A HANDBOOK FOR THESIS:

HPERD DEPARTMENT

NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

Last Updated January 2012
Thesis Requirements

Students pursuing a Master of Science in Recreation (all emphasis areas) are required to complete a Thesis. This document outlines the Thesis criteria to be met and explains various related concepts.

Choosing a Topic:
Choice and approval of a thesis topic are matters to be determined by the student and the thesis committee. Generally speaking, thesis research should represent a significant effort to gather and analyze data. Typically thesis projects are in the form of correlation-based or comparison-based studies; however, surveys, single subject designs, and qualitative designs are allowed at the discretion of the thesis chair. Survey research in particular should only be conducted if it addresses a significant issue and is done in a manner that challenges the student to examine this issue. All topics must be approved by the thesis chair, and preferably the entire committee, before the student implements the project.

The Thesis Committee
Students must identify three faculty members to serve on their thesis committee and identify one member as the chair of the committee. It is encouraged that one member of this committee be from outside the HPERD department, it is required that one member be from outside of the “Recreation” faculty. The primary advisor for the student is the thesis Chair. The chair’s primary responsibilities include approving the student’s chosen topic, approving the student’s research proposal (chapters 1-3), approving the thesis prior to committee review, and signing off on a final draft to be submitted to the Graduate Dean.

The committee, as a whole, will meet on two occasions. The first will be to hear the student’s “Thesis Proposal”. This is a presentation of chapters 1-3. Each member of the committee should be provided with a copy (approved by the chair) of the proposal 2 weeks prior to the proposal meeting. The second meeting will be to hear the students “Thesis Defense”. Again, approved copies of the final thesis should be distributed to the committee 2 weeks prior to the thesis presentation.

Following the defense, students will make corrections and submit the completed document to the Graduate Office for the Dean’s approval. Deadlines for submission to the graduate office are announced at the beginning of each trimester. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure their proposal is completed in time. No exceptions will be made to the 2-week periods for review.

Enrollment
Students must enroll in 45-699 to receive academic credit for the thesis. It should be noted that 22-690: Research Paper in P.E. will not meet the academic requirements for the M.S. in Recreation.
Content and Format

All papers are written in a 5-chapter format: Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Discussion. The Introduction chapter is a brief description of the problem to be addressed and how the researcher proposes to address it (i.e. independent and dependent variables). The introduction is essentially an outline for the Literature Review. Material presented in the introduction should be supported by cited references. The Literature Review is an in-depth look at theory and research pertaining to the study variables. Usually, literature reviews are at least 10-15 pages in length, whereas the introduction is typically 3-6 pages in length. Literature review length will be determined by the nature of the student’s topic and the amount of critical information pertaining to this topic. The Methods chapter is a detailed description of who was studied, what instruments and materials were used in the study, what interventions, training, or educational programs were implemented, what research design and statistics were utilized, and any other details pertaining to the method of study. The general rule is that the Methods chapter should provide enough information to allow the reader to accurately reproduce/replicate the study. The Results chapter presents statistics associated with data analysis, and the Discussion chapter provides insight into the relevance of these findings. Recommended subsections of the Discussion chapter include: Findings, Limitations, and Implications/Recommendations (for both research and practice). Other required elements of the paper are a title page, a thesis approval page, an abstract, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, any included appendices, and the reference pages.

All Thesis papers must be written in APA format (most recent edition) and consistent with the format guidelines described in the Graduate School Thesis Manual (attached). The Graduate School Thesis Manual takes precedence over APA Guidelines when the two contradict. All factual assertions must be supported by a cited reference. All cited references (and only those cited in the body of the paper) are to be included in the reference page. Quotes must be accompanied by a page number. Plagiarism will not be tolerated; therefore, it is very important that students put all unquoted information from outside sources in their own words AND provide citations for such information (quoted or unquoted). Students MUST review the Graduate School Guidelines for Theses and Scholarly Papers to ensure compliance with Graduate School formatting requirements.

