

Robertson School of Government

Thesis Procedure Guidelines

Thesis Registration

Students must successfully complete at least 9 hours of course work as well as GOV 603 Research Methods **prior to undertaking the thesis**. Students will not be allowed to register for the thesis in the semester that they plan to graduate. **Students must meet with their Academic Support Specialist and fill out all required forms before beginning any step of the Thesis process.** The following timeline illustrates thesis deadlines and important dates:

Timeline for Spring Degree Clearance and Commencement Participation

1. Registration must be processed by 1st day of the **FALL** semester
 - * To accomplish this it is recommended:
 - Set appointment with an Academic Support Specialist at beginning of Summer semester (or earlier) to review process and obtain paperwork
 - Choose thesis chair/committee and begin working on proposal during Summer semester
 - Submit all paperwork two weeks prior to first day of fall classes
2. Defense must be successfully completed by the **FIRST** Monday in March
 - * To accomplish this it is recommended:
 - Complete rough draft by end of Fall or beginning of Spring semester
 - After defense make any corrections **within a week** and send to chair to start editing process.
3. In order to earn a Spring graduation date, the final deadline for completion of **ALL** requirements, including administratively processing (editing) and binding the thesis, is the **LAST** Monday in April

Timeline for Fall Degree Clearance

1. Registration must be processed by 1st day of the **SUMMER** semester
 - * To accomplish this it is recommended:
 - Set appointment with an Academic Support Specialist at beginning of Spring semester (or earlier) to review process and obtain paperwork
 - Choose thesis chair/committee and begin working on proposal during Spring semester
 - Submit all paperwork two weeks prior to first day of summer classes
2. Defense must be successfully completed by the **FIRST** Monday in October
 - * To accomplish this it is recommended:
 - Complete rough draft by end of Summer or beginning of Fall semester
 - After defense, make any corrections **within a week** and send to chair to start editing process.
3. In order to earn a fall graduation date, the final deadline for completion of **ALL** requirements, including administratively processing (editing) and binding the thesis, is the **LAST** Monday in November

Timeline for Summer Degree Clearance

1. Registration must be processed by 1st day of the **SPRING** semester
 - * To accomplish this it is recommended:
 - Set appointment with an Academic Support Specialist at beginning of Fall semester (or earlier) to review process and obtain paperwork
 - Choose thesis chair/committee and begin working on proposal during Fall semester
 - Submit all paperwork two weeks prior to first day of spring classes
2. Defense must be successfully completed by the **FIRST** Monday in June
 - * To accomplish this it is recommended:
 - Complete rough draft by end of Spring or beginning of Summer semester
 - After defense, make any corrections **within a week** and send to chair to start editing process.

3. In order to earn a summer graduation date, the final deadline for completion of **ALL** requirements, including administratively processing (editing) and binding the thesis, is the **LAST** Monday in July

Purpose of the Thesis

A thesis in most universities is intended to demonstrate that a student is sufficiently acquainted with research methods (including historical, critical, or empirical) to replicate and add to previous significant research or to undertake original research. Thesis projects are often designed to solve practical problems and answer applied research questions; in other cases, they deal with underlying theoretical questions and issues which are of general interest to scholars and professionals.

The thesis is the culminating vehicle Master level students use to demonstrate:

- Ability to conduct rigorous applied-research or pure research adding to the body of knowledge
- Ability to write at a scholarly level
- Ability to successfully defend the findings of the research

Thesis Committee

The thesis committee consists of the thesis advisor and two additional members. The thesis chair can be, but is not required to be, the student's academic advisor. The thesis chair must be a full-time faculty member in the Robertson School of Government (there are occasional exceptions in the case of joint degrees students). The student selects a thesis chair through a collaborative process. This is collaborative in that the student and the professor both decide if the combination is right for the student and the professor. In special circumstances, the Robertson School of Government Dean may assign a chair for a student. The student and the chair select two other committee members. **The names of the committee members must be written on the Individual Study form and be approved by the Dean via the submitted Individual Study Form.** Faculty loads may affect approval of committee membership.

