

Process and Guidelines for the Development of an All College Thesis (PSYC 398)/Senior Thesis (PSYC 396) Proposal

NOTE 1: The All College Thesis requires a minimum GPA of 3.4. There is no minimum GPA required for the Senior Thesis beyond the requirements for graduation.

NOTE 2: Students are encouraged to register for 3 credits in the fall and 1 credit in the spring for both PSYC 398 and PSYC 396

The Spring semester (Junior year) all college thesis proposal is designed to be a tentative document that will provide sufficient detail to establish the feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed research. The goal is to provide the student with early feedback and direction from thesis committee members in order to enhance the quality of proposed research. It does not preclude changes being made to the project that is ultimately conducted. In fact, we would hope that the student would make changes based upon the feedback and constructive criticism provided by committee members early on which would ultimately be included in the Fall semester (Senior year) all college thesis proposal.

While the specific requirements of the thesis proposal could vary somewhat from moderator to moderator, we would expect final proposals to contain the following sections as a general rule:

To be included in the Senior All College Thesis & Senior Thesis Proposal:

Brief literature review: The introduction should include a brief literature review sufficient to demonstrate that the proposal is grounded in the literature. This review need not be complete, but should demonstrate that enough background has been explored to suggest or support the hypotheses proposed. The introduction will end with the hypotheses and rationale for the hypotheses.

Proposed Method: The method section should include information about the anticipated number of participants, operationalization of key variables, procedures, and materials.

Predicted results: The results section should articulate the pattern of results that the student is predicting and should also include the statistical tests the student intends to use.

Discussion: The discussion section should outline the interpretation of predicted results in the context of the reviewed literature, anticipated conclusions, and consideration of alternative explanations/anticipation of limitations.

References: The reference section should be formatted in APA-style.

Appendices: Surveys, testing materials etc.

All thesis proposals must be written following the current edition of the APA style manual.

Proposal Feedback Process & Procedures

Proposal meeting: In the spring of the junior year (in a typical 4 year plan) students who want to complete a senior all college thesis would enroll in the Thesis Preparation (if required by thesis advisor) or an Advanced Research course (when instituted in the proposed new curriculum) and would develop the proposal. An all college thesis moderator and readers would be selected and would meet prior to May 1. At least one week prior to the meeting the student will provide readers with the proposal. During the thesis proposal meeting, readers and the moderator will provide feedback/suggestions/comments on the proposal and will negotiate tasks and/or additional roles to be adopted by the readers (e.g. providing assistance with computer programming, survey construction, data analysis, etc). After the thesis proposal meeting the faculty moderator and the student will meet to identify what changes and additions the student will need to work on prior to submitting a final proposal draft to the committee in early fall semester.

Students who are studying abroad in the spring semester of their junior year will need to have their proposal meeting in the fall semester of their junior year, no later than December 15.

Final project approval: Faculty moderators and readers will sign off individually on a final all college thesis proposal that addresses all of the changes identified during the proposal meeting no later than September 15. Students will provide readers with the proposal at least one week prior. A final copy of the approved all college thesis proposal will be due in the chair's office by September 15.

NOTE 3: This writing will leave students well equipped to write their IRB or IACUC proposal.

Reader roles:

- Read draft proposal and attend proposal meeting (draft to committee members a minimum of 1 week prior to meeting; meeting scheduled prior to May 1).
- Sign off on finalized version of proposal (before September 15).
- Perform additional tasks as agreed to in proposal meeting.
- Read final thesis, provide feedback and attend final defense.

Senior Thesis

Students completing a senior thesis will work with their faculty moderator to develop a research proposal that contains all of the sections listed above. Students completing a senior thesis do not have a committee so they will not have anything due during the spring semester of their junior year. The final proposal will be due in the chair's office by October 1st.

NOTE 4: The department is in the process of collecting high quality proposals to use as examples for students to review as they develop their own proposals.