

# GRADUATE RESEARCH PROCEDURES

### Definitions - Graduate Research Options

Ball State journalism graduate students are required by the department to enroll in one of three graduate research options, which are defined as follows:

A *research paper* (three hours) is a formally prepared review of literature and/or limited research study, e.g., a case study, showing that the student possesses the ability to attack successfully a genuine educational, journalistic, or public relations problem, and to draw valid and significant conclusions from the data. In general, the length of the paper will vary as situation and instructor indicate. Students enroll in RES 697 by presenting the appropriate approval form (see Appendix A) and a research paper proposal to the Graduate School. A letter and registration form prepared by the journalism department may then be taken to the Registrar.

A *creative research project* (three hours), or professional project, is evidence of superior technique and scholarship on the part of graduate students in journalism or public relations. Examples of creative research projects may include: original works of literary journalism, critical analyses of journalistic writing (literary compositions), instructional units in journalism or public relations education, books, manuals, photographic exhibits, or a series of nonfiction stories concerning an appropriate topic. The creative research project must be supported by a formally prepared written report which includes background research, a description of the project, and at least two outside/external evaluations of the project. Students enroll in CRPRJ 698 (3) by presenting the appropriate approval form (see Appendix A) and creative research project proposal to the Graduate School. A letter and registration form prepared by the journalism department may then be taken to the Registrar.

### OR

A *thesis* (six hours) is a formally prepared original study showing that the student possesses the ability to attack successfully a genuine educational, journalistic, or public relations problem and to employ proper historical or behavioral research methods to draw valid and significant conclusions from the data collected. The length of the thesis may vary as thesis committee (three persons) indicate. Students enroll in THES 698 by presenting the appropriate approval form (see Appendix B) and thesis proposal to the Graduate School. A letter and registration form prepared by the journalism department may then be taken to the Registrar.

A *creative research project* (six hours), or professional project, is evidence of superior technique and scholarship in journalism or public relations. Examples of creative research projects may include: original works of literary journalism, critical analyses of journalistic writing (literary compositions), instructional units in journalism or public relations education, books, manuals, photographic exhibits, movies, or a series of nonfiction stories concerning an appropriate topic. The creative research project must be supported by a formally prepared written report which includes background research, a description of the project, and at least two outside/external evaluations of the project. Students enroll in CRPRJ 698 (6) by presenting the appropriate approval form (see Appendix B) and creative research project proposal to the Graduate School. A letter and registration form prepared by the journalism department may then be taken to the Registrar.

### Research Paper • Adviser/Student Responsibilities\*

One of the responsibilities of graduate faculty members is to take on the task of guiding a graduate student through that student's graduate research paper experience. As you will discover it can be a time-consuming and agonizing process for the student, which you can expedite and facilitate by means of your own knowledge of the process and procedures

required.

Once you have consented to advise a research paper for a graduate student, you and the student must sign a Graduate Paper Agreement form (Appendix C). It is your responsibility to make every effort to see that the student completes the research paper experience successfully and has met all the deadlines and requirements necessary to meet department and Graduate School guidelines. You should make sure that the student understands the importance of deadlines and make every effort to help the student plan reasonable and achievable deadlines. In short, it is recommended that research projects be completed 10 days before deadlines established by the Graduate School.

The approved graduate studies style guide for the Department of Journalism (M.A., Journalism and Public Relations) is *Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. However, graduate faculty may select another style guide (e.g., APA, MLA) for use in class assignments and in research papers, creative/professional projects and theses.

The first task of the student who wishes to meet his graduate writing requirement by preparing a research paper is to create a research paper proposal. The research paper adviser should look upon the student's proposal as a contract between himself and the student. Therefore, the proposal should be as detailed as necessary to ensure that the student has a clear indication of how to proceed to complete the research paper. An outline guide for the research paper proposal is available from the graduate adviser. The proposal should contain a statement of the problem, a review of the literature, and a discussion of methods to be used to study the questions proposed, which is the minimum amount of information suggested by the Graduate School.

