

Master's Thesis Guide for SLHS Students

Sequence for Approaching Your Thesis

1. Consider a possible topic of research. Approach faculty members early with whom you're interested in working to see if they might like to work with you on a thesis with this topic. This gives the faculty members time to consider your request. This also give you time to identify alternate committee members if a faculty is unable to participate in your committee. Faculty members might request to read your thesis proposal first before making an official commitment. Developing and completing your thesis should be a positive experience for both you and your committee members. If there are no reasonable matches that you can foresee, then a master's thesis may not be a good option.
2. Develop your idea into a proposal. The SLHS 703: Research Methods, Evidence-Based Practices, and Professional Issues course is a natural place for this to take place.
3. Take your proposal to the faculty members who've expressed interest in serving on your thesis committee. In order to formalize their membership on your thesis committee, they must sign your Proposal for Culminating Experience Requirement form. (This form can be downloaded from <http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/culminating-experience.htm>). At this time, you and the person who has agreed to be your primary thesis advisor should work out an estimated timeline and expected responsibilities.
4. If your research involves people as subjects, you must clear your project proposal with the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Start this as soon as possible because it can take several months.
5. You must submit the following 3 forms **the semester before** you plan to implement the proposed study. You should plan to spend one year on your study, so complete these paperwork at least 3 semesters before you plan to graduate.
 - 1) The Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form (This form can be downloaded from <https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/advancement-to-candidacy>.)
 - 2) The Proposal for Culminating Experience Requirement form. (This form can be downloaded from <https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/culminating-experience>.)
 - 3) The Human Subjects Protection Protocol Form (Download from https://research.sfsu.edu/hap_IRB.)

6. Once you receive approval on the 3 forms above from the Division of Graduate Studies, the department will authorize you to register for SLHS 898 in the *following* semester. You will be able to begin your study then. **Please be aware that you must be enrolled in a thesis-specific course to begin your study. This is necessary to provide liability coverage for your study.**
7. If your Human Subjects Protection Protocol is approved by the SFSU Institutional Review Board within the same semester that you submit your proposal and you're ready to start implementing your study early, then you can get special approval from your thesis advisor to enroll in their section of SLHS 899 rather than waiting until the following semester to begin your study. Because SLHS 899 is not an official thesis course, you would still need to enroll in SLHS 898 in the following semester.
8. Keep in touch with your committee as you work on your thesis. Let them know your progress.
9. Finalize your thesis according to the thesis guidelines. This includes committee member signatures, paperwork, formatting your thesis according to university standards and filing your thesis. (See <https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/thesis-dissertation-guidelines>.)
10. Give yourself at least three semesters for the entire process from submitting your proposals to completing and filing your thesis.