

EQUITY, EDUCATION & SOCIAL JUSTICE (EESJ)

THESIS GUIDELINES

Completing a master's thesis can be a rewarding part of the EESJ program. These exit options offer you the opportunity to carry out an independent research study under the guidance of a committee of faculty members. Completing a thesis is a significant undertaking that involves a considerable amount of time and planning, and may slightly extend the time to degree completion. Students who choose the thesis exit option should have a strong interest in completing a scholarly study on a topic for which they have a deep interest, and should be prepared to work independently with considerable self-motivation.

PREPARING TO COMPLETE THE THESIS

The EESJ Thesis Guidelines were developed to assist EESJ students in planning and completing a thesis as an exit requirement. They should be read in conjunction with other relevant documents and resources produced by the College of Education and university.

GETTING STARTED

Below are some initial steps to help you get started in the process:

1. After reading the EESJ guidelines, also read [the College of Education thesis instructions](#).
2. Download the university [style and format procedures guide](#). Many additional, very helpful resources, including deadlines for filing, are available from the library's [Thesis and Dissertation Office](#).
3. Attend [thesis and research workshops](#) at the library and the CSULB Graduate Center.
4. Begin thinking about which faculty members you would like to serve on your committee. You will need three members, and two must be tenured or tenure-track faculty. Take courses with these individuals and get to know them as potential members of your committee. The chair of the committee must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from the College of Education, though additional committee members may come from other colleges. Once your application for a EESJ thesis has been approved, you will be assigned a chair and will work with the chair to secure two additional committee members.
5. Start thinking about your topic early, and draft outlines and timetables. Use any unstructured/open topic course assignments as an opportunity to investigate and begin building a background in the literature in your area(s) of interest.
6. Consider that if you plan to conduct a study using human subjects or identifiable data related to human subjects, you will need to go through the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)'s](#) process. The review process typically takes about 1-2 months depending on whether you are working with children or other vulnerable populations (thus requiring full IRB committee review), and you will need approval before you begin collecting data. Keep in mind that data collected through a research methods course generally cannot be included in a thesis because it was obtained without IRB approval. Also note that it generally takes students **several months to prepare IRB documents** for submission to the IRB because the process requires that you have a set research design and have developed all relevant materials (such as interview questions, surveys, flyers or emails to contact participants, etc.).

WHAT IS A THESIS?

	Thesis
Original Work?	Yes
Research-based?	Yes
Lengthens program?	Maybe (1-2 semesters)
Enrollment required?	Two semesters of EDP 698 over one calendar year
Significant time commitment?	Yes
Requires three committee members?	Yes
What type of research basis?	Empirical, historical, or theoretical
Contains?	Generally 5 chapters, to be negotiated with committee chair

WHAT A THESIS IS NOT

- A group effort
- A paper you have already written or developed
- A volunteer or service learning project

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR A THESIS IN THE EESJ PROGRAM

Completing a thesis with a EESJ core faculty member as the committee chair requires a two-step application process: 1) an application through EESJ, and 2) an application for EDP 698: Thesis through the College of Education's Graduate Studies office.

1) APPLYING TO EESJ TO COMPLETE A THESIS:

The EESJ Thesis proposal includes an application form (included as an appendix to this document) and a narrative proposal that follows the guidelines listed below. The application form and narrative proposal should be submitted **as one continuous document** to the EESJ Program Coordinator by **Friday of the first week of classes** in the Spring semester in which you are applying. **No extensions will be granted.** You should, as always, submit your best work; however, keep in mind that the process of developing your thesis is iterative, and your plans will go through several transformations before you begin the work.

You will receive notification regarding your application by mid-February, and if approved, will have your committee chair assigned. You will then need to work with your chair to secure two additional committee members before the March 1 deadline to apply for the EDP 698 course through Graduate Studies (see below). Specific feedback on the thesis proposal will follow a few weeks after notification regarding acceptance of the application, and will generally be collated by and come from your assigned thesis chair.

