

Department of Child and Family Studies

Project Procedures

A Masters Thesis Project in the Department of Child and Family Studies develops a “product” that is relevant to applied settings. Such “products” include training material, educational curriculums, educational storybooks, interactive WebPages, etc., that would be viewed as relevant and helpful to practitioners in the field.

As with the thesis study, students are expected to develop a prospectus that includes: (1) relevant literature review and a discussion of how the project will contribute to the field; and (2) a timeline for the project.

Master’s Thesis Project – 7 Steps to Follow:

1) Students develop preliminary project thesis idea and select a faculty member who will serve as *Chair* of their committee and who will provide supervision to them as they formulate and implement their thesis project.

2) Students must also select another faculty who will serve as a committee member and thesis project reader. This person should be a full time faculty member in CFS or in another department in the university. Students are also to find two external evaluators {*who meet the approval of their Chair*} who critique their “products” from a practitioner’s point of view. Occasionally part-time lectures have volunteered to assist students with their thesis projects. This is acceptable as long as the part-time lecturer is available during the time period for thesis project completion.

Note: *Students are expected to keep regular contact with the faculty Chair throughout the period of thesis project. Holidays, summer vacations, professional travel, and sabbatical leaves may restrict the availability of the faculty Chair and/or reader. Students are expected to plan accordingly.*

3) Students will prepare a thesis project prospectus, and final Thesis project.

Thesis Project Prospectus – The prospectus is a summary statement that ranges from 2-3 single-spaced, 12-point Times font, typed pages. The prospectus should include: 1) a title and topic statement; 2) a brief literature review; 3) description of the procedures to develop the project “product”; and 4) timeline.

Topic Statement - What is the purpose of your thesis project? Refer to this by elaborating on the problem(s), question(s), or issue(s) that your thesis project will address.

- What is the purpose of the project?
- How does your thesis project fit into and contribute to the field of *Child Development and Family Studies*?

Literature review - Review relevant literature to provide a background or context of the subject you are examining. For the prospectus, this should include 5 or more relevant articles.

- Discuss how your thesis project is relevant and helpful to practitioners in the field.

Procedure - In broad terms, describe what steps you will take to develop your “product”.

- Will you include pilot testing?
- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your “product”?

Timeline - Provide a rough timeline of the writing phases (*including submissions of drafts*), project development, and evaluation of your product.

4) First Thesis Project Prospectus Meeting – Students will distribute their prospectus to their faculty chair and committee member, and arrange for a first thesis project prospectus meeting. The event will last for approximately one hour, during which time the student will verbally present their prospectus to your committee members, who will provide feedback, in terms of relevant literature, methodology / procedure, and overall thesis project development. At this time the student will be counseled if IRB approval will be needed.

5) Second Thesis Project Prospectus meeting – Students are to carry out and complete their thesis project under the supervision of their faculty chair. Students will expand each section of the prospectus resulting in a document that is judged by their Committee Chair to be adequate in length. Page length can vary from 30 to 60 pages. The feedback obtained in the second thesis prospectus meeting is to be used as the basis for expansion and formulation of the thesis. As portions of the thesis project are approved by the Chair, the student will distribute a copy to the other committee member(s). When the other committee member has approved those sections that were provided, the student is to arrange for a second thesis project prospectus meeting. Again, the event will last for approximately one hour, during which the student will verbally present the prospectus to their committee members, who will provide more extensive feedback, in terms of the introduction / literature review, methodology / procedure, and overall thesis project development.

6) Thesis Submission and Approval – Students will attend a Master’s Thesis advisement workshop offered by the library. This workshop addresses issues of thesis format, signature page preparation and timeline for filling the thesis with the library.

7) Formal Presentation – Students will arrange for a formal oral presentation in the Spring Quarter of the academic year in which they complete their thesis. It is expected that the student present their work for the first 15 minutes, primarily focusing on results and interpretations. Students will then address questions from committee members. The event will also be opened up to interested faculty, and masters and undergraduate students. Orals will generally not be held during Summer Session.

Evaluation Criteria

Note: All thesis projects are to include critiques by two external reviewers who are practitioners and would likely utilize the ‘product’ in their organizations. The student’s response to the external reviewers’ critiques is to be addressed in the discussion section. The actual critiques are to be included in the appendices of the thesis project. Are students allowed to pick their two practitioners or they need to get the approval from the chair?

1) The faculty Chair and committee member(s) grade the thesis project as *Passing* or *Not Passing*. {Faculty Chairs will monitor the in-progress thesis project such that unsatisfactory documents / “products” are not submitted for review to fellow readers.}

The committee member(s) is free to request revisions of written material and “products” as many times as necessary in order to generate an adequate MA thesis project. When revisions are required, students are to generate a brief reply (*no more than 2 pages*) outlining the changes made, specifically highlighting the page numbers and paragraph numbers.

2) In order to assure a high level of scholarly rigor, the following criteria will be used by the faculty Chair and reader in evaluating the thesis project: 1) the significance of the project; 2) the thoroughness, accuracy, and inclusiveness of the critical review of the literature on the topic; 3) the cogency of the project; 4) the appropriateness of the procedure utilized; 5) competence in evaluating the effectiveness of the project “product”; 6) relevancy of the product towards practitioners in a given field; and 7) acknowledgement of the limits of the project.

3) If the faculty Chair and committee member(s) vote that the thesis project is acceptable or can be made acceptable with minor changes approved by the Chair, the candidate may proceed with the preparation of the final thesis project. However, if the thesis is conditionally accepted but continues to require substantial changes, the revised project “product” must first be approved, prior to the preparation of the final version.

4) The basis for a non-acceptance and required revisions can range from excessive typographical errors, failure to adhere to APA style, and/or substantive problems in the literature review, procedure, “product” evaluation / relevancy to practitioners.
