

Thesis

Policy & Procedures



THESIS OVERVIEW

The Master's Thesis is a comprehensive research study in which the student presents a research question and findings that contributes to the field's overall knowledge-base. It may be comprised of original or secondary research, and takes on average, over twelve months to complete. Because of its rigor, the thesis option is recommended for those students who are either interested in pursuing a Ph.D. or a research-oriented career, and requires the permission of the Program Director.

QUALIFYING TO WRITE A THESIS

For those students who are interested in writing a thesis, the following procedure must be followed:

Step One: Apply for 'eligibility' with the Program Director, who will verify whether the student has met the minimum grade point criteria (3.3 overall; B or better in the CRJU 602, 603, 610, and 710).

If Yes, the student may move to Step Two;

If No, the student must take the comprehensive exams.

Step Two: Submit a "Pre-Thesis Proposal" (see page 46-47 for specific guidelines of what must be included in the mini-proposal) to the thesis admission committee, consisting of the MSCJ Program Director and a CCJFS division faculty member who agrees to serve as the Chair of the student's thesis committee. Students eligible to proceed to the pre-thesis proposal should select a faculty member with expertise in the topic area of the proposed thesis. The Chair of the Thesis Committee will then work closely with the prospective "thesis" student in the development of his or her pre-thesis proposal. The committee will then review the viability of the product (e.g., research question, methods, data), as well as the quality of the student's writing. One of three decisions will be made:

If Yes, the student will be authorized to register for his or her first (3) thesis credits and will proceed to drafting his or her prospectus;

If Revise and Resubmit (e.g., the committee see the potential is there, but modifications need to be made - these can be major or minor), the student has one opportunity make the revisions, OR submit a new proposal. If deciding to write a new proposal, it is still considered a revise and resubmit step. If the revisions are accepted, the student will be authorized to register for his or her first (3) thesis

credits and will proceed to drafting his or her prospectus. If the revisions and/or new proposal is rejected, the student must take the comprehensive exams;

If Reject outright (due to lack of research and writing skills), the student must take the comprehensive exams.

For fall semester, proposals are due September 1st & November 1st. For spring semester, proposals are due February 1st & April 1st. Faculty members will meet as soon thereafter as possible.

For those students who proceed to the prospectus stage, the committee will recommend two additional faculty members whose expertise best matches the student's research question to complete the thesis committee - the student can then approach each recommended faculty member to seek their approval to serve on the committee.

Pre-Thesis Research Proposal

The first task is to select a criminal justice topic that you are interested in conducting re-search. Find a topic available in any one of the suggested journals listed below.

Criminology	Family Violence
Criminology and Public Policy	Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency
Justice Quarterly	Criminal Justice Review
Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice	Crime and Delinquency
Journal of Criminal Justice	Police and Society
Law and Society Review	Law and Society
Journal of Quantitative Criminology	Deviant Behavior
Women and Criminal Justice	International Criminal Justice Review

Brief Introduction

- 1.State the research problem. Briefly summarize the research question and provide justification (cite) as to why it is a worth while question.
- 2.Theoretical perspective. Identify studies that have previously addressed the problem.
- 3.Identify the deficiencies in prior research.
- 4.State the significance of the study (i.e. to the field; community). What is the purpose of the study – the goal(s). Explain why you are doing the research - usefulness, what you hope to learn.

Abstract

Develop an abstract to describe the methods of your proposed thesis research - include the following:

- 1.Describe the research topic - what, where, when, who, how, etc. Provide the research question, the statement of the problem, and the relevance of the study.
- 2.Describe what type of research methods you will use to test your hypothesis.
- 3.Provide a description of the data being examined.

4. Describe the sample, population, and participants in the study, and discuss any human subjects concerns.
5. Discuss the type of data you will be using and where you will attain your data.
6. Describe how the data will be collected and from where will the data be taken.
7. Describe the instruments, variables, and materials used to collect data.

Reference page

Adhering to the APA writing style, develop a reference page for at least 15 resources. All references need to be research based articles, reports, chapters, and books with original research.

TASK SEQUENCE AND SPECIFIED DEADLINES FOR THESIS

Students are reminded that University policy requires that all requirements for the Masters Degree must be completed within seven years from the date of enrollment in their first graduate course. Students should also be aware of the time commitment required to complete a thesis, consideration should be given to each stage of the thesis, to include:

1. Receive approval from MSCJ Thesis Committee of Pre-Thesis Proposal; select thesis advisor, and with the advice of the advisor, two additional committee members.
2. Register for first (3) Thesis credits; begin writing formal prospectus of thesis (e.g., Chapters 1 - 3).
3. Human Subjects approval
4. Approval to use data or time to collect data
5. Orally defend prospectus, and earn approval of thesis committee.
6. Register for last (3) Thesis credits.
7. Develop thesis database and analyze data, update and revise Chapter 3 and write Chapters 4 & 5.
8. Orally defend final thesis. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule final oral examinations and to provide each member of the committee copies of the thesis at least 14 days before the examination. Oral examinations are open to other faculty and interested students. The examination may be scheduled whenever the student completes the thesis to the satisfaction of the Thesis Advisor and has completed all other graduation requirements for the degree. The typical oral examination lasts about one hour although additional time should be scheduled for adequate oral defense. The final oral examination on the Masters thesis may be scheduled at any time during regular semesters at the mutual convenience of the student and the thesis committee.
9. Approval of student's final thesis must be unanimous. The student has two attempts to successfully pass his or her oral defense, failure to meet this criteria constitutes failure of the thesis and the student will not be awarded a graduate degree from the MSCJ Program.
10. Once approved the original typed manuscript is signed on approval page by advisor. The original thesis is presented to the graduate program director, two copies must be delivered by the student to the Langsdale Library special collections coordinator, and

another signed copy is to be delivered to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Upon submission of signed copies, a grade is issued and entered

11. The final approved copy of the thesis must be presented to the Thesis Advisor no later than the end of the 11th week of the semester in which the student wishes to graduate. Failure to submit the final manuscript by this time may preclude the student's graduation within the last semester. Submission of final copies during summer semesters will be at the discretion of the Thesis Advisor who will decide on appropriate deadlines during this period.

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDE FOR WRITING THE THESIS

The following is a set of guidelines concerning content which is often included in theses.³ It is intended as a rough outline of some of the topics a student should consider in preparing his or her thesis proposal and in the final version as well. However, this set is far from comprehensive; some of the items may not be addressed in a student's specific research at all while other items not included in the list may be very important. In finalizing the proposal and final thesis the student should work closely with his or her thesis advisor in deciding what topics should be covered.

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM (e.g., "Briefly summarize what you're going to tell me")

- A. Introduction
- B. General Background of the problem (Where does the problem fit within larger social issues, current or past trends etc?)
- C. Statement of the problem (What is the area of concern you are addressing, why is it important?)
- D. Purpose of your research (Why are you studying what you are, what do you feel will come of you efforts, how can the research help solve the problem you described?)
- E. Theoretical framework of your study
- F. Conceptual assumptions you are making for the study
- G. General statement of your research questions or hypotheses
- H. Definitions of key terms (conceptual rather than operational)
- I. General limits of the study
- J. Description of what follows in subsequent chapters

³ These guidelines were drawn in part from Joan and William Michael's paper printed in Isaac and Michael's *Handbook in Research and Evaluation* (Edits; San Diego), 1975, p. 157-158

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE (e.g., “Tell me what others have said”)

A. Overview of the chapter

B. Summary of literature

- Tell reader what other studies concerning this problem have found
- Tell reader who else has done work on the problem
- Tell reader when and where other research has been conducted
- Tell reader what other research methodologies, techniques, and the like have been utilized
- Tell reader what other types of statistical approaches have been used
- Demonstrate why there is a need for your particular study
- Demonstrate why your findings may be important in solving the particular problem described
- Provide the theoretical and logical basis for the predictions stated in your research questions or hypotheses
- Prevent reinventing the wheel
- Gives you guidance in appropriate techniques
- Overall; basically justifies what you have done and demonstrates to the reader how and why your research is different (or similar) to previous work

