted and attributed. The author’s manuscript was diagnostically reviewed by iThenticate on the date indicated as a determining factor in this assessment...”

Candidate then uploads thesis to ProQuest (Begin this process here; Select “Submit my dissertation/thesis”, select Purdue University Graduate School, then create a new student account. Follow instructions forms there). After you submit to ProQuest, the Thesis/Dissertation Formatting office will complete a final format review of the document—if approved the candidate will receive a deposit receipt. Once the deposit receipt is received candidate must pay the deposit fee ($90.00 USD).

Candidates will also upload their final thesis documents to OPUS. For graduate theses to be added to OPUS, students will need to sign a copyright agreement (a hard copy is available through Sarah Wagner’s office at the library: wagners@ipfw.edu) and attaching the final copy of the thesis to that form. Sarah Wagner, the librarian that oversees OPUS, is available for your questions at the email address above.
Professional Project Option Requirements

Students who select the project option will earn the requisite credit hours in the degree program, including 6 credit hours of Project Research, and complete a project that applies the theories and methods of a given approach to communication research.

The Graduate Faculty have approved the following guidelines for completing the project option:

At the completion of 9 credit hours, students should select a chair and declare their intent to take complete the project option by completing the “Preliminary Decision for IPFW Professional Communication M.A. Degree Requirement Options” form.

After selecting a chair, candidates should work with their chair to identify committee members and file a Plan of Study. The plan of study should be submitted by the close of the first 15-18 credit hours.

Faculty suggest the following benchmarks for moving through the project process:

➢ Submit proposal to Chair for initial review by the 4th week of classes in the semester prior to graduation. If you plan to graduate in fall, this should be completed in the prior spring; if you plan to graduate in spring, this should be completed in the prior fall.
➢ Submit proposal to Committee for review by the 8th week of classes (Fall: by end of October; Spring: by the end of March) in the semester before graduation. Committee should provide feedback within two weeks of receiving the proposal. There is no defense requirement associated with the proposal process, but the candidate should, along with their chair, attempt to arrange a meeting if necessary among the committee members.
➢ Develop project plan with advisor. Upon committee approval of their proposal, the candidate will submit a project plan to the chair. The chair, in consultation with the committee, will amend or approve the plan. This can be as fluid or structured as the chair and candidate prefer. All committee members should be notified of the timeline of the project and any specialized work the candidate may need from the each committee member.
➢ Submit full draft of project to Chair for review no later than the 6th week of classes (Fall: by early October; Spring: by early March).
➢ Submit full draft of project to Committee for review no fewer than 10 working days before your scheduled defense date in the semester of anticipated graduation. We suggest defenses be scheduled for no later than early November for fall graduation and early April for spring graduation.
➢ If students need to take time off of the program while they are in the writing phase, the same departmental standards will apply. If you are gone for more than three consecutive semesters (including summer) you will need to reapply to the program. If you stop out for five or more years, your plan of study and courses will expire.

Formatting
Any written portions of the project should be completed in the citation style most appropriate to committee expectations (in most cases this will be APA, but in others Chicago, AP, etc.).

**Project Defense**
All members of the committee should have a completed, defensible draft of the project no fewer than 10 working days before the defense date. It is the responsibility of the candidate to check with committee members in the case they prefer the document further in advance.

All project defenses must be scheduled at least 4 weeks before the final submission deadline (specific date varies by semester). For example, the submission deadline for Fall 2017 is December 8th. If the candidate planned on graduating in Fall 2017, they would need to schedule the defense before or on November 10th. This gap ensures enough time for revisions (both major and minor) as well as appropriate formatting of the document and final deposit of the thesis.

**Defense Decisions:** The committee will evaluate both the candidate’s document and the oral defense of the project. At the close of the defense, the committee may deliver one of the following decisions: pass, pass with revisions, or fail.

