



Academically Excellent, Distinctively Christian

Psychology
Master of Science (M.S.)
Thesis Handbook
Non-Licensure
(Fall 2023 – Summer 2024)



Christian Leadership
to Change the World

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Important Notice

This handbook provides helpful information about the thesis project required in the doctoral preparation concentration within the M.S. Program in General Psychology. Program requirements and procedures related to the thesis project are subject to change. Students are expected to regularly review program announcements that accompany such changes and then abide by the changed requirements. Students from all cohorts are obligated to follow current program requirements and procedures as they evolve, unless otherwise stated.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Only students in the Doctoral Preparation concentration in good academic standing can work on a Thesis Project. **As of Fall 2017 semester, the thesis project is no longer a required but rather an elective part of the Doctoral Preparation concentration.** In other words, students in the Doctoral Preparation concentration may choose to complete a thesis project (in lieu of 2 elective courses), but they are not required to do so. The thesis project in the M.S. program should clearly demonstrate competence in the basic elements of research design applied to a topic of inquiry in psychological science. While many forms of scholarship are conducted in the field of psychology, the focus of the thesis project is to demonstrate competence in empirical research. Consequently, the thesis project must utilize a research methodology that includes quantitative analysis of empirical data.

One of the distinctive characteristics of Regent University is its commitment to the outworking of a Christian worldview. The thesis should reflect an ability to integrate faith and learning. This does not mean that all theses are to be formally couched in “religious language” or that project topics must be limited to explicitly theological topics. Since the School of Psychology & Counseling (SPC) operates under the assumption that *all truth is God’s truth*, any project that focuses on knowledge of the truth about human functioning is viewed as valuable.

When the thesis addresses issues that have implications for matters of faith, such connections should be explicitly examined in a manner sensitive to the diverse religious and Biblical perspectives relevant to the topic. If students choose to focus their thesis on topics that are parochial to the Christian community, a graduate-level exploration of those Christian topics within both the theological and psychological fields is expected.

The general standard for passing the performance of the M.S. Thesis is the competent implementation of a research design capable of asking a meaningful research question in psychological science raised by a review of current literature. This does not require that the research project discover new knowledge or represent a novel research project. For instance, replication studies of un-replicated or inadequately replicated findings are legitimate topics for the M.S. thesis.

In addition to demonstrating competency in research design and implementation, students are also expected to reflect the values of diligence, integrity, and scholarship common to both biblical thought and the professional discipline of psychology. The student must display writing skills that are at a graduate level and consistent with APA style. The composition of the thesis must reflect proper grammar, correct spelling, and a writing style commensurate with the graduate-level nature of the project. The manuscript should also conform exactly to the specific format requirements outlined in this handbook. The student should take care to discharge his or her responsibilities in a timely manner and maintain a good working relationship with all committee members and others involved in the thesis process. Students are encouraged to be creative with their ideas, but they must display receptivity to feedback. Proper ethical conduct while doing the thesis, as outlined in APA’s (2010) ethical principles and code of conduct, is an expectation.

For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. – Luke 11:10

CHAPTER II TYPES OF THESIS PROJECTS

As noted earlier, a successful thesis must demonstrate competence in the design and conduct of an empirical research project in psychology.

Types of Research Designs

Listed below are several examples of various thesis projects that would be appropriate:

True Experimental Designs

Participants are randomly assigned to a gratitude journaling condition versus a general journal condition on a daily basis for 14 days. Daily mood ratings are collected and the two groups are compared at the end of the 14-day period.

Quasi-Experimental Designs

An interrupted time series design is used in program evaluation to assess the effects of an Employee Assistance Program on employee satisfaction and mental health.

Comparative

The productivity level of employees allowed to structure their tasks at work for a 4-week period is compared to the productivity of employees in settings where their activities are assigned throughout the day by a supervisor over the same period.

Associational

The correlation between measures of Openness to Experience and Religious Commitment is examined in a college student sample. Regression models exploring the predictive power of marital satisfaction for longevity would be another example.

Replication Projects

A replication project involves faithfully repeating a project conducted by another researcher in order to see if the same outcome is obtained. Some have argued that psychology is in a “replication crisis” since many celebrated findings in psychology have not been replicated by independent researchers or at times have not been found upon replication. In order to be a

robust science, psychology must use reliable and replicable discoveries. A replication project may take the form of any particular research design used in an original study. There are several benefits to selecting a replication project for a thesis. It is an excellent way to gain an understanding of how existing psychological research is actually conducted. It can also add to the body of knowledge by providing corroborating data or discrepant data. It typically provides a readymade rationale for the research project facilitating a strong introduction section.

