

The University of Texas at Tyler

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND KINESIOLOGY

Thesis Policies and Procedures

Following are policies and procedures intended to guide students in the Department of Health and Kinesiology in the thesis process. If any conflict arises between Department and University policies or procedures, University versions take precedence.

1. Getting Started. The student should begin early in the graduate program (no later than the beginning of the second semester is recommended) to pursue an area of study and ultimately a topic for the thesis research. This may be done by reading research literature, interacting with faculty, observing and assisting with thesis projects of other students, and the like.

2. Selection of the thesis Advisor, Thesis Committee Chair and other Thesis Committee members. The Thesis Committee must consist of at least three persons, including the Chair and the Advisor. Normally Committee members must hold a doctoral degree. Exceptions will include a person with certain expertise and experience that qualify the person to evaluate and give advice on a particular thesis project. Normally the same person serves as Committee Chair and Advisor. The Chair must be a full-time faculty member in the Department of Health and Kinesiology. The Chair is responsible for assuring that all Department and University requirements are met. The Advisor is the person who is the primary supervisor and overseer of the research project. The Advisor may be someone other than a full-time faculty member in the Department of Health and Kinesiology. The Chair must approve all members of the Committee. A faculty member or other person may decline the student's request to be on the Committee. Once all positions have been filled, the Chair will verify the make-up of the Committee via email to the student and all Committee members, with copy to the Chair and Administrative Assistant of the Department of Health and Kinesiology.

If a member of the Thesis Committee other than the Committee Chair must be replaced for any reason, a replacement will be selected and approved in the same manner as original Committee members are selected. If the Thesis Committee Chair must be replaced, the student will work with the Department Chair to select a replacement, and the Department Chair must approve the appointment.

3. Functions of the Thesis Committee. The Thesis Committee has two general functions—to advise the student and to evaluate the thesis project and written materials. Specific functions of the Committee include (a) approval of the thesis proposal prior to the student's conducting the project and (b) final evaluation of the completed project, including the written thesis. Ideally, the Committee will provide advice and support throughout the thesis experience, although the majority of the day-to-day advice and supervision will come from the Advisor.

4. Writing the thesis proposal. The student plans the study and writes the proposal, working closely with the Advisor (and Chair, if these are different persons). The written proposal must include at least the following content: background and rationale of the study, purpose, methods, and literature references. The proposed study must be based on a thorough review of the relevant literature, but a formal written review of literature is not a required part of the proposal. The proposal should be written in the style that will be used in the thesis itself. (See #7 below.)

5. Approval of the thesis proposal. When the Advisor and Chair consent, the student distributes copies of the thesis proposal to all members of the Committee. The student arranges a meeting with the Committee for review and approval of the proposal. This meeting will be open to all faculty and students. The Committee Chair will see that the meeting is publicized. Committee members should have the proposal at least one week prior to the meeting. At the meeting, the student presents the proposal to the Committee, receives input from attendees, especially members of the Thesis Committee, and responds to questions of attendees. After the proposal meeting, the Committee will formally evaluate the proposal as (a) proposed project not approved, (b) proposed project approved, or (c) proposed project approved with noted revisions. The evaluation is documented on the form headed "Outcome of Thesis Proposal Meeting," which is filed in the student's academic record folder in the Department of Health and Kinesiology. If the project is not approved as proposed, the student must propose a new project or make the necessary revisions in the project proposal and gain approval of the Committee before proceeding.

The student, working closely with the Advisor (and Chair, if these are different persons), submits the proposal and other required materials to the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) if human subjects will be studied, or to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) if animals will be studied. Approval of other committees may also be required before proceeding. For example, if the study will be done at another institution, a committee of that institution will likely have to approve. If approval of any committee other than the Thesis Committee requires

revisions of the proposal, the Thesis Committee must approve these revisions also. The student may not proceed with recruitment of participants or data collection before all required approvals are obtained.

