



CALIFORNIA
STATE UNIVERSITY
DOMINGUEZ HILLS

THESIS GUIDE FOR M.A. ENGLISH

This guide is meant to supplement the documents provided by the Graduate Studies Office.

Although guidelines for the prospectus and thesis and timelines are provided below, all thesis writers should discuss them with their thesis director early in the process, since there is some variation depending upon the director and the project.

University thesis information, including submission procedures and deadlines, can be found here: <https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/graduate-studies/thesis/>

Please see also the following guides, which are linked to from the above page:

Guidelines for Submission:

<https://www.csudh.edu/Assets/csudh-sites/graduate-studies/docs/thesis/thesisandprojectformattingandsubmission%20ppt.pdf>

Thesis and Project Guides:

<https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/graduate-studies/thesis/thesis-project-guides/>

The Hard Deadlines:

<https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/graduate-studies/thesis/deadlines/>

Forms:

<https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/graduate-studies/thesis/forms/>

Thesis/Project Template:

<https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/graduate-studies/thesis/templates/>

Applying to Graduate:

<https://www.csudh.edu/gsr/graduate-studies/graduation/how-to-apply/>

Please also contact the Graduate Studies Office if your project uses human subjects and thus requires IRB approval.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to fulfilling all degree requirements, thesis writers need to be aware of the following requirements:

- Graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment. They should enroll in English 600 if they are not taking anything else. Permission numbers can be obtained by calling the department office or emailing Leslie Bayless at lbayless@csudh.edu.
- All students must apply to graduate.
- If graduating in a later semester, you will need to change your graduation date. You do not need to apply a second time, but the Change of Graduation Date form will need to be filled out, signed by the Graduate Coordinator, and turned in along with a small fee.
- Thesis writers must submit an Intent to Submit Form to Graduate Studies by the stated deadline. This form must be resubmitted if the thesis is being turned in in a later semester.
- Thesis writers must receive approvals for the thesis by the stated deadline.
- Thesis writers must submit a properly formatted thesis by the stated deadline (no exceptions).
- The Graduate Studies Office will request revisions to the thesis before final approval, so submission by the deadlines stated below does not mean that you are done; they just mean you are done with the English department.

The department offers annual Thesis Workshops, run by graduate faculty. We strongly recommend that prospective and current thesis writers attend at least one of these workshops, which cover much of the information in this guide in more detail.

THESIS TIMELINES AND DEADLINES

Dates in **bold** are University or Graduate Studies deadlines and are set in stone. All others are guidelines that should ensure students finish on time, but should be worked through in consultation with the thesis director and the second and third readers. Please allow your director and readers ample time (and be sure to discuss what “ample” means for each) to read and respond to your drafts. Some students need more or less time for readers to review their drafts and ask for revisions. Be prepared to submit multiple drafts, especially to your thesis director. The prospectus should be turned in with enough time to get the Graduate Coordinator’s approval before the end of the term (see below).

In addition, the Graduate Studies Office will run a thesis workshop that will cover how to format the thesis properly and use the university’s thesis template; it is highly recommended that you attend this workshop (dates to be determined and usually available on the Graduate Studies website).

	Spring	Summer	Fall
Application to Graduate Due (regular deadline)	October 1	February 1	July 1
Application to Graduate Due (late deadline)	Last day of fall semester	April 15	September 15
Prospectus Due to the Graduate Coordinator (with form signed by chair, second, and third readers)	December 1	February 1	May 1
Draft Due to Thesis Chair	February 1	April 10	September 1
Intent to Submit form due to Graduate Studies	February 10	May 20	September 10
Thesis Ready for Second and Third Readers	March 1 st	May 10	October 1
Committee Member Approval Deadline	March 25	June 3	October 25
Thesis Due to Grad Studies	April 1	June 10	November 1

THESIS BASICS

Minimum GPA Requirement

Students with a 3.75 GPA may write a thesis.

If your GPA is less than a 3.75, you may write a thesis with the approval of your thesis director and the Graduate Studies Coordinator. Approval will only be granted to projects that are fully developed and thought out. Please talk to your prospective thesis director and the graduate studies coordinator before you proceed. Students with a GPA below a 3.5 are discouraged from writing a thesis.

Please be aware that because of the early thesis deadlines (see above), students writing a thesis frequently take an additional semester to complete their degree. To improve time to the degree, thesis writers are encouraged to discuss their thesis with their director before leaving for the summer before their last year in the program so that that time can be used productively.

Finding a Topic, a Thesis Chair, and the Second and Third Readers

While not required, it is recommended that your thesis develop out of one of your term papers. That way, you will already have part of it written and the research begun before you begin writing.

Once you have a topic, you will want to discuss it with both the faculty members with whom you would like to pursue the project and the Coordinator of the Graduate Studies Program. These faculty members can suggest second and third readers for you. Typically, the second reader has some expertise in the field in which you are writing. The third reader should work in the same general area if possible (literature or rhetoric/composition) but may not have direct knowledge of the topic.

Prospectus Guidelines

The prospectus should contain a project description approximately 3-5 pages in length plus a bibliography of works that the student plans to consult in his/her research. The prospectus should situate the project within current discourse on the topic, indicating the project's relevance, importance, originality, and, if possible, argument. It should also provide a rough outline of the project, include tentative chapter descriptions and a tentative thesis title.

If using human subjects, as rhetoric/composition students sometimes do when working with DH students, IRB approval is required. Please consult with the Graduate Studies Office and obtain that approval before proceeding with your research; this process is separate from the prospectus, and should be begun well before starting work on your thesis, since approval can take several months to obtain.

The prospectus should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Coordinator, attached to the prospectus form, which will require the signatures of your thesis director and your second and third readers. This form can be found on the English department's webpage for

graduate programs in Literature. The Graduate Studies Coordinator will review the prospectus and either approve it or ask for modifications in consultation with your director. The prospectus needs to be turned in early enough in the semester for it to receive approval before you leave for semester break so that you will have the approvals that you need before working on your own over summer and winter breaks. Please see the deadlines above.

Thesis Length

Most theses run approximately 30-40 pages in length, but please discuss the expectations for the thesis with your chair before you begin the project and become aware of your chair's requirements, since there is considerable variation within the department.

On rare occasions, usually in rhetoric/composition, students do a project instead of a thesis. Projects must have an analytical component and chapters, just as a thesis does. Please consult the guidelines for theses and projects put out by the Graduate Studies Office for more details.

If you have general questions about theses, please contact Dr. Jane J. Lee, Graduate Coordinator (jlee@csudh.edu). For more specific questions about your thesis, communicate early and often with your thesis chair.