Once the proposal is prepared to the satisfaction of the research paper adviser, the research paper adviser should send the student to the graduate adviser to learn how to register for RES 697, which provides research paper hours. A research paper adviser should make sure the student is well-apprieved of appropriate deadlines in order to allow the adviser time to guide the student through the process and to give pertinent advice about the research paper itself.

Once the student is registered for RES 697 and has embarked on completion of the research paper, the adviser should inform the student whether the adviser would like to see the draft copy of the research paper by chapters, or as a complete draft. The student is responsible for complying with the request of the research paper adviser.

Once the research paper adviser is satisfied that the student has completed the research paper draft, the adviser should instruct the student to prepare the final draft of the research paper according to Turabian's guidelines. The research paper adviser should make every effort to insure that the final student product adheres to proper academic writing style.

Once the final copies of the paper have been presented to the research paper adviser, the adviser should make sure to file the necessary incomplete grade report, if the student has received a preliminary "I" grade for the research paper. Advisers should request one copy of the graduate student's research paper for the department graduate paper file. Advisers should notify the journalism graduate adviser when research papers are completed in order for the graduate adviser to prepare and submit to the Graduate School the final student course check sheet which is a requirement before the student can be certified for graduation.

When the student's research paper has been filed at the Graduate School with the appropriate research paper approval sheet, and the completed "I" removal form—if necessary—then the research paper adviser will have completed this task. \**The preceding narrative also applies to three-hour creative research project/CRPRJ 698-3 responsibilities.*

## Thesis • Chairperson/Student Responsibilities\*

One of the responsibilities of graduate faculty members is to take on the task of guiding a graduate student through that student's graduate research paper experience. As you will discover it can be a time-consuming and agonizing process for the student, which you can expedite and facilitate by means of your own knowledge of the process and procedures required.

Once you have consented to chair the thesis committee of a graduate student, you should understand that it is your responsibility to make every effort to see that the student completes the thesis experience successfully, and has met all the deadlines and requirements necessary to meet department and Graduate School guidelines. You should make sure that the student understands the importance of deadlines and make every effort to help the student plan reasonable and achievable deadlines. In short, it is recommended that theses be completed 10 days before deadlines established by the Graduate School.

The approved graduate studies style guide for the Department of Journalism (M.A., Journalism and Public Relations) is *Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. However, graduate faculty may select another style guide (e.g., APA, MLA) for use in class assignments and in research papers, creative/professional projects and theses.

The first task of the student who wishes to meet his graduate writing requirement by preparing a thesis is to create a thesis proposal. The thesis chairperson should look upon the student's proposal as a contract between the student and his committee. Therefore, the proposal should be as detailed as necessary to ensure that the student has a clear indication of how to proceed to complete the thesis requirement. An outline guide for a thesis proposal is available from the graduate adviser. The proposal should contain a statement of the problem, a review of the literature, and a discussion of methods to be used to study the questions proposed, which is the minimum amount of information suggested by the Graduate School.

Once the proposal is prepared to the satisfaction of the thesis adviser, the student should be instructed to call his thesis committee together for his first meeting with the committee. Responsibility for choosing committee members (one member can be chosen by the student from outside of the department along as that faculty member has expertise in the subject matter and is a member of the graduate faculty) and setting up thesis committee meetings rests with the student. Copies of the thesis proposal should be presented by the student to the other members of the student's thesis committee in ample time before the full thesis meeting. A thesis chairperson should make sure the student is well-apprieved of appropriate deadlines to ensure that unreasonable time constraints are not placed upon committee members.

