



## **Thesis/Dissertation: Procedures and Suggested Guidelines**

### **Section I - Student Considerations**

1. Spend some time looking at other theses/dissertations, especially those in your topic area. There is a list of all College of Criminal Justice theses/dissertations in the College Advisement Office (A-214).
2. Get a copy of the University Thesis/Dissertation guidelines.  
<http://library.shsu.edu/research/thesis/index.php>
3. Choose a topic area, research your topic, develop an outline of the literature and methodology you are considering. Remember you want to have a well thought out proposal before you visit with the potential chair of your committee.
4. a) You may have to discuss your thesis/dissertation idea with several faculty members before selecting a chair.  
b) Once you have decided on your chair, speak with him/her about whom should be on the committee as members.
5. Discuss your topic with potential committee members and ask them if they would be willing to serve on your thesis/dissertation committee. The Thesis/Dissertation Committee should be composed of: a faculty member who has substantive expertise and knowledge of the topic and two readers from the College of Criminal Justice – all of whom are voting members. Outside readers may be on committee if appropriate but are not voting members.
6. After speaking with your chair and committee members, arrange an appointment with the chair and present your proposal. Remember they will be more willing to work with you if you provide them with a well-developed topic. Do NOT go to a professor and say, “do you have any data? I want to do a thesis/dissertation.”
7. Develop an abstract and outline of the topic as necessary to complete the committee approval form located on the website.
8. Arrange a meeting with the College of Criminal Justice Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies so he/she can approve the committee.
9. Prepare for the prospectus defense. A prospectus is your formal research proposal. The prospectus should follow the style guidelines suggested in the University

Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines (APA style). A copy of this document is available in the College's Graduate Office and on-line, <http://library.shsu.edu/research/thesis/index.php> .

10. The prospectus defense is a meeting of your committee to formally approve your prospectus. The chair of your committee will direct this meeting. During the prospectus defense you will be asked to present your proposal. This is followed by a discussion of your proposal. Generally, suggestions are made at that time to improve the design of the study. The committee will then meet in executive session to determine if you have successfully defended your prospectus. You will then be informed of their decision.
11. Prepare drafts for your chair and committee members (remember to use services of the Writing Center – proof and style, before you give any committee member a draft: don't waste their time with grammar and style issues). While some chairs require that students “defend” the first three chapters of their thesis/dissertation; others may accept less.
12. Follow the timeline located on the Graduate Studies website at [http://www.shsu.edu/~grs\\_www/current/thesisdissertationtimeline.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~grs_www/current/thesisdissertationtimeline.html)

## **Section II – Faculty Considerations**

1. Request students to have all documents presented to the committee processed by the Writing Center prior to their dissemination to committee members.
2. Request all students to obtain and familiarize themselves with the University Guidelines for Theses/Dissertations located at the Newton Gresham Library.
3. Hold an in-depth discussion with the students regarding their thesis/dissertation making sure students have completed the requisite courses necessary to conduct the proposed thesis/dissertation.
4. Provide students with reasonable guidance throughout the process so that they can choose appropriate committee members, prepare a prospectus, defend the prospectus, make changes as directed/recommended by the committee, and prepare a final defense document. Faculty should assist the student in planning the review and defense process in such a manner that maximizes the input of the committee prior to the defense date. To facilitate that process, faculty must certify that the defense document has been reviewed by the committee and that changes by the committee have been incorporated in the defense document .

### **Section III – Graduate Office Considerations**

1. Provide students with general directions about the thesis/dissertation process.
2. Assist in the registration of students for thesis/dissertation courses.
3. Provide thesis/dissertation chairs with the appropriate paperwork to assemble committees, declare defense dates, and assign defense grades.
4. Receive declaration of defense forms and coordinate with CJC building operations to assign rooms for defenses.
5. Provide the University Registrar with assigned grades provided by the committee chairs.

A copy of this document, College of Criminal Justice Thesis/Dissertation: Procedures and Suggested Guidelines may be found at [http://www.cjcenter.org/resources/documents/thesis\\_and\\_dissertation\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.cjcenter.org/resources/documents/thesis_and_dissertation_guidelines.pdf)

**Graduate Office  
College of Criminal Justice  
Sam Houston State University  
Declaration of Thesis/Dissertation Defense\***



As chair of thesis/dissertation committee for \_\_\_\_\_ I certify that the committee has carefully reviewed the thesis/dissertation document and that the comments and edits from all the committee members have been included in the defense document and that the student is ready to defend the:  
(please select one)

- \_\_\_\_\_thesis prospectus
- \_\_\_\_\_dissertation prospectus
- \_\_\_\_\_thesis final defense
- \_\_\_\_\_dissertation final defense

Please arrange a room for the prospectus/defense on \_\_\_\_\_ at  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_.  
(time)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\* This form should be used for both prospectus and final defenses.