

# Policies and Procedures for a Master's Degree with Thesis

## Northwestern Oklahoma State University

### Office of Graduate Studies

A master's thesis is the product of individual research. It should represent an original contribution to an academic field of knowledge, and it must represent original research.

#### ***Thesis Topic and Committee Selection***

- The student needs to form a Thesis Advisory Committee (separate from the student's Graduate Advisory Committee) that consists of three graduate faculty members, one to chair and two to serve as members (the student's Graduate Advisory Committee, however, may also serve as the Thesis Committee if faculty members agree). The members of the Thesis Committee are selected by the student contingent upon their willingness to serve and upon the approval of the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.
- The thesis topic and committee must be chosen before the completion of twenty hours of course work.

#### ***The Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Membership Form***

- The *Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Membership Form* must be filled out by the student, signed by all thesis committee members, and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies before the completion of twenty hours of course work.

#### ***Changes to Thesis Committee or Thesis Topic***

- If any changes occur either to committee membership or to the thesis topic, a new *Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Form* must be completed and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Changes in the thesis topic or thesis committee membership must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies at least 30 days prior to the thesis defense.
- If membership to the thesis advisory committee changes, all members of the new committee must sign the new *Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Form*.
- Any faculty member who is being replaced must indicate approval of the change(s) made by signing the back of the new form. This signature indicates a willingness to be deleted from the committee.
- If the committee member being replaced is no longer employed by NWOSU, this should be indicated on the back of the form; subsequently, the signature of the committee member who has departed is not required.
- If the thesis topic changes, all committee members and the student must sign a new *Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Form*. Changes to the working title (not topic) may be made with approval of the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

## **The Thesis**

Those graduate students who choose to write a thesis should pick up a copy of NWOSU's *Guidelines for Thesis Preparation and Submission Handbook* at the Office of Graduate Studies. This may also be found at the Graduate Studies webpage: <http://www.nwosu.edu/graduate-studies>.

#### ***Enrollment Requirements for Thesis Research***

- Thesis hours are available "by arrangement" from 3 up to 6 hours. Subsequently, any student who writes a thesis may take 3, 4, 5, or 6 hours of 5330 for credit depending on the student's individual needs.

- The student should enroll in EDUC 5330/Thesis for three hours during the next to last semester of coursework. Following initial enrollment in EDUC 5330, students must maintain continuous enrollment at NWOSU in at least 1 hour of EDUC 5330 until the maximum of six hours have been met, until all degree requirements are completed, **or** until the candidacy is discontinued.
- Enrolling in EDUC 5330 must be completed during regular registration periods.
- Exceptions to the continuous enrollment regulation will be considered on an individual basis by NWOSU's Graduate Committee only after a petition has been submitted to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.
- In the event that a graduate student does not comply, or has not complied, with the enrollment provisions above, then the student must enroll—by no later than the semester in which graduation is expected—in the exact number of hours of EDUC 5330 that would have been completed with continuous enrollment.

### **Failure to Complete Thesis**

- If a student plans to write a thesis but never finishes (or changes his/her mind), he/she must meet with his/her Graduate Advisory Committee to devise and submit a new Plan of Study that deletes the thesis from intended coursework. This must be done as soon as possible after the student decided not to complete the thesis.

### **Thesis Defense**

- Students are permitted only one thesis defense.
- Students must be enrolled in EDUC 5330 at NWOSU during the semester in which the thesis defense occurs.

#### ***Thesis Draft***

- Students are responsible for providing every member of the thesis advisory committee with a draft of the thesis.
- The thesis advisory committee will determine the timing of the student's submission of the draft to give them sufficient time to review the thesis prior to the deadlines for submitting a reading copy to the Office of Graduate Studies.

#### ***Authority for the Thesis Defense***

- The reading copy must be submitted in person, not by mail, to the Office of Graduate Studies at least one week before the thesis defense. The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies will review the reading copy.
- Once the reading copy is approved, the Office of Graduate Studies will issue the *Authority Report Form of the Thesis Defense* to the chair of the student's Thesis Advisory Committee.
- Students may not defend until the chair has received the *Authority Report Form of the Thesis Defense*.
- Authorization for the defense is valid for the period listed on the form.
- If the defense is not completed during this period, the Office of Graduate Studies must be notified of the reason, and the form must be returned to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies marked "Not Taken."

#### ***The Defense***

- The student and all members of his/her thesis advisory committee must participate in the defense either in person or via ITV.

- The thesis defense may not be held when the university is not in session or during the week of final exams. In unavoidable circumstances, the student may petition the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for an exception to this rule.
- A student is allowed only one attempt at the thesis defense.
- The defense is open to the public.

### ***The Decision***

- Within one week of the thesis defense, the chair of the Thesis Advisory Committee will report the decision to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies on the *Authority Report Form for the Thesis Defense*.
- All members of the thesis committee must sign the report form.
- A majority vote (two out of three members) must occur from the thesis advisory committee in order for a student to pass or fail the defense.

### ***Unsatisfactory Defense***

- If the defense is determined to be unsatisfactory by the student's thesis advisory committee, the decision is final, and the defense cannot be repeated. The student must then take additional coursework at NWOSU to make up for the hours taken for thesis credit. This coursework will be determined by the student's Graduate Advisory committee.

### ***Satisfactory Defense***

- A student who successfully defends his/her thesis may be asked by members of the Thesis Advisory Committee to make additional revisions/emendations before a final copy is submitted for archiving. The student has 30 days after the defense to make these changes to the final submitted version. However, students who are planning to graduate in a particular semester must meet specific deadlines and may not have 30 days available. The last date to submit a thesis per semester is the last day of finals week.
- The student must then deliver three (3) originally signed, unbound copies of the thesis on white, 20-24 pound weight, 100-percent-watermarked cotton or cotton rag-bond paper to the Office of Graduate Studies for deposit in the Alva and Enid campus libraries and in the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Thesis copies must be brought to the Office of Graduate Studies within 30 calendar days following the successful defense. They may not be sent through the mail. Students who are planning to graduate in a particular semester must meet specific deadlines and, subsequently, may not have 30 days available.
- Students who do not deposit during the semester of the defense must enroll in the semester they deposit. The semester the thesis is deposited is the semester of graduation.
- The Office of Graduate Studies will review the thesis and perform a final degree check before graduation may occur.

### ***Failure to Deposit Final Thesis***

- If the thesis is not deposited in the Office of Graduate Studies by the last day of the semester in which it was defended, the student will not graduate.
- If the final thesis is not deposited within 30 days after the defense, then the results of the first defense will be set aside and the student must repeat the thesis defense.

### ***Graduation/Completion***

A student may not graduate until all degree requirements are completed, including depositing the final thesis copies to the Office of Graduate Studies.