Master’s Thesis Policies and Guidelines

Students completing a master’s thesis will produce a written work (thesis), and give an oral presentation (defense) on a topic chosen with consultation of a thesis supervisor.

**Time:** A thesis typically takes at least two or three semesters of solid work.

**Length:** A thesis is typically 50 to 100 pages.

**Requirements:** A student is required to have a GPA of 3.5 or better on the MS degree program, **EXCLUDING DIRECTED STUDY COURSES**, and have completed at least 3 5000-level courses from his/her MS degree program when a faculty member agrees to be the thesis supervisor. The GPA must also be 3.5 or more when submitting the GS-12 and registering in Math 5990 (Thesis).

**Content and Presentation:** The thesis should contain an original research result or consist of an expository discussion of a topic, organized in an original way. If the thesis contains an original research result, it should also discuss the broad context in which the result occurs (e.g., other related results or conjectures in the field, historical development, etc.). The thesis must contain some content of theoretical significance, e.g., some theorems and their proofs. The writing should be grammatically correct and structurally sound, i.e., the presentation of the results and their context should follow a logical order. The introduction to the thesis should be readable by a person who has some mathematical knowledge, but is not necessarily an expert in the subject.

**Research:** The thesis must draw from multiple sources in the mathematical literature.

**Oral Defense:** The oral defense of a thesis is a public event. An announcement of an upcoming thesis defense should be posted in the Math Department at least a week in advance. A student’s defense presentation will typically last one hour, followed by questions from the thesis committee and other members of the audience.

**Prospectus and Committee:** At least one to two semesters before the planned thesis defense, the student, in consultation with the proposed thesis supervisor, will write a 1-2 page thesis prospectus, including a tentative title and a research plan. The prospectus will then be used to recruit a thesis committee, normally consisting of the thesis supervisor and two other math department faculty members able to evaluate the thesis and oral defense. Faculty members from other departments can serve on a thesis committee that is interdisciplinary in nature.

**Abstract:** One semester before the defense, the student, in consultation with the thesis supervisor, should choose a title for the thesis and write an abstract. The abstract and a GS-12 form are submitted to the College Associate Dean for approval.
**Typesetting:** The thesis must follow university guidelines on typesetting and formatting. See:

www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/gsr/cal_la/students/stuCurrent/studentCurrentGuide.html

and


The department’s LaTeX thesis template is available at:

http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/math/thesis.html

**Registration:** A student is required to register in Math 5990 (Thesis) during the semester in which the student defends his/her thesis. He/she should also register in Math 5990 (Thesis) or Math 5980 (Directed Studies) during those semesters he/she is doing thesis related research and/or writing. The thesis supervisor will be the instructor for such courses. Forms to set up these courses are available in the department office and require the graduate advisor’s signature. Deadlines for registration and withdrawal are same as for any other university course. A student who has registered in Math 5990 (Thesis) may not take the comprehensive exams (or vice versa).

**University Policies:** Consult the University Catalog for other university policies on master’s theses.