

Psychology & Counseling Thesis Process for Students

Please review these general guidelines for the master's thesis process in the Department of Psychology and Counseling. It is important that you check the Graduate School Website for important due dates for the steps below. You can check the website here:

<https://www.uttyler.edu/graduate/calendar.php>

Step One: Appointment of Thesis Committee

- The Appointment of Thesis Committee (ATC) form can be found on The Graduate School web page, under Thesis and Dissertation here:
<https://www.uttyler.edu/graduate/gradfaculty/files/appointment-of-thesis-committee.docx>
- Minimum of 3 committee members; all should have the proper Graduate Faculty Membership:
 - Graduate Research Faculty
 - Visiting Graduate Faculty

*to check who in the Department has Graduate Research Faculty status, please refer to this link: <https://www.uttyler.edu/graduate/gradfaculty/files/graduate-faculty-membership.xlsx>

It is your responsibility to reach out and obtain permission from each of your committee members before sending the ATC Form to the Graduate Admissions Advisor.

- Send completed ATC form to Kristie Allen, Graduate Admissions Advisor (kallen@uttyler.edu). Grad Advisor submits completed form to gradforms@uttyler.edu for review
- gradforms@uttyler.edu will notify your thesis chair of approval of Thesis Committee
- Once approved, The Graduate School will add you to a student group and the Graduate Advisor will get you registered for the appropriate section of Thesis.

Step Two: Proposal Defense (Completed during PSYC 5394 Thesis I)

- While enrolled in PSYC 5394 Thesis I, the student develops a written proposal that includes at least the following content: literature review and background for the study, hypotheses, methods, proposed analyses, and references. The specific format of this proposal is left to the discretion of the committee Chair and/or committee. Examples of different formats include full text written in the style of a thesis introduction and method section, or a preregistration document that outlines all required content and proposed decisions for the study. The proposed study should be based on a thorough review of the relevant literature.
- With the committee Chair's approval, the student distributes copies of the thesis proposal to all members of the Committee. The student arranges a meeting with the Committee for review and approval of the proposal. This can be done via ZOOM. Students should send the proposal document to their committee at least one week prior to the scheduled defense.

**adapted from The Graduate School's website: <https://www.uttyler.edu/graduate/thesis-dissertation/thesis-students.php>*

- At the meeting, members of the Committee will provide insight and recommendations for improvement of the study design. The group will also vote to approve or deny the proposal.

Step Three: Obtain Appropriate Approvals (if necessary)

- The student, working closely with the Committee Chair, submits the proposal and other required materials to the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) if human subjects will be studied.
- This step is not necessary for students using solely archival data.

Step Four: Conducting the Study

- The study must be done precisely as approved by the Thesis Committee and any other person or group whose approval has been obtained (e.g., University of Texas at Tyler IRB, heads of institutions or sites where data will be collected).
- If deviations from approved methods become necessary or desirable, the student must obtain approval from at minimum their thesis chair any other person or group whose approval is required (e.g., submitting a modification to the IRB). Some modifications may also need to be approved by the thesis committee.

Step Five: Thesis Defense (Completed during PSYC 5395 Thesis II)

- Students enrolled in PSYC 5395 Thesis II must request a Thesis Defense by a specific date each semester that is set by the Graduate School. Please check the [calendar](#) for semester-specific dates. Once the thesis date is scheduled, please submit a copy of the thesis to the Supervising Committee. at least one week before the scheduled Defense.
- Defense may take place via Zoom. Please ensure that you schedule your defense with enough time to make any edits or corrections suggested by your committee and meet the submission deadline.
- The graduate school requests that the details of your thesis defense be sent to gradforms@uttyler.edu so that we may create an invitation – this is not mandatory for thesis students but is offered if you would like them to help you promote it.
- They will need
 - College Name (ex: College of Education and Psychology)
 - Title of Thesis
 - Student First and Last Name,
 - Degree and Program (ex: MS Biology)
 - Defense Time, Day, Month, Date, Year
 - Room Number
 - Zoom dial in (if applicable)
 - Thesis Chair Name and College (if different from above)

- gradforms@uttyler.edu will then:
 - Send out a detailed thesis defense invitation to thesis chair, student, and all full-time Faculty
 - Promote the Thesis Defense

Step Six: Submission of Thesis Manuscript to The Graduate School

- After the successful thesis defense:
 - Thesis manuscript is submitted to thesis committee members for physical signatures
 - Student initiates the [Thesis Signature Page](#) DocuSign Form and obtains signatures from all committee members, the Department Chair, and the Dean.
 - Thesis manuscript, with signed signature page, is submitted to gradmanuscripts@uttyler.edu (faculty member may submit on behalf of the student but student must be cc'd) by the Graduate School's deadline that semester. Note: the deadline for submission of the final thesis is not the last day of the semester. The date is set by the Graduate School to allow time for manuscript processing and review by an external editor. If your thesis is not submitted to the graduate school by the semester [deadline](#), the thesis completion will not be processed in time to allow conferral of the degree that semester.
 - gradmanuscripts@uttyler.edu will send electronic manuscript to the reviewer and will correspond with student via email
 - Student should check email for revisions; initial submission does not indicate approval of manuscript/graduation

Step Seven: Approval of Thesis Manuscript

- Once student receives email of approved thesis manuscript:
 - Electronic Thesis Submission Information, including Rights Management and Access Information, will be emailed
 - Student must upload their approved manuscript to ScholarWorks (a video tutorial gets emailed with the approval paperwork)

Step Eight: Thesis Manuscript Submission to the Institutional Repository

- After the submission to the Institutional Repository (ScholarWorks):
 - The student will receive two emails from Scholar Works – the first confirms that the submission was received, and the second confirms that the manuscript has been accepted

- Students will forward the accepted email to gradmanuscripts@uttyler.edu and we will update the student's myUTTyler account so that the student may receive their degree
- If the student does not forward their successful submission email to gradmanuscripts@uttyler.edu, their degree cannot be conferred

Team-Based Thesis Project Option

- Students may have the option to conduct a thesis project as a team of 2-3 students. A team-based approach would be appropriate for students who share some overlapping interests and are able to conceive of a thesis project that is relevant to all parties' interests. This option may have more value to doctoral students who plan to conduct a solo dissertation project in addition to a thesis project, whereas master's students may wish to conduct a solo thesis project given that it may be their only opportunity to do so in the program.
 - Students and faculty might consider this option because it distributes the workload across multiple students, which could be particularly beneficial for larger projects or proposals and might increase the likelihood that projects are completed in a timely fashion.
 - Another benefit to this option is greater exposure to team-based research, which is important given that collaborations are essential to a research career. Specifically, this approach would create an opportunity to further develop the administrative, scientific, and interpersonal skills required to collaborate with other researchers.
- **All team-based thesis projects are subject to the same requirements as a standard thesis project and must be approved by a thesis committee prior to enrolling in thesis course credits.**
- **A team thesis project must include one primary faculty sponsor who agrees to serve as the designated thesis Chair and assumes the same responsibilities as would be expected in a typical thesis project.** For a team that involves doctoral students, this would be one student's faculty mentor. It is assumed that other doctoral faculty mentor(s) who are affiliated with other students on the team would serve as members of the thesis committee.
- Every team member is expected to contribute equally to the project and all members should be able to answer any question about any construct, measure, aspect of the study design, and statistical technique or approach. There are no "silos" in a team.
- Professionalism and professional problem solving within the team is critical. The thesis Chair and other committee members will provide feedback and guidance in these domain as needed.

- Authorship order for the final, submitted thesis project is irrelevant. It is assumed that everyone contributed equally.
 - However, because students are encouraged to submit a manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal based on their thesis project, teams are encouraged to design studies with several aims or sub-aims that could produce multiple manuscripts after the completion of the thesis defense. For example, if a two-student team designed the project to answer two related questions, or an additional question that extends beyond the primary thesis proposal, both students could write a first-author manuscript and serve as second-author on each other's submission.