Types of Data Collection/Utilization

In addition to these various types of research designs, theses also differ in terms of the data collection procedures they utilize. Some theses use novel data acquired for the thesis. Others involve the analysis of archival data conducted under the supervision of a faculty research team or faculty member. Collections of questionnaire or survey responses are a common source of psychological data. Such data collection may involve internet web-based surveys or group administration of such instruments.

Additional sources of data collection might include psycho-physiological measures, biochemical analyses, neurological imaging, or naturalistic observation. In-depth interviewing and focus group interviews may also be used, depending on the nature of the project. Data collection procedures typically vary between the dimensions of qualitative-quantitative data and validated/invalidated instrumentation.

CHAPTER III THE REGENT PSYCHOLOGY THESIS PROCESS

Formulating a Topic

An appropriate thesis stems from a well-formulated topic that is pertinent to the field of psychology. A variety of activities, such as completing guided readings or participating in a faculty research team, can act as catalysts for the development of the thesis topic. Students should actively work on developing their research topic from the moment they enter the M.S. Program. Often early academic projects, such as term papers or student presentations, may provide the impetus for the thesis topic. Intellectual curiosity and diligence in mastering a research area are valuable factors in arriving at a good thesis topic. Einstein is credited with the statement that "...chance favors the prepared mind". From a theistic perspective, this could be reformulated as "God rewards a diligent seeker".

Although students are encouraged to pursue thesis topics that are of personal interest, students must be able to enlist a thesis committee that is willing to supervise a project. Some thesis topics may lie outside the areas of expertise or interests of current faculty. In such cases, securing a thesis chair and committee may be difficult. Consequently, students must be prepared to revise their thesis ideas in dialogue with potential project chairs until they have approval for the project.

Writing a Proposal Paper for Research Design (GPSY 513)

All M.S. students enroll in the Research Methods seminar (GPSY 513). The course focuses on the following areas: survey of the range of research methods utilized in contemporary psychology with a primary emphasis on quantitative research, including both experimental and non-experimental designs. It also includes a Research Methods Paper that is to serve as the basis for the thesis project for all students enrolled in the Doctoral Concentration.

The Research Methods paper includes a literature review delineating the rationale for the research topic, a statement of the research questions or scholarly project that will be the focus of the project, and the proposed methodology and/or procedure. Students in the Doctoral Concentration Track are highly encouraged to build on this paper for their actual thesis project and to propose their thesis by the end of the Research Methods (GPSY 513) class. *If Thesis Proposal has not occurred in the Research Methods class, then students are required to continuously register for Thesis Proposal GPSY 518 course for the subsequent semesters until they successfully propose. These additional credits do not replace the credits required for the degree, however, they do increase the overall credits necessary for the M.S. degree.* Once a successful proposal has occurred (in GPSY 513 or GPSY 518), students are allowed to register for Thesis courses (GPSY 599A and GPSY 599B).

Students should establish their thesis committee **no later than the end of the second semester in their program (preferably earlier)**. Once a committee is established, a student submits a completed *Thesis Topic Approval* form to the Program Director. The thesis requires students to obtain a thesis chair, a thesis reader, and list a topic approved by the chair. The minimum thesis committee will consist of two individuals: a chair and a member. The Chair must be a member of the full-time Regent psychology faculty. A reader is a volunteer committee member who is a psychologist or another professional with a terminal degree in a discipline appropriate to the topic. In rare cases, a chair who is not a full-time psychology faculty member at Regent may be approved by the Program Director. Faculty may serve on the committee providing that the following conditions are met:

1. The potential chair holds a degree, such as a Ph.D., Ed.D., or Psy.D., that reflects expertise in the field of psychology and that is not available among the existing core Regent faculty.
2. The potential chair must qualify or hold an appointment as an adjunct or affiliate faculty member in the School of Psychology & Counseling.

Writing a Thesis Proposal

The student works closely with the thesis committee in preparing the proposal manuscript, which consists of several elements: the Title page, prospective Abstract, Introduction, and other sections that are appropriate to the particular type of thesis project undertaken. Chapter three of this manual describes each of the above elements as they are applied to the final thesis. Much of this description is appropriate for the proposal document. Briefly, the Title page is an identifying page designed in accordance with the specifications described in the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. The Abstract summarizes the proposed project and any anticipated findings. The Introduction serves as a literature review that highlights the need and importance of the particular topic. The Introduction concludes with the project's hypotheses or theses.

The nature of the particular thesis, along with the desires of the committee, determines the format of sections following the Introduction. A scientific journal article format is to be followed for the thesis project. The completed thesis project is to closely simulate a journal article submission, apart from having more introductory detail and potentially more information in the appendices, such as copies of instruments used in the study. **The entire body of the thesis apart from appended materials, prefatory pages, and references, should not exceed 50 double space and properly formatted pages.**

Any student who wishes to take the thesis option of courses in the MS program must request approval from the Program Director at the start of the semester prior to the one they wish to start the courses in. Thesis courses are built on demand and at the approval and direction of the Program Director. Also, any student who has received a grade lower than B (lower than 83%) in any of the courses in research/ quantitative sequence in the program (GPSY 510, GPSY 511, GPSY 512 and GPSY 513) will not be eligible to remain in the Doctoral

Preparation Concentration since many doctoral programs require at least a B level competency in these areas and a cumulative GPA of 3.5.