*Please note that if you have any incompletes in prior courses, you will need to resolve those before you

are able to pursue the thesis. Students with incomplete marks in any prior courses are not eligible to pursue the thesis option.

2) APPLYING TO GRADUATE STUDIES TO COMPLETE A THESIS:

If your thesis proposal is approved through EESJ and you have three committee members secured, your next step will be to submit an application to enroll in EDP 698: Thesis through the College of Education's Graduate Studies office. Applications to register for the thesis, with **signatures from all three committee members**, are due to the Graduate Studies Office by **March 1** for final submission of the thesis in Spring/Summer the following academic year. The application covers both semesters of enrollment in EDP 698. You must also obtain signatures from the Advanced Studies in Education and Counseling **Department Chair** (in ED1-10) and the **Associate Dean** (in ED1-3). Generally, it is not necessary to make an appointment to obtain Department Chair or Associate Dean signatures; stop by during business hours and plan ahead in case they are not available. You must also submit a **"statement of the problem"** with the application; the EESJ thesis proposal (without the forms and rubric) will serve as this statement. The original thesis proposal as submitted to the EESJ Program Coordinator will suffice. Along with the application, you must submit a **completed Advancement to Candidacy form** if you have not done so already; this form requires the signature of your faculty advisor.

ELEMENTS OF THE NARRATIVE THESIS PROPOSAL

The narrative proposal that accompanies the application form (in one continuous document) should be 12-15 pages in length, and should include the items listed below. Please see the EESJ key expectations rubric for the thesis at the conclusion of this document.

INTRODUCTION TO PROBLEM OR ISSUE (2-3 PAGES):

Introduce the problem or issue that you seek to address with your study. Additionally, you should provide a rationale for why the topic is an important area of inquiry. Using references will assist you in outlining and backing up your selection of a topic. Also, provide closely linked research questions that are appropriate for a master's thesis using the methodology.

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (1.5-2 PAGES):

Describe the theoretical and/or conceptual framework(s) you expect to use to pursue your thesis. Provide a detailed explanation of the framework(s), why you have chosen this/these particular framework(s) for this thesis, and what insights it/they will provide in relation to your study. Use citations as necessary to back up your rationale. You will need to use at least one theoretical framework and may also use additional theoretical or conceptual frameworks.

What is the difference between a theoretical framework and a conceptual framework? A theoretical framework (or theory) is a broad explanatory framework that will help you explore, understand, and explain your topic. For a thesis, the theoretical framework serves as the foundation for how you approach your study including how you ask your research questions, the literature you draw from, and the methodology you choose. A conceptual framework (or construct) is not as broad as a theoretical framework; a conceptual framework is a more focused construct that will help you explore, understand, and explain a particular element of your topic. For example, critical race theory is a theoretical framework that allows researchers to understand how race and racism (and other forms of oppression) emerge and mediate the educational experiences of people of color. Community cultural wealth is a conceptual framework (developed from the broader theoretical framework of critical race theory) used to explain the unique forms of knowledge, skills, and abilities utilized by communities of color to challenge, resist, and

navigate racist institutions and structures. In this example, critical race theory is a broad explanatory framework that examines race and racism. Community cultural wealth is a conceptual framework that explains a more specific phenomenon—how people of color challenge, resist, and navigate racism.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE (5-7 PAGES):

Describe, critique, and synthesize the research literature, current theory and/or concepts related to your area of inquiry with a minimum of 10 scholarly journal sources. Be sure to include a variety of viewpoints, not just those that support your position on the topic. You should go beyond simply summarizing various articles or books to analyze and discuss how they relate to each other and to your topic (in other words, the discussion should be synthesized). Consider what themes are relevant in the literature you've consulted, and what the "conversation" is in the literature around your topic.

METHODOLOGY (2-3 PAGES):

Describe your proposed research site in detail and provide specific information about the people or groups involved.

