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3 **June 5, 1995**

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5  
6 **DEFINITION AND REGULATIONS FOR GRADUATE THESES AND PROJECTS**

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9 **This academic policy was recommended by the Academic Senate on May 11, 1995**  
10 **and received the concurrence of the President on May 31, 1995. This policy**  
11 **statement supersedes PS 83-06.**

12  
13 Introduction

14  
15 Theses and projects submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate  
16 degree at this University shall meet the following definitions quoted from the amendment to  
17 Section 40510, Title 5.

18  
19 A thesis is the written product of the systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies  
20 the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking,  
21 sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and  
22 offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical  
23 and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough  
24 documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis will be required.

25  
26 A project is a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to  
27 professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and  
28 organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that  
29 includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or  
30 recommendation. An oral defense of the project may be required.

31  
32 Students shall be held responsible for understanding the definition of a graduate thesis or  
33 project as outlined above and must follow the format guidelines prescribed by the  
34 department in which the thesis or project is completed.

35  
36 Students, acting in accordance with prevailing college and department policies, shall be  
37 responsible for selecting a suitable thesis or project advisor.

38  
39 Each student preparing a thesis or project proposal shall prepare it in accordance with  
40 prevailing college and department guidelines.

41  
42 The preparation and acceptance of graduate theses and projects shall be governed by the  
43 processes, procedures, duties, and responsibilities outlined below.

44  
45 **Colleges and Programs**

46  
47 Each college shall be accountable for the quality of graduate theses and projects completed  
48 through each of its departments.

49  
50 Each college dean shall ensure that procedures exist for the establishment of thesis and  
51 project committees and for the guidance of thesis and project students consistent with this  
52 policy statement.

53  
54 College deans shall ensure that all theses and project reports have been properly reviewed  
55 by the thesis or project committee and the University thesis reviewer and that required  
56 corrections and changes are made before theses or project reports are submitted for  
57 placement in the University Library.

58  
59 Departments

60  
61 Each department shall prepare procedures for the establishment of thesis or project  
62 committees and for the guidance of thesis or project students consistent with those  
63 established by their college and consistent with this policy statement.

64  
65 Prior to approval, departments should determine that a thesis or project proposal is  
66 consistent with the available space, equipment, facilities, and qualified faculty. The  
67 University does not assume responsibility for supplying everything that a student might  
68 need in order to complete a thesis or project.

69  
70 Departments in which theses or projects are required shall establish procedures to ensure  
71 that all students develop as a part of their graduate education the requisite research skills  
72 and knowledge appropriate to the completion of acceptable theses or project.

73  
74 Each department shall develop a procedure to monitor thesis or project progress each  
75 semester following student enrollment in Thesis or Project 698.

76  
77 Departments shall be responsive to any extraordinary circumstance that may develop  
78 during the thesis or project effort over which the student, thesis or project committee, or  
79 the department have no control such as reduction in funding, equipment failures,  
80 unobtainable supplies, departure of qualified faculty, denial of access to needed data, et  
81 cetera. In most cases, an amended graduate program, a redesigned thesis or project  
82 proposal, or a reassignment of faculty to the thesis or project committee will be sufficient to  
83 alleviate the circumstances.

84  
85 Thesis or Project Committees

86  
87 A student's thesis or project committee shall consist of at least three members qualified in  
88 the areas relating to the thesis or project. At least two shall be full-time faculty members at  
89 CSULB, one of whom must be tenured or tenure track. The chair of the thesis or project  
90 committee, including the chair of a committee for a special major, must be tenured or  
91 tenure-track from a department authorized to offer a graduate degree. The thesis  
92 committee must be approved by the appropriate department graduate advisor and college  
93 dean or director of graduate studies. Normally the chair of the committee also serves as  
94 thesis or project director, but this is not necessarily so. The thesis or project director must  
95 be a person qualified in the specific area of the thesis or project, but need not be a tenured  
96 or tenure-track faculty member. When the thesis or project committee includes a thesis or  
97 project director who is not the chair of the committee, this person may be identified on the  
98 thesis or project report approval page as Thesis Director or Project Director.

99 The committee shall be responsible for the guidance of the student throughout the thesis or  
100 project effort. Any change in the composition of the committee requires justification and  
101 must be approved by the appropriate department graduate advisor and college dean or  
102 director of graduate studies.

103  
104 If the college or department offering the degree funds the workload credit generated by the  
105 thesis director or committee chair, prior approval of such workload by the college dean or

106 department chair is required. In the absence of such prior approval, the thesis director or  
107 committee chair will not be reimbursed for the workload generated in connection with the  
108 thesis or project.

109  
110 Before agreeing to serve on a thesis or project committee, the prospective members shall  
111 review the thesis or project topic and determine that they possess the requisite expertise to  
112 serve on such a committee, and that sufficient resources and materials exist and are  
113 reasonably available to the student to support such a study.

114  
115 Thesis or project committee members shall review the research competence of the thesis or  
116 project student before approving a thesis or project proposal.

117  
118 Thesis or project committee members shall advise and direct students in their thesis or  
119 project work and ensure that the thesis or project meets the standards and definition of a  
120 thesis or project specified in the first section.

121  
122 Thesis or project committee members shall determine the grade to be awarded for  
123 completion of the thesis or project; and by signing the thesis or project report signature  
124 page, thesis or project committee members certify that they have determined that the  
125 thesis or project meets required standards of scholarship, format, and style of the discipline.

126

127  
128 Thesis or Project Committee Chairs

129  
130 Thesis or project committee chairs shall determine that the student has the proper  
131 preparation in terms of course work and research skills to pursue the proposed thesis or  
132 project.

133  
134 In departments where this function is not carried out by graduate advisors, thesis or project  
135 committee chairs shall advise the student in the selection of other members for the thesis or  
136 project committee, ensuring that the other members are appropriate to the proposed thesis  
137 or project effort.

138  
139 Thesis or project committee chairs shall be the major contact point with the student and  
140 shall oversee the other committee members' work with the student.

141 Thesis or project committee chairs shall assure that the editorial and format standards  
142 appropriate to the mechanical preparation of a thesis or project are followed.

143  
144 Thesis or project committee chairs shall establish guidelines for the student and timetables  
145 to be followed to ensure completion of the thesis or project in a reasonable time.

146  
147 Thesis or project committee chairs shall arrange for the oral defense of the thesis or project  
148 when required.

149  
150 The thesis or project committee chair is responsible for canvassing the committee and  
151 reporting the grade agreed upon by its members. After the approval page has been signed  
152 by the committee and by the dean, and the completed thesis or project report has been  
153 reviewed by the University thesis reviewer for conformance with prescribed format criteria,  
154 the final grade shall be submitted.

155  
156 Thesis Reviewer

157  
158 Students shall consult the University thesis reviewer for information, advice, and assistance

159 on the mechanics of preparing a completed thesis or project report. The University thesis  
160 reviewer shall verify that each thesis or project report meets the format criteria prescribed  
161 by the department or program and by the University, and that it meets all procedural  
162 requirements for theses and project reports imposed by the University.

163  
164 All theses and project reports must be acceptable for deposit in the University Library.

165  
166 EFFECTIVE: Fall 1995