

UNIVERSITY SENATE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Graduate Academic Council

Date: April 6, 2005

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND UNIVERSITY POLICIES PERTAINING TO THE
OVERSIGHT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH LEADING TO THESES
AND DISSERTATIONS**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the University Senate approves the attached proposal attending to the oversight of graduate student research leading to the preparation of theses or dissertations as detailed in specific policies pertaining to (1) masters theses and (2) admission to doctoral candidacy, as approved by the Graduate Academic Council
2. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval.

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Rationale

Consistent with federal and state regulations, the University at Albany has mandatory advance review procedures for proposed research that will involve human subjects, animals, or biohazardous materials. The policies and procedures pertaining to this review are applicable to faculty and student investigators alike. In order to assure for maximum adherence with such policies, the head of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), with support from the Vice President for Research, has suggested that graduate studies regulations be amended to document that investigators acknowledge responsibility for such research protocol approval. The Graduate Academic Council accepts this recommendation and has examined existing policies at key threshold points in masters and doctoral programs. Proposed policy changes, as specified below, are the result of this review toward this end. Other minor editorial changes are included to update the existing policies.

GENERAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE MASTER'S THESIS

A thesis is the culmination of a program of advanced study leading to a master's degree and, as such, must attest to the attainment of a basic understanding of scholarly investigation and reporting in an academic or professional field.

Responsibility for the evaluation and acceptance of a thesis rests with the major department.

Regulations governing the preparation and submission of a master's thesis follow. Detailed procedures and the Subject Approval Form required preliminary to registration for work on a thesis or in a research course requiring the writing of a thesis are available in the Office of Graduate Studies. These should be obtained by the students (and advisors) at the beginning of the planning for the research and writing of a thesis.

Permission to undertake a thesis is at the direction of the student's major department.

Masters thesis research involving human subjects, animals, or biohazardous materials must be approved in advance by the applicable University compliance committee(s): Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) or an IRB, IACUC, or IBC that has been designated by the University (as demonstrated by an approval letter, or written acknowledgment by the student and advisor that such research must be approved in advance by the committee(s) and that engaging in such research without such approval would constitute misconduct.

After the subject and scope of the research have been determined, students formally apply for approval of the project. The student submits the Application for Approval of Subject of Thesis for the Master's Degree for this purpose to the advisor and upon her/his approval to Office of Graduate Studies for final approval.

Unless there is some reason to suggest a reconsideration, the Office of Graduate Studies files one copy of the approval in the student's folder and returns two copies to the advisor, one copy for the advisor's file and one to be returned to the student along with the set of directions;

Students include the research course or master's thesis course in their registered program for the session. Students in the sciences register for appropriate research courses (e.g., Atm 699, Bio 699, Chm 699T). Students in other fields register their thesis effort and credits under a standard, departmental listing such as Fre 699, Tch 699, His 699, Cll 699. The student registers in the research 'course' or thesis 'course' for an appropriate number of credits for the session in question. If the work is to be spread out over two or more sessions, the student reregisters for the same course in each of the following sessions;

The student should be guided by the directions to students for format, style, paper, margins, and general procedures in writing and submitting the thesis. Directions for the preparation of a thesis are obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies;

The student submits unbound two final copies of the thesis and two final copies of an abstract to the advisor. The copies of the thesis submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies must be in the following physical mode:

A printed original *without errors or corrections*, on 100 percent non-recycled cotton or rag bond paper, and a printed copy, *without errors or corrections*, on 25 percent non-recycled cotton or rag bond paper;

The department chair notifies the student and the Dean of Graduate Studies as to the official evaluation of the thesis;

Upon final acceptance of a thesis, the student makes a prepayment of charges to the University Library to cover the costs of binding and gives the receipt to the department chair.

Students may request permission of their department and of the Dean of Graduate Studies to arrange for publication of their thesis. In such cases the publication must state on the title page, or in the foreword, or in a footnote in the case of publication in a journal, that the publication has been presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at the University at Albany;

The department chair or dean of the college or school transmits the thesis to the Dean of Graduate Studies with a) the statement of acceptance signed by the readers, and b) a receipt from the student for the prepayment of binding charges;

Unless copies of the thesis are unacceptable to the Dean of Graduate Studies (in which case the dean notifies the student and the department), the dean authorizes the Registrar to assign the appropriate grade and credits to the student's record. Subsequently the dean transmits the thesis to the University Library for binding, distribution, and filing (ordinarily after the degree has been conferred);

Theses which have been approved should be transmitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies by May 1 for degrees to be conferred in May, by December 1 for degrees to be conferred in December, and by August 1 for degrees to be conferred in August.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to doctoral candidacy means that, in the judgment of the faculty, the doctoral student has an adequate knowledge of the field and the specialty, knows how to use the academic resources, has potential to do original research and complete the dissertation. The qualifying procedures include the following:

passing all requisite departmental/program comprehensive/qualifying exam(s)

satisfying University resident study requirements

achieving a satisfactory academic record: at least a B (3.0) average in all resident graduate courses applicable to the degree

satisfying the research tool requirements

certification that dissertation research involving human subjects, animal subjects, or biohazardous materials has been approved by the applicable University compliance committee(s): Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) or an IRB, IACUC, or IBC that has been designated by the University) as demonstrated by an approval letter, or written acknowledgement by the student and

advisor that such research must be approved in advance by the IRB, IACUC, or IBC and that engaging in such research without approval would constitute misconduct

satisfying all other program specific candidacy requirements.

Admission to candidacy is not automatic, and a graduate student becomes a candidate for a doctoral degree only with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Graduate Academic Council, acting upon the recommendation of the program faculty and/or the dean of the school or college directing the program.

Students in doctoral programs should be admitted to candidacy at least one session (exclusive of a summer session) before the acceptance of their dissertation and the completion of all requirements of the degree.