RSG Template and Writing Style

The thesis must be written following Turabian citation guidelines. The title page and signature page must exactly follow the example thesis provided on the Robertson School of Government website. This assists students in preparing their thesis by providing certain uniform standards regarding the style and format, while still allowing flexibility to satisfy the acceptable practices of respective academic disciplines. All thesis students are expected to demonstrate excellent research and writing skills, as well as the proper format and style in preparing the thesis. The document must be as professional as possible as the thesis represents the student, the committee, the university and the discipline.

Human Subject Research Review Form

The student should be familiar with Regent University's policy on human research (see University website) and have completed and submitted the **Human Subject Research Review Form** to their thesis chair with the submission of the thesis proposal. After this form is approved, the student's thesis chair will keep a copy of the form in the student's thesis binder.

Thesis Proposal

The purpose of the proposal is to develop the foundation for the thesis. The student should first seek consensus from his or her committee regarding the proposal title and topic for study as discussions regarding the research evolve. The student, under the direction of the thesis chair, writes the research proposal. The full proposal consists of a series of precise statements describing the research hypothesis or problem statement, a review of related literature, and the methodology chosen to answer the research

question. Each thesis chair uses their own system and process in chairing theses. Please refer to your thesis chair for specifics as to moving through the proposal stage.

Thesis Proposal Requirements

The student will submit their proposal to the thesis chair. At that time the thesis chair will dispense the proposal to the other committee members. The thesis chair will also collect signatures from all committee members and the Dean on the Individual Study form submitted to Student Services. After all signatures are obtained, the thesis chair will return the completed Individual Study form to Student Services to register the student for the Thesis course.

Thesis Defense Requirements

The responsibility for the quality of content and the correctness of form of the thesis lies with the student and the supervising faculty committee. This includes ensuring the research and written work (a) is the student's own work, (b) is of high professional quality and (c) meets the applicable academic, stylistic and other preparation standards set by the Robertson School of Government.

The student will work on the thesis project primarily under the guidance of the thesis chair. The student should seek committee comments during the project and keep each committee member informed of progress on the thesis. **Only the thesis chair will review the drafts presented by the student, until the thesis is judged by the chair to be ready for review by the other committee members.** An examination copy of the thesis should be provided to each committee member at least two weeks prior to the date of defense. The thesis chair will poll the committee and if necessary convene to determine if the thesis is defensible in content. If the committee indicates major revisions are needed, it may be necessary to postpone the oral defense until such revisions are made.

When the student and thesis chair agree the thesis is ready to be defended, a tentative date for the defense may be set based on mutual consent of all involved. **The thesis chair should inform the Faculty Administrative Assistant of the date set for the defense in order to reserve a room for the meeting and announce it to the Robertson School of Government community.**

Students must successfully defend their thesis to participate in Commencement. The members of the student's thesis committee must reach consensus to approve the final copy of the thesis. Immediately following the oral thesis defense, the chair of the thesis committee shall communicate the results to the student both orally and in writing. The committee chair records and emails the student with the changes/updates agreed upon by the committee members at the time of the final defense so the student may resume work on their thesis and not be delayed. **The student should make all changes quickly in order to start the editing process. No longer than a week is recommended to make the needed corrections and send to thesis chair.**

Thesis Editing

Once the student has made all required changes to their thesis and the chair has acknowledged said changes, the chair emails the final copy to Student Services for editing. The final manuscript must comply with Turabian citation and the RSG example thesis format. Student Services will coordinate the proofreading/editing process, consisting of two to three rounds of online editing with an RSG-approved and trained Turabian editor. This process can last anywhere between **4-8 weeks** dependent upon the time of year that the student finishes and the amount of editing needed. **Therefore, the earlier you submit the thesis for final review to your chair the better your chance of meeting the next deadline. It is not the responsibility of the thesis editor to make certain that the student meets the next deadline.**

The thesis must be one document and **completely** free of all typographical, grammatical, structural and reference errors. Proofreading/editing charges vary from thesis to thesis based on the length of the document and the amount of editing needed. Students must pay all proofreading/editing charges related to their thesis. Payment is made **by the student** to the editor through PayPal. The proofreading/editing rate

for RSG theses is US\$42.00 per hour. A 100-page manuscript might cost between US\$126.00 to US\$420.00, although it could be more if there are numerous errors, formatting problems or correspondence between the editor and students regarding questions about the thesis.

The editor will review the manuscript electronically using the “track changes” and “comments” features in Microsoft Word. Students work directly with the editor during Round 1 and Round 2 of editing. The editor may stop editing after a few pages if numerous errors exist and request the student review the work before resubmitting. The proofreader does not begin Round 2 until the student has paid for Round 1 using PayPal, accepted/rejected all edits from Round 1 and addressed any other issues. Once the thesis has been edited in Round 2 and all track changes and comments have been corrected, the editor emails the final copy to Student Services. Student Services will send the final thesis to the thesis chair for final approval. Thereafter, the thesis chair will return the final thesis to Student Services.

Preparing the Thesis through ProQuest

Students will need to set up an account through the ProQuest website in order to submit their final thesis. They will be asked to fill in a charge sheet where they have the option of purchasing personal copies of their work. **Students are responsible for paying the copyright and thesis fees. Any other charges are additional.** All fees will be added to the student’s account and can be paid for through Genisys. The student’s Academic Support Specialist will then review the submission and will let the student know if any changes need to be made. Once the review is complete, the student’s advisor will then accept the thesis. A decision letter will then be forwarded to the registrar’s office for final processing of the graduation date and semester. **The graduation date is based on when the Registrar receives the Thesis Approval Form.**

For more information and tutorials please click on the following links:

<http://libguides.regent.edu/ETD>

<http://www.proquest.com/company/ETD-Administrator-Tutorial-Videos.html#student>

For instructions on PDF conversion, click on the link below:

<http://www.etdadmin.com/GlobalTemplates/ETDAdmin/StudentHelp/pdf.html#prepare>

Please click on the link below to set up a ProQuest account and begin submitting the thesis:

<http://libguides.regent.edu/ETD>

Copyright

Copyright protection extends for a statutory period on creative, original works of authorship fixed in a tangible medium. Since a thesis is a literary work, students must take care not to violate copyright laws when preparing the thesis manuscript. If the manuscript contains any material (figures, tables, text, etc.) taken from other sources, the student has the responsibility to determine if he or she needs a license or a letter of permission from the copyright holder to use the material. This is true even if the student is an author of the other sources. The publisher may still require a letter of permission. This license or permission letter must accompany the thesis in the appendix.

Personal copyright of the thesis is held by the author. All Regent theses use the Proquest Information and Learning service to apply for U.S. copyright in the author’s name. Each student is giving Proquest the

right to list the thesis within its international database and sell it (and provide royalties each year). As the copyright holder, each student also has permission to distribute his/her thesis in electronic or print format.

Personal Thesis Copies

Personal copies can be obtained through other sources. Following are a few options:

1. <http://www.phdbookbinding.com/>
2. <http://www.thesisquest.com/>
3. <http://www.salisburybookbinders.co.uk/thesis.html>
4. <http://www.thesisbookbinding.com/>

Many other options exist. Check pricing and options by just typing “Thesis Binding” into a website search engine.

Thesis Writing Tips

You must use Turabian and the template found in the RSG example thesis for your thesis. Thoroughly read and follow the writing style and grammar in Turabian and the RSG thesis example provided.

Consistency is the most common writing concern. Be consistent with spelling, format and word usage throughout the document. Select one option to use when possibilities exist and do not deviate from it.

Samples of this might include:

1. Use one allowable form of spelling for words such as “judgement” or “judgment” not both.
2. Capitalize Bible but not biblical.
3. Use curved quotation marks and apostrophes rather than straight ones or a mixture of both.

Have the document proofread early. Proofreading an initial draft can save time, money and frustration. Most recurring errors in thesis can be identified in the first 10 pages. These usually include such items as margins, uppercase and lowercase usage, heading levels, page numbering, indenting, references, tense and quotations. Most writers prefer to adjust their writing early rather than pay for corrections and delays later. You may contact the RSG proofreader/editor any time and contract with her for such preliminary work.