Scientific journal article format

The following scientific journal article format is most appropriate for experimental, quasi-experimental, and program evaluation thesis designs and should include:

- The Title Page
- Abstract
- Introduction that should include a literature review on the research topic, the rationale for the proposed study, and the proposed research questions and hypotheses
- The Method section, which delineates the specific methodology the student, will use to investigate the topic. This section must describe the specific design of the study, identify the participants and their method of selection, and define procedures to be carried out and the measures to be used with an adequate discussion of reliability/validity issues. The Method section of the proposal should also contain a discussion of any ethical issues relevant to the study. The ethical principles and standards of the American Psychological Association (www.apa.org) should be specifically addressed when applicable. If any ethical concerns arise from the study design, a plan to safeguard participants and a justification of risks must be included. The Thesis Chair will help the student develop appropriate subheadings for this section. For example, typical subheadings might include the following: Participants, Assessment Instruments, Procedures, or Ethical Safeguards.
- A References section then completes the thesis proposal in this format.

Students should carefully review the current edition of the *APA Publication Manual* to ensure they are correctly following the APA style. It is also important for students to note that APA allows some exceptions to standard APA style guidelines for theses. For instance, APA recommends judicious use of single spacing when it contributes to the readability of the thesis manuscript. Examples include single-spacing table headings, table of contents, and long quotations.

Thesis Proposal (GPSY 518)

If a student has not completed Thesis Proposal Meeting in GPSY 513, the student is to register for GPSY 518 at the next available session and commence formal work on their thesis proposal. A written draft of the proposal should be prepared in close consultation with the committee members. It is not uncommon for several drafts to be produced prior to the final version being approved by the committee. In most cases, the faculty member should be given two weeks (during semesters, not including University holidays or breaks) to review the draft. Usually, the student and Chair work closely on finalizing a draft prior to its dissemination to the committee member(s). The draft should also include a preliminary timeline for completion of the thesis. Planning enough time for feedback and revisions is essential. Any revisions or

concerns raised by committee members should be promptly resolved to ensure the successful completion of the proposal (within two weeks or sooner).

Thesis Proposal Approval

The proposal process is complete when students successfully present their proposal to their thesis committee either via email or during a synchronous proposal meeting, receive all appropriate signatures on the **Thesis Proposal Approval Form** (including the signatures of all members of the thesis committee and Program Director), and turns in this completed and signed form to the Academic Manager. This should be completed prior to the end of the GPSY 513 course or GPSY 518 course. Appendix B contains the competency evaluation sheet for the proposal completed by the student's thesis committee at the time of the proposal. In order to pass the proposal, the student must receive a passing rating by the committee on all relevant competencies. If a student has any questions about this aspect of the thesis project, they need to consult with their thesis Chair. Note also that there may be many revisions to the proposal. Committee members have a minimum of two weeks to review revised drafts until they are ready to be proposed. It is possible that committee members will require revisions to the drafts prior to scheduling the proposal. This contingency should be taken into account in planning your timeline.

Due to the online nature of the program, thesis proposal may occur completely asynchronously (approval by all members of the thesis committee via email) or via a synchronous "meeting" via Skype or Collaborate (or another online platform), **per the discretion of the thesis committee members.** The thesis committee may decide to hold a synchronous proposal meeting in order to ask questions and clarify any aspects of the proposal. Students need to clarify with their committee members which option they would prefer.

If requested by the thesis committee, a synchronous proposal presentation would proceed in the following way. The committee Chair will open the meeting with prayer and present the student to the committee. The student should be prepared to give a detailed presentation of the study being proposed. Presentation time should not exceed 20 minutes. The presentation should review pertinent literature, highlight the importance of the study, outline the design, and predict the anticipated results. The presentation should include the limitations of the study and important issues for future research. A PowerPoint presentation and/or handouts are recommended to aid the presentation. When the student has completed the presentation, the committee chair will open the floor for questions from the committee members and then to any other faculty members present. Questioning will not be open to other observers present. Areas upon which inquiries are made can include research methodology, theoretical issues, and Christian integration or worldview issues.

