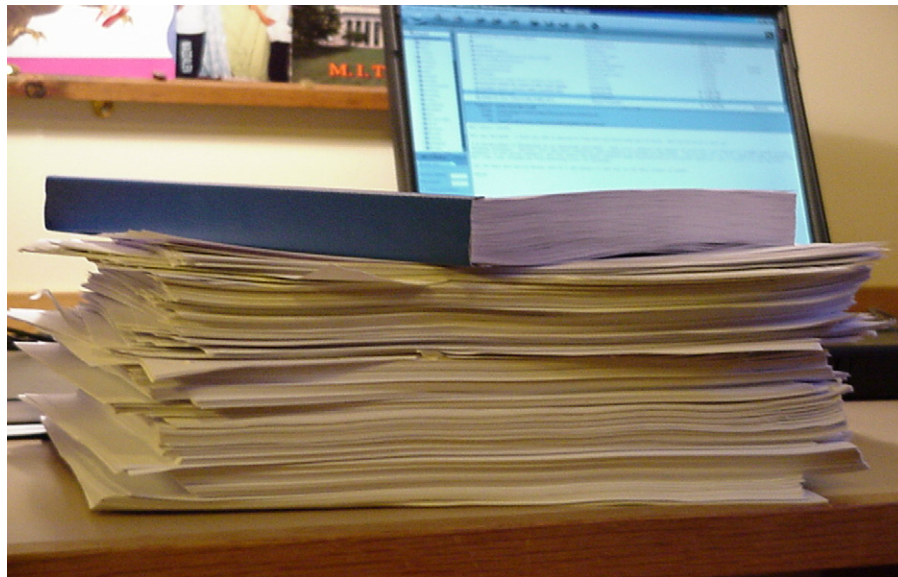


School Counseling



Thesis and Project Handbook

Engaging the culture, changing the world.



Seattle Pacific
UNIVERSITY

School Counseling Thesis Handbook

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THE MISSION OF SPU'S SCHOOL OF EDUCATION:

To prepare educators for service and leadership in schools and communities by developing their professional competence and character within a framework of Christian faith and values.



i should have
written my thesis
on discovering
myself some friends

MASTER'S THESIS

A thesis is not required for this degree but is an **elective option**. It is a good choice for persons intending to apply to a doctoral program or for those who have a comprehensive project pending, at the district level, which will require quantitative or qualitative analysis.

A master's thesis is a formal investigation into a research question that involves original data and primary sources, thus resulting in a scholarly manuscript suitable for binding and possible publication. It is expected that the thesis will demonstrate conceptualization at the highest level and be a comprehensive study of value to the academic community as a whole. Components of a thesis include a written proposal containing an appropriate research design, a thorough literature review, a collection of applicable data, a tabulation of statistics, an evaluation of the results utilizing appropriate methods. This information must be compiled into an acceptable written form (APA format 5th ed.).

Thesis research is conducted under the direction of a three-person committee, with a "Thesis Chair" responsible for the majority of guidance. The Thesis Chair is an SPU faculty member proficient in the field, who has agreed, after meeting with the student in advance, to supervise the endeavor.

Theses:

- Must be completed within three years or less
- Are bound and retained by Seattle Pacific University
- Require EDU 6975 and EDU 6976
- Are three to six credits each (A thesis will increase total number of credits required for degree completion to at least 71.)

Examples of a thesis include, but are not limited to (1) research with results of interest and importance to the profession as a whole, (2) action or evaluation research which uses qualitative and/or quantitative data and provides results useful for local or state purposes, (3) a thorough review of literature and research on a topic important to the profession, and (4) an historical or philosophical analysis of reoccurring themes and issues in education.

MASTER'S PROJECT

A project is not required for this program, but is an elective option. It is a good choice for a student who wishes to research a specific area and for an individual who works in a research-oriented setting.

Description

A project is an undertaking of practical value to the classroom or district that includes the development of a proposal for research, a literature search of previous studies in the field, and development of the means to evaluate the research. It is conducted under the direction of a "Project Supervisor." The Project Supervisor is an SPU faculty member proficient in the field, who has agreed, after meeting with the student in advance, to supervise the endeavor.

Projects:

- Must be completed within a year or less
- Are not bound and retained by the University
- Are three credits each



Examples of a project include, but are not limited to (1) writing a specific unit of study or curriculum, (2) developing a curriculum program for a school district, (3) preparing for and presenting a seminar relative to a specific issue, and (4) developing educational goals for a district or school, based upon needs assessment and literature review.

Pursuing a Master's Project

General steps for arranging and pursuing a master's project appear below:

- 1) The student identifies an SPU faculty member, proficient in the area of interest, who is willing to supervise the project. This individual is called the "Project Supervisor."
- 2) The student develops a two-page proposal that details project goals/activities and describes the final product. This is submitted to the Project Supervisor, who reviews the proposal and gives recommendations for revision.
- 3) When the final draft of the proposal has been submitted, the student meets with the Project Supervisor to discuss specifics of how the project will be conducted.
- 4) The student registers for EDU 6960 - Master's Project (three credits). Enrollment in the project will require special approval from the Program Chair. You can also sign up for EDU 6900 Independent Study.
- 5) When the work is done and all revisions have been made, the final product is submitted to the Project Supervisor, who awards a grade.

Master Thesis Process—A summary¹

1. Please check with Al Blomquist if there is a form needed in the School of Education for doing a thesis.
2. Create a thesis proposal
 - a. Complete proposal (for content see below)
 - b. Submit proposal to chair of committee for approval of proposal
 - c. Select 2 other committee members (called “readers”, who must also approve proposal)
 - d. Submit proposal and IRB forms which relates to protection of human subjects (see <http://www.spu.edu/orgs/irb/>) to the chair who signs it and then sends it on for approval
 - e. Work out logistics of the study
3. Execute the study with assistance from committee, specifically the chair
4. Write up the study in APA format (5th ed.) in 5 chapters (summary of chapters)
 - a. Title page with sign off lines
 - b. Abstract
 - c. Table of contents
 - d. Chapter 1
 - i. Overview of study
 - ii. Purposes of study
 - iii. Rationale and significance of study
 - iv. Research questions and hypotheses
 - e. Chapter 2
 - i. Literature review including
 1. theoretical underpinnings of the study
 2. past research that applies to the study
 3. current research
 4. summary of theory and research
 - f. Chapter 3
 - i. Methodology
 1. Research design
 2. Participants
 3. Instrumentation
 - a. Reliability and validity of these measures
 4. Procedures
 - a. Sampling
 - b. Study procedures and processes
 5. Statistical methods to respond to each hypothesis
 - g. Chapter 4
 - i. Results
 1. Descriptive statistics
 2. Inferential statistics
 3. Summary of findings by hypothesis

¹ Subject to change

- h. Chapter 5
 - i. Discussion
 - 1. Restate purposes of study
 - 2. Restate research questions
 - 3. Review study's finding in light of
 - a. Past research
 - b. Theoretical considerations
 - 4. Implications for practice
 - 5. Limitations of study
 - 6. Suggestions for future research
 - 7. Summary statements
- 5. Submit thesis to chair for feedback and revisions in this order
 - a. Chapters 1 and 2
 - b. Chapter 3
 - c. Chapter 4
 - d. Chapter 5
- 6. Chair approves thesis and distributes to 2 thesis readers (other committee members)
- 7. Defend thesis with committee members using PowerPoint presentation
- 8. Final changes and approval
- 9. Binding and submission of a hard copy to all committee members

developed by Christopher Sink, professor and chair School Counseling

Version: 1-05-06



**MASTER'S THESIS
DESCRIPTION/PROCEDURES
Seattle Pacific University
School of Education**

Description

The master's thesis is a formal investigation into a research question that involves original data and primary sources, thus resulting in a scholarly manuscript for binding and possible publication. Examples include the following: (1) empirical research with results of interest and importance to the profession as a whole, (2) state purposes, (3) a thorough review of literature and research on a topic important to the profession, and (4) an historical or philosophical analysis of reoccurring themes and issues of education.

Thesis research is conducted under the direction of a three-person committee, with a chairperson responsible for the majority of guidance given to the student. Mentoring of the student is a primary concern. A copy of the thesis will be bound and kept in Weter Memorial Library. The student may, but is not required to, order one or more copies for their own use.

A thesis must be at least six credits, but may be as many as twelve or fifteen. **Note:** *EDU 6975 Interpreting and Applying Educational Research I* and *EDU 6976 Interpreting and Applying Educational Research II* are prerequisites to the master's thesis.

Procedures for pursuing a master's thesis are as follows:

1. The student develops a two-page proposal and meets with a member of the graduate faculty willing to review/amend this document and supervise the thesis. This individual will become, with the Dean's approval, the "committee chair."
2. The student submits the attached **THESIS REQUEST** form, with sections I and II completed and signed, to the Dean in the School of Education. A copy of the proposal is to be attached.
3. The Dean evaluates the proposal. If all is satisfactory, he approves selection of committee chair, appoints two additional committee members (or assigns the chair to do so), and signs the **THESIS REQUEST**. A copy is sent to the student, indicating permission to proceed. A copy is also retained in the student's file.
4. Under the chair's supervision, the student develops a full proposal for committee review.
5. The research is conducted. At least three credits of *EDU 6995, Thesis* must be enrolled in at this time. Any remaining credits may be registered for during the following quarter. The signature of the committee chair is required to register, and student is responsible to obtain this. Forms are available from the School of Education. **Note:** Thesis should be completed in one year or less.
6. The committee reviews and approves the final product.

The student submits a copy of the thesis to the Library for binding and placement in the Library. Additional copies submitted will be bound and returned to the student. (A mailing address must accompany the order form.) *A binding fee is charged for each thesis ordered.*

THESIS PROPOSAL

The proposal should describe what you propose to do for your research study. It should include: (a) your name; (b) date submitted; (c) a tentative title; (d) the problem; (e) the purpose of your project/study; (f) operational definitions; (g) related research; (h) assumptions; (i) hypothesis(es), question(s), or focus of your project; (j) procedures; (k) subjects or persons for whom the project will be developed; (l) research steps; (m) data analysis; (n) limitations; and (o) other information you consider relevant to your thesis or project. It should also include an approval cover page and human subjects form (see <http://www.spu.edu/orgs/irb/>). In preparing your research proposal you should follow the appropriate format and directions described below.

FORMAT OF THE PROPOSAL FOR A THESIS

The proposal should include the following information:

1. **COVER APPROVAL PAGE**
Complete the information and obtain signatures.
2. **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL REQUEST**
Include your application for IRB review. For the current protocol and forms, see web site: <http://www.spu.edu/orgs/irb/>
3. **TITLE**
State the tentative title of your proposal.
4. **PROBLEM**
Discuss the importance or significance of the problem selected. Show how your project or thesis is related to broader problems in the area.
5. **PURPOSE**
State the purpose of your study.
6. **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**
Clearly define the key variables, concepts, and terms which have a special meaning in your proposed study.

7. **RELATED RESEARCH**

Present a critical review of the related research, not just a summary of the findings. Show the relation of the reviewed material to your problem, hypotheses, questions, assumptions, and procedures. Note: For the proposal, the review of literature should be an abbreviated one. The complete review is needed for the actual project/thesis.

8. **ASSUMPTIONS**

If needed, list the assumptions (generalizations taken for granted) underlying various phases of your study.

9. **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS(ES)**

Clearly state the question(s) and the related hypothesis(es) to be investigated. Make sure that your hypotheses are stated in research format (either directional or non-directional [null]) and in a manner that can be empirically tested. State the focus of your thesis.

10. **METHOD**

State clearly and fully the methods to be used to gather data, test hypotheses, develop a model, and/or to answer questions.

- a. Participants: Indicate nature, sources, characteristics, and size of sample to be used. The sample may comprise children, adults, animals, primary and secondary material, courses of study, TV programs, etc.

Describe your sample in terms of factors such as age, grade level, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicities, or any other variable of potential significance.

- b. Procedures: Indicate techniques to be used, e.g., experimentation, questionnaire survey, interview survey, drawings, observations, analysis of published evidence, examination of documents via internal and external criticism, etc. Techniques not commonly used should be described in detail giving information concerning validity and reliability. Techniques to be devised by the investigator should be pretested and examined for utility before suggesting them as methods of measurement.
- c. Research Steps: List all research steps in the order in which they are to be carried out.
- d. Data Analysis: State appropriate methods of analyzing your data, e.g., specify the statistical methods to be used for testing each hypothesis or to answer each question. Indicate the criterion of significance. Common statistical procedures like product-moment correlation, analysis of variance, t, F, or chi square tests need not be elaborated further. For non-statistical research, indicate qualitative methods of analyzing your data.

11. CONCLUSIONS, GENERALIZATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

- a. Conclusions: State probable findings or conclusions.
 - b. Generalizations: Indicate the extent to which your findings may apply beyond your situation.
 - c. Implications: What lessons might be learned from your study?
 - d. Limitations: What deficiencies does your study have? How serious are they?
 - e. Suggestions for further research: Indicate avenues for further research.
- 12. REFERENCES - Follow closely *APA Publication Manual (5th ed.)* format.**



PROJECT

The project involves producing a creative activity and a written report. The creative project involves synthesizing and integrating knowledge and theory gained in the school counseling program and then demonstrating such through various media.

The creative project is written in the same manner as a thesis and includes (a) pre-text information (i.e., title page; approval page; copyright page; table of contents; list of tables and/or figures, if used; abstract); (b) text (i.e., 4 or 5 chapters); and (c) post-text (list of references and appendices, including the project itself if it is a written document).

