

University of Oregon
School of Architecture and Allied Arts
Department of Architecture

Master of Science in Architecture (M.S.) Handbook

*Graduate Studies Committee
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University of Oregon
School of Architecture and Allied Arts
Department of Architecture

MASTER OF SCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM

GUIDELINES FOR THESIS AND TERMINAL PROJECT PROCEDURES

THESIS AND TERMINAL PROJECT, DEFINED

A thesis is an extended paper presenting independent and original research that makes a contribution to the current body of knowledge in the field. The author may conduct an original investigation or develop an original interpretation of existing research and/or literature. There is no mandatory organization for a thesis, but the Graduate School suggests five basic chapters or divisions: an introduction of the problem, a review of the literature in the field, an explanation of the materials and methods used in solving the problem, a discussion of results found from review of the methodology, and a conclusion. A full bibliography, or other relevant means of citing sources, is included.

In the Department of Architecture, research investigations in M.S. theses may include design work done as part of the research methodology in order to test hypotheses, illustrate conclusions, or show the result of such things as design standards or guidelines developed as part of the thesis. Such design work is welcomed as long as it plays a clear role in the logical development of the work. In some cases, the physical format of the final work will have to be more loose than the required 8-1/2 x 11: thesis format specified by the Graduate School. In such a case, the format will be developed in consultation with the student's committee. If the final work is not in thesis format, it is considered a terminal project rather than a thesis.

The Graduate School does not review a terminal project, nor will a terminal project be included in scholarly databases. The Graduate Studies Committee strongly recommends that final work be in the form of a thesis, formatted to include any design work, unless a less-restrictive format is absolutely necessary. In all cases, a rigorous scholarly content of the work must be maintained.

COMMITTEE SELECTION

The thesis committee shall be comprised of three members, with a minimum of two faculty members from the Department of Architecture, including the chair. The third member may be a faculty member from the Department of Architecture, a faculty member from outside the Department or University, or a professional in the field. Under

special circumstances, but not encouraged, an additional committee member may be justified.

The thesis committee shall be formed by the student in consultation with the advisor. The chair of the committee is selected first, and then in consultation with the chair the other members are selected. Although a potential committee chair is identified at the time of admission based on the evolving thesis work, the student is responsible for approaching prospective committee members; soliciting their interest, and securing their agreement to serve on the committee. The committee must be finalized by the time that the proposal is presented to the Graduate Studies Committee.

It is the responsibility of the student to work closely with members of the committee both individually and collectively during development of the proposal.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

A good part of the initial work, during the first term or two of the student's program, will be involved in developing the thesis proposal.

The thesis proposal should be a clear, tightly organized and logical set of statements about what the thesis is, why you are doing it, what the work will entail, and what you expect the results to be. Although theses change somewhat while work on them is being done, it is essential to be as clear and rigorous as possible in the proposal.

Although a master's thesis is not a Ph.D. dissertation, in which complete mastery of a focused area of investigation is expected, the master's thesis is still expected to contain original research that can stand up to rigorous review. One role of the proposal is to describe the originality and rigor of the proposed research.

It is common for students to begin the process of proposal formulation with projects that are too broad to carry out as a master's research project, within the normal period of 1-2 years. Much work in the development of the proposal is therefore concerned with narrowing the focus of the work while maintaining both its rigor and aspects that will sustain one's interest in doing the work. This development of focus is a major goal of discussions between the student and thesis advisor.

Most proposals will have the following parts.

Summary

A concise statement of approximately 300 words or fewer that summarizes the entire proposal.

Statement of problem or issue

A detailed description of the particular issue you are looking at. What is the particular research question you are asking? Why is it important? How and why is it defined in the way it is?

Background

Put the research question into a larger context. How does it fit into other work in the field? What work have other people done; what are the gaps in this work; and how will your research help fill those gaps or contribute new knowledge?

Hypothesis or focus

This part should be short and concise. Provide as clear a statement as you can of the particular hypothesis you are testing, or of the particular study you are undertaking.

Methodology

What method(s) will you use to undertake the work, and why? Be as clear as possible. Make clear distinctions between quantitative and qualitative techniques. Justify your methods, any combinations of methods, what their relationships are to each other. Specifically, how will your methods help to answer your research question(s)? If you are doing surveys or measurements, how will they be defined and limited? If the work involves literature searches or documentary evidence, what are your primary sources and why are they being used? In all cases, how will data be analyzed, and how will that analysis be used? How will you go from research question to methods to conclusions?

Plan of work, including schedule and work done so far

Provide a brief narrative and a timetable for the work. Include background research, fieldwork, library research, measurements, analysis and final write-up of the thesis. Include time for thesis adviser/committee review. Indicate what work has been so far. Be realistic about your time, and take into account other commitments such as GTF responsibilities and coursework.

Expected results

What do you expect to find? What will the form of the conclusion be? Will the work result in information/conclusions that are useful to practitioners? to academics? to students? to lay people?

Proposed thesis table of contents

This may change over the course of the research and writing, but there is often no better way to give focus to a research/writing project than by writing a preliminary table of contents.

Bibliography

A list of sources that you have used so far in putting together the proposal, plus a preliminary list of sources that are still to be used. The bibliography should be in standard Chicago Manual of Style format, and should cite any web-based sources in a retrievable form.

Personal benefits and benefits to the field

How do you expect the thesis to benefit you in your future career as a teacher, researcher and/or practitioner? And how do you see it being used by others?

Limitations of the work/future research

What questions will remain to be asked that come out of your thesis, and how will your thesis set the stage for future research?

MEETING TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL

Once the proposal has been completed, and all members of the student's thesis committee have approved it, the proposal is formally presented to a joint meeting involving the Graduate Studies Committee or designated representative(s) of the Committee, and the student's thesis committee, for formal approval.

This process begins with the completion and submission of the form in Appendix II of this document. It is the student's responsibility to schedule a time and place for this meeting, in consultation with the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee and the members of the student's proposed committee.

This meeting is scheduled after the proposal has been reviewed and approved by members of the student's proposed committee. At least one week before the meeting, the student shall distribute copies of the proposal to each member of the Graduate Studies Committee, the student's own thesis committee, and to other MS graduate students.

It is important that all proposed members of the student's committee and a majority of the faculty members of the Graduate Studies Committee be in attendance at this important meeting. In exceptional circumstances the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee may authorize the meeting to proceed in spite of the absence of one of the proposed members of the student's committee or of the Graduate Studies Committee, but the absent person's approval of the proposal must be indicated in advance.

The Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee or designated representative will chair this meeting. At the meeting the student will make a brief visual presentation (ten to fifteen minutes in length) to emphasize major aspects of the proposal. After a brief question and answer session, the two committees will discuss the proposal with the student and then talk without the presence of the student to determine the outcome. The student will then be invited back into the room and informed of the outcome. Four outcomes of this meeting are possible:

1. **APPROVAL:** If no faculty member of the Graduate Studies Committee objects, and all proposed members of the student's committee agree that the proposal is satisfactory as submitted, it is approved.

2. **APPROVED AS MODIFIED:** If the student making the proposal, and all members of each committee present agree on modifications to the proposal, the proposal is approved as modified. These modifications will be written by the Chair of either committee on the file copy of the **APPROVAL OF THESIS PROPOSAL** form, or on a record copy of the proposal which is attached to this form.

3. **APPROVED WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STUDENT'S COMMITTEE:** If the student making the proposal, the faculty members of the Graduate Studies Committee, and all proposed members of the student's committee, agree that modifications to the proposal are not fully resolved at the conclusion of the meeting but can be satisfactorily resolved by the student's committee at a subsequent meeting, the proposal is approved, subject to general instructions to the student's committee about this resolution. These instructions will be written by the Chair of either committee on the file copy of the **APPROVAL OF THESIS PROPOSAL** form, or on a record copy of the proposal which is attached to this form.

4. **RESUBMIT:** If none of the three potential outcomes listed above are satisfied, the proposal must be resubmitted and the meeting repeated.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair of the student's committee and the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee (or representative) will indicate their support for the approved proposal, plus any approved modifications or instructions, by signing the file copy of the **APPROVAL OF THESIS PROPOSAL** form. This file copy will be kept by the Department's Administrative Assistant for Curriculum, who will distribute copies of the form and the approved modifications or instructions to members of the student's committee and to the student.

Once the thesis proposal is approved, the student can register for thesis credits and proceed with carrying out the work of the thesis.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PROPOSAL AFTER APPROVAL

The student's committee has sole responsibility for directing the thesis or terminal project after the proposal has been approved. The Chair of the student's committee should consult with the Graduate Studies Committee if major adjustments are made to the approved proposal.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Each member of the committee is expected to play a significant role in guiding the thesis or terminal project. Each thesis or terminal project is different and the Chair and student together will determine the level and nature of participation by other committee members. The Chair of the Committee is expected, in addition, to provide administrative oversight to the project, monitoring in general the participation of other committee members, attempting to resolve conflicts, and insuring that regulations are followed.

