

EDCI 597 Master's Thesis/Research Project

Overview

The Master's Thesis/Research project is the culminating activity of the Master of Arts Degree. It demonstrates the competence and quality of your work.

The following are several ways the master's thesis/research project can be approached. Specific details regarding each approach are outlined later in this document.

1. Thesis
2. Research Study
3. Action Research Study
4. Education Project
5. Practicum

General Steps in Completing the Master's Thesis/Research Project:

1. Invite a faculty member to be your advisor for the thesis/research project.
2. Meet with your advisor to discuss potential ideas.
3. Draft a written proposal (see proposal guidelines) and present to your advisor.
4. Following any necessary revisions, the advisor brings your proposal to the faculty in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction for approval.
5. Upon approval, you have one year to complete the project. If not completed within the year, you must re-register for the course and pay for three (3) additional units to allow for another year. A further extension will require departmental approval.
6. When the master's thesis/research project is completed, present required evidence to your advisor for evaluation.

Curriculum and Instruction Faculty

Curriculum & Instruction faculty are committed to excellence in scholarship. Each faculty member has engaged in research and, thus, understands the time and commitment it takes to pursue this academic goal. Furthermore, many are involved in active research, conducting studies and disseminating results through presentations and publications.

In order to support your development as a scholar the department has designated a specific instructor to collaborate with you on research and/or an academic project. Please contact the selected instructor below to discuss ways to get involved with current research as well as assistance with your own research topics and projects.

The following instructor is who you are to contact and work with one on one with your project for the Curriculum & Instruction master's degree. Below is their contact information and their specializations:

Linda Caviness

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937-550-4856

Brain-based Learning

Reading and Language Arts

Teacher Education

Proposal Guidelines

In order to fulfill the requirements of the Master of Arts degree, you must develop and complete a thesis/research project. In order to accomplish this requirement, you must first request a faculty advisor, prepare a proposal, and obtain departmental approval for your thesis/research project.

This proposal paper is intended to show your engagement in the scholarly literature which will provide the foundation for your thesis/research project. The paper provides a good starting point upon which to develop your final research product(s). It is also intended to demonstrate your careful forethought and prior planning which will guide your future steps through the process.

Please carefully review the following requirements for your proposal. In consultation with your faculty advisor, prepare the proposal according to the guidelines. Following any necessary revisions, your advisor will present the final draft of your proposal to the Curriculum and Instruction Department faculty for approval to begin your thesis/research project.

1. **Cover Page**, typed (see form)
2. **Proposal Paper**: You should include clearly labeled subsections in the narrative to address each of the following required elements. Use APA format according to the most recent edition.
 - **Introduction**: Include background and an introduction to the problem, a concise rationale, and a brief description of your thesis/project including your research question(s) if applicable.
 - **Literature Review**: Include relevant and significant literature that forms the foundation of the thesis/research project and to provide a context for the project's significance to current scholarship/research in your field. Describe the specific contribution(s) your work will make and to whom. Discuss the hypothesis to be tested, the expected outcomes, and/or the specific thesis of the project (as applicable).
 - **Design & Methodology**: Describe the plan for the thesis/research project, and any procedures that will be implemented. Describe the activity to be carried out in the realization of the final product.
 - **Timeline**: Outline your proposed schedule for the completion of each of the major components of the project, from beginning to end.
3. **References**: Include a bibliography with all references cited in the proposal.
4. **Other Supporting Documents** (if applicable)

Thesis

A thesis is a comprehensive scholarly paper on particular topic and the theorists and researchers who have conducted work on the topic. A thesis is a good option for students wishing to pursue education beyond a master's degree.

Steps in Completing a Thesis (consulting regularly with your advisor):

1. Determine the topic of your thesis.
2. Complete and submit a written proposal (see proposal guidelines).
3. Upon approval, complete a thesis and submit draft(s) to your faculty advisor. Revise according to feedback.
4. Submit the final thesis to your faculty advisor for evaluation.

Components of a Thesis (APA style, most recent edition):

1. Title page
2. Table of Contents
3. Abstract
4. Introduction (including background/problem, purpose/significance, research questions)
5. Comprehensive Literature Review (including the history, theories, theorists, and relevant scholarly studies on the topic)
6. Synthesis
7. Conclusions and Contributions to the Body of Knowledge
8. Suggestions for Future Research in the Topic
9. References

Ideas for Disseminating the Thesis (Recommended)

1. Submit manuscript to a journal (be aware you may have to reduce the length prior to submission).
2. Submit and give a poster presentation at a national, regional, or state conference.
3. Submit and give a presentation at a national, regional, or state conference.
4. Give a seminar talk in an appropriate public forum.

