

**ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY  
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

**THE THESIS IN INDUSTRIAL-  
ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**Revised October, 2011**

**This booklet is designed to be a guide through the thesis process. Official regulations are contained in the current Roosevelt University Graduate Catalog.**

## THE MASTER'S THESIS: OUTLINING THE PROCESS

The following is a list of the steps students must complete to satisfy the thesis requirement for the I-O Master's (M.A.) Degree. Further details on the process can be found inside this packet.

- 1) The ideal time to start the thesis process is during your first semester. However, students have been successful starting later. The sooner you get started, the sooner you'll finish the project. As early as possible you should:
  - Start thinking about a thesis topic.
  - Start talking to I-O faculty about your interest in the thesis project and your topic of interest.
- 2) Identify an I-O faculty member that is interested in chairing your thesis committee and start working with them to develop your idea further. You will work closely with your committee chair on all subsequent steps of the thesis process.
- 3) In consultation with your committee chair, develop your thesis proposal document. Most thesis proposals consist of the "Introduction" and "Methods" section of a research paper, though faculty may request other material be included. The thesis proposal document might require several rounds of revisions with your committee chair.
- 4) While completing your proposal, consult with your committee chair to identify a second faculty "reader" for your thesis committee.
- 5) When the thesis proposal has been revised to the satisfaction of the committee chair, your chair will give you permission to provide your reader with a draft of the thesis proposal for their feedback.
- 6) Revise the thesis proposal with your reader. The thesis proposal document might require several rounds of revisions with your reader.
- 7) When both committee members (committee chair and reader) agree that the project is ready, schedule your "thesis proposal meeting" with your committee members.
- 8) Present your proposal at your thesis proposal meeting. This meeting is a chance to review the project and identify changes that should be made to the proposal before the project moves forward. You should bring the "THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM" to your thesis proposal meeting.
- 9) The thesis proposal meeting will conclude with one of the following outcomes: (a) committee approves the proposal outright, (b) committee grants conditional approval pending minor changes to the proposal, or (c) committee remands the project back to the student for major revisions, requiring another thesis proposal meeting. When the Committee is satisfied, they should complete the "THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM" and your chair should add that to your file.

- 10) Register for Psychology 690 – Thesis. To do this, complete an “Individualized Section Registration Form” (available from the Registrar’s Office or online) with your committee chair and return that form to the registrar.
- 11) Complete the online ethics training module (it takes several hours). There is a link to this module on Roosevelt’s Institutional Review Board webpage here:  
<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies/IRB.aspx>
- 12) All research must be presented to Roosevelt University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review of the ethical considerations of the project. To do this, you must complete an IRB Form for your research project. The IRB Form, instructions for completing the IRB Form, and a list of submission deadlines and committee meetings is located on the IRB webpage here:  
<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies/IRB.aspx>
- 13) Get written approval from the IRB for your project. The IRB might require changes to your IRB Form, or approve the project outright. You cannot collect data until the IRB has provided written approval for your project.
- 14) Collect your thesis data.
- 15) Analyze that data, and write the first complete draft of your thesis (Includes, “Introduction,” “Methods,” “Results,” “Discussion,” "References," and “Appendices,” sections).
- 16) Revise your thesis with your Committee Chair. The thesis document might require several rounds of revisions with your committee chair.
- 17) When the thesis has been revised to the satisfaction of your committee chair, your chair will give you permission to provide your reader with a draft of the thesis for their feedback.
- 18) Revise your thesis with your reader. The thesis document might require several rounds of revisions with your reader.
- 19) When both committee members agree that the project is ready, schedule your “thesis defense meeting” with your committee members.
- 20) Present your project at your publicly announced thesis defense meeting (sometimes called, “final oral defense”). This meeting is an opportunity for you to present your project and demonstrate your expertise on your research topic. Members of the public, other faculty/students are welcome to attend your Thesis Defense Meeting. You should bring the “MASTER’S THESIS TRANSMITTAL FORM” to your Thesis Defense Meeting. That form is available on the Graduate Dean’s website here:  
<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies/Documents.aspx>

21) Your Committee might require additional changes at the thesis defense meeting, or they might approve the project outright. When the committee is satisfied, they should complete the “THESIS TRANSMITTAL FORM.” Your chair should copy this form for your file and send you with the original.

