GETTING STARTED ON THE THESIS

Advice for Graduate Students

Graduate Resource Center
www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis
IT ALL STARTS WITH A QUESTION.
Break It Down — The Thesis

- State Question
  
aaka
  
Identify Problem

- State Assumptions

- Determine Sources and Methods

- Analyze Data

- Conclude or Recommend
Break It Down — The Project Report

- Objectives
- Methodology
- Significance
- Conclusion or Recommendation
Let’s Get Started

Prepare It
• Ask questions

Research & Write It
• Examine questions

Submit It
• Finalize answers
PREPARE IT

Ask Questions
GS-12 Form

- Establishes Committee
- Due to your college by end of semester prior to submission

Check with your college about deadlines!
Establish Department Protocol

Check with your department regarding protocol and process.

- Forming the committee
- Submission of prospectus or proposal
- Format of performance or exhibition
- Defense or presentation of thesis/project

When in doubt, ask your department!
Forming the Committee

- Area of research expertise
- Methodology expertise
- Style of mentorship
- Availability

**ALSO:** Network with alums and peers in your field!
For spring semester completion, ideally apply to IRB early in fall.

Check to see if you need to apply to another institution’s IRB.

See Office of Research, Scholarships, and Creative Activity website: www.calstatela.edu/orad
Data Analysis

- Access to data — Public domain vs. Private source
- Make sure there’s enough data to answer your question!
  - Lit review
  - Prospectus
Funding Your Thesis

- Culminating Project Fund (Graduate Studies)
- Seek out grants and scholarships
  - National and International Scholarship and Fellowship Programs (NISFeP) — Moodle
- Graduate assistantships in labs or with faculty to access datasets
- Work study on research teams
Creating a Timeline

- One year is short! Be concise.
- Find out all deadlines (e.g., department, university, etc.).
- Work backwards from deadlines to create timeline.
- Schedule time for thesis, like a class.
- Seek out best practices. Don’t reinvent the wheel!
- Aim to have bulk of work done by beginning of final semester.
RESEARCH & WRITE IT

Examine Questions
Resources on Campus

- Writing consultants
- Library reference liaisons
- Library workshops
- Graduate Student Support Programs
Avoid Plagiarism

No co-authorship of thesis or project report (per Title 5).

- Anti-plagiarism software (e.g., TurnItIn)
- Library workshops
- Library reference liaisons
Style Manual

- Confirm style manual with committee chair or department.
- Purchase or download the manual!
- Use citation manager (e.g., RefWorks).
Software

- Confirm correct software with advisor.
- Tables and figures should be created in template software.
- Use only MS Word or LaTeX to format.
- Get tech help if you need it (e.g., lynda.calstatela.edu)

**TIP!** Download MS Office free, get Adobe Creative Suite cheap.
Feedback

- Seek feedback from committee chair *and* members.
- There’s danger in not listening to feedback!
- Keep all feedback and drafts.
Take care of yourself!

- Get sleep. Stay hydrated. Eat well.
- Use health services.
- Take breaks. Exercise.
- Plan ahead!
Plan for the Unexpected

- In case of emergency, contact your committee and GRC.
- Don’t submit thesis unless you are enrolled.
- Backup all the things!
- Complete thesis before classes expire at 7 years.
- Renew IRB before it expires after 1 year.
SUBMIT IT

Finalize Answers
Formatting and Submission

- Deadlines in fall, spring, and summer
- Workshops every term
- Electronic submission — online repository
- Your style manual is your new best friend!
- Thesis reviewers (graduate student employees)
- Hire editor if needed.
Contact Us

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