

(Revised 10/05/2023)

Master of Science in Criminal Justice Procedures and Suggested Guidelines for Thesis

I. Student Considerations

- 1) Complete all six core courses before enrolling in thesis.
- 2) Spend time reading and studying the samples of the theses provided to you. Keep in mind that your thesis must conform to the American Psychological Association (APA) style of writing.
- 3) Complete the following three steps before discussing your thesis with the potential chair of the thesis committee: (1) select a research topic for your thesis; (2) develop the outline of the literature and the research questions of your study; and (3) plan for your study's methodology, including sampling.
- 4) Select three committee members (chair and two readers), two of whom must be KSU graduate faculty. The graduate faculty status can be applied for this particular purpose, and program director can assist in this process. Chair of your thesis committee must be KSU graduate faculty from the MSCJ program. Consult with the chair of your thesis committee in selecting the other two members. One faculty member on the committee should have substantive knowledge of the topic. The three members of your thesis committee are voting members.
- 5) Complete **the Committee Approval form** once committee members are identified .
- 6) After talking to all three thesis committee members, arrange a meeting with the chair so that you can present your thesis proposal. This is not a formal proposal defense, and only the chair is required to be present. The proposal should consist of:
 - (a) Introduction of the study, including the study's research questions (2-3 pages)
 - (b) Review of the literature (6-7 pages)
 - (c) Methodology of the study (2-3 pages).

Submit your thesis proposal to all committee members (via the committee chair) at least **14 days** before the meeting. Complete **the Proposal Approval form** after the chair approved the proposal.

- 7) Do not begin collecting data for your thesis until your proposal (stated in Item 6) is approved and signed by thesis chair and until the IRB (Institutional Review Board) approves your IRB application.
- 8) Complete and submit **the Petition-to-Graduate** during the semester preceding the semester of expected graduation.
- 9) Prepare drafts of your thesis for your thesis chair and the two committee members. **The final thesis should be between 80 and 200 pages.** Do not forget to follow the APA style and make use of the KSU Writing Center. In completing your thesis, regularly discuss with the chair and the committee members about your thesis and follow their suggestions.

- 10) Arrange for a thesis defense date with all three committee members and submit the final draft of the thesis to them at least **21 days** prior to the final defense. Prepare to present the thesis between 30 and 40 minutes. Complete **the Thesis Defense Outcome form** after the thesis has been successfully defended. The final thesis outcome as indicated on the form ("Passed"/ "Failed"/ "Passed with Revisions") will be the outcome determined by a majority of the thesis committee members.
- 11) Submit/ upload the final version of the thesis for publication to the **Digital Commons** once the final version is ready for submission.

II. Thesis Structure

The table below provides helpful information for your thesis completion.

Purpose(s)	Describe, explore, explain, and / or apply
Design and Methodology	Use sampling procedure and advanced statistics or qualitative methods
Audience	Academic audience as well as criminal justice officials
Length	Between 80 and 200 pages
Chapter Content & Format	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 (Introduction) 	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context and background (including compelling facts or statistics from research sources) • Problem statement(to show the issue exists and is worth being studied) • Research questions • Significance of study • Defining key terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 (Literature Review) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an organized, informed discussion of relevant published work. • Identify what is a gap in the literature (i.e., what we do not know) • Relate your thesis topic to what has already been published. • State your hypotheses and the rationale for each one
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 (Methodology) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain your research design used to answer your research questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study population ○ Sampling procedure ○ Instrument and variables

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data collection process ○ Data analysis plan (what research technique(s), why, and how)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 4 (Findings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report the empirical findings of the study through tables, figures, and / or charts and their interpretations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chapter 5 (Discussion and Conclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer your evaluation of the results and when possible, relate the findings to those presented in the literature review section ○ Explain whether the hypotheses were supported ○ Provide policy implications ● Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summarize key findings of the study ○ Address limitations of the study that might have affected the results ○ Suggest future research based on your study's findings

III. Final Thesis Defense and Submission Dates

All theses must follow the current American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. The strict timelines for completing/ submitting theses and for final defenses are provided below. (*)

Expected Graduation	Petition Deadline	Submit Final Thesis Draft to Committee	Defend Thesis	Final Copy with Edits to Committee	Final Copy Submitted for Publication to Digital Commons
Fall	(**)	End of Week 10	End of Week 13	End of Week 15	Final grades deadline (**)
Spring	(**)	End of Week 10	End of Week 13	End of Week 15	Final grades deadline (**)

(*) Deadlines above are based on instructional weeks of the semester for fall and spring semesters. (Note: Fall (Thanksgiving) and Spring Break weeks are excluded). **For purposes of the deadlines, "End of Week" means by or before 5pm of the Friday of that Week.**

(**) May vary by semester. Please consult KSU academic calendar on Registrar's website for each semester's Petition Deadlines and Final Grades Deadlines.