



Master of Science Plan A Thesis Policy

Department of Kinesiology • Michigan State University • East Lansing MI 48824 • <http://www.education.msu.edu/kin>

Adopted on 3/4/05, and effective immediately

Policies

1. Students electing the thesis option must fulfill all of the regular requirements for the Plan A option of the master's degree in their concentration, plus successfully complete 6 credits of KIN 899, Master's Thesis Research. Also, in addition to KIN 871, they must complete one additional research methods course at the 400-900 level approved by the student's guidance committee (3 credits).
2. A thesis shall consist of a written report of original research. The format of the thesis is prescribed by the Graduate School (<http://grad.msu.edu/format.htm>).
3. The thesis committee shall consist of at least three regular faculty members.
 - a. Additional voting or non-voting members may be selected in addition to the three regular faculty members required by University policy. Additional members could include, for example, a doctoral candidate in the student's concentration, or an off-campus professional involved in the planning and/or execution of the project.
 - b. The membership of the thesis committee may be different from the membership of the student's guidance committee.
4. The student shall prepare, present, and defend a thesis proposal prior to beginning any data collection (a proposal includes the title page and introduction, literature review, and methods chapters of the proposed thesis research). The completed written proposal must be provided to all committee members at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled proposal defense date. Approval of the proposal by the committee is required before data collection begins.
5. Generally, the proposal defense presentation should consist of a 15-30 minute talk in which the student briefly outlines the rationale and proposed methods for the study. After the presentation, questions may be addressed to the student by the audience, not to exceed 15 minutes total. After the question/answer period, the thesis committee will meet privately with the student to engage in scholarly inquiry and discussion about the thesis and to address any specific concerns. The student will then be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates on the outcome of the defense. The committee shall decide on one of four outcomes: approved with no changes, approved with changes (student's thesis advisor to be the final arbiter of the revised proposal), approved with changes (revision to be resubmitted to all committee members for re-evaluation), or rejected. Following these deliberations, the student will be apprised of the committee's decision.
6. If the project will involve research using human subjects, laboratory animals, or hazardous substances, an application must be submitted to the appropriate university review board (e.g., UCRIHS, AUCAUC, or ORCBS). Approval by the appropriate university review board is required before any data collection begins. In most cases, the student should list all members of the thesis committee as co-investigators.

7. Upon conclusion of the research, the student shall prepare, present, and defend the written thesis. The final defense meeting serves as the student's final certifying examination. This final presentation and defense shall follow the same procedures outlined above for the proposal defense, with the addition of a brief oral summary of the results, discussion, and recommendations.
 - a. A traditional thesis includes: (a) front matter – title page, acknowledgments, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, and abstract; (b) introduction; (c) review of literature; (d) methods; (e) results; (f) discussion; (g) recommendations; (h) references; and (i) appendices with information such as human subjects approval, copies of instruments, and raw data.
 - b. An alternate presentation of the content may be used for the written thesis if approved by the thesis committee at the time of the thesis proposal defense. For example, the thesis committee may approve a final report that consists of the thesis proposal (rewritten in past tense and revised to include updates to the literature review and methods) plus one or more journal articles.
8. The proposal defense presentation and the defense of the completed thesis shall be open to the public. The thesis advisor shall notify the Graduate Studies Secretary at least 14 days in advance of defense, and the Graduate Studies Secretary shall notify KIN faculty and graduate students within 7 days in advance of the defense. Notification shall be via email and written notices posted on the Graduate Studies bulletin board by the Graduate Studies Secretary.
9. Unbound copies of the completed thesis must be filed with the Graduate School and the Department of Kinesiology. Bound copies of the completed thesis should be provided to the thesis advisor and all members of the thesis committee.
10. The student and thesis committee must comply with MSU guidelines on *Research Data: Management, Control, and Access* (http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/regs/regs_index.htm). According to those guidelines, research data for projects conducted at MSU or under the auspices of MSU are the property of MSU. Therefore, students must insure that thesis data remain at MSU. The student may take a copy of the data when s/he leaves the university. The *Research Data: Management, Control, and Access* guidelines provide additional information on this topic, including procedures for requesting transfer of data to a different institution.