Students should calculate a time-line for completion based on the following table. Note that all five chapters of the thesis must be completed at least 1 month before the graduate office deadline for the student to graduate during the ongoing trimester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribute Proposal (chapters 1-3)</th>
<th>Distribute Thesis To Committee</th>
<th>Thesis Defense Presentation</th>
<th>Turn in to Graduate School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Weeks Prior to Proposal Meeting</td>
<td>2 weeks Prior to Thesis Defense</td>
<td>2 Weeks Prior to Grad Office Deadline</td>
<td>Grad Office Deadline TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Component Forms

A Research Component Form must be submitted to the Graduate Office after the supervising faculty member approves the final draft. This document must be signed by the thesis chair. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that this document is submitted to the Graduate Office prior to the deadline. Research Component Forms can be obtained from the supervising faculty member.

Topic Approval

The thesis chair is responsible for approving topics for the thesis (in accordance with department requirements). Minimum content requirements are described in the Graduate Catalog; however, departmental requirements are more stringent. Literature reviews (alone) and other Non-empirical projects are unacceptable. Typical theses involve, but are not limited to, experimental, causal-comparative, or correlation research designs.

Citation of Sources and Plagiarism

Students should be extremely thorough in citing sources. Sources must ALWAYS be cited whenever use is made of the material of others (even if the concept or idea is not a direct quote). References must be cited both in the body of the paper and in the reference page. See Appendix A for examples of reference page format.

IMPORTANT: ALL THESIS PROJECTS INVOLVING HUMANS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PRIOR TO DATA COLLECTION OR INTERVENTION OF ANY TYPE.
**Procedures for Successful Completion of Your Thesis**

1. Identify a faculty member to serve as your thesis chair. Work with this individual to identify an appropriate topic. Once the topic has been designated, recruit 2 additional faculty members (1 from outside HPERD) to serve on your thesis committee. **Complete the Thesis Committee Form and file with your thesis chair.**

2. Plan a schedule for the research and writing of the research paper with the thesis chair. This process should start before or (at the very latest) during enrollment in PE: 22-634. **Obtain a personal copy** of this Thesis Handbook from the supervising faculty member or the University Web Page.

3. Consult with faculty and refer to this handbook for guidelines concerning grammar, style, and format. American Psychological Association (APA) format guidelines are required **unless otherwise indicated in this document.**

4. Prepare a 3-chapter proposal to be presented to your committee. Be sure your chair approves the proposal before distributing to any other committee members, unless otherwise authorized. After receiving approval from your committee, and receiving IRB Approval, begin the data collection process. **All Thesis Projects must be submitted to IRB.**

5. Once the completed 5-chapter thesis is written, plan to allow the thesis chair at least two weeks to read each draft. Once approval is given, coordinate a thesis defense meeting. After all committee members have signed off on your thesis, submit to graduate school in accordance with the attached requirements. Students must meet graduate school deadlines. Once the Dean of the Graduate School approves your final draft, complete a Research Component Form and submit to the Graduate School.

6. Remember that most theses require at least two revisions; therefore, it is very important that students submit a completed first draft as early as possible. **Calculate your deadlines.**

   **Example:** if Grad office Deadline is November 25th
   - Final Draft To Chair – October 10th
   - Final Draft to Committee – November 1st
   - Thesis Defense – November 14th
   - Graduate Office Deadline – November 25th

   Note that Grad office **deadline is VERY early**
Thesis Format Checklist

___ Double space every line, including tables.

___ Title Page (see grad school guidelines for format)

   ___ the title page is not numbered.
   ___ The title is typed in all caps.
   ___ the title is in the same size font as all other headings (12 point, courier or NT roman).
   ___ Title is Inverted Pyramid (split, on 2 or more lines) style if longer than 4 1/2 inches.
   ___ Title is concise and comprehensive.
   ___ NO initials, abbreviations, numerals, symbols included.
   ___ Name of Author is full legal name and in upper and lower case (not all caps).
   ___ degree, department, university, and date are all included and correct.
   ___ Title page is in the same format as displayed in Appendix A.