When the questioning period has been completed, the committee discusses the student's proposal defense, with particular emphasis on the areas delineated in the Proposal Presentation Competency Review form (See Appendix B). The committee will make one of three recommendations: Pass, Pass with recommendations, or Fail. A "Pass" signifies that the student has a sufficient grasp of the project to begin implementing the methodology, A "Pass

with recommendations” suggests that the student has a sufficient grasp of most elements of the thesis; however, additions or revisions may be necessary to the existing proposal document prior to implementing the thesis. A "fail" indicates that the student has not met sufficient criteria cited in the Proposal Presentation Competency Review form. In this case, recommendations are made and the student must seek a second proposal meeting, addressing the concerns of the committee. Note that the majority of students achieve a “Pass with recommendations”. This is because the proposal defense is a time when both student and Committee members discuss, refine, and even may change the design or statistics involved in the thesis proposal.

One session is generally considered adequate time to develop a proposal acceptable to the committee. Once the proposal defense is completed and Human Subjects Review Committee approval is obtained, the student will receive a grade of “P”, or “pass” for GPSY 518 (Thesis Proposal), unless the Proposal occurred in GPSY 513 class. ***However, if a student fails to complete the proposal prior to the end of the session in which they are enrolled in GPSY 513 or GPSY 518, they will have to register for Proposal continuation credits (additional GPSY 518 credits) for each session until the presentation occurs. These additional credits do not replace the credits required for the degree, however, they do increase the overall credits necessary for the M.S. degree.*** Students who are deemed by the faculty to be making inadequate progress in their thesis projects will be given a written warning with a description of the inadequate areas of performance and deadlines for remediation. This will be considered in the annual review of the student. Failure to correct deficiencies by the prescribed deadlines may result in a student being removed from the doctoral concentration, thus requiring that they complete the requirements for the standard concentration in order to obtain the M.S. degree.

Human Subjects Review

After the successful thesis proposal has been completed and the student has obtained all necessary signatures on the **Thesis Proposal Approval Form** (including the signature of the Program Director), a Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) application can be submitted. Any project involving data collection and human subjects must be submitted to the HSRC, even if the project is potentially exempt or at minimal risk. HSRC follows the guidelines as outlined in *Faculty & Academic Policy Handbook*. Please see Regent University’s website for details regarding the HSRC process. Once an HSRC application has been submitted to the HSRC, and upon the advisement of the committee Chair, the student may proceed to schedule a proposal defense and prepare the final draft of the proposal document. **No data may be collected prior to receiving explicit approval from the HSRC.**

Implementing the Thesis

Once the student has passed the Thesis Proposal Presentation (in GPSY 513 or GPSY 518) and obtained human subjects approval, they can request permission to register for Thesis courses (GPSY 599A and 599B) and conduct the thesis project. Student cannot register for GPSY 599 courses if they have not obtained all appropriate signatures on their **Thesis Proposal**

Approval Form (including the signature of the Program Director) and have turned in their form to the Academic Manager. This form serves as a tracking form for each student and each thesis project, and without that completed and signed form on file the student will not be permitted to register for GPSY 599 courses.

It is of note that ***all GPSY 599 courses are 15-week courses, not 8-week courses***; they span the full length of the semester due to the nature of academic work required as part of these courses. Should the project not be completed by the end of the semester in which the student is enrolled in GPSY 599B, the student must register for the thesis continuance course (GPSY 599C) each session until the thesis has been successfully completed. Typically, a maximum of two semesters of GPSY 599C will be allowed per thesis project. If the student fails to complete the thesis project after completing two consecutive semesters of GPSY 599C, they will not be allowed to proceed with their thesis project (unless in unusual/ extenuating circumstances, for which an academic petition will need to be submitted). An exception to the 2-semester rule will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the thesis committee, Program Director, and potentially the Dean of SPC.

Continuous enrollment in GPSY 599 is required until the thesis is completed and documentation is on file with the Program Director (a signed Thesis Defense Competency Review form) and the Registrar's Office receives documentation of acceptance to ProQuest by the Academic Services Manager. GPSY 599C is assigned a grade of "IP", or "in process" until the thesis process is completed. This may result in the need to register for more than the minimum required number of hours, and payment of corresponding tuition charges. Financial aid is not required to cover any credit hours above those required for your degree per your ADP.

It is in this phase that students will implement the data collection and analysis strategies delineated in the proposal. Students must write the Results and Discussion section in the proposal as two separate sections describing what they found in their project and discussing its significance. Any remaining sections of the thesis must then be written, including the References, Appendices and all Figures and Tables. Students must adhere to the 50-page limit on the main body of the thesis.

All students must continue to work closely with committee members throughout the writing process. A draft of the thesis should be completed with appropriate input from committee members. It is important that this draft include any new pertinent research findings released since the creation of the original proposal. These findings will be included in an updated Introduction section. The process continues as one similar to the proposal creation. Students submit a draft to all committee members for their review. *It is common for several revised drafts to be requested by the committee prior to giving final thesis draft approval.* A student at this level is also expected to demonstrate appropriate initiative, problem-solving skills, and knowledge of resources needed to complete the thesis. The academic protocol requires the faculty member is provided with a two-week period in which to review the document. This two-week period is during the academic semester, not during academic break times (such as spring break or university breaks such as between semesters). Once all requested revisions have been adequately addressed and the committee Chair gives approval, the student may request a date for their thesis defense. A defense date cannot be scheduled until the defense committee gives its approval. It is the philosophy of our Department that the

Thesis Chair has discretion and ultimate knowledge of knowing when the project and student are ready to defend their thesis.