NOTE: The review of the literature is often the most important and time consuming portion of a thesis. A comprehensive and thorough review is one of the very first steps that you engage in before thinking about statistics, hypotheses data collection or anything else. Most graduate students minimize the importance of a good review but a good review will make the remainder of the research effort and final writing much simpler and much less forbidding.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY (e.g., “Tell me how you conducted the study”)

A. Overview

B. Description of the research design (i.e., correlational, experimental etc.)

C. The specific research design utilized

D. Operational statement of hypotheses (research and null)

- E. Definitions of variables
- F. Pilot studies (if conducted)
- G. How subjects selected (sampling techniques)
- H. How data were collected (tests, surveys etc.) and the reliability and validity of the collection
- I. How data were coded or recoded
- J. How the data were analyzed and processed
- K. Possible errors in your research and the consequences of such errors (study limitations)
- L. Summary or the chapter

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS (e.g., “Show me what you’ve found”)

- A. Present findings in easy to interpret tables or charts with accompanying descriptions
- B. Present finding in order corresponding to your research hypotheses
- C. When describing your findings do so factually leaving inference and interpretation for later
- D. Present a discussion section following the findings to link your findings to the problem, theory, review of the literature and/or justification of the study
- E. Summary of findings

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (e.g., “Tell me what you’ve told me”)

- A. Summary of topics covered in first chapters and your basic findings
- B. Conclusions (What did you get from your efforts)
- C. Practical recommendations (for applied settings, future research, theoretical perspectives and the like)

THESIS FORMAT

The original manuscript must be printed on 16 or 20 pound bond 100% cotton content 8½ x 11 white paper. The left margin must be 1½ inches, with the remaining margins equal to 1 inch. The font size should be 12 pt and in either Arial, Times New Roman, Helvetica, or Palatino. The manuscript should be double spaced on printed on only one side of the paper. The citation style must comply with APA standards, and the organization of the thesis must be arranged in the following sequence:

Blank Leaf

Approval Sheet (see sample on page 54)

Abstract (see sample on page 57) - The abstract must be double-spaced and no longer than 250 words. It should briefly contain the following: a) the statement of the problem, b) the research methods utilized, c) the findings or results, and d) the conclusions.

Title Page - (see sample on page 56) - Wording of the title is particularly important for locating research by others interested in your topic. Therefore, the title should consist of a meaningful description of the content to aid retrieval.

Blank leaf (bearing copyright if desired) 4

Preface or Forward (optional)

Dedication (optional)

Acknowledgment (optional)

Table of Contents

List of Tables (if any) - Pictures, tables, figures, etc. should be presented on the same quality paper as the rest of the manuscript and awkward sized materials, such as computer printouts (if included) reduced to 8½ x 11 inches. Exceptions, such as including oversized materials in an attached envelope, are to be decided by the Thesis Advisor in consultation with the Program Director.

List of other types of materials (maps, figures, etc.)

Body of text

Appendices (if any)

References

Index (if any)

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⁴ Should the student wish to copyright the thesis it is his or her obligation to secure such copyright. He/She may file for copyright himself or it may be obtained through University Microfilms in Ann Arbor, Michigan. If a copyright is applied for, notice of copyright should be placed one line above the bottom margin of the last unnumbered page of the preliminaries of the manuscript (see IIA).

