

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Department of Special Education & Communication Disorders
Graduate Program in Speech-Language Pathology

M.S. Thesis Manual

Students in the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders may opt to follow the Thesis plan to the completion of the Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology. The master's thesis gives the student experience in conducting independent research and in completing scholarly writing. This creative work can help the student better understand and evaluate reports of the research literature. The possibility of submitting a revised version of the completed thesis for professional publication is encouraged.

The thesis plan revolves around a five-semester schedule, with students formally enrolling for the thesis course for two credit hours in the third, fourth, and fifth semesters for a total of six credits. It is anticipated that students completing the thesis will complete their off-campus practica in a part-time manner during both the fourth and fifth semesters. With this thesis option, there is a potential that the program will extend to a sixth semester. The oral examination at the completion of the thesis takes the place of the comprehensive examination required by non-thesis students. This oral presentation consists primarily of the defense of the thesis project. Students must also follow the Graduate School information outlined in "Guidelines for the Preparation of a Thesis." This manual is located in the Graduate School Office located in Rendleman Hall, Room 2202 and can be found on-line on the Graduate Schools website at www.siu.edu/graduate/current/index.shtml#cs13_thesis.

Steps in Completing the Thesis:

The proposed sequence of steps involved in completing the thesis plan is outlined below. The timeline presented is a general one, as a student's progress through the individual steps may vary.

I. 1st and 2nd semesters (First Fall and Spring semesters of graduate school)

A. Selection of a chair, topic, and committee

1. Select a topic of interest. Choose a broad area (e.g. adult language). Research that area to narrow your scope into a focused area of possible inquiry, which can generate a series of questions.
2. Select a chair from the permanent graduate faculty who has knowledge/interest in your topic as well as knowledge of conducting research. Permanent graduate faculty and their interest areas are:

Dr. Jean Harrison	Childhood and adolescent language development/disorders Phonological development/disorders
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Dr. James Panico	Fluency
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Dr. T.K. Parthasarathy	Audiology Central auditory processing
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Dr. Steffany Chleboun	Acquired brain injuries
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3. Select Committee members. Graduate School regulations require at least three graduate faculty members. The program of Speech-Language Pathology requires that permanent graduate faculty should be chosen. Additional committee members may be recruited, including temporary graduate faculty members, experts in your field of inquiry, etc.

4. After consulting with the committee chair, it is the student's responsibility to obtain agreement from the committee members that they will serve on the thesis committee and that they will attend full committee meetings. These full meetings will include an introductory meeting to generally discuss thesis; the prospectus meeting; a possible post-prospective meeting and the defense. (Other regular meeting will occur between candidate and committee chair.)

B. Preparation of the prospectus

1. Prepare the prospectus (the first three chapters of the thesis). These chapters include (1) an introduction, (2) a comprehensive review of the literature related to the question to be answered, along with a statement of the problem, and (3) the procedures to be used in the study, including the proposed statistical analysis. During the first Fall semester most new graduate students will be enrolled in SPPA 503 and should consider developing their thesis chapters in coordination with the requirements of this course.
2. You should meet with your chair every 2-3 weeks to discuss your progress and develop the paper from outline to rough draft to final document. This should be an established, regular meeting arranged between the candidate and the chair.

C. Prospectus meeting

1. After the prospectus has been prepared and circulated to the committee, a formal meeting is held during which time the committee approves or disapproves the prospectus. This meeting must be held by the midpoint of the second semester of the graduate program.

2. Three copies of the Registration of Thesis Title form will be signed, one for the department, one for the advisor and one for the student. The form for the Institutional Review Board, (IRB) regarding human subjects must be submitted, if applicable. These forms must be completed by the end of the second semester of the graduate program.

II. 3rd Semester

A. Data Collection

1. After prospectus approval by the committee and permission from the IRB is granted, begin data collection and analysis.

III. 4th Semester

A. Thesis Preparation

1. Complete data analysis.
2. Write Chapter 4 (results), and begin Chapter 5 (discussion).

IV. 5th Semester

A. Thesis completion

1. Final thesis writing
2. Final presentation of thesis

B. Thesis committee meetings

1. Meetings with the student's thesis committee should take place when the chair and the student feel the thesis is ready to be discussed. Preliminary drafts to the full committee will be due to the committee at least two weeks prior to full committee meetings.

C. Preparation of the Manuscript

1. After the thesis draft has been approved by the chair and the committee, the student will prepare formal copies of the thesis and distribute them to all committee members.
2. The thesis will be written according to guidelines set forth by the Graduate School in the document Guidelines for the Preparation of Thesis, revised April 2001. The student will be responsible for obtaining this document and following the guidelines set forth.

D. Formal Presentation of the Thesis

1. When the full committee has approved the thesis, the final presentation will be scheduled. One hour will be allotted to the formal presentation and this session will be open to interested parties.
2. Following the presentation and general questions, the candidate and all guests will be asked to leave and the advisory committee will discuss the thesis. The three permanent graduate faculty will then vote on the thesis. One half-hour will be allotted for this meeting. The possible votes will include: accept, accept with modifications or not accept. The accept with modifications should be anticipated by the candidate to be the most usual outcome. The student may then reenter the session to receive the ballot results.

V. **Postponing Graduation**

If the student is not able to complete the thesis project during the anticipated semester and has already filed an application to graduate form with the Graduate School, the student may petition the Graduate School to postpone

graduation to a following semester. A form, Request for Extended Thesis Credit, must be submitted to the Graduate School.

(Revised 8-17-09)