Defense of the Thesis

The committee chairperson has the final responsibility for approving an oral defense of the thesis. With the Chair's permission, committee member(s) are contacted and a date is set for the oral defense. The student is responsible for contacting the program administrative assistant to arrange a room (or receive information on conducting a thesis defense online through Collaborate or a similar online format). The student will notify all committee members and any other necessary individuals of the date, time, and room (in case the student chooses to travel on campus for defense). Once the date is set, the student must submit copies of the manuscript to all committee members at least one week prior to the defense date.

For in-person defenses, the student will provide a room reservation request to the program administrative assistant two business weeks in advance of the date of the defense. Students are permitted to conduct their defense live with video conferencing through Collaborate.

Thesis Defense Process

The committee Chair will open the meeting with prayer and will introduce each member of the thesis committee. The student should be prepared to give a brief presentation of the study (15-20 minutes). The presentation should highlight the importance of the study, outline the design, briefly summarize the results and discuss the significance of the findings. The presentation should include any limitations of the study or important issues that need to be further addressed. Typically, the presentation is facilitated with PowerPoint or handouts. When the student has completed the presentation, the committee chair will begin the period of questioning. Afterward, the chair will open the floor to questions only from members of the thesis committee and then from any faculty members present. Questioning will not be open to other observers present. In addition to questions concerning research methods and theoretical issues, students should be prepared to answer questions relating their topic, findings or research to an operative, worldview of religion and spirituality. When the questioning period has been completed, all persons, other than committee members, present in the room, will leave the room or video conference, in order for the committee to discuss the recommendation regarding the oral defense. Emphasis will be placed on areas described in the Thesis Defense Competency Review form (See Appendix B). When a recommendation has been agreed upon, the student will be invited back and the recommendation of the committee will be given to the student by the committee chair. If the recommendation is favorable, the student will proceed to Step Seven in the thesis process.

The committee may approve the thesis, approve it provisionally upon revisions, or assign a grade of fail. A failing grade on the oral defense should not occur unless the student has failed to work closely with committee members over the thesis process or displays

substantial deficits in knowledge areas pertinent to the study. In the event of a failure, the committee will delineate the required steps for remediation. A failure at this level means that the student will have to sit for their oral defense a second time, once all other remedial steps have been taken. All committee members must sign/approve the revised thesis once the student has passed the defense. A completed Thesis Competency Review form and Thesis Summary Form must be turned in to the program's Academic Services Manager immediately upon passing the defense.

If a provisional passing grade is received, the committee will delineate the required steps for remediation and specify a recommended timeline for completion of these steps. Delineation of these steps may necessitate an additional meeting with committee members. The timeline for completion of remedial steps may vary in accordance with the specific remedial concerns of each case. The thesis chairperson will oversee any changes to a provisionally approved thesis, and all committee members must sign/approve the revised thesis. Students with a provisionally approved thesis do not need to repeat their oral defense; however, they must continue to take at least one thesis hour each semester while completing the remedial steps requested.

If a full passing grade is received, the chairperson approves the project for manuscript completion. The student presents an official title page to the committee for appropriate committee member signatures, and then proceeds to obtain all other necessary signatures on the **Thesis Defense Competency Review** form, including the signatures of the thesis committee members and of the Program Director. Once all necessary signatures have been obtained, this form needs to be **turned in to the Academic Services Manager**.

Publication and Presentation of Theses

Students are encouraged to present their thesis at conferences and submit for publication. Typically, the author order should be the student followed by their thesis chair, and then other relevant researchers. However, there may be exceptions to this if the thesis is a portion of the faculty's larger research program and publications. This should be clearly stated and understood prior to the thesis proposal. Student contribution to the research should be proportional to their contribution to the research presentation and publication, in keeping with APA Research Ethics.

The decision whether to actually present or submit an article-length version of the manuscript should be made by the student and their Chair. For example, some theses represent sections of a professor's ongoing program of research within their research teams. In these cases, the professor and student may decide to include the thesis as part of a larger article or conference presentation at some future time.

