

New Jersey City University
College of Professional Studies
Master's Thesis Guidelines
November 2005

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MASTER'S THESIS GUIDELINES

Master's Thesis Guidelines

A. General Comments

In a Master's thesis, a student must demonstrate an ability to analyze, interpret and synthesize information and to apply the skills and knowledge acquired during graduate course work to a particular area of interest. Students may register for the thesis after completing a minimum of 24 credits (27 credits for business), a research methods course, and permission of the department.

The College of Professional Studies requires that all theses conform to the specifications given below. Departures from these guidelines will render a thesis unacceptable. A thesis for the Master's degree must show familiarity with previous work in the field and demonstrate an ability to carry out research and organize results. The thesis must be written in a scholarly manner consistent with a style guide acceptable to the student's department.

There are several ways to satisfy this requirement:

1. Collect and analyze original data on a research topic.
2. Critically review the literature related to a specific question and/or hypothesis that results in (1) a meta-analysis, (2) potential application, and (3) conclusions and recommendations for further study. This review must be comprehensive and include an analytic and applied component. For example, the review might result in recommendations for the development of a program, a change in policy or the establishment of new standards.
3. Analyze a current policy issue from two or more perspectives.

There are three required formal submissions to be made to your advisor. See Sections B, C, and D.

B. Thesis Proposal - Brief Idea Paper (See Specimen)

The thesis proposal should consist of (1) a cover page with the title of the project, the name of the student, and a place for the thesis advisor to sign to indicate approval of the proposal, (2) a one or two-page statement of the subject or research issue to be addressed, and (3) a topical outline of the thesis, and (4) proposed methodology, including intended instrument. If human subjects are to be used, approval by the Institutional Research Board (IRB) must be obtained by your advisor (See Section J).

The proposal should be submitted and approved by the student's thesis advisor as early as possible in the semester, as determined by your department. The thesis proposal will serve as the basis for the faculty member's evaluation of the feasibility of the project and of the decision to serve as advisor.

This is the first formal submission to your advisor.

C. Detailed Thesis Plan (See Specimen)

This is the formal plan for the project. In essence, the Plan constitutes the first sections of the thesis. The Thesis Plan should contain the following components.

1. Chapter 1 (See also Section D):
Introduction:
 - a. Statement of the problem.
 - b. Significance of the problem, and thesis justification.
2. Chapter 2 (See also Section D): Initial review of the literature.

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3. Chapter 3 (See also Section D): Specification of the thesis goals: The purpose of the thesis, the expected results of the project, and how the thesis will contribute to the literature.
4. Chapter 4 (See also Section D): Hypothesis/Research Question
5. Chapter 5 (See also Section D): Intended methodology – research design, procedures, and instruments.
6. Chapter 5: Limitations/Assumptions
7. Chapter 5: Ethical Issues
8. Expected completion date.

Students are reminded that a well-prepared Thesis Plan can constitute a significant portion of the work of the thesis itself, and the subsequent completion of the thesis is facilitated. Any changes to elements of the Plan must be approved by your advisor in advance.

This is the second formal submission to your advisor and should be submitted to your advisor within the timeframe as required by your department.

D. The Formal Thesis and its Components (See Specimen)

1. Title Page	The title page (see specimen) must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title of the thesis • Name of the author and department • Month and year the thesis was submitted • The following statement: "A thesis presented to the faculty of the College of Professional Studies of NJCU in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of..." • Universal copyright notice followed by the author's name and the year the thesis was submitted.
2. Signature Page	The signature page must include your thesis advisor, department chair, Dean of Professional Studies, and Dean of Graduate Studies (see specimen).
3. Abstract	The abstract must contain the title of the thesis, author name, month and year and provide a concise summary of the thesis of 150 words or less and is single-spaced (see specimen).
4. Acknowledgements	The candidate is required to declare, in an acknowledgements section, the extent to which assistance (paid or unpaid) has been given by members of staff, fellow students, technicians or others in the collection of materials and data, the analysis of data, and the preparation of the thesis (including editorial help). In addition, it is appropriate to recognize the supervision and advice given by thesis supervisors.
5. Detailed Table of Contents	Include chapters, figures, tables, and appendices (see specimen).
6. Introduction: Thesis Plan Item 1 (Chapter 1)	The introduction defines and describes the problem. It will contain the hypothesis, aims and significance of the study. A hypothesis should precisely define what the student intends to prove or discover in one or more hypotheses. Each statement of a hypothesis should be accompanied by an explanation. Organize the introduction as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Statement of the problem b. Significance of the problem c. Thesis justification
7. Review of the Literature:	Every thesis must contain a comprehensive literature review that reflects the student's understanding of the topic. It should contain references to peer reviewed journals, recent

