

# THESIS and PROJECT GUIDELINES

## GRADUATE COMMITTEE

The candidate's graduate committee MUST be formalized the semester prior to the candidate taking MENG 6940/6960. It is strongly suggested that the committee be formed when the candidate has accrued between 24-28 semester credit hours so that the committee chair and committee can guide the candidate to specific coursework that might help in the completion of the master's project/thesis. The committee members are selected based on a general area of co-interest. The graduate committee consists of three persons: at least two faculty members from the Department of English, one of whom will be designated by the student as the committee chair; and the third member may be from another academic department, school district, or other organization. All committee members must hold at least a Master's Degree and have a willingness to read and critique the paper three times and meet for three formal meetings.

### Assignment of the Graduate Committee

The candidate discusses his/her master's thesis/project interest with the program director and possible committee members. Based upon recommendations and available faculty, tentative committee members, including the committee chair, are identified according to interests and/or expertise that best match the area of the candidate's proposed project. The candidate then invites committee members for his/her Graduate Committee. After consulting with the program director, the candidate must complete the thesis/project form found on the MENG website. The signed form should be submitted to the MENG office, approved by the program director, and stored in the student's file in the MENG office.

- The candidate should provide a timeline of his/her project and a short statement outlining background and project interest for prospective committee members.
- Prospective committee members are invited to serve on the graduate committee and sign the Graduate Committee Request Form during the proposal meeting which is arranged by the candidate.
- A retiring faculty member can decide to finish or not to finish his/her service with a candidate. If, however, the faculty member knows of his/her retirement at the time he/she agrees to serve, he/she is expected to see the candidate through to graduation.

A proposal meeting including the candidate and all committee members will be held no later than the first Friday of the semester in which the defense is to occur. At that meeting:

1. The date of the defense will be determined. The defense must be scheduled no later than the last day of course work.
2. At least one progress meeting with the entire thesis/project committee, must be scheduled no later than the Friday of the eleventh week of the semester in which the defense is held.
3. The committee's expectations for the work the candidate will provide at each meeting will be determined during the proposal meeting.

### **Graduate Committee Chair**

It is the responsibility of the committee chair to:

- meet with the candidate to guide and encourage the development of the project.
- advise the candidate when the proposal is ready for committee approval.
- act as the candidate's advocate at the final presentation.
- keep documentation about the decisions made concerning the proposal and/or the project.
- oversee and approve the final project copy.

### **Graduate Committee Member**

It is the responsibility of a committee member to:

- meet with the candidate to guide and encourage the development of the project when requested by the candidate or the committee chair.
- read and critique the proposal.
- take part in the proposal approval meeting.
- read and critique the project.
- take part in the progress meeting and the final presentation.
- may act as chair for the final presentation when nominated by the committee chair and other committee member.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to schedule committee meetings. A committee meeting may be requested at any time by the candidate or the committee chair. The candidate should arrange the date and time with his/her committee. The MENG office will assist with room scheduling.

**Development of the thesis/project.** The candidate works closely with the graduate committee chair and other committee members during the development of the thesis/project. The chair generally sees multiple drafts of the project and meets with the candidate a number of times before the project is ready for its dissemination to other committee members. Depending on the nature of the project, the project may take one or two semesters to complete.

The completed project must be turned in to the MENG office ready **no later than the Friday before the end of the semester**. On some specific occasions, exceptions to this rule can be made by the program director.

### **Candidate**

It is the responsibility of the candidate to:

- discuss the thesis/project with the program director.
- contact faculty members about being Committee Chair and Committee Members.
- schedule the proposal meeting.
- work closely with the Committee Chair to develop and revise the work.
- distribute the thesis/project to the committee at least five working days before defense.
- contact the members of your committee to schedule a day/time for the defense.

- notify the MENG office to schedule a room.
- defend your research.
- bring your cover sheets to the defense for Committee Members signatures. If you wish to have your document bound, each bound copy will need to have an original signature page that is signed by each committee member.

## **Thesis/Project Defense**

### **Responsibilities of the Candidate before the Defense**

When the graduate committee chair informs the candidate that the project report is ready to present, the candidate arranges the date and the time for the presentation with the committee and informs the MENG secretary, who schedules a room.

The candidate is responsible for confirming the meeting date, time, and place with his/her committee.

**The candidate should provide a paper copy of the Thesis/Master's project to each member of the graduate committee at least five (5) working days prior to the scheduled presentation.**

### **On the Day of Defense**

The candidate orally presents the Thesis/Master's project to members of the graduate committee and others who attend. The candidate presents an overview of the project, discussing the project's origins, the author's processes (creative, research, procedures, etc), significance/contributions of the work for the discipline and how the Thesis/Master's project changed the candidates thinking.

The candidate then answers questions from committee members regarding the Thesis/Master's project (observers are not invited to ask questions). After the presentation, the committee meets privately to discuss the presentation and evaluate the written Thesis/Master's project and the oral presentation. A 2/3 vote is required for approval. The candidate is informed of the decision.

If the report is accepted the report is signed by the committee members. The candidate is responsible for bringing the appropriate number of typed cover sheets to the defense. The chair will sign after any revisions have been completed.

If the candidate does not finish the project the semester he/she is registered or performs unsatisfactorily on the Thesis/Master's project or presentation, an *Incomplete* grade will be given, and the candidate must register for MENG 6940/6960 each semester until the project is completed.

### **After the Defense**

It is the responsibility of the candidate to:

- make any needed changes to the defense document.

- submit revised document to the chair for final review and signature of cover sheet(s).
- deliver three CDs each with the final document including the signed cover sheet to the MENG offices.

### **Defense Evaluation**

The defense provides two evaluations: passage/failure of the defense; and if deemed successful, the assignment of passing grades to the student's thesis/project hours. The committee may recommend the Committee Chair to award differing grades in three-hour increments (e.g. a student with six thesis/project hours may be awarded a grade of A for three hours *and* B for three hours).

No thesis receiving a grade lower than a B- may pass.

The committee will evaluate the thesis in one of the following ways:

- Passage without revision—the thesis/project is deemed acceptable and the chair assigns the thesis/project a grade.
- Passage with revision—if the committee requests revisions, they will inform the student and determine a time frame in which those revisions should be completed. Once revisions are complete, the committee will convene to discuss what grades will be assigned to the thesis/project hours.
- Substantial revision required/passage being determined—if the committee requires substantial revisions, the student will be informed of them by the committee. The committee will determine a timeline for completion of the revisions. When they are complete, the committee will evaluate the thesis/project.
- Failure—Failure of the thesis/project constitutes a termination of the student's enrollment in the thesis/project track.