Submission of the Final Manuscript

After a successful defense, the revised thesis manuscript must be presented to the Regent University library and prepared in compliance with university guidelines. Committees may require copy editing if the student's defense has numerous problems with writing conventions. Copy editors are optional but must be approved by the department. **The student must complete their thesis during the two semesters of thesis courses and have the manuscript accepted by ProQuest during this time. If a student does not meet this timeline they may be removed from the thesis track. Students should make sure to communicate with their Thesis Chair and the Program Director if they run into items that might result in not completing their thesis during the two terms provided.** Once the thesis has been successfully defended and any final changes or editorial corrections to the final manuscript have been made, the manuscript must be electronically submitted to ProQuest before a passing grade will be given to GPSY 599A and GPSY 599B. **Until verification of receipt occurs, the thesis project will not be graded as passed by the university.** Additional details are available from the program on how to submit the thesis including fees required for the submission.

Please note the following information on policy:

This message is a reminder of the Registrar's Office's policy regarding thesis completion (or any culminating experience) and degree clearance. **It is vital to have your thesis accepted by Proquest before the last day of the term.** There may be significant consequences if the end-of-term deadline is missed. Even if only by a day, the student must wait until the end of the next term to have their degree posted, which is oftentimes inconvenient or even costly for these students (delays impending raises, may cause financial aid issues, etc.). So make sure to submit no later than two weeks prior to a semester's end.

This message serves as an important reminder to every student that failure to have their degree posted can result in many delays, but especially the award of the degree. Thus, all students should pay careful attention to library deadlines and Registrar Office deadlines, in addition to SPC and M.S. deadlines.

CHAPTER IV MANUSCRIPT COMPONENTS

The manuscript components described below focus primarily on traditional, quantitative theses. Theoretical papers, public policy analysis papers, program development projects, and other projects that are agreed upon by the thesis committee will have many of the same elements (title page, abstract, etc.); however, their sections may be divided into chapters rather than a methods section, results and discussion section. During the proposal creation, students working on non-experimental projects should consult with their thesis chair to ensure the inclusion of appropriate manuscript components.

Prefatory Pages

The prefatory pages should be numbered in the bottom center using small-case Roman numerals. Page numbers should be omitted from the title page. No running head is to be included at any place in the thesis manuscript. Appendix C contains sample prefatory pages following Regent and APA guidelines. The document titled *Prefatory Pages Template* is also available on Canvas with detailed comments on formatting.

Title Page

The title page includes elements enabling the rapid identification of the subject, author(s), date completed, and university supervising the study. The title itself should concisely reflect the main research or theoretical issues investigated.

Signature Page

The signature page template is available from the program administrative assistant and in the appendices of this manual.

Abstract

The abstract summarizes the thesis as a whole. Common abstract elements include a statement regarding the project's purpose, a brief description of the project's methodology, and the results of any empirical design. Theoretical theses have appropriately modified abstracts. Abstracts must not exceed 350 words. This is the maximum length of the abstract allowed for Thesis Abstracts International. Most APA journals set the maximum at 120 words. In anticipation of later publication, students are encouraged to keep the abstract word count closer to this lower number.

Acknowledgments Page (Optional)

The acknowledgments page provides the opportunity for the student to thank those people who influenced the writing and completion of the thesis. Such persons can range from family to administration and faculty.

Table of Contents

The table of contents lists the various sections of the thesis along with the first page number of the section. The Table of Contents should be single-spaced.

List of Tables

The list of tables cites the various tables in the thesis along with the first page number of the section. This list enables readers to rapidly find tables in the thesis. The List of Tables should be single-spaced.

List of Figures

Similar to the list of tables, this list enables the reader to rapidly locate the figures presented in the thesis. The List of Figures should be single-spaced.

Body of the Text: Traditional Thesis

The main body of the thesis will typically be double spaced with a few exceptions. Table headings and long quotations may be single-spaced. Figures and Tables must be inserted in the text as close as possible to where they are first cited. Main body pages are to be numbered in the center and bottom of the page using Arabic numerals. The first page of the main body text should start with the number 1.

Introduction

The introduction describes the research problem or theoretical issue to be addressed and the background studies that have been done in the area. A thorough literature review is expected. The review provides a synthesis and critical analysis of the existing literature. The student's conclusions regarding the literature and the study's hypotheses end this section.

Method

As in the proposal, the methods section delineates the specific design of the study, identifies the subjects and their method of selection, defines the procedures carried out and describes the measures used. This section is described in sufficient detail to permit replicating the study.

Results

Results pertinent to each hypothesis are presented in this section; however, they are not interpreted here. The statistical treatment of data is described, citing the test of significance, the degrees of freedom, and probability levels.

Discussion

In this section, the student interprets the results in light of the literature reviewed and the hypotheses presented in the introduction section. The study's findings are compared with those of other studies, and additional contributions made by the study are critically analyzed. Possibilities for further exploration of the topic are also addressed in this section.

References

Following the text of the article, a list of all the references cited in the text is given. Individual references should be single-spaced with a double space between reference citations. Continue numbering the pages through the references.

