

MS Degree: Thesis Requirements

Overview

The thesis is an original research paper that is defended in front of a three-person thesis committee. The expectation is that a master's thesis is, at a minimum, equivalent to a viable manuscript that could be submitted as one peer-reviewed research paper. For a client-based thesis, the report should meet the requirements of the stakeholder and what was agreed to with the committee in the student's proposal meeting. The thesis must comply with the [specifications for theses and dissertations](#) outlined by the Graduate School. For more guidance on the length and format of the master's thesis, the student should consult his or her advisor.

Assembling a committee and proposing a project

In conjunction with their advisor, the student must assemble a three-member thesis committee. This committee must consist of at least three CUB graduate faculty members and must include at least one rostered or associate ENVIS faculty member and one individual from outside of the ENVIS program. If the student would like to include a committee member who is not on the CU-Boulder faculty roster, he/she must request a "Special Appointment to the Graduate Faculty." Please consult the Graduate Program Coordinator for details as soon as possible, as this process can take as much as one month.

Prior to formally beginning their thesis research, the student should schedule a meeting to propose the project to the committee. At least two weeks before this committee meets, the student will submit a five page research proposal to the committee. During the meeting, the committee will question the student on the proposal and review the student's progress on suggested and required coursework. For a student to continue on in the program, their committee must approve their proposal and may require additional revisions prior to approval.

If the composition of the thesis committee changes after the proposal meeting, it is important to inform the Graduate Program Coordinator as soon as possible. All committee members need to be approved by the Graduate School and sometimes this process can take as much as a month.

Thesis Defense

During the semester in which a student plans to defend the thesis, the student should work with the Graduate Program Coordinator to submit an Admission to Candidacy Application to the Graduate School by the posted deadline.

With the approval of the faculty advisor, the student may schedule a thesis defense. Once the defense date is set, the student must work with the Graduate Program Coordinator to submit the Master's Examination Report form to the Graduate School. This form must be received by the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the defense date.

At least two weeks prior to the defense date, the student should provide the committee with a final draft of the thesis manuscript. At the thesis defense meeting, student should give a short presentation of their project after which the committee will question the student and review their work. The committee will also review the student's completion of coursework assigned in the guidance committee meeting (a

student may graduate without completing all the formally assigned coursework only with the approval of the committee).

The student must receive a passing vote from a majority of committee members to pass the defense. Even with a passing vote, the committee may request revisions to the final thesis. If a majority of the committee votes to fail the candidate, the student will have one more opportunity to pass the defense after a period of time determined by the committee.

After the Defense

After the thesis has been successfully defended, the student must be sure that the signature page with the original signatures of the chair and at least one other committee member is submitted to the Graduate School. The student must also electronically submit the thesis to [ProQuest](#) according to the [Graduate School instructions](#).

Important Deadlines

A. Before you propose your thesis

- Submit your thesis proposal to the committee at least two weeks in advance of your proposal meeting

B. Before you defend your thesis

- Submit an Admission to Candidacy Application to the Graduate School by the posted deadline of the semester in which you plan to defend.
- If you would like to include a committee member who is not on the CU-Boulder faculty, notify the Graduate Program Coordinator at least 6 weeks in advance of your thesis defense.
- Inform the Graduate Program Coordinator of your defense date at least three weeks prior to the defense.
- Submit your thesis to your committee at least two weeks prior to the defense date.

C. After you pass your thesis defense

- Collect signatures of all committee members on the Master's Examination Report and submit to the Graduate Program Coordinator.
- Submit the signature page containing the signatures of the chair and one other committee member to the Graduate School.
- Electronically submit the thesis to [ProQuest](#) according to the [Graduate School instructions](#).