



Masters in Clinical/Counseling Psychology Thesis Information

The graduate thesis is designed to demonstrate a student's ability to carry out independent research (Graduate Thesis Guidelines 2011-2012, Clayton State School of Graduate Studies). In the clinical track, this research should relate to clinical-related issues and contribute to knowledge in the field. Additionally, students are required to successfully propose and defend their product to their committee. To be eligible to complete Thesis, students must have successfully completed (grade of A or B) at least 24 hours of course credit, including Advanced Research Methods and Statistics I (PSYC 5040) & Advanced Research Methods and Statistics II (PSYC 5050).

The School of Graduate Studies has a document that outlines specific instructions and deadlines for completion of the thesis (<http://www.clayton.edu/portals/22/docs/thesis-guidelines.pdf>). The current document is derived from these guidelines and intended as a programmatic guide to completion of the thesis in a timely fashion. The guidelines set forth by the School of Graduate Studies are the official guidelines and should be reviewed thoroughly.

Thesis Chair/Committee Selection

In selecting a thesis chair, students should take into consideration their intended thesis topic, the research and/or expertise area of the desired thesis chair, as well as availability and work style compatibility between the student and desired thesis chair. Students are encouraged to consult with the Graduate Director in determining an appropriate thesis chair. Students should formally select a thesis chair ***no later than by the last day of class of spring semester of their first year***. Upon selection of their thesis chair, students should complete and submit the **Thesis Chair Selection-MS in Clinical/Counseling Psychology** form to the Graduate Director.

Students will work with their thesis chair to develop a committee of at least three (3) graduate faculty. All committee members must have at least affiliate graduate faculty status; the committee chair must have full graduate faculty status. At least two (2) committee members must be clinical faculty. The student is expected to secure the agreement of the other committee members. Students are advised to plan ahead. Depending on how many committees a faculty member is already serving on, he/she may not be available to serve on another committee. It is recommended that students confirm their committee selection by ***no later than the last day of class of summer semester of their first year***. After selecting their committee, students should complete and submit the **Thesis Committee Selection-MS in Clinical/Counseling Psychology** form to the Graduate Director. Additionally, once the thesis committee is identified and ***no later than the second week of classes of the fall semester of their second year***, the student and their Thesis Committee will convene an initial planning meeting to discuss timelines and expectations.

Thesis Course and Credits (PSYC 6995)

While working to complete their thesis, students must be enrolled in Thesis Research (PSYC 6995). Students must complete a minimum of four (4) credit hours of thesis research; however, most students complete the maximum of six (6) credit hours. Students will enroll in the thesis course (1 credit hour) beginning summer of their first year. In consultation with their

selected thesis chair, students should determine the number of credits for which they will enroll for all subsequent semesters.

Thesis Research Prospectus

Before beginning the thesis, the student must prepare a prospectus/proposal which must be approved by the thesis committee. The prospectus should include the following (see Graduate Thesis Guidelines for additional details):

- ✓ **Summary and statement of the research problem**
- ✓ **Review of the established literature**
- ✓ **Rationale, including hypotheses**
- ✓ **Methodology, including proposed sample, measures, and procedures**
- ✓ **Exploration of potential outcomes**
- ✓ **References**
- ✓ **Timetable of work to be completed, including expected IRB submission date (if applicable)**

Students should defend their prospectus by ***no later than November 30th of the student's second year.*** Please note that this is earlier than the proposed timeline provided by the School of Graduate Studies. The deadline advised by the Clinical program is designed to maximize the opportunity for students to complete data collection. By the deadline, students must have: (1) an approved prospectus; (2) a prospectus cover sheet signed by all committee members. This form is found in the Graduate Thesis Guidelines document and should be submitted to the Graduate Director by the deadline.

Thesis Content and Length

It is highly recommended that students completing the thesis thoroughly review the Graduate Thesis Guidelines prior to beginning their thesis process.

Thesis Defense

In collaboration with the student's thesis chair and committee, the student will schedule an hour-long final discussion and presentation of their thesis. Students should also complete the "Permission to Take Master's Oral Examination Form" (found at School of Graduate Studies website) and submit to the Graduate Director. Faculty and other students are invited to attend the defense. The student prepares a thirty-minute presentation, after which the student's committee will ask questions related to the thesis project. **Check the School of Graduate Studies website for deadlines for each semester.**

After the student successfully completes the defense, he/she is required to make all corrections to the thesis as requested by the committee. Following completion of the corrections, all committee members will sign three (3) copies of the Signature Page prepared by the student on 25% white cotton rag paper.

Grading Classifications

Students may receive a grade of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory for the thesis project. Delineated in the table below are the criteria required for each stage of the project. It is within the authority of the Thesis Committee to require revisions to the thesis following the defense and before granting final approval. All combinations of designations and the subsequent grade are as follows:

	Summer (1 st Year)	Fall (2 nd Year)	Spring (2 nd Year)	Summer (2 nd Year)
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Satisfactory	Sufficient progress toward draft of agreed upon deliverable (e.g., literature review, methods section, etc.) as determined by chair and student	Submission of approved thesis timeline AND Successful completion/defense of thesis prospectus no later than Nov. 30 th	Submission of IRB by no later than March 1 st AND Substantial progress toward completion of data collection and completion of thesis project	Successful defense of thesis by July 18 th
Unsatisfactory	Insufficient progress toward draft agreed upon deliverable (e.g., literature review, methods section, etc.) as determined by chair and student	Does not complete/defend thesis prospectus	No IRB submitted OR No data collection after IRB approval OR Not making satisfactory progress toward completion of thesis project	Unsuccessful defense OR No defense by July 18
Incomplete	N/A	Does not complete/defend thesis prospectus but is making "sufficient progress"	Submission of IRB no later than March 1 st but limited progress toward data collection	Full draft of "ready-for-defense" thesis submitted but no defense OR other agreed upon deliverable as determined by student, chair, and committed

Important Final Dates to Remember (Please note all dates are NO LATER THAN):

Identification of Thesis Chair and Committee (Forms here)	No later than the last day of classes of spring semester of their first year (Thesis Chair) and no later than the last day of classes of summer semester of their first year (Thesis Committee)
Planning Meeting with Student and Thesis Committee	No later than the second week of classes of fall semester of their second year.
Development and Defense of Prospectus; Completion and submission of Prospectus Cover Sheet (Form can be found http://www.clayton.edu/Portals/624/docs/prospectus-coversheet.pdf)	No later than November 30 th of the student's second year
Submission of IRB Application (http://www.clayton.edu/provost/irb)	No later than November 30 th of the student's second year
Data Collection and Development of Thesis Document	Spring semester of 2 nd year
Oral Defense	MUST be completed no later than July 15 th

Final Thesis w/ Committee Approval	MUST be completed by no later than July 18th
Submission of Final Thesis to School of Graduate Studies for Binding	No later than July 25th
Submission of all paperwork (Master's Degree Plan of Study, prospectus, oral examination) to School of Graduate Studies	No later than August 1st