22) Submit your completed Thesis (along with the completed THESIS TRANSMITTAL FORM) to the Office of the Roosevelt University Graduate Dean for review and approval. Most theses require some formatting changes to satisfy the Graduate Dean’s requirements. A discussion of the Graduate Dean’s requirements for accepting a Thesis can be found in the “Master’s Thesis Transmittal Process” document on the Graduate College’s website here:  
<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies.aspx>

Please note that the deadline for the Graduate College to receive your completed Thesis document is roughly one month before graduation. Thus, your project must be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> for May graduation, November 1<sup>st</sup> for December graduation, and August 1<sup>st</sup> for September graduation (check specific dates on the Graduate Dean’s website – they are subject to change).

**ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY  
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
MASTER'S THESIS: DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS**

The thesis project requires students to design, execute, and communicate an original piece of empirical research on a topic relevant to I-O Psychology. This document provides an overview of the thesis process.

Your faculty chair will be your greatest ally throughout the thesis process. They are the best resource for clearing up any questions you might have. We encourage you to read this document carefully and discuss it with your committee chair.

Many of the steps mentioned in the outline above will be described below in more detail.

***Should You Write a Thesis?***

You should carefully consider whether you complete a thesis or an internship (or complete the course sequence). Generally speaking, a thesis is the preferred option for students that: (a) want to complete a Ph.D. degree at some point in the future, or (b) want to work on a project that specifically expands their research/quantitative training. You should consult with I-O faculty to discuss which capstone option best supports your goals.

You should note that once you register for thesis or internship credits (see below for more on this step), you will have to re-register if you decide to “switch” from one capstone to another. For example, if you register (and pay) for PSYC 690 – Thesis (3 credits), then you decide you want to complete an internship, you will need to register (and pay) for PSYC 699 – Internship (3 credits). So, be certain that you register for the capstone you’ll complete.

***Developing a Thesis Topic***

We encourage you to start thinking about your thesis topic during your first few weeks on campus. Many students that complete a thesis start later. However, the sooner you start the project, the sooner you’ll finish it.

There are many methods of identifying a thesis topic. All methods require some effort on your part. Rather than waiting for a lightning strike of inspiration, it is best to be proactive and put thought and effort into developing your topic.

Your courses might help you identify general areas of interest (like “leadership development” or “selection”). Once you have identified general topics of interest, start reading recent articles on the topic in I-O research journals. You might also discuss your interests with I-O faculty who might have other ideas to help you learn about the topic and develop your research ideas.

Your goal during this stage should be to narrow your topic of general interest down to an actionable project.

### ***Identifying a Chairperson for your Thesis Committee***

You need not have your thesis idea fully developed at the time you approach a member of the I-O faculty with a request that they chair your thesis committee. The chair of your committee must be a full-time I-O Psychology faculty member. Your chair should be someone who has expertise or interest in the area you wish to study. A list of I-O Faculty is located on the program website here (click the name to learn more about their research interests):

<http://www.roosevelt.edu/CAS/Programs/Psychology/IOPsychology/IOFaculty.aspx>

Lots of factors will influence whether a faculty will agree to chair your project. Faculty will examine whether your idea matches their area(s) of expertise and will determine whether they have the ability to take on another student given the menu of current commitments and ongoing projects in their labs.

Both the student and faculty should be deliberate in determining whether your project is a good fit for the faculty and vice-versa. Once a faculty agrees to chair your thesis project, work closely with your chair to refine your ideas and create a timeline for completing the project.

### ***Rounding out your Thesis Committee: Selecting a Faculty “Reader”***

Your chair will help you decide upon an appropriate person to invite to be the reader on your committee. The reader is a second faculty member that provides input into your thesis project. However, you generally will work more closely with your faculty chair on developing the project. The reader must be a full-time or regular member of the Psychology Faculty.

