Area-specific thesis preparation MA CCAP

Requirements of a Master's thesis in CCAP

A Master's thesis in CCAP must be completed prior to enrolling in PhD courses. A student cannot be in two programs at the same time. The expectation is that a continuing master's student with a doctoral offer for the semester following their last MA semester will defend by the middle of their last MA semester or earlier. If you are unable to successfully finalize your master's thesis with the Office of Graduate Studies by one week before the start of your first PhD semester, the doctoral offer of admission may become be null and void.
Given the constraints outlined above, the following guideline has been developed to assist students and supervisors in the design of projects that are feasible and allow students to defend no later than the 6th semester of their Master's Program.

Type of study: Generally, projects should be short term in nature. Appropriate theses can include a pilot, replication, data from an existing database, component of an ongoing study, a systematic review, or qualitative study.

Type of objectives: 1-3 goals/hypotheses are sufficient, and they may be exploratory in nature depending on the type of research (e.g., qualitative).

Type of Analyses: Complexity of analyses is not necessarily important; rather, it is more important that the analyses fit the project and hypotheses/aims, and should typically be within the scope of material covered in PSYC*6060 and PSYC*6380.

To maintain feasibility of a project, students are not required to meet the level of statistical power expected in journals; students may conduct analyses on a smaller sample than would be desired for later publication for the purpose of defense. Note: Students are welcome to continue collecting data after their defense for the purpose of publication. However, students and supervisors should discuss the logistics of this plan, ensure ethics approval allows for further data collection, and consider the student's role in the project post defense.

It is important to consider the relative level of difficulty of the components of the proposed thesis project and find a balance between all parts of the research process. For example, if data collection/recruitment is expected to take a significant amount of time students and their committee should consider this within the context of data analyses that will be required.

It is the responsibility of the committee and the student to have a discussion regarding the aforementioned points and consider feasibility of the thesis project. This discussion should include the development of a rough timeline of major checkpoints throughout the research process including: ethics submission and approval, recruitment, data collection, and completion of analyses. Further, students and the committee should discuss a backup plan to ensure students can meet the proposed timeline and the sufficiency requirements. This discussion can be formalized and signed off on the CCAP MA Thesis Timeline and Feasibility Guide, which should be submitted along with the proposal paperwork in the 3rd semester of the Master's.

Planning, Structure, and Timeline

Components of the final thesis document can be written at publication length. The final manuscript

should include the following sections: Introduction, Method and Materials/Procedure, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications (followed by Appendices, as relevant). Theses must adhere to the most recent APA formatting guidelines as well as the Atrium formatting requirements (see here for formatting and here for submission requirements). Students are strongly encouraged to discuss a plan of the structure of their thesis (including approximate length of the different sections) with their advisor prior to writing their thesis.

During the preparation of the written thesis, the student should be receiving feedback from the advisor as well as the advisory committee (what form that takes (e.g., drafts, meetings) will be up to each committee to determine). Students are encouraged to have a carefully planned timeline for this process, as it will likely take longer than they expect. This can be developed collaboratively with the advisor and advisory committee, and should include the following milestones (with associated dates): Ethics Submission, Ethics Approval, Start of Recruitment, Start of Data Collection, End of Data Collection, Completion of Analyses, First Draft Complete, Draft to Committee (2 weeks to edit), Final Thesis to Chair of Examination Committee (2 weeks before defense).

Students can fall behind because of difficulty implementing their study, difficulty collecting data, etc. Consider potential barriers to meeting the above timeline for your specific project and consider a) ways to prevent such challenges and b) a backup plan to ensure the thesis can still be completed on time and meet sufficiency requirements if such challenges are encountered. Students are encouraged to develop and review this plan together with their advisor and advisory committee.

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The thesis should strive to evince critical and creative thinking skills, literacy skills and communication skills and a global understanding. The thesis and the work it includes must be professional and adhere to the highest ethical standards. The thesis must also demonstrate the candidate's capacity for original and independent work, and should include a critical evaluation of work which has previously been done in the candidate's field of research. The thesis should emphasize any new conclusions which may be drawn from the candidate's own research.
Typically, students will submit multiple drafts of their thesis to their Advisor prior to submitting it to their committee who may also need to see multiple drafts.

A minimum of two weeks will be allowed for any Advisory Committee member, including the Advisor, to evaluate any work submitted to them.

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