

Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology & Special Education  
School & Applied Child Psychology (SACP) Program

### **UBC SACP M.A. Thesis Research Sequence**

In order to help facilitate thesis and research progress to ensure completed your M.A. thesis in a timely manner, a number of steps to help move you to a successful proposal defence have been added to the M.A. program.

As students in a M.A. program with a scientist-practitioner focus, you should be actively engaged in research activities throughout your program along with your course and clinical training activities. Research activities should include not only your own thesis research but also, engagement in research activities such as lab or research teams, research projects with your supervisor(s) or others in the department or other places at UBC, refereed presentations at professional conferences, and manuscripts submitted for publication. These activities will set you up for success in your doctoral program.

Your thesis research is a critical component of your M.A. program. To ensure timely program completion it is important to begin exploring the topic for your thesis research early in your M.A. program. Doing so will help in making decisions about research courses, papers and projects for classes, and other activities you may become involved both in and outside of the classroom.

#### **Year One: Term 1**

##### **SSHRC (CIHR, NSERC) Application**

If you do not enter the program with federal (SSHRC, CIHR, NSERC) funding, you will be expected to submit a proposal late in the Winter 1 term (typically early December of each year). This is a useful first step in exploring ideas for your thesis research. The proposal and application requires you connect with your research supervisor early in the term or even in the summer before you begin your M.A. program to discuss your research ideas.

##### **Research Topic Planning**

You should be meeting with your research supervisor regularly during your first term. Supervisors have different ways of approaching supervision. Talk with them about your needs as a student and their expectations as a supervisor. By December 15 you will submit a short (approximately 2 page) summary of your thesis progress and plans for moving forward to your research supervisor. You should use the First Year Thesis Update form (attached) in summarizing your work. Students will also share their research ideas with each other and other program faculty during one of the M.A. student meetings during the year.

#### **Year One: Term 2**

You should meet with your supervisor no later than January 15 to progress on your research plan (if you have not done so sooner). A copy of your First Year Thesis Update Form, including notes from the discussion with your supervisor and signatures from you and your supervisor should be placed in your file with the SACP administrative assistant within a week of your meeting.

In Winter Term 2 you will continue to work with your supervisor to develop a Thesis Prospectus. A prospectus is a short road map for the proposed Thesis. It is intended to get you thinking about your project early enough to ensure completion in a timely fashion. You will submit your Thesis Prospectus to your supervisor by May 1st and discuss it with your supervisor by June. At the June meeting you should begin exploration of members for your research supervisory committee and

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clarify plans for any additional coursework or experiences in Year 2 to help ensure the successful completion of the proposal and ultimately successful completion of the Thesis. The prospectus may change as your work to your Thesis proposal but it should serve as a strong plan to move forward.

Your Thesis prospectus should be approximately 8 to 10 pages in length and be organized as follows:

- I. Working Title
- II. Brief Literature Highlights
- III. Statement of the Problem and/or Rational or Need for the Study
- IV. Purpose Statement
- V. Proposed/Preliminary Research Questions
- VI. Considerations for Methodology
  - Potential Approach or Method
  - Potential Sample/Participants
  - Potential Measures or Approaches to Data Collection
  - Potential Approaches to Data Analysis
- VII. Selected References
- VIII. Possible Committee Members
- IX. Timelines and Plans for Moving Forward to Thesis Proposal

Once the document has been reviewed and discussed with your supervisor, a signed copy should be placed in your department file. Note that your prospectus may be completed earlier in the term but must be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Summer Year 1**

#### **Developing your Research Proposal**

By the summer of Year 1 you should have a good sense of the direction for your thesis. You will continue to work on your proposal and work with your supervisor to finalize a research supervisory committee. You can complete your proposal at any point you are ready. Ideally this will be completed by August 1<sup>st</sup> of Year 1. At the very latest it must be completed by September 15<sup>th</sup> of Year 2.

