

Section Five

Masters of Science in Clinical Psychology (MSCP) Research Procedures

MSCP THESIS PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

The checklist below illustrates an approximate timeline for full-time MSCP students to follow in order to complete the requirements for a thesis. The checklist for part-time students is similar in sequence, but will take longer to complete, based upon their completion of the MSCP core courses.

Year 1	
Fall & Winter	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete MSCP core courses. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin thinking about a project/thesis, based upon articles, etc., and ideas from colleagues and faculty.
Spring/ Summer	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with research advisor to review detailed timeline for completing thesis. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin Introduction (including literature review) section of proposal, with guidance from advisor.
Year Two	
Fall	<input type="checkbox"/> Select research advisor and develop an outline of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> General topic of interest, including population; and <input type="checkbox"/> List of potential constructs and their interrelation(s) (theoretical statements). <input type="checkbox"/> Enroll in PSY 6840: Thesis (upon approval of thesis advisor). <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for graduation: Deadline is last school day of September in the academic year in which you plan to graduate. Refer to <i>Schedule of Classes</i> for application and graduation dates. <input type="checkbox"/> Select second reader for thesis (this person must be approved by thesis advisor). <input type="checkbox"/> Complete PSY 6300 and Research Integrity Training (which is part of PSY 6300). <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss research topic and design with advisor <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Introduction and Methods section of proposal, with guidance from advisor. <input type="checkbox"/> If necessary, obtain written approval from authorized person to use subjects from research setting.
Winter	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit draft of research proposal for review by thesis advisor and second reader. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Application for Use of Human Subjects, which will be reviewed by the Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC). The most recent application is available from the following URL: http://www.madonna.edu/admissions/graduate-school/graduate-faculty-resources/center-for-research/hsrc-forms . Review the application with a member of the Human Subjects Review Committee from the College of Social Sciences (currently it is Bob Cohen). <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Application for use of Human Subjects, including proposal, to MU Center for Research. The period required by the HSRC to review each application varies by the type of request: exempt (3-4 days), expedited (5-10 days) or full review (typically 10-14 days). Research with human subjects CANNOT be initiated without approval of the application by the HSRC. The HSRC will notify the student & advisor of outcome of application request. With approval, initiate human subject research
Spring/ Summer	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete research, write manuscript, and meet with advisor as necessary. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit final “draft” copy of manuscript to advisor and to second reader for approval by deadline. Submit final copy of manuscript to advisor for written approval of content. Students must submit acceptable copies of the final paper by the official ending date of the semester of graduation. Otherwise, the student is awarded a Y grade. <input type="checkbox"/> Receive grade for PSY 6840. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit all fees for copy requirements and graduation to the Graduate School (be aware of deadlines) <input type="checkbox"/> Submit three unbound manuscripts (or more for additional personal copies) of approved thesis, on high-quality paper (24 lb. Bond) to the Graduate School. The form to accompany this submission is at: http://www.madonna.edu/pdf/admissions/grad_thesis.pdf <input type="checkbox"/> Collect personal copies of bound theses from the Graduate School. Two bound theses are retained by the Madonna University Library.

MSCP THESIS PROCEDURE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The faculty in the MSCP program gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all persons involved in the creation of the policies and procedures for the *Madonna University Research Guide* (hereafter referred to as the *Research Guide*; available at: <http://www.madonna.edu/admissions/graduate-school/graduate-faculty-resources/center-for-research/research-guide>). We are especially grateful for the information contained in Section Three of the *Research Guide*, Masters of Science in Nursing (hereafter referred to as MSN) Research Procedures, and Section Four, “Masters of Science in Hospice (MSH) Research Procedures.” What follows is an adaptation of these sections as they pertain to completion of a MSCP Thesis.

WHY A MASTERS THESIS?

While there may be many reasons for choosing to complete a thesis, most students will do so as part of their preparation to obtain a Ph.D. in clinical psychology or related applied fields, which includes intensive training in research. For students interested in Ph.D. programs, the thesis should be considered in light of the expectation by most Ph.D. programs that a thesis should be original, empirical, and theory-driven. Therefore, students should consult their thesis advisor regarding acceptable thesis topics and methodologies.