Appendices

The thesis appendices may include numerous aspects of the thesis that are important for the reader but which would be excessive detail for the main body of the text. Typical examples are the inclusion of a survey in the form given to respondents for the thesis or more extensive verbatim transcripts of narrative material, which is summarized in the main body text.

CHAPTER V FORMAT AND STYLE

APA style and university requirements

The thesis must comply with SPC policies. SPC follows the detailed requirements as found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2009) for its theses. The publication manual, Regent University publishing guidelines, thesis committee requirements and the material in this handbook are the publishing authorities for M.S. theses. Regent University's guidelines are based on *Publishing Your Thesis: How to Prepare Your Manuscript for Publication*, a University Microfilms International pamphlet that students may get from the reference desk librarian or the designated SPC library contact person. Pricing for thesis publication and binding can also be obtained from the library by request.

Some points on spacing

Single-spacing may be used in cases that improve readability. Examples include:

- Table titles & headings and figure captions.
- References should be single-spaced but you must double-space *between* references.
- Footnotes and indented, long quotations should be single-spaced. Be sure to double-space between long quotations and adjacent text.
- The *APA Publication Manual* (2001) notes that "...judicious triple- or quadruple-spacing...is appropriate after chapter titles, before major subheadings, before footnotes, and before or after table in the text" (pg. 326).

Please note the following message from Celia L. Seagraves, Graduate Registrar:

"This message is a reminder of the Registrar's Office's policy regarding thesis completion (or any culminating experience) and degree clearance. It is vital to deliver theses to the library for binding (now submit online) before the last day of the term. I realize this is usually in the student's hands, however, they should be well aware of the consequences. Students who miss the end-of-term deadline, even if only by a few days, must wait until the end of the next term to have their degree posted, which is oftentimes inconvenient or even costly for these students (delays impending raises, may cause financial aid issues, etc.) I'm asking for your assistance in stressing this to students and reminding faculty committee members of this policy. If you have any questions, please let me know. Thanks everyone!"

This message serves as an important reminder to every student that failure to have their degree posted can result in many delays, but especially in the award of the degree. Thus, all students should pay careful attention to library deadlines and Registrar Office deadlines, in addition to SPC and M.S. deadlines.

APPENDIX A

THESIS TOPIC/COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM



M.S. Program in General Psychology

Thesis Topic/Committee Approval Form

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Tentative Thesis Topic: _____

Committee Membership (Minimum of 2 Faculty Required)

Chair: _____
(Print Name) (Signature)

Member: _____
(Print Name) (Signature)

Member: _____
(Print Name) (Signature)

Member: _____
(Print Name) (Signature)



Topic/Committee Approval Date: _____ Signature of Program Director: _____

Please note: Once a topic/committee is approved by the program, no changes may be made to the topic or committee without submitting a new approval request.

APPENDIX B

PROPOSAL & THESIS DEFENSE
COMPETENCY EVALUATION FORMS



Thesis Proposal Approval Form

Student: _____

Date: _____

Title of Project: _____

PASS: ___ Yes ___ No ___ Pass with Conditions (**See reverse side**)

- ___ Yes ___ No Clear Statement of Project Topic
- ___ Yes ___ No Adequate Summary of Relevant Literature
 - ___ Thorough
 - ___ Professional Sources
 - ___ Demonstrates value/pertinence of proposal
 - ___ Reflects critical evaluation of area.
- ___ Yes ___ No Clear formulation of task project will accomplish.
- ___ Yes ___ No Selection of appropriate instruments
- ___ Yes ___ No Appropriate Methodology
 - ___ Feasible
 - ___ Sufficiently detailed to carryout
 - ___ Accomplishes task advanced by the project.
- ___ Yes ___ No Method of analysis delineated
- ___ Yes ___ No Importance of project commensurate with Graduate-level Thesis Project
- ___ Yes ___ No Spiritual/integration issues addressed as appropriate.

C=See comments on Reverse Side

Endorsements

Name (Printed)	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Committee Chairperson		
_____	_____	_____
Committee Member		
_____	_____	_____
Committee Member		
_____	_____	_____
Committee Member		
_____	_____	_____
Program Director		



Proposal Presentation Competency Review (OPTIONAL*)

***This form is only required for projects in which the Chair and/or Committee Member(s) require the student to complete a formal Thesis Proposal Presentation during a synchronous meeting**

Student's Name: _____ Student's ID: _____ Date: _____

Title of Project: _____

PASS: ___ Yes ___ No ___ Pass with Conditions (**See reverse side**)