Committee members are expected to make themselves personally available to the student and to view and comment upon draft materials. They should promptly return comments to the student and respond to requests for clarification or assistance in a timely fashion.

REVIEWS AND DEVELOPMENT

It is the responsibility of the student to maintain contact with each member of the thesis/terminal project committee during the development of the thesis or terminal project, to keep all members informed of procedures, and to make all arrangements for committee meetings. Periodic meetings of the full committee may be held to discuss major issues in the progress of the thesis or terminal project and to resolve differences between committee members. An in-progress presentation of the work to other M.S. graduate students and others is recommended.

In the event of procedural conflicts that cannot be resolved by the student and the student's committee, any of the parties may bring the conflict to the Graduate Studies Committee for mediation. The Department Head will have the final authority in any unresolved conflicts.

University regulations prohibit faculty from participating in the review of thesis or terminal project work if the student is on leave or not currently enrolled.

THESIS COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

An abstract of the thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School in week 5 of the term in which the student is finishing. Once submitted, it cannot be changed. This is important to keep in mind, as M.S. theses are normally conducted on a tight schedule.

Theses must be typed to conform to Graduate School specifications as stated in the University of Oregon Style and Policy Manual for Theses and Dissertations (available at the Graduate School, the University of Oregon Bookstore, or electronically from the Graduate School website at the following URL: <http://gradschool.uoregon.edu/thesis-dissertation>)

The Graduate School will reject a completed thesis which is not in compliance with this format. Completed copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School by their deadline (typically Tuesday of the week before final exam week). There is no required length for a thesis. Grad School deadlines are noted on the UO Academic Calendar at the following URL: <http://registrar.uoregon.edu/calendars/>

Students can schedule an appointment with the Thesis Editor at the Graduate School before submission to discuss any formatting issues. Once submitted, the Graduate School will edit the document and send the student revisions that must be made before the thesis is approved and the student is cleared for graduation.

FINAL PRESENTATION AND SUBMITTAL TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

The student is responsible for all arrangements for a final public presentation within the School of Architecture and Allied Arts of the thesis or terminal project. The time of this presentation should be set in consultation with the Committee Chair so that as many students and faculty as possible will have the opportunity to attend. The student will notify all departmental faculty and graduate students of this presentation and will post announcements in Lawrence Hall at least one week before the presentation. Although the Graduate Studies Committee has no formal role in this presentation, members are strongly encouraged to attend. This presentation should be scheduled to allow two prior weeks for the student's committee to review a **complete** final draft of the thesis or terminal project, including references and illustrations. Minor changes in the work may be expected after the presentation. The format for this presentation will consist of a presentation by the student of the work (usually fifteen to twenty minutes in length), followed by questions and general discussion. It is highly recommended that the student rehearse this presentation in advance. The student's committee will attend the presentation and, after its completion, meet without the presence of the student to determine whether the work has been satisfactorily completed. The student will be informed of the decision after this brief meeting.

Satisfactory completion of a thesis or terminal project shall be certified by all members of the student's committee. If a member of the committee is unavailable due to travel or other reason, that member will certify satisfactory completion by mail, email or telephone conversation with the Chair of the student's committee. The Chair of the student's committee shall notify the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee if, for any reason, these conditions cannot be met.

Final acceptance of the work as satisfying the requirements for the degree should be stated by the Chair of the student's committee in a letter or email to the Department Head or a representative of the Department Head with a copy to the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

A thesis must be submitted for acceptance by the Graduate School, following their regulations as to timetable and format.

Two completed, signed copies of a terminal project must be deposited with the Architecture Department's Administrative Assistant for Curriculum.

Customarily, the student provides each person serving on his/her committee a copy of the completed thesis or terminal project.

COURSE CREDITS AND "INCOMPLETE" GRADES

The student must complete a minimum of nine hours of thesis or terminal project credits. There is a maximum of 21 thesis hours credit accrual. (Note: MS students also must complete a minimum of 36 graduate-level non-thesis credits.) Thesis credits will

remain officially "incomplete" until the thesis is accepted by the Graduate School. Terminal project credits will remain officially "incomplete" until the student has deposited two completed copies of the terminal project with the Architecture Department's Administrative Assistant for Curriculum.