GUIDELINES

Research Competency: MSCP students who choose to complete a thesis are expected to develop their research skills throughout the program and demonstrate this skill in their final thesis project. Support in the MSCP program for completing the thesis is provided in three primary ways: course work, colleagues, and reference and other materials.

- A. **Course work:** The content courses and research courses in the MSCP will provide the knowledge base to generate ideas and research questions. PSY 6300: Statistics and Research Methods will provide the background in research methodology to conduct the thesis.
- B. **Colleagues:** Seek out faculty and fellow students to develop and refine your thesis topic and related ideas about research questions, sources of literature, research methodology, and access to populations.
- C. **Reference and other materials:** These resources are very helpful for completing a thesis:
 1. *Completing Your Thesis or Dissertation*, by Fred Pyszczak (2000), Pyszczak Publishing, ISBN: 1-884585-21-3.
 2. The Graduate Writing Center at the University of California- Los Angeles:
<http://gsrc.ucla.edu/gwc/resources/proposing-writing-and-filing-your-thesis-or-dissertation.html>
 3. *Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide*, by the American Psychological Association (2009), ISBN: 1-43380-557-X.

MSCP Research Thesis: PSY 6840: Thesis (4 s.h.) Course description: Each student will conduct original research on a topic of significance in clinical psychology, to be approved by the thesis advisor. The process will involve conducting a thorough literature review, formulating a research question or hypothesis, selecting the appropriate research design and methods, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting results in light of the hypothesis, and drawing conclusions. Each student will present her/his findings to the thesis committee in a research report prepared in APA format. Prerequisite: Statistics and Research Design, and permission of

Program Director.

The Graduate School Protocol: The student will select a research advisor. A second reader who has expertise related to the focus of the thesis will be recommended by the advisor and accepted by the student. With the guidance of the advisor, the student will develop a research proposal. Once the proposal has been approved by the advisor, the second reader and the HSRC, the student will carry out the research study.

Upon completion of the study, the student will finalize the thesis manuscript according to the criteria set forth in the *Research Guide*. Once the manuscript has been approved and signed by the thesis advisor, three copies of the approved thesis will be submitted to the Graduate School for binding.

Selection of a Research Advisor: The student selects a Research Advisor from among the full-time graduate faculty, or among part-time graduate faculty who are approved by the MSCP Program Director. Selection is most often based on a faculty member who possesses related interests and skills. The advisor will indicate agreement to serve by signing the Selection of Research Advisor Form, available at: http://www.madonna.edu/pdf/academics/Sec10_Res.pdf. The Director of the MSCP program assists all students as necessary with selection of an Advisor.

Format for Research Thesis: The student is encouraged to consult with selected advisor to review appropriate format for preparing the initial proposal and the finished copy of the manuscript. MSCP students will follow the guidelines provided by the Graduate School: http://www.madonna.edu/pdf/academics/Sec7_Res.pdf. Samples of some sections are available at: http://www.madonna.edu/pdf/academics/Sec8_Samples.pdf.

Presentation Requirement: No presentation is required for the MSCP research thesis. However, to further promote awareness of clinical psychology, it is recommended that the student offer an informal “brown bag” session to share the research experience and implications of the study for clinicians. Also, some agencies require presentation of findings at the workplace or setting where the research was conducted.

Recommended Outline(s) and Content: For a thesis involving either qualitative or quantitative design, a recommended outline and content organization is provided for the reader in Section Three of the *Research Guide*, “MSN Research Procedures”: http://www.madonna.edu/pdf/academics/Sec3_Nur.pdf

Research requirements specific to Madonna University are presented as well, and the student is encouraged to read all pertinent information in the *Research Guide* prior to proposing/designing one’s research project or thesis.

Grading Criteria: The student’s grade for the project/thesis will be determined by the advisor. Criteria to evaluate the completed research effort can be found in Section Three of the *Research Guide*, “MSN Research Procedures.”