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<p>Thesis Plan Item 2 (Chapter 2)</p>	<p>books, articles, and other sources. While references to Internet sources are acceptable, the student should focus on professional and governmental agency sources. Internet sources should not represent the majority of the total sources cited.</p> <p>A literature review by itself is NOT an acceptable thesis.</p> <p>The review of the literature should provide a discussion of the important studies of the thesis topic. The literature review is the means by which the reader learns of earlier studies and their relation to the topic of the thesis. The review should be sophisticated, focusing upon the present status of the literature, noting patterns of findings and strengths or gaps in research, while providing an insightful description of the present state of the particular field of study.</p>
<p>8. Specification of the Thesis Goals: Thesis Plan Item 3 (Chapter 3)</p>	<p>What is the purpose of the thesis? What are the expected results of the project? How will the thesis contribute to the existing literature?</p>
<p>9. Hypothesis/ Research Question: Thesis Plan Item 4 (Chapter 4)</p>	<p>The appropriate form of hypothesis or research question should be developed in cooperation with your advisor based on a methodology selected from Item 9 below.</p>
<p>10. Methodology and Research Design: Thesis Plan Item 5 (Chapter 5)</p>	<p>A description of the methods used in the study including the sample, instruments employed, and administration of the instrument.</p> <p>The student should have completed a graduate or upper-level undergraduate course that covers research methodology and design. The following is a listing of methods that may be considered:</p> <p>a. Experimental, quasi-experimental or theoretical projects:</p> <p>A study with randomized or otherwise highly controlled allocation of two or more identifiable intervention strategies to test a hypothesis, frequently one regarding causation or treatment effectiveness/ efficacy. The experiment most explicitly addresses the study question, results are clearly relevant, and can be communicated in a straightforward way. Feasibility of conducting an experiment is usually limited within the time frame and resources available to the master's student, given that the student must take significant initiative in study design and execution.</p> <p>b. Case and field studies:</p> <p>A detailed review of a unique or important program that captures the background, process, outcomes, successes, failures and lessons learned. The case study may include either qualitative or quantitative data or both. The case study provides an opportunity to explore a single program in depth, but places the onus on the investigator to provide clarity, organization and scholarship to the investigation. Case studies typically have limited generalizability.</p> <p>c. Content or Meta analyses:</p> <p>A Meta analysis integrates new material heretofore not reviewed or</p>

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	<p>available, or develops a new overview or integrating concept with respect to the meaning or implication of existing material.</p> <p>d. Historical studies:</p> <p>An historical study addresses a specific case study, research question or hypothesis through the collection, evaluation, analysis and synthesis of primary and secondary historical sources. Such a study is acceptable if the student can demonstrate competence in historical methods, and the subject of the study is within the student's field of academic study.</p> <p>e. Policy analysis:</p> <p>A policy analysis is a synthesis of existing and newly collected data, brought together in an organized, structured and thoughtful manner. Its purpose is to answer a policy question or present and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of policy options for decision makers. A policy analysis usually employs multiple sources and types of information (e.g., literature, documents, interviews, secondary data). The policy analysis also requires the investigator to identify relevant data, and provide clarity, organization and structure to the analysis.</p> <p>f. Analytic study:</p> <p>An analytic study is a case control or cohort study, although other approaches may fit into this category. Analytic studies utilize quantitative methods, and are often guided by hypotheses. Analytic studies conducted by master's students typically use existing data.</p> <p>g. Program evaluation:</p> <p>A program evaluation is structured study to assess whether a program, intervention or technique was effective at accomplishing its goals (effectiveness or efficacy for interventions). A program evaluation addresses explicit questions, and the methods and measurement may be complex.</p> <p>A literature review, group projects, or previously completed class projects are not acceptable for meeting the thesis requirement.</p> <p>The research design section should describe how the project is organized so as to yield valid and reliable findings. The student should cite a specific methodology or research technique to be employed. The student should explain why the particular method was chosen, and the specific sequence of steps that will be taken to implement it. The student should also consider any possible defects in the method or approach, and present reasonable solutions to each of the problems raised.</p>
<p>11. Limitations & Assumptions of the Study: Thesis Plan Item 6 (Chapter 5)</p>	<p>A limitation identifies potential weaknesses of the study. Think about your analysis, and your sample, where applicable. Think about threats to internal validity that may have been impossible to avoid or minimize.</p>
<p>12. Ethical Issues: Thesis Plan Item 7 (Chapter 5)</p>	<p>Include a discussion of any relevant ethical concerns involved in the research and how the issues were handled, such as confidentiality, privacy, disclosures, access or use of information, data verification, attribution, and compliance with law and standards.</p>