- If the candidate passes they may initiate the final deposit process below.
- If the candidate passes with revisions, they must revise the project document to the satisfaction of the committee and then may begin the final deposit process below.
- If the candidate fails the defense, they may file a formal appeal of the decision if they feel they have been treated unfairly. If that appeal is not resolved in their favor, they will be dismissed from the program. To file an appeal refer to Section IX. Graduate Student Responsibilities and Rights of the Policies and Procedures for Administering Graduate Student Programs. Failing the defense will result in dismissal from the program.

**Final Deposit**
Once the final revisions have been completed to the satisfaction of the committee, candidates will collect signatures on GS-Form-7 “Report of Master’s Examining Committee”. Deliver the completed form to the graduate program director.

Candidates will also upload written portions of their project documents to OPUS. For graduate theses and projects to be added to OPUS, students will need to sign a copyright agreement (a hard copy is available through Sarah Wagner’s office at the library: wagners@ipfw.edu) and attaching the final copy of the thesis to that form. Sarah Wagner, the librarian that oversees OPUS, is available for your questions at the email address above.

ADD ITHENTICATE!
Comprehensive Exam Option Requirements

Students who select the comprehensive exam option will earn the requisite credit hours in the degree program and, in the final semester of the program, will complete the program in a culminating exam. Reading lists and topics covered in the exam are negotiated with candidate’s committee.

The Graduate Faculty have approved the following guidelines for completing the comprehensive exams:

At the completion of 9 credit hours, we advise students to select a chair and declare their intent to take the comprehensive exams by completing the “Preliminary Decision for IPFW Professional Communication M.A. Degree Requirement Options” form.

Prior to the completion of 15-21 credit hours, students will constitute a three-person advisory committee. Each member of the committee will be designated to ask one of the three required questions: theory, method, or candidate’s specialization. be responsible for helping the student develop a reading list and composing a comprehensive question related to theory, methods, or the candidate’s area of specialization designated by the candidate.

The semester prior to the examining term, students must work with each committee member to create and finalize their reading lists. For example, if the candidate plans to graduate in the spring, they should begin discussions early in the fall semester. If a candidate plans to graduate in the fall, they should start these conversations the spring before. Graduate faculty are unavailable in the summer.

Faculty suggest the following benchmarks for moving through the exams process:

➢ Initiate conversation about reading lists with faculty by the 4th week of classes (Fall: mid September; Spring: early February) the semester before taking the exams.

➢ Finalize your reading lists with committee by the 8th week of classes (Fall: by end of October; Spring: by the end of March) the semester before taking the exams.

Written Exam Procedures

The written portion of the comprehensive exams will occur in the first full week of classes in October or March of the student’s graduating semester.

The committee chair will distribute exam questions to the candidate by 8am on the Monday of exams week. The candidate must return their responses to their committee chair by 8am the following Monday. Questions are to be distributed to students through the Comprehensive Exam Blackboard site as well as an email attachment. Answers should be both emailed to the Committee chair and uploaded to the blackboard site.
After submitting the written portion, the candidate should work with the chair to schedule an oral defense date. The defense should be scheduled at least 10 working days after the written answers are submitted.

**Oral Defense**
The candidate and members of the committee will meet for one hour at least 10 working days after the submission of the written answers. During the oral defense the candidate should be prepared to answer questions related to their written answers.

Students must pass all of the questions to pass the comprehensive exams.

At the close of the defense the committee may deliver the following decisions: pass, pass with revisions, fail.

- If the candidate passes, the committee will sign the GS-Form 7 to be submitted to the Head of the Graduate Program.
- If the candidate passes with revisions, the must revise their essays to the satisfaction of the committee. Once completed, the committee will sign the GS-Form 7 linked above.
- If the candidate fails the defense, the candidate may wait until the next term to take a new set of exams or file an official appeal of the decision if they feel they have been judged unfairly.

If the student elects to retake the exams, they must approach each committee member again to secure their continued service on the committee, establish a new reading list for new questions. If the student fails the second administering of the exams, they will be dismissed from the program.

To file an appeal of the committee decision refer to Section IX. Graduate Student Responsibilities and Rights of the [Policies and Procedures for Administering Graduate Student Programs](#).

No oral defenses will be scheduled after the 15th week of the semester.

*Approved by Graduate Faculty November 2017*