Also include the following additional items:

- Detailed information about the sample, participants, and sampling procedures;
- A description of proposed data collection methods, including details regarding each separate method and how often you will conduct each type of activity, where, when, and with whom;
- A justification/rationale for choosing these particular methods or techniques as appropriate for your study, backed up with citations.

THESIS TIMELINE:

The timeline should represent a plan for all steps required in completing the thesis. When preparing your timeline, you should review the library's deadlines for submission, and work backward to plan out the full scope of the thesis.

REFERENCES:

All sources cited in the proposal should be listed in the references section at the conclusion of the proposal using American Psychological Association (APA) format.

COMPLETING THE THESIS

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT, COMMITTEE CHAIR, AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE CHAIR:

The chair is responsible for guiding you throughout the entire process, including IRB review, with the support of the College of Education Thesis Seminar. Your chair serves as your supervising faculty for the IRB process. The chair provides feedback and constructive criticism on documents you submit. The chair is also responsible for ensuring that you have resolved mechanical/grammar or citation issues prior to submitting documents to committee members.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

The committee members are responsible for providing secondary advisement as you go through the thesis process. The committee members are also responsible for thoroughly reading materials you submit to them (once you have received approval from your chair) and for providing you with constructive feedback.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

The chair and committee members will make an effort to return drafts of the thesis write-up within **two** weeks of receiving them. However, it may take longer. Agreeing upon specific deadlines for submission to the committee chair/members and their return to you will help ensure that the process runs smoothly. Please keep in mind that chairs and/or committee members may not be available for consultation during the winter or summer sessions.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS:

All thesis students are required to attend the College of Education Thesis Seminar to support you through the thesis process. The seminar begins in summer, the semester immediately following thesis approval. Students will attend the seminar for the duration of their thesis study (typically for one year) or, as directed by their chair. You are expected to meet the deadlines provided by the thesis seminar, unless instructed differently by your thesis chair. You will receive information about the thesis seminar once your proposal has been approved.

You are responsible for submitting your best work at each point, and must provide the chair and committee members with text that has been **fully edited for grammar, mechanics, and APA formatting**. Prior to submitting sections of the thesis to committee members, you **must have permission** from your chair. You should offer the option of hard copy versions of your documents to your chair and committee members, unless they prefer to receive electronic versions. You are responsible for copying your chair on any communication with committee members or providing a summary of all feedback received from the committee members in person. You are also responsible for disseminating your thesis (following your chair's approval) to your committee members and Dean for review, **giving them no less than two weeks** to review. As noted above, you need to take university holidays, summer and winter session into account when planning, as you may need to allow more than two weeks for review at certain times of the academic year. A key point to remember is that your thesis should not move forward for review by others without the chair's approval.

GENERAL TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION OF THESIS IN TWO YEARS

AY1*	Fall - Brainstorm topics, conduct literature reviews - Think about potential committee members - Begin drafting proposal	Spring - Submit EESJ application form and narrative by the first Friday of the first week of classes - Submit application for EDP 698 to Graduate Studies Office by March 1 - Obtain approval to move forward by chair and committee members based on Chapters 1 and 3
AY2	Summer/Fall - Work on chapters 1-3 - Attend thesis seminars - Thesis defense	Winter/Spring - Data analysis - Attend thesis seminars - Submit Ch. 4-5 to chair by early Spring

	• Submit to IRB • Begin data collection	• Submit full thesis to committee members for review • Complete thesis defense • Review by Dean (allow at least two weeks) • Submit to university by mid-March or early June
--	--	---

*AY 1 is generally the first academic year for full-time students and the second academic year for part-time students.

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR THESIS COMPLETION

As you prepare to complete your thesis, remember that your chair is your primary guide, with support from the committee members. Submit chapters to your chair (and subsequently to your committee members) as early as possible. Expect that the review process will take several weeks for each iteration, and that you will write several drafts of each chapter. Seek your chair's approval prior to submission of chapters for review by committee members, and keep your chair apprised of communication with committee members at all times.