### ***Preparing Your Thesis Proposal***

Your next step is to develop your thesis proposal. You should develop your proposal draft in close consultation with the committee chair. The thesis proposal includes the “Introduction” and “Methods” sections of a research paper.

- Those sections include a literature review, hypotheses, and a description of the sample, methods, and procedure you want to use for your research.
- For more detail on what Introduction and Methods sections should include, please consult the most recent version of the APA Publication Manual.

Some faculty may require additional materials to complete the proposal. Again, consult your chair and follow their guidelines developed for your specific project.

You must receive permission from your committee chair to submit your thesis proposal to your faculty reader for formal review (of course it’s acceptable to seek the informal guidance of your committee members throughout the process). Typically several drafts of the proposal document are required by your chair and reader.

Your proposal is to be written according to APA formatting standards. We encourage you to purchase and thoroughly read the most recent version of the APA Publication Manual. It is a wealth of information about writing research papers of this type.

The thesis provides an excellent opportunity to develop the critical ability to write competently. Many students seek out additional books like “Elements of Style” by Strunk and White and “On Writing Well” by Zinsser to aid in the development of their writing. It’s worth noting here that the clearly written articles you see in the research literature get to be that way through effort and many, many revisions. Putting words on a page is just the first part of the writing process. Careful reconsideration of each of those words over several revisions is another crucial step.

### ***The Thesis Proposal Meeting***

After both committee members are satisfied with the proposal, you can schedule your proposal meeting with your committee. Your chair will help you identify an appropriate space for the meeting and will discuss the presentation with you at that time (whether you should prepare a PowerPoint, handouts, etc.).

Your committee will likely have feedback on your thesis proposal that requires changes to the proposal document. Your committee will not accept the proposal until those changes have been made.

You should bring a copy of the THESIS PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE FORM (located at the end of this document) to your thesis proposal meeting.

### ***The Institutional Review Board***

Once you have completed your thesis proposal, the Roosevelt Institutional Review Board must review your project to ensure that subjects are treated appropriately BEFORE you can collect data.

The first step is to complete the online ethics training module (it takes several hours). There is a link to this module on Roosevelt’s Institutional Review Board webpage here:

<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies/IRB.aspx>

**NOTE: At the time of this revision, students must complete the CITI course.**

Once you are certified as a researcher, then you can complete the IRB Form for your study. The IRB Form, instructions for completing the IRB Form, and a list of **submission deadlines** are located on the IRB webpage here:

<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies/IRB.aspx>

Follow the IRB instructions carefully. Your chair can help you with any questions you have about the process.

The IRB will review your IRB Form at their meeting. The IRB might require changes to your IRB Form, or approve the project outright. You cannot collect data until the IRB has provided written approval for your project.

Once again, you cannot recruit subjects or collect data until:

- Your thesis committee grants written approval of your thesis proposal (thesis proposal approval form) AND
- The IRB grants written approval of your IRB Form.

***Registering for 690 and 690Y: Thesis in I-O***

Obtain an Individualized Section Registration Form from the Registrar's office in order to register for Psychology 690 (MA thesis credit). We recommend completing this form with your faculty chairperson, as the form needs to be signed by you and your faculty chair. Return the completed form to the Registrar's Office to register for the thesis credits.

You must register for PSYC 690 or you will not be registered for thesis credit and will NOT be able to graduate.

Your thesis process will extend beyond one semester. You must register for PSYC 690Y (Thesis Continuation) in EACH subsequent semester. There is no tuition cost but there is a small fee (about \$125) to do this. Students not registered for 3 consecutive semesters (not including summer) have to reapply for admission to the program. As that is a hassle, be SURE to register for 690Y EACH fall and spring semester after registering for 690 (until your project is completed; does not include summer semesters unless you're graduating in August).

**IMPORTANT:** Be sure that the thesis is your desired final project for completing the program BEFORE you register for PSYC 690. If you register for PSYC 690 and switch to an internship, you will have to register (and pay again) for the 3-credit internship course (PSYC 699 - Internship). The registrar won't let you "switch."