___ Signature Page (see grad school guidelines for format)

___ Abstract

___ Table of Contents (see example below).

___ Page numbers (see grad school guidelines for format - no page number on title page).

___ 1.5 inch Left Margin, 1 inch top, bottom, and right margin.

___ Major headings for each chapter centered, each chapter starts on new page.

___ ALL headings and subheadings are in Bold.

___ Each chapter is divided by subheadings.

___ All 5 major headings, and 1st level subheadings are in table of contents.

___ Paper is written in 3rd person, except when chair indicates it is acceptable to do otherwise.

___ There is a purpose statement and research question at the end of the introduction.

___ Hypothesis is stated at the end of the literature review (in most cases/when appropriate).
All major variables are covered in the introduction and the literature review (IV’s, DV’s).

Methods chapter describes.

- Population studied.
- Sample studied.
- Instrumentation (how you collected data).
- Procedures
- Data analysis/procedures
  (and other subheadings relevant to your study).

Results

Results are presented, but no interpretation

Tables and figures are APA formatted.

Discussions – 3 sections.

Summary of findings – no heading necessary

Limitations

Implications/Recommendations

Appendix

If used, an appendix follows the text, but is before the references. Pages of the appendix are numbered consecutively with the rest of the text. Each appendix should be sequenced with upper-case letters of the alphabet and are in the same format of MAIN HEADINGS (APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B). The appendix must be consistent with the text in terms of margins, font, spacing, and headings.

Reference Page

Double space references.

All citations in the paper are included in the reference list.

All references are cited in the paper at least once.
# SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................................1

Depression.................................................................1
Therapy Techniques.....................................................2
Purpose Statement........................................................2

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE......................................................................................................4

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Cognitive Therapy ..........................................................5
Behavior Therapy .........................................................5
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Descriptive Statistics......................................................17
Hypothesis Tests..........................................................17

V. DISCUSSION ...........................................................................................................................18

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Appendices

A. SAMPLE PAGES .................................................................23

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Recommended Grading Criteria for Thesis
(45-699 Final Grade)

The following criteria is suggested for determining the overall grade for thesis; however, your thesis chair is responsible for assigning this grade. Work with you thesis chair to determine actual grading criteria. The proposal and the final thesis are graded separately (By the Committee Chair), each entailing 50% of the final grade. The following criteria are used for both the thesis proposal and the full 5 chapter thesis.

I. 1st Graded Draft of Thesis Proposal Presented to Chair Prior to Defense
- A ½ percent deduction can be enforced for every format, grammar, or spelling error.

  5% - consistency of discussion across all five chapters
       example - is your statistical analysis consistent with the stated hypothesis? Does your discussion chapter address all proposed research questions.

  10% - Content - are all required sections sufficiently addressed.
          these sections will vary based on the nature of your study.

  10% - Flow and organization of information, quality of recommendations and discussion.

II. Final Draft of Corrected Proposal After Defense Revisions
Remember, at this point, a full 1% can be deducted for every spelling, grammar, or format error.

  - Content and Consistency 12.5% (addresses recommended revisions)

  - Flow and Organization 12.5% (addresses recommended revisions)

III. 1st Graded Draft of complete thesis presented to chair prior to defense
- A ½ percent deduction can be enforced for every format, grammar, or spelling error. (errors in chapters 1, 2, & 3 will be a full point)

  5% - consistency of discussion across all five chapters
       example - is your statistical analysis consistent with the stated hypothesis? Does your discussion chapter address all proposed research questions.

  10% - Content - are all required sections sufficiently addressed.
          these sections will vary based on the nature of your study.

  10% - Flow and organization of information, quality of recommendations and discussion.

IV. Final Draft of Entire Thesis After Defense Revisions
A full 1% can be deducted for every spelling, grammar, or format error.
- Content and Consistency 12.5%
- Flow and Organization 12.5%