Research Study

A research study should be selected and planned in consultation with your advisor. If chosen, you must develop, conduct, and report on an original qualitative or quantitative research study. A research study is an excellent option for students wishing to pursue education beyond a master's degree.

Steps in Completing a Research Study (consulting regularly with your advisor):

1. Determine the topic and nature of your research study.
2. Complete and submit a written proposal (see proposal guidelines).
3. Upon approval by the committee, submit and obtain IRB approval if study involves human subjects. See <http://lasierra.edu/spa/human-subjects/application-research/>.
4. Conduct study. Analyze findings.
5. Prepare a comprehensive report, using APA style according to the most recent edition.
6. Submit your report of findings to your faculty advisor for evaluation.

Ideas for Disseminating Research Study Findings (Recommended)

1. Submit a research manuscript to a journal.
2. Submit and give a research poster presentation at a national, regional, or state conference.
3. Submit and give a presentation at a national, regional, or state conference.

Action Research Study

Action Research is a research study conducted with your own students within your own teaching context. It is planned and conducted with the intention of better understanding and/or improving some aspect of your teaching practice, your classroom, your school/educational environment, your district, or a relevant curriculum and instruction plan.

Steps in Completing an Action Research Study (consulting regularly with your advisor):

1. Determine the topic and nature of your research study.
2. Complete and submit a written proposal (see proposal guidelines).
3. Upon approval by the committee, submit and obtain IRB approval if study involves human subjects. See <http://lasierra.edu/spa/human-subjects/application-research/>.
4. Conduct study. Analyze findings.
5. Prepare a comprehensive report, using APA style according to the most recent edition.
6. Submit your report of findings to your faculty advisor for evaluation.

Ideas for Disseminating Action Research Study Findings (Recommended)

1. Submit a research manuscript to a journal.
2. Submit and give a research poster presentation at a national, regional, or state conference.
3. Submit and give an oral presentation at a national, regional, or state conference.
4. Present to stakeholders and/or other relevant individuals (e.g. if your research revealed information for improving your school, then you might present your findings to the school board).

Education Project

An education project for the master's degree can take many forms and is limited only by your own creativity. Keep in mind that the project must be appropriately professional, scholarly, and comprehensive to fulfill the requirements of the master's degree project.

Steps in Completing an Education Project (consulting regularly with your advisor):

1. Determine the topic and scope of your project.
2. Complete and submit a written proposal (see proposal guidelines).
3. Upon approval, develop and complete your project as proposed.
4. Submit the evidence of the completed project and your list of references used in its planning and execution, and evidence of fulfilling your dissemination plan to your faculty advisor for evaluation.

Ideas for a Potential Education Project:

1. A specialized curriculum in a discipline
2. A simulation (for the purpose of learning)
3. A children's book
4. An educational website
5. A book that facilitates learning in your discipline and/or understandings in your current profession

Ideas for Disseminating the Education Project (Recommended)

1. Submit project for publication.
2. Submit and give a presentation about your project at a national, regional, or state conference.
3. Present your project in an appropriate public forum.
4. Publish your project online and take appropriate steps to advertise it to those who can benefit from it.

Practicum

A practicum encompasses active and in-depth involvement in an education context other than your own. The practicum will need to be planned and coordinated with a faculty advisor and, in some cases, with other entities at La Sierra University and/or the practicum site.

Steps in Completing a Practicum (consulting regularly with your advisor):

1. Determine the nature, scope, and location of the practicum.
2. Complete and submit a written proposal (see proposal guidelines). Proposal must include documentation ensuring the practicum site is in agreement with the proposed plan.
3. Upon approval, fulfill your practicum experience, maintaining a comprehensive and reflective journal along the way.
4. Drawing from your reflective journal as well as scholarly literature, write a paper that summarizes and analyzes the experience. Include a detailed synthesis of what went well, what could have been improved, what you learned, and how that impacts your academic and career goals. Draw connections between your experience and relevant literature. Compare and contrast what you learned with what you expected to learn or what the literature says related to such experiences.
5. Compile an e-portfolio or a Powerpoint/Prezi presentation illustrating your experience including pictures and other artifacts.
6. Submit your paper and e-portfolio/presentation file to your faculty advisor for evaluation.

Ideas for Disseminating Your Practicum Learning (Recommended)

1. Submit and give a presentation at a national, regional, or state conference.
2. Give a seminar talk in an appropriate public forum.
3. Develop a report for the practicum site in order to provide them with useful information that emerged from your reflective paper.