



Graduate Studies

Thesis Policy and Guidelines

October 2003

Nicholls State University

Thesis Requirements

A thesis *may* be written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Psychological Counseling, Master of Business Administration, and Specialist in School Psychology at Nicholls State University. In each of these programs, the thesis is not a requirement, but an option.

A thesis is *required* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in Marine and Environmental Biology. In addition, specific graduate programs may have thesis requirements beyond those outlined here.

The student receives course credit for research upon successful completion of the thesis. Before enrolling in a thesis research course, the student must have a topic which has been formally approved by the Thesis Committee.

Committee

The Thesis Committee is made up of three members of the Nicholls Graduate Faculty who have agreed to direct the research. At least two members, including the Chair, must be from the program in which the degree is housed. Members are selected according to program policy. The Dean will formally appoint the Committee. The Chair is responsible for coordinating the activities of the Committee and generally directing the research.

Process

Once the Committee has been selected, the student should present a formal research proposal (prospectus) for review. This proposal may require several revisions. All materials given to the Committee members must be written and in a format agreed to by the Committee. The student must ensure that the members have adequate time to review and critique the materials in light of the fact that they must maintain their regular teaching, research, and service activities. Members are to return comments to the student on a timely basis.

Upon formal approval of the topic by the Committee, an *Approval of a Thesis Proposal* (attached), with appropriate signatures, along with a copy of the approved proposal, is submitted by the student to the Director of Graduate Studies. Once the *Approval* form has been received by the Director, the student may enroll in the thesis research course and complete the project.

When the Committee agrees that a draft of the thesis is ready for final examination, the Chair should schedule a meeting for the defense. Present will be the Thesis Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies or his/her representative. The meeting will be open, and questions and comments will be invited from all in attendance. The Committee Chair will be responsible

for opening and closing the examination and will act as moderator as necessary. The meeting will conclude with an executive session of the Committee.

After the successful final examination (defense), and after any necessary corrections have been made and approved by the Committee, the student is responsible for submitting a *Final Examination Report for a Thesis* (attached) to evidence the approval of the thesis in its final form. The *Report* is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies with appropriate signatures.

Deadlines

The University Calendar contains two thesis deadlines which must be met. The “Final date to submit a thesis for approval” is the deadline for submission to the Thesis Committee for its final approval. A second deadline, the “Final date for filing an approved thesis,” is the last date for submission of the *Final Examination Report for a Thesis* to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Committee should make every effort in its approval process to enable the student to meet this second and final deadline.

Thesis Form and Style

The thesis will generally be divided into three parts. First will be the preliminary material, then the body and end materials. Examples of several of the items are included here. The preliminary material will include pages in the following order:

1. Title page
2. Copyright page (if the work is to be copyrighted)
3. Approval page (All members of the Thesis Committee must appear by name and rank/title with original signatures in black ink)
4. Acknowledgments (optional)
5. Abstract (limited to 300 words)
6. Table of Contents
7. List of Tables (if included)
8. List of Figures (if included)
9. List of Abbreviations (recommended)

The body of the thesis contains introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion, and conclusion. These sections should have explanations of, and conclusions derived from, the student's research. The body of the thesis is followed by the bibliography, appendices, and a biographical sketch of the author. The sketch is limited to 100 words, and may include personal information such as birth date and place, parents' names, degrees earned, etc.

The thesis should be word processed with one of the prevalent programs – generally Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect. The program and version must be approved by the Committee in advance of submitting materials for review. In addition, the Committee must approve matters of style (e.g., the use of a particular style manual). The student is then responsible for following that style. The student must ensure that an error-free (spelling, grammar, punctuation, style, etc.) product is submitted. The Committee will only approve a thesis which is error-free.

Binding and Copyright

After securing the signatures of the Committee, the student submits the completed thesis to the Director of Graduate Studies for his or her signature. After approval by the Director, the student makes copies of the manuscript and takes them to the Director of the Library for binding. A minimum of four copies must be submitted – one each for the student, Committee Chair, Library Archives, and Graduate Studies. Additional copies may be bound at the discretion of the student. Students are encouraged to bind a minimum of 5 copies so that two copies may be submitted to the Library – one copy for the archives and one copy for the general stacks for circulation.

At the time the copies are submitted for binding, an individual account in the student's name is opened with the bindery. When the bound volumes are received, the student will receive a bill from the bindery, which he or she is responsible for paying. The Library neither receives a bill nor submits the payment of the student's binding fees.

When bound copies are ordered, the student completes a standard agreement indicating whether or not permission is given to the Library to circulate the thesis. If the thesis is to be copyrighted, an additional registration application is to be completed and submitted by the student. The necessary copyright forms and information are available in the Library.

Student Responsibilities

The student, as author, is solely responsible for the accuracy of the thesis, and for any copyright, or other, infringements. Additionally, the student is solely responsible for civil or criminal suits which may arise from the thesis. Under those circumstances, the University may review the granting of the degree in which the thesis was submitted and revoke the degree if such

action is deemed appropriate. The student is responsible for adhering to the thesis requirements, as well as any additional requirements specific to his or her degree granting program.

A student who undertakes the thesis must understand that there is a commitment to the project that is not defined by a finite amount of time (e.g., the duration of a semester or year). Credit for a thesis research course cannot be earned until the thesis has been completed and approved at all levels. That process does not end simply because a semester ends. It is a responsibility of the student to be familiar with policies contained in the Graduate Studies section of the *Bulletin*, and the thesis policies and procedures of the particular degree program.

[Sample title page for a thesis]

THESIS TITLE

A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of Nicholls State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Business Administration

by

John Doe

Spring 2004

[Sample Signature Page]

THESIS TITLE

John Doe

APPROVED:

Fred Smith, Ph.D.
Professor of Management
Committee Chair

Jane Johnson, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Management
Committee Member

Albert Jones, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Accounting
Committee Member

Janice Jameson, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Business Administration

Sam Simpson, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies

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APPROVAL OF A THESIS PROPOSAL

Candidate _____ Student ID _____

College _____ Date _____

Title of Thesis:

Thesis proposal approved by the members of the Thesis Committee as follows:

Name _____ Chair Signature _____
Title _____

Name _____ Signature _____
Title _____

Name _____ Signature _____
Title _____

Approved:

Graduate Program Coordinator Date

Dean Date

Director of Graduate Studies Date

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FINAL EXAMINATION REPORT FOR A THESIS

Candidate _____ Student ID _____

College _____ Date _____

Title of Thesis:

The candidate has successfully passed the final examination of the research:

Name _____ Chair _____ Signature _____

Title _____

Name _____ Signature _____

Title _____

Name _____ Signature _____

Title _____

Approved:

Graduate Program Coordinator Date

Dean Date

Director of Graduate Studies Date