

California State University, Long Beach

POLICY STATEMENT

June 8, 1983

*Superseded by 45-02*  
Number: 83- 06

File: Thesis/Project

This policy was recommended by the Academic Senate in its meeting of May 12, 1983 and approved by the President on June 8, 1983.

SUBJECT: DEFINITION AND REGULATIONS FOR GRADUATE THESES AND PROJECTS

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Students, acting in accordance with prevailing school, program, and department policies, shall be responsible for selecting a suitable thesis advisor.

Each student shall prepare a thesis proposal in accordance with prevailing school, program, and department guidelines.

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

### Schools and Programs

Each school and program shall be accountable for the quality of graduate programs and theses completed through each of its departments.

Each school dean and program director shall ensure that procedures exist for the establishment of thesis committees and for the guidance of thesis students consistent with this policy statement.

School deans and program directors shall ensure that all theses have been properly reviewed by the University thesis reviewer and by the thesis committee, and that required corrections and changes are made before theses are submitted for placement in the University Library.

### Departments

Each department shall prepare procedures for the establishment of thesis committees and for the guidance of thesis students consistent with those established by their school or program and consistent with this policy statement.

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

Departments in which theses are required shall establish procedures to ensure that all students develop as a part of their graduate education the requisite research skills and knowledge appropriate to the completion of acceptable theses. Parallel skills should be developed in students completing projects.

Each department shall develop a procedure to monitor thesis progress each semester following student enrollment in Thesis 698.

Departments shall be responsive to any extraordinary circumstances that may develop during the thesis effort over which the student, thesis



committee, or the department have no control such as reductions in funding, equipment failures, unobtainable supplies, departure of qualified faculty, et cetera. In most cases, an amended graduate program, a redesigned thesis proposal, or a reassignment of faculty to the thesis committee will be sufficient to alleviate the circumstances.

### Thesis Committees

A student's thesis committee shall consist of at least three members qualified in the areas relating to the thesis. At least two shall be full-time faculty members at CSULB, one of whom must be tenured or tenure track. The chair of the thesis committee, including the chair of a committee for a special major, must be tenured or tenure track from a department authorized to offer a graduate degree. Normally the chair of the committee also serves as thesis director, but this is not necessarily so. The thesis director must be a person qualified in the specific area of the thesis, but need not be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. The committee shall be responsible for the guidance of the student throughout the thesis effort. Any change in the composition of the committee requires justification and must be approved by the appropriate department graduate advisor and school dean or director of graduate studies.

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

Thesis committee members shall review the research competence of the thesis student before approving a thesis proposal.

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

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

When the thesis committee includes a thesis director who is not the chair of the committee, this person may be identified on the thesis approval page as "Thesis Director."

### Thesis Committee Chairs

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

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

Thesis committee chairs shall be the major contact point with the student and shall oversee the other committee members' work with the student.

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

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

Thesis committee chairs shall arrange for the oral defense of the thesis when required.

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

### Thesis Reviewer

Students shall consult the University thesis reviewer for information, advice, and assistance on the mechanics of preparing a completed thesis. The University thesis reviewer shall verify that each thesis meets the format criteria prescribed by the department or program and by the University, and that it meets all procedural requirements for theses imposed by the University.

All theses must be acceptable for deposit in the University Library.

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

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