

Non-Thesis (Plan B) Process for Advisees

There are two Master's degree program plans: thesis (plan A) and non-thesis (plan B). The project is the culmination of the student's learning and represents a substantial effort by the student. The project is to be comprehensive, scientific, valid, and appropriately presented, while meeting the standards of HRS and the Graduate School. Examples of appropriate projects include but are not limited to: 1) development of a management or educational program 2) systems design or 3) clinical practice guidelines. A case study option is also acceptable. Separate guidelines are established for this option.

Plan B Project:

Guidelines: The student should discuss possible areas of study with his/her academic advisor early in the course of study. The advisor should encourage the student to pursue the potential topic for a project. Switching advisers should be considered when the topic of interest is outside the academic adviser's expertise. A primary advisor for the project must have an M status in the SHRS. Please refer to the MS Student Handbook Policy 1.8.

When the student begins a literature search on the topic of interest to develop the initial sections of the document (Concept paper and Review of Literature – for other sections see Outline in Part III), he or she will register for independent study credit, such as, HTHRHSC 7993. The advisor and student should decide the outcome of this independent study. The first sections are described below:

- 1) Concept paper. This paper is 5-6 pages in length. It articulates the project, gives a concise background to that problem supported by available literature and defines the proposed objectives. The goal of this paper is to narrow the scope of the student's project and to define the project objectives, i.e. give the student a direction for his/her project.

and

- 2) Review of Literature: When the student has a project focus and proposed project objectives, he or she may begin by spending the term reading and synthesizing the literature. The student will produce a draft of his/her literature review. This focus for an independent study is recommended for students who have selected project topics or for students who have identified a topic but do not know the literature well enough to begin to conceptualize project objectives.

Project Proposal: The next step is to prepare a preliminary draft of the project proposal. During the period the proposal is written, the student must be registered for HTHRHSC 7990 or HTHRHSC 7993. The advisor will determine the number of credit hours that are appropriate. The proposal draft should include: Introduction, Literature Review, and Steps of

Implementation (see Part III). The student and advisor will determine how and when feedback on the drafts will be given. Some advisors may prefer to read the finished proposal while others may want to read, provide feedback and finalize each section in succession. The advisor will determine how polished the draft must be in order to proceed with scheduling project proposal meeting.

Selection of Project committee members: The MS student and advisor will mutually decide on faculty to ask to serve on the Project Committee. Selection of members of the committee will be based on their expertise as it relates to the project topic; the goal is that these members provide support and advice to develop a sound and valid project. The HRS MS graduate program requires that the project committee be comprised of at least 3 graduate faculty, including the student's advisor, with M or P status. One committee member must be outside the student's discipline and/or division. Non graduate faculty members may be appointed to the project committee by approval of the MS Graduate Studies Committee and by petition to the Graduate School. Non-graduate faculty will serve in addition to the required 2 Ohio State graduate faculty. The student will ask the committee members and will proceed with scheduling the meeting once a full committee has been formed. When asking the committee members, the student should be able to articulate the purpose and scope of the project. In addition, potential faculty members often need to know the student's timeline in order to plan their own workload.

Project Proposal Meeting: Distribution of the draft of the proposal must occur well ahead of the project proposal meeting. The student should poll the committee members to determine how far in advance of the meeting they will need the document. The proposal will be given to the committee no earlier than 2 weeks prior to the meeting date and within 5 days of the meeting. The student will also need to determine the preferred type of document each committee member needs - electronic copy, hard copy or both – and provide those on time.

For the meeting, the student will prepare and give a presentation based on the project proposal. Each committee member will ask questions and provide feedback on the project proposal. Expect questions and/or suggestions about design, methods, written and oral presentation of material and scope and direction of the project relative to the literature/field of study. Once the discussion has ended, the committee may hold a discussion with or without the student present. The committee will have 3 choices: Approve the Project Proposal with any needed modifications identified during the meeting; Table the decision pending revision of the current project proposal; or Deny the Project Proposal. Denial of a proposal may be required if any of the following occur:

- the scope, direction, methodology lacks scientific rationale
- the proposal duplicates published studies
- the project raises concerns of appropriate focus and rigor

If a project proposal is denied by the committee, the student may not use this proposal for the

project work and must develop a new project proposal.

If a project proposal is tabled, the student will be asked to address all concerns and suggestions in the revised proposal. Another project proposal meeting will be scheduled once the advisor deems the document ready for committee review. The student will consult with the project committee to identify if and when they will need a revised written document. A tabled proposal is highly unlikely if the student and advisor work together to provide the committee with a sound idea, that is well-thought out and the proposal is well-written. The project proposal must be approved prior to implementation of the project plan.

Project Completion: Once the proposal is approved, the student may proceed with the steps necessary to conduct the project. If IRB approval has not yet been secured, this will be the next step. If IRB approval or exemption exists for the study, then the project may begin. Students implement the project independently. The advisor and committee members are available for consultation, but it is the responsibility of the student to inform the committee regarding issues or problems and need for consultation. Major changes in the design need to be reviewed and approved by the advisor and, when substantial, by the entire committee. During project development, implementation and evaluation, the student is expected to register for course credits if he or she is using the university's resources, including faculty consultation. Completion of the project will be followed by writing the outcomes and discussion under close supervision by the advisor. A dissemination plan should be discussed which is appropriated based on the focus of the project.

Oral Project Examination: For students using a project option, written submission of the project as well as the oral defense of the project will serve as the project examination and the project committee is responsible for conducting the examination. The advisor serves as chair of the project committee and examination. All members of the project committee must be present during the entire examination and are expected to participate fully in questioning during the course of the examination and in the discussion and decision on the result. The project committee will meet for a 2 hour oral examination of the project.

After the examination date has been set, a copy of the complete project must be provided to each committee member in their desired format – hard copy, electronic copy or both – no earlier than 2 weeks and no later than 7 days in advance of the meeting. The student should confirm with each committee member whether they will require the project document 7 or 14 days in advance in their desired format. The project draft must be approved by the master’s project committee before the student performs the oral examination.

The examination will be comprised of an oral presentation of the project. The student may be able to build the presentation by adding onto the computerized presentation used for the proposal meeting. The oral presentation should be approximately 20 - 30 minutes and allowing more than one and half hours for the questioning by the committee members. Each committee member will ask questions. At the conclusion of the examination, the student will leave the room while the committee discusses the quality. The committee will have two choices: Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. If the examination is judged satisfactory, the advisor and committee members sign the Examination Report Form which is required by the Graduate School. If the committee judges the oral project examination as unsatisfactory, the committee must decide if the student is permitted to take a second examination.

Part II: Oral Examination Guidelines

Any exceptions to the examination procedure must be submitted by the student’s advisor to the School’s Graduate Studies committee prior to their implementation.

Rationale for exceptions includes accreditation standards of the profession and requirements to practice in the professional specialty. The examination must take place seven days before the examination approval form for graduation that semester is due to the graduate school.

Part III: Required Project Outline (minimum):

- I. Introduction (Concept Paper)
- II. Literature Review
- III. Steps for Implementation
- IV. Result or Outcomes
- V. Evaluation of the Project

Non Thesis (Plan B) CASE STUDY option

The comprehensive case study projects require an in-depth assessment and synthesis of the information from the core curriculum, current evidence, and clinical or management practice guidelines in relation to a specified case. Case studies will foster your analytic skills for patient/client/program management through the Clinical Care Process of gathering and evaluating information, assessment, diagnosis, developing care plans, monitoring outcomes, and integrating prevention and wellness strategies to optimize the health and clinical status of the patient.

Topics of the case study may encompass any of the following practice areas:

- Education
- Research
- Management/administration
- Clinical nutrition-inpatient
- Clinical nutrition-outpatient/ambulatory care
- Clinical nutrition-long-term care
- Community nutrition
- Consultation and business practice
- Medical Laboratory Science
- Healthcare Policy

Selecting a Case

Potential case report topics and cases must be discussed and approved with the research advisor prior to initiation of the project. You will identify the area of research for your case study during your plan of study. Examples of experiences that may inform your selection include: education practicum, management practicum, food service management, community wellness, or medical nutrition therapy rotation (acute care or outpatient clinic).

Guidelines for the Written Case Study within the Non-Thesis Plan B Process

The following describes the information needed to develop and format the Non-Thesis (Plan B) written Case Study Report document. Sample case studies will be provided for student reference.

The purpose of the case is to describe an interesting case and how it impacts some aspect of clinical practice. You will examine the literature to discuss the evidence behind the care you provided as well as describe the outcomes obtained within the context of the current evidence. Alternate treatment plans and adaptations should also be described as part of the evaluation of outcomes.

Outcome Measures – pre and post – will be required to document the impact of care provided, consistent with the Clinical Care Process guidelines for a clinical case. The outcome measures you choose must be supported by the scientific evidence or standards of practice.

The case manuscript should follow the format:

- a. Title page
- b. Abstract (write this part LAST)
- c. **Chapter One:** Introduction and Statement of the Problem
- d. **Chapter Two:** Literature review supporting the topic
- e. **Chapter Three:** Introduction of the Case: Assessment; Diagnosis; Intervention; Monitoring; and Evaluation
- f. **Chapter Four:** Discussion, Implications and Future Directions
- g. References
- h. Tables and Figures
- i. **Chapter Five:** Sample manuscript formatted for the appropriate journal

Selection of Graduate Exam committee members

The MS student and advisor will mutually decide on faculty to ask to serve on the Case Study Committee. Selection of members of the committee will be based on their expertise as it relates to the clinical topic; the goal is that these members provide support and advice to develop a sound and valid case study. The HRS MS graduate program requires that the case study committee be comprised of at least 3 graduate faculty, including the student's advisor, with M or P status. One committee member must be outside the student's discipline and/or division. Non-graduate faculty members may be appointed to the case study committee by approval of the MS Graduate Studies Committee and by petition to the Graduate School. Non-graduate faculty will serve in addition to the required 2 Ohio State graduate faculty. The student will ask the committee members and will proceed with scheduling the meeting once a full committee has been formed. When asking the committee members, the student should be able to articulate the purpose and scope of the case study. In addition, potential faculty members often need to know the student's timeline in order to plan their own workload.

Oral Presentation of Case Study

The case study oral examination will be administered by the Graduate Exam Committee and will be a 10 - 15-minute case study presentation followed by a question and answer period. A detailed rubric for assessment of passing or non-passing grade will be utilized to standardize the evaluation process and address interrater reliability. A Graduate Exam Committee, consisting of at least three faculty members with M status will administer the oral examination. The Committee will be formed according to the guidelines above. One retest will be permitted if the student's oral examination is deemed to be non-passing by the Graduate Exam Committee.

Guidelines for Formatting and Presentation of Case

Cases will be further evaluated using the following rubric:

	Inadequate	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectation
Title			
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Statement of the Problem –Rationale and potential contribution to clinical practice			
CHAPTER TWO: Literature review supporting the topic			
CHAPTER THREE: Case Description/Past Medical History Assessment, Clinical Diagnosis, and Prognosis (Supported by evidence from the literature and clinical reasoning grounded in science and theory)			
Assessment			
Clinical Diagnosis			
Prognosis			
Clinical Intervention (Supported by evidence from the literature, where possible, or clinical reasoning grounded in science and theory)			
Patient Outcomes, including future goals, potential alternate interventions			
CHAPTER 4: Discussion (draw conclusions, discuss implications, relate back to the literature, make recommendations for future			
CHAPTER 5: Sample manuscript formatted for the appropriate journal			
OTHER: References: AMA bibliography (>60% of references are research articles)			
Appropriate internal citations			
General overall grading items: Terminology consistent with Clinical Care Process and standards of care			
Word-processed, double-spaced, 12 point font			

Passing = All sections are at meets or exceeds expectations