THESIS APPROVAL

Title of Thesis: "It's a Girl Thing" - Exploring Gender
Differences in Risk Factors Among Adolescents

Name of Master's Candidate: Christina N. Lentz
Master of Science, 2006

Certification Approval: _____
Heather L. Pfeifer, Ph.D., Chair Date
Division of Criminology
University of Baltimore

Debra L. Stanley, Ph.D Date Division of
Criminology
University of Baltimore

Cindy J. Smith, Ph.D. Date Division of
Criminology
University of Baltimore

University of Baltimore
Division of Criminology, Criminal Justice & Forensic Studies
MSCJ Thesis Sign-Off Form

The purpose of this form is to document that the student has delivered and the appropriate receiving authority has received the completed and bound copy of the Master's Thesis. All recipients must sign before a student's grade is changed and he or she can receive a diploma.

When you receive a thesis that has a signature page signed in the front few pages, please sign and date that you have received it.

1 copy	Thesis chair	Date
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	Committee member	Date
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	Committee member	Date
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1 copy	MSCJ Program Director	Date
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1 copy	YGCLA Dean's Office	Date
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2 copies on thesis paper	Library	Date
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TARGET MARKET ANALYSIS:
A COMPARATIVE NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT IMPACT EVALUATION

By:

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
University of Baltimore in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Criminal Justice 2008

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Target Market Analysis: A Comparative
Narcotics Enforcement Evaluation
_____, Master of Science, 2008

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Benjamin Wright
Associate Professor
Department of Criminal Justice
University of Baltimore

The present investigation examines the impacts of a narcotics crackdown and the impacts of a Community Oriented Drug Enforcement (CODE) effort. Impact measures include narcotics related telephone complaints. Drug arrest, and specified Part I Index crimes of robbery, breaking and entering, and larceny-theft. Individual enforcement impact analyses, as well as comparative enforcement analyses are presented.

Analyses found actual, although not satisfactory significant, adverse impacts on Part I Index crimes, and drug arrest within the target market following the narcotics Crackdown effort. In contrast, analyses examining the impacts of the community oriented drug enforcement effort found reductions in post-enforcement Part I Index crimes, and drug arrests as compared to the pre-enforcement market. Both efforts examined had a discernable positive impact on citizen perceptions of drug activity as measure by narcotic.

ANNUAL THESIS PROGRESS REVIEW

Each spring the MSCJ graduate faculty will review the progress of each thesis student to determine if sufficient progress is occurring to reasonably expect timely completion or potential for an extension. (An extension may result in the student replacing out-dated coursework to meet current standards and state-of-the-art.) A letter will be sent to the student indicating the review is complete with recommendations / expectations to continue remaining in good standing.

The faculty will discuss each thesis student's progress at the final faculty meeting each spring (usually in April). The chair will provide a report of student pro-gress year to year:

Name _____

Student ID number _____

a) Semester/Year student began program _____

b) Semester/Year student must complete the program _____

c) Semester student enrolled in 1st three thesis credits Fall Spring Summer 200__

d) Semester student enrolled in 2nd three thesis credits Fall Spring Summer 200__

e) Semester successfully defended proposal Fall Spring Summer 200__

f)Annual progress:

Year _____

Year _____

Year _____

The program director will mail a letter to each student indicating one of three scenarios:

• _____ You are making sufficient progress on your thesis and it is expected you will complete timely. As you know, you must complete your thesis within seven calendar years. Failure to do so will necessitate a written request by you to the Program Director requesting an extension and may result in a requirement to replace out-dated coursework to meet current standards and remain state-of-the-art. Your time period will expire:

• _____ You are making slow progress on your thesis. You will need to increase your time commitment to complete your thesis timely. Remember: You must complete your thesis within seven calendar years. Failure to do so will necessitate a written request by you to the Program Director requesting an extension and may result in a requirement to replace out-dated coursework to meet current standards and remain state-of-the-art. Your time period will expire:

_____.

• _____ Your progress on your thesis is inadequate. Remember: You must complete your thesis within seven calendar years. Failure to do so will necessitate a written request by you to the Program Director requesting an extension and may result in a requirement to replace out-dated coursework to meet current standards and remain state-of-the-art. Your time period will expire:

_____. **Please contact your Chair to work out a schedule of tasks.**