6. Conducting the study. Working closely with the Advisor, the student conducts the study. Normally this involves recruiting participants, collecting data, and analyzing data. The study must be done precisely as approved by the Thesis Committee and any other person or group whose approval has been obtained (e.g., IRB or IACUC). If deviations from approved methods become necessary or desirable, the student must obtain approval from the Thesis Committee and any other person or group whose approval is required (e.g., IRB or IACUC). Direct financial support may be available through funds of the Department of Health and Kinesiology, grant funds, or other funds.

7. Writing the thesis. Working closely with the Advisor (and Committee Chair, if these are different persons), the student writes the thesis in the traditional thesis format: Preliminary Pages, Abstract, Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Review of Literature), Chapter 3 (Methods), Chapter 4 (Results), Chapter 5 (Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study), and list of references. Form and style of the traditional thesis should be consistent with the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The final copy of the thesis must meet the requirements of the University as specified by the Office of Graduate Studies (e.g., “Guidelines for Preparation of Dissertation and Master’s Thesis”). If there is any discrepancy between University requirements and the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, University requirements take precedence.

8. Defense of thesis and evaluation by Thesis Committee. When the Committee Chair (and Advisor, when pertinent) consents, the student distributes copies of the thesis to all Committee members. The student also provides a copy to the Department Chair. The student arranges a meeting with the Committee for the student to present and defend the thesis and for the Committee to evaluate the thesis. This meeting shall be publicized and open for others (e.g., students, faculty not on the Thesis Committee) to attend. Committee members should have the thesis at least two weeks prior to the meeting. After this meeting, the Committee will formally evaluate the thesis. One of three possible outcomes will result from this meeting: (a) thesis not approved, (b) thesis approved, or (c) thesis approved with noted revisions. If the thesis is not approved, this must be documented in a written memo from the Chair of the Thesis Committee to the student, copied to other members of the Committee and the Department Chair, stating the reasons for the disapproval and alternatives for the student to complete the thesis. Approval of

the thesis is documented on the Thesis Approval Form. If revisions are required before final approval, the Committee may require another meeting for review of the revised thesis before giving approval. Or the Committee may authorize the Advisor or Chair to see that required revisions are made. The Committee members should sign one Thesis Approval Form for Department records and one for each printed copy of the thesis that will be prepared. The Committee Chair will withhold his/her signature on the Thesis Approval Form until all revisions required by the Committee and the Office of Graduate Studies have been completed.

If the Committee does not approve the thesis and the student decides to appeal the Committee's evaluation, the student shall follow the procedures that are in place for appealing a grade in a course, with one exception. The exception is that the Thesis Committee Chair will be part of the appeal process instead of a course instructor.

9. Preparation and submission of final copies of thesis. The student, with the guidance and approval of the Thesis Committee Chair, will prepare and submit the final copy of the thesis as required by the University. Also with the guidance and approval of the Committee Chair, the student will prepare two copies of the thesis suitable for binding. The Department of Health and Kinesiology will arrange and pay for binding of two copies, one for Department archives and one for the student. If the student would like additional bound copies, the student must request and pay for those copies.

10. Enrollment in and grades for HECC 5395 and HECC 5396. The student must register for a three-hour thesis course (HECC 5395 or HECC 5396) each semester after research has commenced until all thesis requirements have been completed. The Chair of the Thesis Committee will make the decision and advise the student regarding when to initially register for thesis credit. "Commencement of the research" refers primarily to the start of substantial involvement of the Chair or Health and Kinesiology faculty Advisor in the project development, and in all cases occurs no later than the date of acceptance of the proposal by the Thesis Committee. The student should enroll in HECC 5395 Thesis I the first semester of enrollment for thesis credit and HECC 5396 Thesis II the second semester and subsequent semesters (if necessary). Normally the proposal presentation takes place while enrolled in HECC 5395 (but may take place before), and the thesis defense must take place while enrolled in HECC 5396.

A student registered for thesis credit who does not complete all thesis requirements by the deadline for the given semester will receive a grade of I (Incomplete) for HECC 5395 or HECC

5396. Once all thesis requirements have been met, previous grades of I will be changed to reflect six semester hours of credit for thesis, three for HECC 5395 and three for HECC 5396. The thesis Chair is responsible for seeing that all that is required at the Department level is completed in terms of recording the student's grades in HECC 5395 and 5396.