The thesis chairperson should try to be an advocate for the student in this meeting. The goal of the meeting is to make sure that all three faculty committee members can agree on the plan which the student has created to carry out his thesis project. Having the student meet with all three committee members at the same time will alleviate the problem of having the student shuffle back and forth between committee members—thereby wasting time and effort—to seek approval for various details in the thesis project. A suggested format for the thesis proposal meeting is as follows:

*a. Thesis chairperson meets with committee members at the beginning and before the student is allowed into the meeting room. Chairperson should make sure that committee members understand the procedures to be followed, and he should discuss with committee members any major problems they may have with the paper.*

*b. Once the student has entered the committee room, the chairperson asks the student to give a 5-10 minute summary of what he proposes to explore in his thesis project. Once the student makes his presentation, then committee members should be encouraged to address questions they think pertinent to the student. The tone of the meeting should amiable, non-threatening, and helpful.*

*c. After committee members have completed their discussion with the student, the chairperson should ask the student to leave the committee room.*

*d. Depending on the quality of the paper, the thesis chairperson asks direction from the committee. If committee members agree that that student is ready to proceed with his thesis and enroll in THESIS 698, then the chairperson should request that all committee members sign the appropriate form so that the student can take his proposal and thesis approval form over to the Graduate School. The journalism department office will assist in preparing registration materials necessary for enrollment in THES 698. If committee members have minor problems with the thesis proposal, the chairperson should ask how they can be resolved and if he can be responsible for their resolution. If major problems exist, and committee members cannot agree to sign the thesis topic approval form, then the chairperson should try to work out an orderly resolution to the problems posed by committee members. This might entail having the student visit each member of the committee, for example. The chairperson should seek to resolve all problems with one more thesis proposal meeting.*

Once the student is registered for THESIS 698, and has embarked on completion of his thesis, the chairperson should instruct the student to check with his committee members to see if they would like to see the draft copy of thesis by chapters, or as a complete draft. The student is responsible for complying with requests of committee members.

Once the thesis chairperson is satisfied that the student has completed the thesis draft, he should instruct the student to schedule a thesis defense meeting with his committee. By the time the thesis defense meeting is called, committee members should have edited the student's efforts quite effectively and returned such editing by the time the thesis defense meeting is called. A suggested format for the thesis defense meeting is as follows:

*a. Thesis chairperson meets with committee members before student is allowed to enter the committee room. At this time, the thesis chairperson asks if any major problems exist in the final thesis draft. If not, then the chairperson invites the student into the committee room.*

*b. The chairperson asks the student to give a summary of the thesis project completed by the student including a full discussion of the thesis findings. Committee members should not hesitate to ask questions of the student's work and findings in the project to ascertain if the student possesses the requisite knowledge and understands the significance of his project.*

*c. When committee members and the chairperson are satisfied that the student has met the challenge of their concerns in the thesis, the chairperson should ask the student to leave the committee room in order for the committee to deliberate on the success or failure of the student's project. If all committee members agree the project was successful, the chairperson should circulate the thesis approval form for signatures.*

*d. Committee members should be free to leave then, or they can remain and offer congratulations when the chairperson informs the student that his efforts were successful. If minor errors are found in the thesis draft, or slight modifications need to be made, the chairperson should retain the final approval form until the student has complied with all the changes required. Once the chairperson is satisfied that the final draft is complete and typed, then he can return the final approval sheet to the student. Thesis chairpersons should always request one copy of the student's thesis for inclusion in the department's file of complete student theses.*

Once the final copies of the paper have been presented to the thesis chairperson, thesis chairpersons should make sure they have filed incomplete grade reports if the student has received a preliminary "I" grade for his thesis project. Students should be encouraged to present one extra copy of their final papers to the department for inclusion into the department collection. Chairpersons should notify the journalism graduate adviser when theses are completed in order that the graduate adviser can prepare and submit to the Graduate School the final student course check sheet which is a requirement before the student can be certified for graduation. Chairpersons should submit one extra copy of the student's thesis abstract to the department head so that the abstract can be sent to *Journalism Abstracts*, which is the annual compendium of such papers collected and printed by AEJMC.