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<p>13. Results and Analysis (Chapter 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the results and methods used in the analysis of the data accompanied by tables and graphs, if appropriate. <p>An analysis of the results demonstrates how this study compares with previous studies, whether the hypothesis has been supported and the implications for further study. In addition, implications for current practice should be discussed.</p>
<p>14. Conclusions and potential for follow-up research (Chapter 7)</p>	<p>Include a brief summary of the problem, procedures and principal findings.</p>
<p>15. References</p>	<p>Documentation of sources cited in the thesis in a format consistent with the style used in the thesis.</p>
<p>16. Appendices</p>	<p>Common kinds of appendices include a mathematical proof, a large table, lists of words, a sample questionnaire or other survey instrument used in the research. (APA Publication Manual, 2001, 5th edition)</p> <p>The following materials are appropriate for inclusion in an appendix. Please consult with your advisor.</p> <p>Verbatim instructions to participants in your study, Original scales or questionnaires. If an instrument is copyrighted, permission in writing to reproduce the instrument from the copyright holder should be noted, Interview protocols, Sample of informed consent forms, Cover letters sent to appropriate stakeholders, Official letters of permission to conduct research.</p>
<p>17. Lists of Tables and Figures</p>	<p>Where applicable, list tables and figures, with page numbers.</p>

This is the third and final formal submission to your advisor for approval prior to obtaining the required signatures. It should be submitted X weeks before the end of the semester or as otherwise required by your department.

E. Steps in Writing the Thesis

1. Take an appropriate Techniques of Research course prior to registering for the Thesis. In this course you will write a research proposal, which can be used as the basis for your thesis.
2. Contact your department's Graduate Coordinator (GC) prior to registering for the thesis. Drop off or mail your thesis proposal prior to your meeting. The Graduate Coordinator will give you some suggestions and make a recommendation to the Chairperson of the Department regarding thesis advisement. If it is in accordance you're your department's policy, you may also request a thesis advisor and, if possible, your request will be honored.
3. The Chairperson, in consultation with the GC, will assign an advisor to work with you. You should contact the Department by the second week of the semester in which you register to find out the name of your advisor.
4. Give a copy of your thesis proposal to your advisor for review. If you are doing a survey, do not distribute your instrument before your thesis advisor approves your methodology. Set up an appointment to discuss your proposal. Be sure to discuss turnaround times with your advisor. When you submit a draft, it may take some time for your advisor to return it depending on the time of year and your advisor's schedule. It is your responsibility to keep in touch with your advisor on a regular basis.

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5. Expect to write several drafts of your thesis. You will be submitting drafts, rewriting them, resubmitting, rewriting etc.
 6. Masters' theses should be approximately 50 to 100 pages in length (or as determined by your department), using a 12-point Times Roman font, double spaced, excluding title page, abstracts, table of contents, preface, acknowledgments, reference list, and appendices.
 7. Final Version. The final version of the thesis must be free from typographical, grammatical and other errors when submitted to the Graduate Studies Office. While this is the responsibility of the student, supervisors should not sign off on theses that are not as error free as possible.
 8. Copies. Your thesis must be completed and approved, and four copies submitted for signature to your advisor in accordance with your departmental policy. The signed copies will be filed with the Graduate Studies Office, the Office of the Dean of Professional Studies, your Department, and the fourth copy will be returned to the student.
 9. Electronic Copy. Submit an electronic copy of your Word file in the format of a labeled CD or DVD-ROM with the final paper copies as specified in #8 above.
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F. The Role of the Thesis Advisor and Student

1. It is the role of the thesis advisor to guide the student during thesis preparation and to review drafts of the thesis. The thesis advisor must inform the student of his/her expectations and deadlines at their first meeting. It is the role of the student to keep in touch with the advisor on a regular basis.
 2. The student should expect to rewrite the thesis several times prior to final submission. While the advisor can help the student with revisions, if extensive editing work is needed, the student may be referred to other resources such as the Open Writing Lab for further assistance.
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G. Thesis Formatting

1. **Citations, References and Appendices.** These should conform to a scholarly style appropriate to the discipline and acceptable to the Department. Please check with your advisor for the appropriate writing style format before commencing any written work. Consistency of formatting for citations is required throughout the thesis. (Consult handbooks such as the APA, MLA or University of Chicago Style Manual (Turabian) for formatting styles. These are available at the Guarini Library).
2. **Script and Page Format.** Theses must be typed (using word processing software) on size 8.5" x 11" paper. Use a Times-Roman, 12-point font, with double spacing. Left-hand margins should have a width of 1.5 inches to facilitate binding. The right-hand margin need not be justified but it should be 1 inch. The top and bottom margins should also be 1 inch. Footers should be set at 0.5 inches from the bottom of the page.
3. **Paper and Print Quality.** The thesis must be printed on standard quality paper. The original must be of laser-print quality.
4. **Pagination.** Page numbers must be inserted on each page at the bottom right (in the footer), excluding title and table of contents pages. Pagination must be carefully checked for correct sequence and completeness. All errors must be corrected before final deposition.

