

THESIS AND THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

THESIS AND THESIS PROPOSAL OUTLINE

These guidelines are a supplement, **not** a substitute, for the Graduate Studies thesis guidelines (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/thesis/index.htm>). All MS students should **consult with their thesis chair** for additional instructions.

Text in **green** indicates sections to be included **only in the thesis**

Text in **orange** indicate sections to be included **only in the thesis proposal**

Front Pages – *Carefully follow instructions, including pagination, from graduate studies guidelines*

- Title Page (title is no more than 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation)
- **Copyright Page (thesis only)**
- Thesis Committee Page
- Abstract (one double spaced page maximum)
- **Acknowledgments (thesis only)**
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures (if appropriate)
- List of Tables (if appropriate)

INTRODUCTION – Should include the following:

Motivation/Scope – (1-2 pages) Importance of the problem, big picture.

Background – (1-2 pages) Broad logic leading to specific choice of research questions.

Literature Review – (10 to 15 pages, with 30-45 references) organized from the general to specific, subheadings reflecting internal organization may include:

Theoretical basis

Related research

Similar research methods

Problem Statement- (<3 pages) – concise statement of central problem culminating in the:

Objectives - 1 to 3 sentence summary of overall goals of research

Hypotheses - 3 to 5 specific testable predictions (active or null/statistical hypotheses)

METHODS – (10-15 pages) generally including:

Study Site/Sample Frame

Study Design – organized by research objective(s) & hypotheses

Data Collection – organized by research objective(s) & hypotheses

Data Analysis – organized by research objective(s) & hypotheses

RESULTS (thesis only)– organized by research objective(s) & hypotheses

DISCUSSION (thesis only)

CONCLUSIONS (thesis only)

Applications/Recommendations (thesis only)

LITERATURE CITED

BUDGET (proposal only)

TIMELINE (proposal only)

CURRICULUM VITAE (proposal only)

APPENDICES (IF APPROPRIATE)

CITATIONS AND REFERENCING

The ‘reference and citation style’ required for your thesis, and thesis proposal, is determined by your **thesis advisor**. Your advisor may require that you adhere to a specific style guide, or they may ask you follow the citation guidelines for a research journal in your field. In either case citation style and format must be precise and consistent throughout the document. All references should be peer-reviewed academic journal research papers or other primary sources in your field. Internet-only sources should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

THESIS ROADMAP AND TIMELINE

For most of you, your Master's Thesis will represent the first large-scale independent research project that you have undertaken. To get the most out of this process it is important that you **consult with your thesis advisor** frequently, and schedule plenty of time for each step in the process outlined below.

I Design of Research Project (2-3 months)

- Meet with your thesis advisor to determine the focus of your research, and discuss potential thesis committee members.
- Review literature on your thesis topic and on the research methods used in your field of interest.
- Develop a research design in consultation with your complete (three member) thesis committee.
Note: It is a good idea to schedule a meeting with all of your committee members at this stage.

II Proposal Review and Revision (2-3 months)

- Submit your complete thesis proposal to your thesis advisor (*be certain to follow the format instruction discussed in the previous section*).

III Preparing on the Thesis

- Data collection/field work (6-12 months)
- Analyze data and interpret results
- Write and edit your thesis. *Note: It is strongly advised that students ask colleagues, or hire a professional editor, to review their manuscripts before submitting them to their thesis advisor.*

IV Submitting, Revising, and Defending the Thesis (3-6 months)

- Write first draft of thesis and submit to thesis advisor
- Revise thesis as per thesis advisor comments
- Submit thesis to full committee (following thesis advisor's approval of revision)
- Revise and revise again until full committee approval is reached
- Present your findings in your **thesis defense**
- Submit thesis to Graduate Studies office
- Revise if necessary
- Submit final draft to Graduate Studies office

Thesis Committee Etiquette

Always maintain a professional demeanor when consulting with your thesis advisor and thesis committee members. These are the people that can help you the most. To encourage a positive relationship, be respectful of their time and busy schedules.

Before submitting either your thesis or thesis proposal to any other thesis committee members **consult with your thesis advisor**. Always give your thesis advisor the first opportunity to review your work before you send it to anybody else connected to the thesis process.