Appendix I.

USEFUL REFERENCES FOR DEVELOPING THE PROPOSAL, CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH AND WRITING THE THESIS

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Groat, Linda and David Wang. *Architectural Research Methods*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

University of Chicago Press Staff, eds., *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Appendix II.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND ALLIED ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

REQUEST FOR THESIS PROPOSAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

(Please return to the Department Office)

This form is to be completed when the thesis proposal is ready to be submitted for approval. It should be signed by all members of the student's thesis committee and submitted to the Architecture Department's Administrative Assistant for Curriculum in the Department Office who will forward it to the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

DATE: _____

1. NAME OF STUDENT ENGAGED IN THESIS WORK: _____

2. PROPOSED TITLE OF THESIS: _____

3. EXPECTED TERM OF COMPLETION: _____

4. THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS (CHAIR AND AT LEAST ONE OTHER MEMBER
MUST BE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE):

CHAIR: (Name/Signature/Date)

MEMBER NO. 2 (Name/Signature/Date)

MEMBER NO. 3 (Name/Signature/Date)

MEMBER NO. 4 (Name/Signature/Date)

•The Request for Thesis Proposal Review must be submitted one week prior for review by each of the GSC members.

•Attach a copy of the Thesis Proposal to this form.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND ALLIED ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

REQUEST FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THESIS PROPOSAL

This form is to be completed after the proposal presentation, and returned to the Administrative Assistant for Curriculum in the Department Office.

DATE: _____

1. NAME OF STUDENT ENGAGED IN THESIS WORK: _____

2. PROPOSED TITLE OF THESIS: _____

3. EXPECTED TERM OF COMPLETION: _____

ACTION (check one)

- Approved as submitted
- Approved with revisions to be handled by the student and her/his thesis committee, without the need for additional review by the Graduate Studies Committee
- Tentative approval with need for revisions and additional review by the Graduate Studies Committee
- Rejection of proposal (Attach notes to this document if necessary)

SIGNATURE OF THE CHAIR OR DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

DATE

Appendix III.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH PARTY

The Student

The student selects a Thesis Committee Chair from the faculty of the Department of Architecture based upon common research interests. After the Chair has been selected, the student selects the Thesis Committee Members in consultation with the Chair. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule meetings related to the progress of the research including the meeting to approve the thesis or terminal project proposal and the final thesis presentation. The student is responsible for submitting final copies of the thesis to the Graduate School and to the Administrative Assistant for Curriculum.

Thesis Committee Chair

The Thesis Committee Chair assists the student in the selection of Thesis Committee Members. Additionally, the Chair directs the student to relevant literature based on his or her research interests. The Chair provides feedback at the student's request in a timely fashion. It is the Chair's responsibility to provide administrative oversight to the project, monitoring in general the participation of other committee members, attempting to resolve conflicts, and insuring that regulations are followed. The Chair also determines when the student is prepared to present the thesis proposal by signing the Request for Thesis Proposal Review form. The Chair indicates that the student has completed the thesis by signing the cover page of the thesis document and writing a letter to the Department Head, copying the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee, indicating that the thesis requirements have been satisfied.

Thesis Committee Members

Thesis Committee Members provides feedback to the student in a timely fashion. Committee Members also determine when the student is prepared to present the thesis proposal by signing the Request for Thesis Proposal Review form. Thesis Committee members attend the thesis proposal review, the final thesis presentation, and make a reasonable effort to attend periodic Thesis Committee meetings scheduled by the student.

Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee

The Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee chairs the thesis proposal review meeting. The Chair also indicates that the thesis proposal is approved by signing the Request for Thesis Proposal Review form. It is also the responsibility of the Chair to mediate disputes among members of the Thesis Committee.

Graduate Studies Committee Members

Graduate Studies Committee Members review the request for thesis proposal review and the attached thesis proposal. They attend the thesis proposal review meeting. It is recommended, but not required, that members attend the final thesis presentation.

Department Head

Has the final authority in any unresolved conflicts among members of the Thesis Committee.

Administrative Assistant for Curriculum

The Administrative Assistant for Curriculum forwards the Request for Thesis Proposal Review to the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee. He or she also maintains the file copy, signed by all members of the Thesis Committee and the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee, of the Request for Thesis Proposal Review form and distributes copies of this form to members of the Thesis Committee and to the student.