- ___ Yes ___ No Clear Statement of Project Topic
- ___ Yes ___ No Adequate Summary of Relevant Literature
 - ___ Thorough
 - ___ Professional Sources
 - ___ Demonstrates value/pertinence of proposal
 - ___ Reflects critical evaluation of area.
- ___ Yes ___ No Clear formulation of task project will accomplish.
- ___ Yes ___ No Selection of appropriate instruments
- ___ Yes ___ No Appropriate Methodology
 - ___ Feasible
 - ___ Sufficiently detailed to carryout
 - ___ Accomplishes task advanced by the project.
- ___ Yes ___ No Method of analysis delineated
- ___ Yes ___ No Importance of project commensurate with Graduate-level Project
- ___ Yes ___ No Spiritual/integration issues addressed as appropriate.
- ___ Yes ___ No Competent Presentation/Management of Proposal
 - ___ Student gave cogent oral presentation
 - ___ Student's presentation was concise
 - ___ Student responded to committee questions/concerns in a manner commensurate with graduate-level standing.
 - ___ Negative criticisms appropriately handled

C=See comments on Reverse Side

Endorsements

Name (Printed)	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Committee Chairperson		
_____	_____	_____
Committee Member		
_____	_____	_____
Committee Member		
_____	_____	_____
Committee Member		
_____	_____	_____
Program Director		

[Committee Comments on Reverse Side]

Thesis Defense Competency Review.

Student's Name: _____ Student's ID: _____ Date: _____

Title of Project: _____

Pass: ___ Yes ___ No ___ Pass with Conditions (See reverse side)

- ___ Yes ___ No Clear Statement of Project Topic
- ___ Yes ___ No Adequate Summary of Relevant Literature
- ___ Thorough
 - ___ Current
 - ___ Professional Sources
 - ___ Demonstrates value/pertinence of proposal
 - ___ Reflects critical evaluation of area.
- ___ Yes ___ No Clear formulation of task project will accomplish.
- ___ Yes ___ No Selection of appropriate instruments
- ___ Yes ___ No Appropriate Methodology
- ___ Feasible
 - ___ Sufficiently detailed to carryout
 - ___ Accomplishes task advanced by the project.
- ___ Yes ___ No Importance of project commensurate with graduate level
- ___ Yes ___ No Spiritual/integration issues addressed as appropriate.
- ___ Yes ___ No Competent Implementation of Project
- ___ Design implemented as proposed
 - ___ Deviations from design adequately justified and managed
 - ___ Student adequately records implementation
- ___ Yes ___ No Competent Analysis Conducted
- ___ Appropriate analysis to answer research questions
 - ___ Appropriate post hoc analyses conducted as necessary
 - ___ Valid statistical inferences drawn from data
- ___ Yes ___ No Adequate discussion/integration of results
- ___ Relevant substantive implications of study clearly presented
 - ___ Conclusions synthesized with relevant literature
 - ___ Scientific data and theological insights appropriately integrated
- ___ Yes ___ No Competent Presentation/Management of Defense
- ___ Student gave cogent oral presentation
 - ___ Student responded to committee questions/concerns in a manner commensurate with graduate level standing.
 - ___ Negative criticisms appropriately handled

Endorsements

Name (Printed)

Signature

Date

Committee Chairperson

Committee Member

Committee Member

Program Director

[Committee Comments on Reverse Side]

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE THESIS PREFATORY PAGES

The manuscript must be prepared with 1" margins on all sides except for the left hand margin. The left margin must be 1.5" to allow for binding

Insert first line of title, 2 inches from the top of the page

Integration of Psychology and Theology:

The Answer for Psychology's Ills

The title must be double spaced and must be no more than 8-10 words.

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the School of the Psychology & Counseling

Regent University

All text on the title page is to be double spaced.

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree,

Master of Science

By

Jay R. Adams

July 2023

Insert full name but do not include any titles or degrees

Only date the Month and Year of when all revisions and edits were approved

School of Psychology and Counseling

Regent University

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by:

Student Name

Titled

TITLE OF THESIS IN UPPER CASE AND BOLD

Has been approved by [his/her] committee as satisfactory completion of the thesis
requirement for the degree of
[Master of Science in General Psychology].

Approved By:

Benson P. Fraser, Ph.D., Committee Chair
School of ...

Name, Degree, Committee Member
School of...

Name, Degree, Program Director
School of...

Month Year

This project demonstrates

Abstract

Number preliminary pages with small case Roman Numerals starting with the abstract page that should be numbered iii. The title and signature page should have no page numbering.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express his gratitude to his thesis chair, Dr. Yarhouse, whose
extensive feedback.....

Make sure text of acknowledgement
section is double spaced.

Table of Contents

Signature Page	ii
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List of Figures	vi
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Psychology's Value.....	1
Theologies Value.....	8
Integration: Where the Twain Shall Meet	15

Method

- Remember that the abstract is the first page that should have a page number printed on it. It should start with page number iii.
- Single space within sections of the TOC, for instance, the contents for the prefatory pages are single spaced.
- The first page of the main body of the text starts with Arabic numeral 1.
- Indent to indicate level of subheading.