

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### THESIS GUIDELINES

Please note that the thesis process can vary. The process described here is intended to serve as a guide, not as a prescription. Please do not hesitate to adjust the process to serve your advisee and her project goals.

In general, the thesis in the education department should include the following components (but the order and emphasis can vary depending on the project): a literature review that includes a minimum of 20 to 25 sources, a research question, some relevant experience in schools (impetus or rationale for study may arise from past experiences, data collection in schools might include tutoring, observing, and/or interviewing\*), reflection, and analysis that connects knowledge gained from reading relevant literature, gathering information in or about schools, and reflecting.

\*Note: data collection in Wake County schools requires district approval. See WCPSS Evaluation and Research website at [http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/external\\_research/index.html](http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/external_research/index.html) for more information.

#### **1. Project Definition & IRB Proposal** (semester before thesis semester or first two weeks of semester)

Students will identify relevant literature; hone research question; discuss research question and literature with advisor.

Student and advisor will together discuss the ethical and practical considerations for doing research in or about schools; establish a timeline for completion of the thesis; set intermittent deadlines for subtasks; establish schedule of regular meetings.

Appropriate paperwork will be submitted to registrar's office and proposal submitted to IRB for approval. Literature review can and should continue while awaiting IRB approval. Data collection (if involving human participants) cannot begin until approval secured.

#### **2. Data Collection** (approximately 8 weeks - up to about week 10 of the semester)

Students will collect data and continue with literature search as suggested by advisor or needed by student;

Regular communication between the student and the advisor should occur. This may include written progress reports (form to be agreed upon with advisor), written reflections (form to be agreed upon with advisor), and/or regular meetings to discuss project content, issues that arise in carrying out project and progress of student.

### **3. Reflection and analysis** (weeks 11 and 12)

Student will analyze data in order to summarize the findings of the project and to find relationships among and between experiences, literature, and data (this might involve making a table, drawing a concept map or Venn diagram, color-coding themes, completing statistical analyses, etc.). Student will write an outline and work with advisor to set up a time for presentation of the thesis.

Student and advisor will discuss ways of making sense of data and other contents of the project. Advisor will provide feedback on the outline.

### **4. Draft** (weeks 12 and 13)

Student will write a draft of the thesis from the outline, and revise as necessary. Advisor and student will critique the draft.

### **5. Revisions and Final Copy** (weeks 14 and 15)

Student will revise draft until both student and advisor are satisfied that the work conveys the intentions of the author, is "true" to her findings, and meets the standards for presentation of written work in a particular style (APA is most often used).

### **6. Presentation with handout or demonstration**

Student will present findings seminar-style as scheduled with advisor. In spring semester, this can occur during Celebrating Student Achievement day but this requires adjustments to the suggested timeline.

### **Summary of Requirements**

Length of paper 25-30 pages

Minimum number of cited sources 20-25

Connection to school experience

Presentation (including presentation or publication software – e.g. PowerPoint or Publisher handout)

Paper (generally APA format)

Revised 3/10