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5. **Binding and Labeling.** Thesis copies must be bound in stiff-cover binders.
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H. Presentation at the Student Research Forum

This is an annual campus-wide research forum for students who have completed their thesis. Discuss the possibility of presenting your thesis at this forum with your advisor.

I. Academic Integrity

It is the policy of New Jersey City University that all written work adheres to the following guidelines:

1. Sources from which specific ideas, phrases or sentences are extracted should be noted by an appropriate reference.
2. All sources should be included in references.
3. Written assignments which utilize the work of other students must acknowledge the source.
4. Written work submitted for one course must not be used to fulfill the requirements of another course.
5. Term papers obtained from professional "term paper" companies constitute the most flagrant violation of academic integrity. Students who do not adhere to these guidelines may be guilty of acts of plagiarism. Simply defined, plagiarism means a) to steal and pass off ideas or words of another as one's own, b) to use material without crediting the source or c) to present as new and original an idea, phrase or statement derived from an existing source.

Please refer to the official University Academic Integrity Policy. This can be found at the NJCU web site at <http://www.njcu.edu/dept/senate/integritypolicy.htm>.

J. Protection of Human Subjects (Institutional Review Board)

Your advisor must obtain permission for you from the NJCU Institutional Research Board before any research involving human subjects is conducted. Please refer to the official University policy on protection of human subjects. This can be found at the NJCU web site at http://www.njcu.edu/dept/academicaffairs/fh_1101.html.

K. Completion and Grading Policy

Students should refer to their Department's policy regarding completion and grading.

The student must complete all requirements for the Master of Science degree within seven (7) years of initial registration.

NOTE: Significant portions of this draft were taken from NJCU Health Science and McGill University thesis guidelines. A significant part of the "Thesis Proposal" section was taken from Rensselaer University. Various sections were taken from Emory University "The Elements of a Proposal", and NJCU Criminal Justice thesis guidelines.

SPECIMEN PAGES FOLLOW.

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THESIS PROPOSAL (See Section B)

NOTE: Submit to your advisor within four weeks of the beginning of the semester, or as otherwise required by your department.

(Cover Page)

STUDENT NAME

TITLE OF PROPOSED THESIS

SEMESTER, YEAR

ADVISOR NAME

A thesis submitted to the College of Professional Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of the Master's of Science in Accounting.

Student Signature & Date _____

Advisor Signature & Date _____

(Next Page)

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH ISSUE

Thesis Title (Centered)

“Introduction”

(Write about 500 – 1,000 words)

(Next Page)

TOPICAL OUTLINE

Follow Thesis Guidelines, Section D

The thesis proposal should consist of (1) a cover page with the title of the project, the name of the student, and a place for the thesis advisor to sign to indicate approval of the proposal, (2) a one or two-page statement of the subject or research issue to be addressed, and (3) a topical outline of the thesis, and (4) proposed methodology, including intended instrument. If human subjects are to be used, approval by the Institutional Research Board (IRB) must be obtained by your advisor (See Section J).

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(SPECIMEN: TITLE PAGE)

TITLE OF THESIS

AUTHOR NAME and DEPARTMENT
MONTH, YEAR

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN XXXXXXXXXX

COPYRIGHT, AUTHOR NAME, YEAR

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(SPECIMEN: SIGNATURE PAGE)

SIGNATURE PAGE

MASTER'S THESIS

TITLE OF THESIS

BY (STUDENT NAME)

MONTH, YEAR

APPROVED:

THESIS ADVISOR _____ DATE _____

DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON _____ DATE _____

DEAN OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES _____ DATE _____

DEAN, GRADUATE STUDIES _____ DATE _____

DATE FILED _____

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(SPECIMEN: ABSTRACT PAGE)

ABSTRACT

TITLE OF THESIS

Author Name

Month, Year

The abstract must provide a concise summary of the thesis of 150 words or less and is single-spaced.

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(SPECIMEN: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS PAGE)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to take this opportunity to recognize the following individuals who assisted in this thesis:

The candidate is required to declare, in an acknowledgements section, the extent to which assistance has been given by members of staff, fellow students, technicians or others in the collection of materials and data, the analysis of data, and the preparation of the thesis (including editorial help). In addition, it is appropriate to recognize the supervision and advice given by thesis supervisors.

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