Thesis Requirements for a Master’s Degree

If a student is admitted to a master’s degree program with a thesis option for the degree, a committee to direct the written thesis will be established. The thesis must demonstrate the student’s capability for research and independent thought. Preparation of the thesis must be in conformity with the Graduate College Guide to Preparing and Submitting a Thesis or Dissertation.

Thesis Proposal

The student must submit an official Thesis Proposal Form and proposal to his or her thesis committee. Thesis proposals vary by department and discipline. Please see your department for proposal guidelines and requirements. After signing the form and obtaining committee members’ signatures, the graduate advisor’s signature and the department chair’s signature, the student must submit the Thesis Proposal Form with one copy of the proposal attached to the dean of The Graduate College for approval before proceeding with research on the thesis. If the thesis research involves human subjects, the student must obtain exemption or approval from the Texas State Institutional Review Board prior to submitting the proposal form to The Graduate College. The IRB approval letter should be included with the proposal form. If the thesis research involves vertebrate animals, the proposal form must include the Texas State IACUC approval code. It is recommended that the thesis proposal form be submitted to the dean of The Graduate College by the end of the student’s enrollment in 5399A. Failure to submit the thesis proposal in a timely fashion may result in delayed graduation.

Thesis Committee

The thesis committee must be composed of a minimum of three approved graduate faculty members.

Thesis Enrollment and Credit

The completion of a minimum of six hours of thesis enrollment is required. For a student’s initial thesis course enrollment, the student registers for thesis course number 5399A. After that, the student will enroll in thesis B courses in each subsequent semester until the thesis is defended with the department and approved by The Graduate College. Preliminary discussions regarding the selection of a topic and assignment to a research supervisor does not require enrollment for the thesis course.

Students must be enrolled in thesis credits if they are receiving supervision and/or are using university resources related to their thesis work. The number of thesis credit hours students enroll in must reflect the amount of work being done on the thesis that semester. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to ensure that students are making adequate progress toward their degree throughout the thesis process. Failure to register for the thesis course during a term in which supervision is received may result in postponement of graduation. After initial enrollment in 5399A, the student will continue to enroll in a thesis B course as long as it takes to complete the thesis. Thesis projects are by definition original and individualized projects. As such, depending on the topic, methodology, and other factors, some projects may take longer than others to complete. If the thesis requires work beyond the minimum number of thesis credits needed for the degree, the student may enroll in additional thesis credits at the committee chair’s discretion. In the rare case when a student has not previously enrolled in thesis and plans to work on and complete the thesis in one term, the student will enroll in both 5399A and 5399B.

The only grades assigned for thesis courses are PR (progress), CR (credit), W (withdraw), and F (failing). If acceptable progress is not being made in a thesis course, the instructor may issue a grade of F. If the student is making acceptable progress, a grade of PR is assigned until the thesis is completed. Thesis credit (“CR”) will be awarded only after the thesis has been both approved by The Graduate College and released to Alkek Library.

A student who has selected the thesis option must be registered for the thesis course during the term in which the degree will be conferred.

Thesis Deadlines and Approval Process

Thesis deadlines are posted on The Graduate College website. The completed thesis must be submitted to the chair of the thesis committee on or before the deadlines listed on The Graduate College website.

The following must be submitted to The Graduate College by the thesis deadline listed on The Graduate College website:

1. The Thesis Submission Approval Form bearing original (wet) and/or electronic signatures of the student and all committee members.
2. One (1) PDF of the thesis in final form, approved by all committee members, uploaded in the online Vireo submission system.

After the thesis is approved by The Graduate College, Alkek Library will harvest the document from the Vireo submission system for publishing in the Digital Collections database (according to the student’s embargo selection). NOTE: MFA Creative Writing theses will have a permanent embargo and will never be published to Digital Collections.

While original (wet) signatures are preferred, there may be situations as determined by the chair of the committee in which obtaining original signatures is inefficient or has the potential to delay the student’s progress. In those situations, the following methods of signing are acceptable:

- signing and faxing the form
- signing, scanning, and emailing the form
- notifying the department in an email from their university’s or institution’s email account that the committee chair can sign the form on their behalf
- electronically signing the form using the university’s licensed signature platform.

If this process results in more than one document with signatures, all documents need to be submitted to The Graduate College together.

All theses and dissertations are submitted to the Library through Viero, the electronic thesis and dissertation deposit platform. The Library harvests approved theses and dissertations from this system for the online repository. No additional action is required on the student’s part to provide or pay for the library copy. If students would like bound copies of their thesis or dissertation for their own use, students have the option of providing additional copies of their thesis/dissertation to have bound...
as personal copies or department copies for a fee. Please contact Alkek Library for information about that process.