CHAPTERS 1-3:

Students generally work on Chapters 1-3 of the thesis summer and early fall. While preparing the chapters and your IRB application (if applicable), you must provide your committee members with the opportunity to review them, particularly Chapters 1 and 3. The committee must receive chapters 1-3 **at least 2 weeks in advance of the thesis proposal defense. Your chair must approve the document before it is sent to the committee members.** Make sure you obtain your chair's approval prior to submitting documents to your committee members and copy your chair on any communication with committee members. **You must be working on chapters 1-3 well in advance of early fall semester with your chair.** You should consult with your chair about providing committee members with the opportunity to provide feedback on your methodology prior to submitting your application to IRB and/or carrying out data collection. Your chair will prepare the faculty sponsor letter for the IRB once consultation with committee members is completed. It is imperative that you communicate with your committee members early on to find out what their preferences are.

PRELIMINARY & FINAL THESIS DEFENSE

You are required to have a preliminary and final defense for your thesis. The preliminary defense must take place no later than **early November of fall semester.** During this meeting, you will convene all committee members to discuss and provide feedback for chapters 1-3. For the final defense, you will convene all committee members to discuss and provide feedback on the entire thesis. At the final defense, you must bring your final (correctly formatted) signature page. It is important that you contact committee members early to set a date and time for these defense meetings, once your document is completed, and your chair has approved you to do so. Committee members must be given **at least 2 weeks** to review your final document prior to these defense meetings, following approval from your chair. Request that your chair reserve a room for these defense meetings. Students are unable to request room reservations in ASEC. At both defense meetings, students typically prepare a 20-25 minute PowerPoint presentation summarizing the appropriate chapters. Consult with your chair regarding your presentation well before your defense date.

HUMAN SUBJECTS AND INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PROCESS

The human subjects review section of the university's Institutional Review Board is charged with protecting the people involved in research or other scholarly projects conducted by staff or students at CSULB. If you plan to use human subjects in your thesis, you must complete the university's application process through the IRB **several months before you begin to collect data.** Development of the IRB

protocol generally occurs in conjunction with development of Chapter 3 of the thesis. You will work with your chair and College of Education IRB Liaison. You will submit your application to your chair for review first, make edits, and then make an appointment with the IRB Liaison, working with them to ascertain how much review time is needed. This process is usually repeated 2-3 times before submission and the review time between submitting versions to your chair and the IRB Liaison may be a week or two; build in time for you to make edits prior to resubmitting the drafts to your chair or the IRB Liaison too. You will also be consulting with your other committee members about the general direction of the study while preparing to submit the IRB documents, providing another reason to plan ahead. Once submitted, IRB approval is a lengthy process, and generally requires 1-2 months for review. Including “vulnerable” populations in your thesis, such as children (under the age of 18) or undocumented individuals, may result in a considerably longer process. Therefore, it is necessary to apply for IRB approval as early as possible in the thesis process.

Please be aware that the IRB needs to review **all** instruments you will use in your thesis, such as interview questions, recruitment emails and flyers, and surveys. Due to the level of detail required in the application, plan to spend several weeks or months (if part time) preparing the necessary paperwork. Also, you should expect to receive multiple questions from the IRB regarding your application, and will usually be required to revise your documents and resubmit them for further review. This revise-and-resubmit process may occur more than once; this process adds to the overall time it takes to receive IRB approval. Responding to the IRB’s requests promptly will help to ensure that your approval moves forward. You may not begin conducting any aspects of your empirical research until approval has been received from the IRB.

DATA COLLECTION:

After receiving **approval from your chair** and IRB clearance (if applicable), you should carry out your data collection. For most students, data collection occurs in fall, winter, or early spring. This phase of the thesis is very time consuming and does not always go according to plan. Be prepared for the unexpected and for the process to take longer than you envisioned.

DATA ANALYSIS:

As you collect data, you should continually work on developing your work further and preparing for the next step. Expect to spend several months in the Winter Session or early part of spring semester working intensely on the data analysis process or product creation/assessment.

SUBMITTING CHAPTERS 4-5 TO COMMITTEE CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Students generally work on Chapters 4-5 during spring semester. You will draft several versions of these chapters in a review process with your committee chair and the CED Thesis Seminar first. Once you have **received the approval of your chair** to do so, you may share your chapters with your committee members. **Your chair and committee members must all approve your documents prior to submitting it to the Dean and university.** Once your documents have been approved by your chair, you must provide **all chapters** of the thesis to your committee members **at least 2 weeks before the final defense.**

REVIEW OF FINAL THESIS FOR APPROVAL BY COMMITTEE CHAIR:

After making all of the chair’s and committee members’ suggested revisions, the committee chair will review the final document/product prior to submission to the Dean and university. **You must obtain your chair’s approval and signature on the signature page before submitting the document/product to the Dean.** Keep in mind that your chair may request additional revisions at this stage; build in several weeks for this process.

REVIEW BY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DEAN:

The Dean of the College of Education needs to review your thesis prior to submitting it to the university. Arrangements should be made with the Dean's office, and review generally requires at least two weeks (that is, you must submit the documents to the dean at least two weeks before the university deadline for submission). The Office of Graduate Studies typically sends out the final deadline for the Dean's review before the spring and summer filing dates.

SUBMITTING FINAL THESIS TO UNIVERSITY:

Theses are due in early April for Spring submission and mid July for Summer submission. Check the university [Thesis and Dissertation Office webpage](#) for exact submission dates for the relevant academic year. The process of submitting the thesis to the university involves more than simply filing the document. You must also set a pre-submission consultation with the Thesis and Dissertation office prior to filing. Once you have uploaded the final document with signature page, this office will also review it. Changes may be necessary before your final document is accepted. This process can take approximately a month. This process is not complete until you are issued a clearance letter from the thesis office.

WHAT DO THESES CONTAIN?

A traditional master's thesis contains five chapters: Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methodology, Findings/Results, and Summary/Conclusion. Most theses employing qualitative research are in the range of 80-120 pages total, including all references and appendices (e.g., interview protocols, recruitment flyers). You should consult the format suggested by the College of Education appended below, and are encouraged to follow it. If you would like to follow a different format, discuss this with your chair as early as possible. One area that is not included in the CED suggested format is a theoretical framework section, you should be sure to incorporate this section in Chapter 1 as noted in the suggested format below. We have also added page ranges to give you an idea of how long each chapter normally is in a qualitative thesis. These numbers are simply general guidelines, and your chapters may be shorter or longer, depending on your topic and the organization of your thesis. Please confer closely with your chair regarding organization as well as chapter length and contents.

THESIS TIPS**GENERAL**

- If possible, take EDP 400 and EDP 520 or 595 before you submit a thesis proposal. For full-time students, this might involve taking EDP 400 in the summer before the program begins. There are two reasons for taking the research methods courses early: 1) so that you will be familiar with the research methods you might use as you prepare your proposal, and 2) because the major assignment for the 500-level research methods courses is a research proposal. This course can therefore be used as a springboard for you to develop your thesis proposal, and to test ideas related to the thesis.

- Consult with other students who are completing or who have completed a thesis. They will be able to provide you with valuable tips and suggestions. Your committee members are also good sources of information regarding the process.
- Your thesis committee chair and fellow students will be able to provide suggestions and tips for navigating the IRB process based on their own experiences.
- It is not advisable to conduct a study for a class that involves the same potential participants you would like to include in your thesis. Consider the class work as a “pilot” study to test your ideas and include a similar population in that work.
- Though most students intend to submit their theses to the Thesis and Dissertation Office in March of the final Spring Semester, the process of conducting research often takes longer than planned. Thus, you should be aware of the summer submission deadlines too, which begin after graduation. Students who submit the thesis during summer may enroll in GS700 for a nominal fee during the summer session in order to be enrolled during the session in which they submit the thesis (as required by the university).
- EDP 698 is a credit-bearing course for which you will receive a grade based on your effort and attention to deadlines, as well as the final thesis. The course generally involves independent work on the thesis with guidance by the chair, and meeting times are arranged directly with your thesis chair (often once per week or every two weeks). Students receive a report in-progress (RP) grade for the first semester, and grades are submitted for both sections of EDP 698 after consultation with committee members and upon completion of final review of the thesis. Note that you must enroll in both sections of EDP 698 during one academic year.

EARLY PLANNING

- In the beginning stages of planning your thesis, try to gear some papers or annotated bibliographies you write for classes toward a potential thesis topic.
- Attend a graduate writing or APA formatting workshop if you have not already done so.
- Review the literature related to your topic while planning (and throughout the writing process). Preparing an annotated bibliography is a good starting point.
- Formulate a rough thesis outline and a rough thesis timeline well in advance of the required deadlines, as these documents take time to develop.
- Discuss your ideas with your colleagues and peers, in order to gain as much feedback as possible before submitting your proposal.
- Consult EESJ faculty and others whom you think might be interested in your work and able to provide guidance. Please keep in mind that CSULB faculty are employed on a nine month calendar; therefore, they may not be available for consultations during the winter and/or summer sessions.
- Attend a workshop sponsored by the Thesis and Dissertation Office about formatting your thesis.

KEEPING ON TRACK

- Establish a timeline for yourself in conjunction with your committee chair and committee members. Set dates in advance with all committee members to review chapters and drafts. It is important for you to stick to the deadlines you set; your committee members will also be encouraged to do so.
- Consult the university [Thesis and Dissertation Office web page](#) regularly and read the documents. Make sure that you follow the guidelines from the start to avoid having to reformat after you are done.

- Make an appointment with the Writer's Resource Lab and meet with peers to go over outlines and drafts of chapters.
- Work closely with your thesis chair to hone your topic.
- Work on the thesis often. Try to work on it at least a little bit as many days per week as possible. That way, it will always be on your mind and you will be open to research and critical/analytical breakthroughs.
- Spend time double-checking thesis write-up formatting.
- Appointments are available with thesis format evaluators prior to submission to the university. Make an appointment to go over formatting before submission.

THESIS RESOURCES

- [CSULB Thesis and Dissertation Office](#)
Room 501, 5th Floor of University Library
Telephone: 562.985.4013
Email: lib-thesis@csulb.edu
- [College of Education Thesis Guidelines](#)
- [Institutional Review Board](#) (Human Subjects)
Location: FO5-111
Telephone: 562.985.5314

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMAT OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

Below are suggested guidelines for your Master's thesis in EESJ. These are similar to the guidelines for the College of Education, but are specific to the research approaches we take in the EESJ program¹. Please use these guidelines to outline your thesis study. Confer with the University Thesis Guidelines and your thesis chair for additional guidance.

PRELIMINARY PAGES

Please consult with the University Thesis Guidelines for the Title and Signature/Approval pages that are included in your thesis.

ABSTRACT

This is a one-page (150 words or less) summary of the problem or topic, the questions explored, the methods used, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION (10-12 PAGES)

In this section you will set the stage for your research. You will provide the background for the issue being investigated, and describe it in light of current research. This will lead you into the Problem Statement section where you make the case for your study and describe what needs to be known about the issue under investigation. This is also the section where you pose your research questions, which stem from thoughtful analysis and consideration in relation to the problem or topic under study.