Once the student's thesis has been filed with the Graduate School, and the incomplete grade form has been filled out if necessary, then the thesis chairperson has completed this task. \**The preceding narrative also applies to six-hour creative research project/CRPRJ 698-6 responsibilities.*

## Basic Requirements • Research Papers, Creative Projects, Theses

### Style Manual

The approved graduate studies style manual for the Department of Journalism (M.A., Journalism and Public Relations) is *Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. However, graduate faculty may select another style guide (e.g., APA, MLA) for use in class assignments and in research papers, creative/professional projects and theses.

### Typing Instructions

*Margins* should be consistent throughout the text. The TOP margin should be one inch, and two inches on the first page of each chapter. A triple space should be left between a chapter title and written material which follows. The LEFT-HAND margin should be one and one-half inches. The RIGHT-HAND margin should be one inch, and the BOTTOM margin should be one and one-quarter inches.

*Footnotes:* Students should choose either the regular "note" form (at the bottom of each page) and the corresponding "bibliography" entry style or the "parenthetical reference" form with the corresponding "reference list" entry style. The two styles should not be mixed and they should be consistent throughout the paper.

### Submitting Final Copies

Final approval copies of research papers, creative research projects and theses must be received by the research adviser or thesis chair at least **ten class days** before the Graduate School deadline. The Graduate School deadline is typically four weeks prior to the close of fall and spring semesters. During the summer, the deadline is two weeks prior to the close of summer semester. Check with the Graduate School or the department's graduate adviser for specific dates. If enrolled in THES 698, the thesis committee must meet and consider final approval prior to the department deadlines.

The **research paper** (three hours) requires: electronic submission to the Graduate School, a final approval form (see Appendix D), and an "I" removal form for RES 697 if registration was made in a previous semester.

The **creative research project** (three hours), or professional project, requires: electronic submission to the Graduate School, a final approval form (see Appendix D), and an "I" removal form for CRPRJ 698 (3) if registration was made in a previous semester.

The **thesis** (six hours) requires: electronic submission to the Graduate School, two final approval forms (see Appendix E), and three copies of a 100 to 150 word abstract of the thesis (See Appendix F) describing briefly the nature of the study and the findings. An "I" removal form for THES 698 should be included if registration was made in a previous semester.

The **creative research project** (six hours), or professional project, requires: electronic submission to the Graduate School, two final approval forms (see Appendix E), and three copies of a 100 to 150 word abstract of the project (see Appendix F) describing briefly the nature of the project and the findings. An "I" removal form for CRPRJ 698 (6) should be included if registration was made in a previous semester.

## GENERAL FORMS OF PRESENTATION

### A. Research Paper

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. List of Tables
4. List of Figures
5. Body of the Paper:
  - A. Problem
  - B. Review of Related Literature.
  - C. Method
  - D. Findings
  - E. Summary and Conclusion
6. Bibliography
7. Appendix

### B. Thesis

1. Title Page
2. Acknowledgments: a statement of indebtedness to other persons for assistance
3. Table of Contents
4. List of Tables
5. List of Figures
6. Body of the Thesis:
  - A. Problem
  - B. Review of Related Literature
  - C. Method
  - D. Findings
  - E. Summary and conclusions, including suggestions for further research
7. Bibliography
8. Appendix

### C. Creative Research Project/Professional Project

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. The Project
  - A. Introduction/Rationale
  - B. Literature Review
  - C. Methodology
  - D. Body of the Project (e.g. stories, critiques, photo exhibits)
  - E. Summary/Conclusions/Implications - Future Research
  - F. Two Outside Evaluations/Reviews of the Project (which must include all of the following)
    - I. Brief discussion of evaluator's credentials (e.g., knowledge and experience of the subject area)
    - II. Relationship to the student and subject matter
    - III. Evaluation of the topic as appropriate for the creative endeavor
    - IV. Evaluation of the student's approach
    - V. Evaluation of the body of the project
      - a) Quality
      - b) Depth of treatment
      - c) Coverage
    - VI. Evaluation of the student's work as contributing to the field (e.g., body of knowledge)
  - G. Bibliography
  - H. Appendix