

MA in Applied Anthropology Program Policy for the First Year Review

The Department of Anthropology seeks to foster support for student accomplishment and scholarly growth through formalized measures of review of students' progress in their first year in the MA in Applied Anthropology program. The intent of this policy is to describe what constitutes satisfactory or unsatisfactory scholastic progress in the first year and to clarify terms of corresponding sanctions such as probation and dismissal. It is the hope of the Graduate Faculty that all students will use the First Year Review process and feedback to successfully begin their research, understand university requirements for IRB and other approvals, identify resources and courses to aid in this endeavor, and gain momentum to complete degree requirements in a timely way.

In accordance with University Policy (*S16-16, Administrative Academic Probation and Disqualification S16-16, II.D*) requirements to advise all students of program-level criteria, the Department will publish the policy on our program website and in program documents for all incoming students. These policies shall be made available to students on the MA in Applied Anthropology website under a "First Year Review" tab, referred to in our website FAQ about progress through the program, discussed at program orientation, and distributed by email to first year students with the instructions for the First Year Review.

Requirements

Before advancing to candidacy in the MA program, all first-year graduate students' coursework progress and project/thesis proposals will be reviewed by a faculty panel (comprised of the department graduate committee). The First Year Review is administered once each year, in the Spring semester, and all students in the first year cohort are expected to complete the review in that semester. Students will have opportunity to propose a viable masters project or thesis in this review. If their proposal is unsatisfactory on their first attempt, they will be placed on probation and must propose a second project prior to the end of the subsequent academic semester in which they are enrolled. If students fail to complete this requirement within two successive semesters (Spring of their first year and their next active semester), they will be disqualified from the Master's program.

Procedures

The following procedures for completing the First Year Review are effective Spring 2018:

1. Students will finalize a full proposal for the thesis or project, according to the posted guidelines:
<http://www.sjsu.edu/anthropology/degrees/maa/programfaq/#proposal>. It is recommended that students work with faculty member(s) and seek advice of the Graduate Coordinator as they formulate a project idea and begin their proposal. Sample proposals will be made available to all students by email or by individual requests of the Coordinator.

2. A student's final proposal will be attached to a draft MOU coversheet which lists three proposed committee members—no signatures are required at this point, as the panel might result in some changes to this committee—and the documents will be submitted as a single pdf to the Graduate Committee (gradadvisor-anthropology@sjsu.edu) by the specified deadline in the Spring semester.
3. The faculty panel will review these proposals, confer on student progress, and discuss any concerns with the individual student. The committee will provide written evaluations, including ratings and feedback on content, to students 3-5 weeks after the submission deadline, typically mid-semester.
4. Within 2-4 weeks of notification to the student, the First Year Review panel will be held to allow private meetings between each student and the committee. At the panel review, students have opportunity to provide a written response to the faculty evaluation for their file, discuss matters of concern or questions, and finalize which faculty will serve on the their three-person thesis/project committee. Students are expected to speak directly to how they will improve their proposals in the areas identified by faculty reviewers as being in need of improvement.

Students may change the MOU later in consultation with their committee, but the goal is for every student to have a working MOU/proposal by the end of first year. **The First Year Review must be successfully completed before a student may submit the petition to advance to candidacy in the program, typically in their second Fall semester (one semester following the First Year Review).**

Evaluation

The faculty evaluation of each student's First Year Review will be reported in writing to the student as: "Commendable", "Good", "Satisfactory", "Needs Improvement", or "Unsatisfactory". This scale will be assigned for both the student's project or thesis proposal and their coursework progress through the ANTH core courses for the degree.

A proposal with ratings of "Commendable", "Good", or "Satisfactory" will contain: a format which adheres to the posted proposal guidelines and includes all required proposal sections; absence of grammatical errors or typos; clear logic of anthropological methods to investigate an issue with potential theoretical value or application value; and a viable project idea informed by a solid foundation of relevant literature, logical methods, and a clear plan for completion. For a thesis, this includes a project concept of theoretical interest and clear set of models, hypotheses, or research questions logically linked to methods and data collection activities. For a project report, this includes a partner organization, agency, or site and the detailed outcome (e.g. deliverables, proposed intervention or application, etc.) of the proposed work.

A rating of "Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" in the First Year Review will result from: incomplete or missing sections in the proposal body; lack of support for the premise or foundations of the project, including its theoretical or methodological basis or an underdeveloped literature review; ambiguous, problematic, or missing project intent(s) and goals; unspecified partner organizations, or proposals with many edits

needed for multiple grammatical errors or typos. For a thesis, this includes a lack of, or problematically stated, research questions or hypotheses. For a project report, this includes an unclear or unspecified partner organization or lack of clear deliverables.

Receiving a Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory will result in the following:

- Receiving the rating of “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” on the Proposal Ranking of the First Year Review will result in immediate departmental/program probationary status for the student. A student placed on probation is required to meet with the program Graduate Coordinator to address proposal expectations and initiate a revised proposal. The student should work the remainder of Spring semester to produce and submit a revised proposal for the review of their assigned graduate committee. A successful revised proposal will receive a rating of “Commendable”, “Good” or “Satisfactory,” and earn the committee’s signature on the MOU coversheet signifying the First Year Review is complete and probation will be lifted.
- For students unable to prepare a satisfactory proposal by the end of Spring semester, probation will be offered the next semester of active enrollment to provide one more semester for the student to develop a viable project or thesis proposal. Proposal drafts will reviewed by their assigned graduate committee throughout the semester, and committee signatures on the MOU coversheet will signify approval of the proposal by the end of the semester. If students complete this requirement during the second semester of effort (e.g. Fall semester) their probation will be lifted; students who fail to complete this requirement will be disqualified from the Applied Anthropology program by departmental memo to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Postponing the First Year Review

Students may petition for extensions of one year (to complete the review the following Spring) if they are taking a leave from all classes in the Spring term of their first year *and* they provide documentation of reasons of health or some other difficulty. One month in advance of the deadline for submission of First Year Review materials, a petition for an extension must be made in writing to the Graduate Coordinator, and be approved by the Graduate Committee. Students who do not have an approved extension but miss the deadline to submit their review materials due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. accident, illness, death in family, jury duty) must provide documentation for a late petition of extension.