MS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THESIS GUIDELINES

Students pursuing the MS in National Security Affairs and International Relations have the option of choosing the comprehensive exam or thesis option as a final requirement to complete the degree program. Below are the guidelines for students who choose the thesis option.

Graduate Thesis Requirements

The thesis represents the culmination of a student's work in a master's degree program at the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Completing the thesis demonstrates that the student can work independently, integrate discipline-specific information, and respond to feedback. Students must complete a minimum of twenty-four credits of graduate coursework before taking master's thesis courses. The master's thesis coursework is six credits spread out over two consecutive semesters.

The Thesis

The thesis option represents a significant commitment on the part of the student. Those who choose it must be prepared to engage in extensive research and writing. Completed thesis projects are expected to be in the range of fifty to seventy-five pages (typed, double-spaced, twelve point font). The project should constitute a work of original research and contribute to the scholarship in the field of national security affairs and international relations. Students can frame their own project[s] in consultation with, and subject to the approval of, a faculty member who will serve as the thesis director. Subject to the approval of the thesis director, students may employ qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research methods.

THESIS PHASES

PHASE 1

Prior to registering for the thesis course, a student interested in the thesis option must first reach out to the faculty member with whom he or she wishes to work and secure the faculty member's agreement to become the thesis director. The student must secure the agreement of the thesis director by the middle of the semester prior to when the student first registers for the thesis course. The thesis director must be a full-time NSU faculty member and must teach in the National Security Affairs and International Relations master's program. Ideally, the thesis director will have expertise that is directly relevant to the student's area of study. The thesis director's approval will be required before the student is permitted to register for the thesis course.

PHASE 2

During the first semester in which the student is registered for the thesis course, the student and the thesis director meet regularly to set goals, review drafts, and ensure progress. During this initial stage, the student will produced a thesis proposal under the supervision of the thesis director. The student will then submit the proposal to the Comprehensive Exam Committee for approval no later than mid-term of the first semester of the student's two-semester thesis sequence. Once approved by the committee, the student may begin work on the project.

PHASE 3

This is main phase of the thesis process. It begins as soon as the Comprehensive Exam Committee approves the student's thesis proposal and continues through the second semester of the student's two-semester thesis sequence. Under the supervision of the thesis director, the student will engage in appropriate research. The student must work with the thesis director to establish a timetable for submission of drafts, edits and reviews. In the latter stages of writing, line edits should be implemented to make the writing clear, cohesive, and grammatically correct. Documentation should be accurate and conform to the most recent updates of documentation style (see Style Guidelines below). Prior to the defense, the student submits final copies of the project to the thesis director, each member of the Comprehensive Exam Committee and to the Department Chair [no later than four weeks before the end date of the second semester of the student's two-semester thesis sequence].

PHASE 4

After submitting final copies of the thesis, the student will schedule a thesis defense, with the thesis director and Comprehensive Exam Committee's approval. The thesis defense should take place during the student's final semester of the program, no later than two weeks before the end date of the second semester of the student's two-semester thesis sequence. The student and the thesis director should discuss appropriate presentation of the project prior to the defense. The defense will be before the graduate faculty and an audience of other students and invited guests. During the event, the student summarizes the project, presents the major findings, and addresses questions from the Comprehensive Exam Committee. The student's presentation of the project and answers to these questions are part of the assessment of the thesis project. After the committee finishes asking questions, audience members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the student. After the thesis defense, the committee members will assess all parts of the project and decide whether or not to recommend approval of the thesis. The committee may require that the student complete further work or revisions following the defense. If approval is recommended, the thesis director and the members of the Comprehensive Exam Committee will complete the signature page, and the student will submit the thesis for final approval by the department chair. Finally, the student will submit one copy of the final thesis to the department to be bound and become part of the university's thesis archive. This copy must adhere to the Thesis Format

Important Deadlines

Thesis Director:

The student must secure the agreement of the thesis director by the middle of the semester prior to when the student first registers for the thesis course.

Thesis Proposal:

All thesis proposals must be submitted to the Comprehensive Exam Committee by mid-term of the first semester of the student's two-semester thesis sequence.

Final Submission:

The student must secure the agreement of the thesis director by the middle of the semester prior to when the student first registers for the thesis course.

Thesis Defense:

The thesis defense must take place no later than two weeks before the end date of the second semester of the student's two-semester thesis sequence.

Repeats

In the event that a student fails to complete the thesis in a two-semester sequence or in the event that student fails to successfully defend the thesis before the Comprehensive Exam Committee, the student will be given the opportunity, subject to the approval of the committee, to repeat another semester of three-credit thesis course work in order to complete and defend the project.

Format and Style Guidelines

Students must adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style guidelines for thesis submission.
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/