Following are brief descriptions for each of these items.

TITLE PAGE:	AN EXPLANATORY TITLE THAT IS STATED CONCISELY • include author’s name, date and Seattle Pacific University
APPROVAL PAGE:	CERTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF PROJECT • include title, author name, and signature of committee members
OPTIONAL PAGES:	INCLUDE COPYRIGHT, DEDICATION, PREFACE, AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
TABLE OF CONTENTS:	LIST TITLES AND SUBTITLES • include first page numbers only
LIST OF TABLES:	LIST TABLE NUMBER, TITLE, AND PAGE NUMBERS • include first page numbers only
LIST OF FIGURES:	LIST FIGURE NUMBER, TITLE, AND PAGE NUMBERS • include first page numbers only
ABSTRACT:	150 WORD SUMMARY OF STUDY • include the purpose, sample, and findings • write specific findings in past tense

- CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION
- introduce topic
 - state the purpose of the project
 - state the theoretical bases underlying the study
 - describe the scope and setting of the study
 - define variables operationally
 - describe the significance of the project
- CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE
- describe previous research and information on topic
 - integrate the research; do not merely list
 - discuss relevant research, theories, and approaches that support the need for the project
- CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY
- describe the participants or intended participants
 - describe the materials used or developed (tapes, interviews, questionnaires, books, etc.)
 - describe the reliability and validity of published instruments
 - describe the activities you used
 - describe the procedural steps
- CHAPTER IV: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS
- write a summary and brief overview of the project
 - list your conclusions: What were the results, if any? Who benefits from the study? What would you do differently next time?
 - state the implications of the project: What was or will be accomplished as a result of it?
 - list any limitations
 - write recommendations for further development of this project, future research
- REFERENCES: LIST OF ALL SOURCES CITED IN TEXT
- APPENDICES: ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
- include questionnaires, interview materials, bibliographies, etc.
 - include the written part of the project (handbook, grant proposal, etc.)

The following information is adapted from the *Master's Degree Program Guidelines for Thesis or Project* developed by CSU, Stanislaus Office of Graduate Studies.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Creative projects should be based on a compilation of comparative analysis of the works done by others. Although such material provides the project with substance, you must show evidence of originality and critical thinking, and also demonstrate scholarly and/or creative ability.

The type of creative project you develop is limited only by your creativity, capability, and budget. Faculty are most concerned with the manner in which the material is researched, organized, developed, and presented. The content guidelines are more flexible for a project than for a thesis. Often, as in cases where the project is a manual or handbook, the project itself is placed in the Appendix, while sections in the main body of the text are tailored to introduce, justify, and validate the creative effort.

While requirements for specific creative projects will vary, there are certain elements common to each project. These should be discussed with your project chair.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROJECT

Because of the uniqueness of projects, the introductory sections and the main body will vary in number. The following information should be adapted as necessary. As a general rule, however, creative projects will contain at least some descriptive sections similar to those listed below.

PRE-TEXT PAGES

Pre-text pages usually include a title page, approval page, copyright page, acknowledgment page, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, list of symbols, and abstract. Each of these follow the same format as used in a thesis, substituting the words “creative project” for “thesis.”

BODY OF TEXT

The text in a creative project is divided into chapters in a manner similar to a thesis. It may include the following chapters: Introduction; Review of Related Literature; Methodology; Results; Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations. Note that the subtitles are different from those of a thesis, but follow the format described in the university guidelines.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The primary function of this initial section is to provide a comprehensive overview of the creative project. You may or may not need all of the subsections described here.

Purpose of the Project: A statement of the purpose of the project explains why the project was attempted. In this section you should explain why the project is important to undertake.

Scope (Description) of the Project: Define what the project is in terms of content and format. Include specific information regarding the subject matter, the intended audience, how the project is to be used, and the results or effects expected.

Significance of the Project: Explain the importance of the project in the field of study. Discuss the new dimensions or concepts that have been presented. Emphasize the importance of the project in its use of techniques and specify the intended effects. If the project is designed to be informational, persuasive, or instructional, specify the effects in terms of behavioral objectives.

Limitations of the Project: If applicable, present and discuss the content or method's limitations with regard to resources, time, and other factors.