***Collecting and Analyzing Your Data***

Your chair will work with you to develop a protocol for collecting, handling and analyzing your data.

***Writing the Thesis Document***

When your data are collected and analyzed, you can begin writing your first complete draft of the thesis document.

Your thesis document should include the following sections:

1. *Title Page*
2. *Acknowledgements.* One page should be devoted to acknowledgements. For administrative purposes all terminal project committee members must be listed and the

committee chair designated. Students may acknowledge any other individuals who have contributed significantly to their terminal project.

3. *Abstract*
4. *Introduction*
5. *Methods*
6. *Results*
7. *Discussion*
8. *References*
9. *Appendices (as required)*

As with your thesis proposal, your thesis document must be written in APA format. Again, refer to the most recent edition of the APA Publication Manual if you have questions about what those sections should include.

### ***Revising the Thesis Document***

The process of revising your thesis document will be similar to the process of revising your thesis proposal document. You will exchange several drafts of the thesis document with your committee chair. Once your committee chair is satisfied with the document they will give permission to submit the thesis to your reader for formal review. You will also need to make revisions requested by the reader.

Writing improves through the process of revision. Revising is the only way to end up with a document that is concisely written, well organized, and error free. Going through several revisions is also an excellent developmental exercise that will improve your writing ability.

### ***The Thesis Defense Meeting***

When both committee members are satisfied with the thesis document, schedule the thesis defense meeting (this meeting is also referred to as the, “final oral defense” in some program materials). This meeting is an opportunity to present your project and demonstrate your expertise in the area of your research.

The thesis defense meeting is publically posted and family, friends, student and faculty colleagues are welcome to attend. However, the primary audience is your thesis committee. Your committee will have a number of questions about your project and related topic areas. Work with your chair to determine how to best prepare for and execute the thesis defense meeting.

At the conclusion of your presentation, the committee will deliberate in private and meet with you to discuss whether they have (a) approved the thesis, (b) approved the thesis with changes, or (c) not approved or remanded for further changes (requiring another defense meeting).

Bring the THESIS TRANSMITTAL FORM from the Graduate Dean’s website to your thesis defense meeting. That form is located here:

<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies/Documents.aspx>

### *After the Thesis Defense Meeting – Submitting the Thesis Document to the Graduate Dean*

After you have:

- Completed the thesis defense
- The approval of your thesis committee
- Made any final changes requested by your committee

You can submit the document to Roosevelt University's Graduate College. This is the final step in the process.

The Graduate Dean's website outlines the formatting and submission requirements for submitting your document to the Graduate College for review. Please pay extra attention to the submission deadlines. Generally speaking, you need to submit your completed thesis document to the graduate dean ONE MONTH prior to your desired graduation date. Please keep this in mind when managing your expectations for completing the thesis project and graduation.

A document outlining the process for submitting the thesis document to the Graduate College for review is located here:

<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies/Documents.aspx>

The Graduate Dean often requests changes to your thesis document that must be made before the Graduate College will approve the thesis.

**NOTE:** As you approach the end of your thesis project, take time to ensure that you have met all other requirements to graduate on time (you must apply for graduation early in the semester you wish to graduate, ensure your coursework is complete, etc.). Consult with your committee chair and University advisors to ensure that "the t's are crossed and i's are dotted" as you approach the end of your degree program.

Roosevelt University  
Industrial and Organizational Psychology

**Thesis Proposal Approval Form: Master's Degree Candidate**

**Student Information**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Proposal Meeting Information**

Thesis Proposal Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>For Use by the Thesis Committee Members</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Approved as is.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Approved with the following corrections:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not approved for the reasons below:</b>
Comments:	

**Committee Chair:**

**Faculty Reader:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type or Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type or Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

The THESIS TRANSMITTAL FORM is located here:

<http://www.roosevelt.edu/Provost/GraduateStudies/Documents.aspx>

Bring the THESIS TRANSMITTAL FORM to your Thesis Defense Meeting and then submit the completed form to the Office of the Graduate Dean