SUBSECTIONS FOR CHAPTER I

- Background to the general, overall problem or topic. Description of the specific problem or topic you are studying.
- Problem Statement. Brief, 1-2 sentences – but may be longer if necessary – based on your narrative of the problem or topic. The statement of the problem explains what needs to be known.
- Purpose of the Study. The purpose of the study describes what the study will do and is a direct response to what needs to be known.
- Theoretical/Conceptual Framework. Describe the framework(s) used to shape the thesis, provide rationale for choosing these framework(s) as relevant for your thesis. Theses must contain at least one theoretical framework. If an additional framework emerges later in the thesis process (i.e. after data collection), you must also include the framework in this chapter.
- Research Questions.
- Definitions of terms that will aid the reader in understanding the study (if applicable).
- Significance of the Study. This section describes how your study contributes to the literature or the overall field. Why is this study important?

¹ This section of the document is reproduced from the Office of Graduate Studies and Research website. EESJ has made some adjustments regarding 1) theoretical/conceptual framework, 2) including basic guidelines for page ranges for each chapter (for theses involving qualitative research, which are the most common EESJ theses), and 3) Please note that the guidelines presented here may be adapted in consultation with your chair; which are generally highly unique.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE (20-30 PAGES)

This section identifies and describes what has been discovered and reported in the research literature with regards to the issue that you are investigating. It requires a thorough search of the literature and a careful analysis. Only those articles, books, and manuscripts directly related to your problem or topic are included. The discussion of the literature is related to the questions to be answered by your study. It is not to be written as an annotated bibliography. It is not simply a laundry list of what various authors have said about the topic. The most successful literature reviews are tightly coupled to the various areas generated by the research questions; the literature should inform and explain these areas. The summary of the literature review leads into your comments about how your study will contribute to and expand on this body of knowledge.

SUBSECTIONS FOR CHAPTER II

- Introduction. (This is generally a roadmap to alert the reader to the various themes that will be covered in Chapter II)
- Review of the Literature. Sub-headings can be related to the research questions to be answered or areas to be explored by the study, organize the literature review by common themes that link the research studies together; include your critique and commentary with reference to the studies cited.
- Summary of the major points discovered in your review. Look at each of your subsections, summarize the major points presented in two sentences for each subsection. These sentences form the basis for your summary of the literature. In this section, be explicit regarding how the literature contributes to your study. This section is short and focused.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY (10-15 PAGES)

Restate the questions to be answered by this investigation. Describe in detail how you will gather the information to answer your study questions and why you chose these specific methods.

SUBSECTIONS FOR CHAPTER III

- Introduction with a brief review of the problem or topic and research questions.
- Research Design. Describe the *design* (qualitative vs. quantitative) of your study and your methodological approach (e.g., basic qualitative interview study, case study, narrative). Explain the central tenets and purposes of your design, as well as a rationale.
- Site/Research Context. Describe the site where your research was conducted (context of research).
Depending on the methodology chosen, this may include a description of the physical characteristics or demographic profile of the site.
- Research Participants/Collaborators. Describe your participant criteria you will be using. What are the characteristics of your sample – e.g. age ranges, gender, years teaching, any other distinguishing characteristics. How were participants chosen?
- Data Collection. This section should describe any operational details that another researcher would need to know to replicate the study. Begin with your recruitment strategies, and include details about 1) the specific order in which steps to carry out the research were undertaken, 2) the timing of the study - when it occurred and how long did it take (use specific dates), 3) instructions given to participants, 4) your data collection instruments (e.g. survey, questionnaire,

interview protocol? Where did you get it? Why did you decide on this instrument? What did it include?) and 5) briefings, debriefings, or safeguards taken.

- Data Analysis. Provide a detailed description of the data analysis techniques and process used.
- Positionality. Describe your position in relationship to the thesis study. How did you come to this particular thesis topic?
- Limitations of the Study. Describe the limitations to the study, specifically the events that occurred that were beyond the control of the researcher.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS/RESULTS (25-40 PAGES)

What did your study reveal? What were the results from your data collection efforts? Use appropriate graphics such as charts, graphs, tables, drawings, etc. to present your data. Remember, a cross analysis where data is continually compared from all sources produces the most reliable results. Also remember that your findings should answer your research questions. If a theoretical/conceptual framework emerges during data collection, it should not be introduced in this chapter. Rather, it should be included in chapter 1.

