

GETTING STARTED ON YOUR THESIS | CSUN CHS MA PROGRAM

Preliminary Thesis Steps			
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
ESTABLISH THESIS COMMITTEE	COMPLETE THESIS PLANNING FORM	COMPLETE THESIS PROPOSAL	DEFEND THESIS PROPOSAL

Step 1: ESTABLISH THESIS COMMITTEE

- In conjunction with the MA program coordinator, graduate students will identify faculty to serve on their committee. Students will contact faculty members to serve on their committee via email, appointment, or faculty office hours.
- A thesis committee consists of a chair and two other committee members.
- A thesis chair is a faculty member who mentors a student through the thesis process, from start to finish. The chair's responsibilities include guidance in developing and narrowing research topic, providing feedback on drafts of thesis proposal and thesis, sharing knowledge and resources, supporting and encouraging student, and assisting in selecting thesis committee members.
- Your chair and second committee member must be a tenure track faculty member from the Chicana/o Studies Department (CHS) at CSUN.
- The third committee member can be a lecturer from the CSUN CHS Department or a CSUN tenure track faculty member from another department at CSUN or an expert outside of the university. The expert does not have to have a university undergraduate or graduate degree to serve.

Step 2: COMPLETE THESIS PLANNING FORM

- Once all members have agreed to serve on your committee, you must initiate and complete the **Thesis Planning Form**. The form is electronic and can be found at <https://academics.csun.edu/etd/>.
- If you have a committee member that is not from CSUN, you must inform the MA program coordinator so they can input the member into the system. A curriculum vitae or resume is needed and must be emailed to the graduate coordinator.
- The electronic form will generate an email and ask your committee members to sign off in agreement that they will serve on your committee.
- The electronic form will also send an email to contact the MA program coordinator and ask them to approve your committee.

STEP 3: COMPLETE THESIS PROPOSAL

- Meet weekly or bimonthly with thesis chair for guidance in the development of your proposal. Be prepared to write several (if not many) drafts of proposal.
- Thesis proposals range from 12-20 pages.
- The following outline is the framework for your thesis proposal:

Introduction to the Subject of Interest and the Research Question

- a. What is the goal of the research project?
- b. What is the topic, issue or focus of your research?
- c. What is your research question(s)?
- d. What are the important terms to be defined?
- e. What is the significance of the issue or topic? Why is it compelling?
 - Do you want to extend a theory?
 - Do you want to extend our understanding of previous research in a more relevant/contemporary context?
 - Do you want to resolve a practical problem?
 - Do you want to test a method or methodology?
- f. What are the limitations and delimitations of such a study?

Review of Literature

- a. How does your research project contribute to the ongoing dialogue in the field?
- b. What does previous research reveal about the different aspects of the topic?
- c. What research questions and/or hypotheses have emerged from the literature review?
- d. What is the theoretical framework for the investigation?

Method

- a. What will constitute the data for the research?
- b. What materials and information are needed to conduct the research?
- c. Who will provide the data for the research? What is the population being studied? Who will be the respondents for this research? What is the sample size? If appropriate, is the population from one or more specific sites?
- d. How will the data be collected, analyzed, and interpreted? Provide rationale for data collection procedures.
- e. What are some of the ethical issues to address as part of the methods?
- f. Create a timeline for data collection.

Create timeline for completion of thesis

- a. Determine due dates for completing each chapter of your thesis.
- b. Inquire and determine which human subjects deadline best meets your timeline. Dates can be found at <https://www.csun.edu/research-sponsored-programs/protection-human-subjects>.
- c. Determine which date(s) your full committee will be meeting to review your work and complete thesis.
- d. Inquire and determine graduate office deadlines for the semester.

Step 4: DEFEND THESIS PROPOSAL

- Once your thesis chair determines your proposal is ready to go to committee, set a thesis proposal defense date with your committee members. Find a suitable date and time.
- Your thesis chair will send out email invitation and your thesis proposal to the committee.
- Committee members are provided 3 weeks to read and review thesis proposal.
- Deliver a formal presentation summarizing your research proposal the day of your defense. Typically, 10-15-minute presentation discussing introduction and background, research question(s), methodology, and significance of the research.
- After your presentation, the committee will ask questions to clarify aspects of your proposal, methodology, and assess your understanding of the topic.
- Committee will decide whether to approve, request revisions, or reject the proposal.
- If approved at thesis defense, begin your research according to the approved proposal.
- If major revisions are needed, take notes on their feedback and re-submit revisions to committee at a later date. Once any revisions are accepted, you will receive formal approval to proceed with your research.