Definition of Terms: Define any special terms and establish standard abbreviations which will be used throughout the text.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter constitutes the major research effort of the project. It provides the source material for the creative project and places the present project in context of existing information in the field. You should review and cite related studies and discuss their strengths and weaknesses pertaining to the purpose of the project. Discuss the techniques or theories examined and their respective implications for the present project. Summarize the review with a synthesis of the literature identifying various approaches and themes. This section ultimately justifies the need for the project.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes in depth each aspect of the creative project. It should be significantly detailed and should describe the format and techniques used. Techniques, questionnaires, interviews, study sites, artistic materials, and performing art elements used to accomplish the creative project should be described here.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

There may or may not be a results section, depending on the type of project. If there are findings to report, they should be synthesized for inclusion in this section. If the result is a performance or artistic creation, it should be described. Evaluation of the project is also included in this chapter.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary: Present an overview of the previous sections and how the final project addresses issues which have been raised. Reacquaint the reader with the conceptual framework and the design of the study. Basically, this section summarizes the entire project effort.

Conclusions: Conclusions presented should validate the need for the project and explain how the present study responded to that need.

Recommendations: Include comments regarding potential improvements or further development regarding the content, technique, and process of the creative project.

POST-TEXT

Post-text pages usually include references and appendices. In addition, oversized materials and photographs also may be placed in the post-text section.

REFERENCES

You must cite references in accordance with the *APA Publication Manual* (5th ed.). Include every source cited in the study and material which has been adapted for use in tables and figures. (The reference list cites works that specifically support the thesis; a bibliography cites works for background or for further reading.)

References cited in the text must appear in the reference list; conversely, each entry in the reference list must be cited in the text.

APPENDICES

As a general rule, a written project itself is placed in the appendix. This will allow more freedom in the format of the work. In addition, material too detailed for inclusion in the body of the text, or material which cannot be effectively presented due to its length or size, may be included in the appendices.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The proposal should include: (a) cover approval page, (b) human subjects form, (c) title, (d) description, (e) rationale, (f) background, (g) operational definitions, (h) goals and objectives, (i) methods and procedures, and (j) evaluation.

FORMAT OF THE PROPOSAL FOR A PROJECT

The project involves producing/implementing a creative activity and completing a written report. Following are brief descriptions of items that must be included in the written report.

1. **COVER APPROVAL PAGE**
Complete the information and obtain signatures.
2. **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW APPLICATION (if applicable)**
Attach your completed IRB application (see web site: <http://www.spu.edu/orgs/irb>)
3. **TITLE**
State your title in concise form.
4. **DESCRIPTION:**
Describe that which you plan to do.
5. **RATIONALE:**
State the reasons why what you plan to do is important and how it relates to the counseling profession (i.e., significance).
6. **BACKGROUND:**
Describe, as relevant, theory, research, and information relevant to your creative activity. (Review the literature in your area of interest.) Note: For the proposal, the review of literature should be an abbreviated one. The complete review is needed for the actual project.
7. **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:**
Clearly define key variables, concepts, and terms that have special meaning in your project.
8. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**
State your desired outcome and effect.

9. **METHODS AND PROCEDURES:**

Describe the methods, materials, and steps you will employ to complete your project.

- a. Sample: Indicate who will be involved in the creative activity. The sample may include children, adults, programs, courses of study, etc. Indicate age, sex, socioeconomic status and/or other variables of significance.
- b. Activities: Describe what you and participants will do. For example, attend workshop, make a presentation, test students, create videotapes, and the like.
- c. Step-by-Step Development: List the steps necessary to complete this project.

10. **EVALUATION:**

List any limitations in your project. Also, describe the system of evaluation which you will use to assess the worth/value of your project.

11. **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Discuss the implications of creating the project. Also state what you hope will be achieved as a result of your project.

12. **REFERENCES OR BIBLIOGRAPHY** - Follow *APA Publication Manual* (5th ed.) format.

BINDING

Projects may be bound, according to university guidelines. One copy of your project will be kept in the School Counseling Program coordinator's office. You also may want to make personal copies and, if reasonable and desired, provide a copy to each committee member.

Adapted from:

http://www.csustan.edu/advstd/sch_couns/Data/Program-Information/ThesisProjInfo.pdf

Christopher Sink
Chair, School Counseling
version 1-5-2006

Proposal for a Masters Thesis or Project

Attached is a proposal that I, _____
(student)

submit for approval for partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters degree in Education with an emphasis in School Counseling.

Thesis or Project Title: _____

Check appropriate choice: _____ Date submitted: _____

- Project
- Thesis

Approved:

 Committee Chairperson Date

 Committee Member Date

 Committee Member Date

Note: The thesis/project committee chair and at least one other voting member must be from the School of Education. These two members must have a doctorate to serve. The third voting member may be from outside the SOE, e.g., an ESA certificated school counselor. A committee is considered complete when there is a chair and two voting members.