There are some variations of the format of the Thesis proposal. You should work with your research supervisor to develop a proposal plan that fits with their approach, the methodology you are using for your research, and G+PS guidelines (<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/dissertation-thesis-preparation>). The thesis proposal typically has 3 sections or chapters and while the length of the document varies they typically range from 15 to 30 pages depending on the approach taken and supervisor preferences. A sample organization might look like this:

- I. Introduction
- II. Review of the Literature
- III. Methodology (the components of this chapter in particular will vary with the approach taken but typically include at minimum the following)
  - Purpose Student
  - Research Questions
  - Methods or Design
  - Procedures

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- Participants
  - Recruitment
  - Measures or approaches to Data Collection
  - Ethical Considerations
  - Data Analysis
- IV. References
- V. Appendices (including samples of measures, questionnaires, interview guides, etc)

### **Year Two**

At the very latest your thesis proposal should be completed by September 15<sup>th</sup> of Year 2. The thesis research focus in Year 2 of your program is on obtaining ethics and other research approvals to conduct your research, conducting your thesis research, writing up your final dissertation document, and the final oral defense of your research.

Following approval of your proposal you will obtain ethics approval.

(<https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/behavioural-research-ethics> ) and then begin your research.

Timelines at this point will vary depending on the nature of your research. You should work closely with your supervisory committee in developing and monitoring your thesis plan and timelines. You are strongly encouraged to complete data collection and data analysis by June of Year 2 with final defense in the Summer of Year 2. Every effort should be made to complete your thesis by August 31<sup>st</sup> of Year 2 before you begin the Ph.D. program. However, if needed, permission may be requested to begin your Ph.D. program prior to final thesis defense with a final oral thesis defense by mid October to meet fall graduation and program completion timelines. Information final on dissertation formatting and the final oral examination is found at <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/final-dissertation-thesis-submission>



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## SACP M.A. Student Term 1 Thesis Update Form

By December 15 of your first term in the program Ph.D. students are required to submit a short summary (approximately 2 pages) of your thesis progress to your research supervisor (copy to your SACP advisor if this person is different). You should meet with your research supervisor no later than January 15 to review your progress and proposed plan for moving forward with your dissertation prospectus in the Winter 2 term (submitted by May 30). A copy of this update and approved plan should be signed by the student and their research supervisor (advisor if a research supervisor has not been identified) and submitted to the SACP program assistant (with copy for the student and supervisor) within one week of the review meeting. Submitting this form is a shared responsibility of the student and supervisor to ensure this occurs on time. Your summary can take any form that works for and is helpful for you and your supervisor. However in preparing this summary, respond, at minimum, to the following questions:

- What research activities have you engaged in during the Winter 1 term to facilitate your thesis progress?
- What is the general area you anticipate for study in your thesis research?
- What is your plan for the Winter 2 to help facilitate your completing a thesis prospectus by May 1<sup>st</sup>? (this might include discussion of plan for readings, research meetings, coursework, workshops, timelines)

After your meeting, attach the Thesis Update Summary to this completed form.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of meeting to discuss Thesis Update Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Any additional comments resulting from the meeting:

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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**SACP M.A. Student Term 2 Thesis Prospectus Form**

You will submit your Thesis Prospectus to your supervisor by May 1st and discuss it with your supervisor by June 1st. At the June meeting you should begin exploration of members for your research supervisory committee and clarify plans for any additional coursework or experiences in Year 2 to help ensure the successful development of the dissertation proposal and ultimately successful and timely completion of the thesis. The prospectus may change as your work to your thesis proposal but it should serve as a strong plan to move forward. Your thesis prospectus (approximately 8 to 10 pages in length) should be attached to this form. Respond to the following areas in your prospectus:

- I. Working Title
- II. Brief Literature Highlights
- III. Statement of the Problem and/or Rational or Need for the Study
- IV. Purpose Statement
- V. Proposed/Preliminary Research Questions
- VI. Considerations for Methodology
  - Potential Approach or Method
  - Potential Sample/Participants
  - Potential Measures or Approaches to Data Collection
  - Potential Approaches to Data Analysis
- VII. Selected References/Bibliography
- VIII. Possible Committee Members
- IX. Timelines and Plans for Moving Forward to Dissertation Proposal

Once the prospectus has been reviewed and discussed with your supervisor, a signed copy of this form along with the prospectus attached should be placed in your department file within one month of your meeting.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Any additional comments resulting from the meeting:

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### SACP Thesis Proposal Approval Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Student #)

has successfully defended and had approved the proposal for their thesis for the M.A. in School and Applied Child Psychology in the UBC Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education.

Title of Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisory Committee:

Supervisor(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Supervisory Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature