



## Speech-Language Pathology

### SELECTING THESIS OPTION

---

When considering the option of writing a thesis, students should be aware of the following general facts about thesis work and the integration of this work within the MS curriculum.

- 1) Students are expected to plan, execute, and report on a research project or creative endeavor that creates, analyzes, assesses, or otherwise advances knowledge in the discipline of study.
- 2) A thesis may be initiated at any time during a student's academic program. However, it is recommended that students initiate their thesis work in the first Fall/Spring semester of graduate school. A natural starting point for thinking about thesis research is during the first evidence-based practice course. One requirement of this course is for students to write a CAT paper, which may lead to a thesis research project.
- 3) A Thesis Committee Membership Form must be completed and submitted for approval to the Program Director and Chair before thesis work (e.g., data collection) can begin and before enrolling for thesis credit.
- 4) If you are working with humans, animals or hazardous chemicals in your research, you may also need to complete the appropriate research ethics training (CITI) and submit a proposal for approval to the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board  
<https://www.moravian.edu/hsirb>.
- 5) Successful completion of a thesis requires the approval of the written document by a student's Thesis/Examining Committee and a successful defense of the thesis before that committee. In order to be approved the thesis manuscript must have been submitted to a peer reviewed publication for review. When the committee approves, all committee members must sign 4 copies of the approval page of the thesis.

## PROCEDURES FOR THE THESIS PROCESS

---

1. Work with the program director and faculty to determine a committee of no less than three people. Two faculty on the committee, including the thesis director must be members of the rehabilitation sciences department.
2. Prepare and present your thesis idea via a prospectus or summary. Consult with your thesis director for more information.
3. Take note that the style you will use is APA, so please format your work accordingly.
4. Acquire HSIRB approval (if needed) for research involving humans. You may NOT collect any data until you receive approval.
5. Defend your prospectus and submit your prospectus and form to the Program Director and Department Chair.
6. Begin and/or continue the hard work of conducting/gathering your research.
7. Typeset the manuscript, with input on organization and format from your committee. Pay attention to the formatting for manuscript submission (usually APA).
8. Have your program director announce your defense to the department. **Your defense must take place at least one month before the last day of on campus classes.**
9. Publicly defend your work (**again, one month prior to the last day of classes**), taking your signature pages with you.
10. Make any changes that the committee requires, and make sure all signature pages are signed (each committee member must sign).

## THESIS TIMELINE

---

### **SPRING I**

- Literature Review Draft I
- Methods Draft I
- Literature Review Draft II
- Methods Draft II

### **SUMMER II**

- Lit Review and Methods (finalized)
- Submit prospectus draft
- Submit IRB application
- Submit Prospectus
- Data Collection
- Data analysis
- Results Draft I

### **FALL II**

- Results Draft II
- Finalized Results
- Discussion Draft I
- Discussion Draft II

### **SPRING II**

- Discussion Draft III
- Finalized Discussion
- Completed paper with formatting
- Thesis Director announces defense date to Department
- Defense PowerPoint draft
- Defend
- Submit

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

---

### SELECTING A THESIS DIRECTOR

A Thesis Director is a member of the program faculty who serves as a mentor to the student and is a key member of a student's Thesis Committee. The thesis advisor will aid with:

- establishing a timetable for completing the thesis
- guiding the student through each phase of the development of the thesis
- assisting the student in choosing the other members of the Thesis Committee
- informing the student of important policies, procedures, and deadlines associated with the thesis
- serving as a resource person and troubleshooter

The choice of a Thesis Director is entirely up to a student. Naturally, students should select a member of the faculty with whom they feel they can work well. It is also a good idea to choose someone who has expertise in the content area of the thesis and who has the time to serve as a mentor. Before selecting a thesis director, students are encouraged to interview members of the faculty who might serve in this capacity. Students should assess each faculty member's interest in a particular topic, research agenda and direction, and the time to serve as a mentor throughout the thesis project. During this interview, faculty members may expect a student to provide them with (a) an oral description of their thesis research idea, and (b) a writing sample (maybe first draft of the prospectus). Note that a faculty member may accept or decline an invitation to serve as Thesis Director.

### SELECTING A THESIS COMMITTEE

A Thesis/Examining Committee must be comprised of least three individuals, including the Thesis Director (see description above) and two or three additional members. One additional faculty member must be from the department of rehabilitation sciences. The third member may be from the department, from another department, or from another university or off-campus facility (e.g., a research laboratory, clinical site, medical facility, school, etc.). Students should collaborate with their Thesis Director in selecting additional committee members. Committee members are typically selected for their ability to contribute to some aspect of the thesis project (e.g., content, statistical analysis, etc.) and for their availability at key points in the process.

Thesis Committee members are responsible for:

- evaluating the formal prospectus and determining whether it merits approval
- asking questions that support a student's thesis project
- serving as a resource, as appropriate, to different aspects of the thesis project
- participating during the prospectus defense and final oral defense
- determining (by vote) whether the thesis merits approval

## THESIS PROSPECTUS

---

A prospectus is essentially a "game plan" for a thesis project. While the idea may be developed in a number of ways, the formal prospectus is generally developed in collaboration with the Thesis Director and one or more members of the Thesis Committee Members. The content of a prospectus will vary somewhat, depending on the type of thesis that a student is writing. A research prospectus is a formal, written document which includes the following components:

- Statements about the importance of the topic you wish to explore
- A review of the theoretical and technical literature on the topic
- A summary of the gaps left by the current literature
- A statement of the research objectives
- A description of the research design
- A hypothesis regarding the expected outcomes

All documents must conform to acceptable rules of APA format and style.

## ORAL DEFENSE OF PROSPECTUS

Once the prospectus has been written and approved by the Thesis Director, a formal meeting of the Thesis/Examining Committee must be held to determine if the formal prospectus is acceptable. Members of the Thesis/Examining Committee should receive the written document of a formal prospectus at least two weeks prior to the Prospectus Meeting. At the time of the meeting (which can occur virtually depending on placement), the student should be prepared to give a 15-minute presentation and defend the prospectus in an oral examination format. Implementation of the plan described in the prospectus may not proceed until the prospectus has been defended and the associated approval form has been submitted.

## LIBRARY RESOURCES

It is highly recommended that students use the library as a resource during the thesis process. This links to a guide will direct students to such resources and tools:

<https://moravian.libguides.com/MSLP-Thesis-Resources>