

95-07

June 5, 1995

DEFINITION AND REGULATIONS FOR GRADUATE THESES AND PROJECTS

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

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 or project as outlined above and must follow the format guidelines prescribed by the department in which the thesis or project is completed.

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

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

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

Colleges and Programs

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

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

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

Departments

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

Prior to approval, departments should determine that a thesis or project 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 or project.

Departments in which theses or projects 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 or project.

Each department shall develop a procedure to monitor thesis or project progress each semester following

student enrollment in Thesis or Project 698.

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

Thesis or Project Committees

A student's thesis or project committee shall consist of at least three members qualified in the areas relating to the thesis or project. 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 or project 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. The thesis committee must be approved by the appropriate department graduate advisor and college dean or director of graduate studies. Normally the chair of the committee also serves as thesis or project director, but this is not necessarily so. The thesis or project director must be a person qualified in the specific area of the thesis or project, but need not be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. When the thesis or project committee includes a thesis or project director who is not the chair of the committee, this person may be identified on the thesis or project report approval page as Thesis Director or Project Director.

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

If the college or department offering the degree funds the workload credit generated by the thesis director or committee chair, prior approval of such workload by the college dean or department chair is required. In the absence of such prior approval, the thesis director or committee chair will not be reimbursed for the workload generated in connection with the thesis or project.

Before agreeing to serve on a thesis or project committee, the prospective members shall review the thesis or project 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 or project committee members shall review the research competence of the thesis or project student before approving a thesis or project proposal.

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

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

Thesis or Project Committee Chairs

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

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

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

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

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

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

The thesis or project committee chair is responsible for canvassing the committee and reporting the grade agreed upon by its members. After the approval page has been signed by the committee and by the dean, and the completed thesis or project report has been reviewed by the University thesis reviewer for conformance with prescribed format criteria, 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 or project report. The University thesis reviewer shall verify that each thesis or project report meets the format criteria prescribed by the department or program and by the University, and that it meets all procedural requirements for theses and project reports imposed by the University.

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

EFFECTIVE: Fall 1995