

# THESIS/DISSERTATION PROCEDURES

## PAPERWORK AND MEETINGS

The Psychology Graduate Program Office is available to assist departmental graduate students with questions and to make certain the paperwork process flows smoothly for each graduate student in our program. The office's goal is to ensure that certain appropriate paperwork is filed with the Graduate School during the process of forming the committee and completing the thesis or dissertation. However, without important information from the student, this goal cannot be reached. The breakdown in the paperwork process occurs when procedures are not followed and the office is not provided with required information. Failure to follow guidelines could mean paperwork will not be available at the time of your prospectus or oral defense meeting, which may ultimately result in a delay in your degree progress. Please don't let this happen.

Review the "Blue Book" for information concerning committee composition and additional information relating to your thesis or dissertation. Important Graduate School deadlines for graduation application and document submission can be found here: <http://gradschool.siu.edu/index.html>

### Steps in the Thesis/Dissertation Process

#### Committee

- Choose topic and **form** faculty committee **before** beginning work on your prospectus. This is not just getting faculty to agree to serve on your committee, it is officially forming a committee through paperwork submitted to the office. Please keep in mind that non-academics (e.g., Student Services staff) may be members of your committee, but they require additional approvals and adjunct faculty appointment procedures, so allow extra time for this process.
- Thesis/dissertation committee approval form is available in the office. Complete the form with requested information and return it to the office. We will submit the form to the Department Chair for formal departmental approval of the committee.
- After committee and topic are approved by Department Chair, the office will submit official paperwork to Graduate School for approval. Failure to have Graduate Faculty Committee Approval Form on file with the Graduate School means that a student cannot be cleared for graduation. An approved thesis/dissertation committee is part of the **required** paperwork.
- Arrange a meeting with the committee chair **before** beginning work on the prospectus. The committee chair can provide invaluable guidance on the process.

#### Prospectus

- A prospectus must be approved at least one semester prior to graduation. This means that you cannot prospect and defend a thesis or dissertation in the same semester.
- Notify the office of the date, time, and location at least **ONE WEEK** prior to the prospectus meeting. This information will be posted to the departmental website, as well as the bulletin board in the Graduate Lounge.
- The office will complete the necessary paperwork and submit it to the committee chair the day before scheduled prospectus meeting.
- Committee chair will return the signed paperwork to the office.

## Oral Defense

- Notify the office of the date, time, and location at least **ONE WEEK** prior to the oral defense meeting. This information will be posted to the departmental website, as well as the bulletin board in the Graduate Lounge. You are also required to submit an electronic copy of thesis/dissertation and a separate one-page abstract (formatted following Graduate School guidelines) as an email attachment to [clnouse@siu.edu](mailto:clnouse@siu.edu). This must also be done at least **ONE WEEK** prior to the meeting. The office will include your abstract with notice of your oral defense. If the document and abstract are not provided a week before the scheduled meeting, the meeting will be postponed.
- The office will prepare the oral defense approval forms, thesis/dissertation approval forms, and thesis/dissertation assessment forms and submit these to the committee chair the day before scheduled oral defense meeting.
- **Oral Defense Meeting** procedures:
  - Meetings are open to students and faculty.
  - Students should plan to make a **formal presentation** during the first 30 minutes of the meeting; questions with the exception of points of clarification are reserved until after the presentation.
  - The thesis/dissertation committee Chair will give priority to questions from the committee, but others are welcome to ask questions.
  - Meetings should be scheduled in a room of appropriate size.
  - Students should not bring food or drink for the committee members.
  - Committee Chair will return signed paperwork to the office.

## After Oral Defense

- You will pick up signed Oral Defense forms and Thesis/Dissertation Approval forms from the office and deliver them to the Graduate School (Woody B114). Be sure to submit your Human Subjects Approval form as well (if applicable). There will also be signed Thesis/Dissertation Approval forms available for your required two bound copies for the department--one for the committee chair/co-chair and one for the department.
- After the thesis/dissertation is approved and final revisions are cleared by the committee chair and Graduate School, the document is to be filed electronically to the Graduate School. You can find additional information on the electronic submission process at the Graduate School's website here: <http://gradschool.siu.edu/thesis-dissertation-researchpaper/etd-guidelines.html>
- Be sure to apply for graduation by the Graduate School deadline. The PDF application form is available at [http://gradschool.siu.edu/\\_common/documents/graduation\\_app.pdf](http://gradschool.siu.edu/_common/documents/graduation_app.pdf).
- MA students should be sure to apply for the PhD program through the Graduate School (<http://gradschool.siu.edu/applygrad/index.html>). You will not need to submit any of the "supplemental materials" or "recommendations". An application fee is not required (select "payment by check" for payment method). Please inform our office when your application is complete so that we may proceed with the admissions process.

Thank you for your assistance in keeping your thesis/dissertation paperwork completed in a timely manner. Following these basic guidelines can help reduce stress as you take another step toward your ultimate goal.

*This document was adapted from a document distributed by Connie Childers on May 5, 2008.*