SUBSECTIONS FOR CHAPTER IV:

- Introduction with a brief review of your data collection/analysis procedures
- Findings. Organize this section by research question. Use tables and charts to help illustrate your findings. Note that if an additional framework emerges following data collection, the framework must be included in chapter 1 in the theoretical/conceptual framework subsection. New theories/constructs should not be introduced in this chapter.
- Conclusion. Briefly end the chapter by summarizing your findings.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION (10-15 PAGES)

Summary of Findings, Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations for Policy and Practice, and Suggestions for Future Research.

This is the section where you use the findings to come to conclusions and propose a problem solution or a recommendation on how to build a program, a process, or a policy that will potentially remedy all or part of the issue. The significance of this section lies in the discussion of the implications. The identification of areas where more information is needed and therefore where further study is required should be discussed in this chapter as well.

SUBSECTIONS FOR CHAPTER V

- Summary of Findings. How does your data answer each of your RQ's? An overall analysis of the findings as they relate to the research questions should be included. What have you discovered and what does it all mean?
- Implications and Contributions. What are the implications of your research findings? This is neither a re-presentation of data nor recommendations. Contributions describe the new information and/or knowledge your study offers.
- Recommendations for Policy and/or Practice. What policy and practice recommendations do you have based on your research findings?
- Recommendations for Future Research. Offer recommendations for further research in this area. Describe what could be done differently in future studies.

REFERENCES

Include a complete reference list of all documents cited in the study in APA format.

APPENDICES (IF APPROPRIATE)

Include in the appendices any items that support the study (e.g. data collection materials), but would interrupt the flow of the text of the project if included in the narrative.

EQUITY, EDUCATION & SOCIAL JUSTICE (EESJ) THESIS AND APPLICATION

Name:

Proposed Committee Chair:

Proposed Committee Members:

Proposed Thesis Title:

Abstract (200-250 words):

Please note: An electronic copy of this application form and the accompanying proposal must be submitted to the EESJ program coordinator **as one continuous document** via email by the Friday of the first week of classes for the Spring Semester in which you are applying. Applications for a thesis will be reviewed by core faculty members. Depending on current program and departmental resources, EESJ faculty may not be able to accommodate all students who wish to pursue a thesis.

EQUITY, EDUCATION & SOCIAL JUSTICE (EESJ)

THESIS PROPOSAL KEY EXPECTATIONS

Student Name: _____

Please note: In addition to the specific expectations listed here, the thesis proposal must receive a satisfactory or exemplary mark for all items on the EESJ Sophisticated Academic Writing Rubric to be considered.

Expectation	Unsatisfactory (No/Limited Proficiency)	Developing (Some Proficiency)	Satisfactory (Proficiency)	Exemplary (High Proficiency)
INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS (2-3 pages)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Introducing the topic or problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
Justification for why study is important	☐	☐	☐	☐
Closely linked, answerable research questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (1.5-2 pages)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Detailed explanation of framework(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rationale for choosing framework(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐
REVIEW OF LITERATURE (5-7 pages)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Discussion of all literature sources presented (not just summaries)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Variety of viewpoints presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
Critique and analysis of literature presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
Synthesis of research presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relation of literature to chosen topic	☐	☐	☐	☐
At least ten relevant scholarly literature sources included	☐	☐	☐	☐
METHODOLOGY (3-4 pages)				
Detailed description of site or situation to be researched	☐	☐	☐	☐
Specific information about sample, sampling procedure, and participants	☐	☐	☐	☐
Describe each method chosen fully and in detail	☐	☐	☐	☐
Substantiate choice of methods proposed	☐	☐	☐	☐

THESIS TIMELINE	☐	☐	☐	☐
Specific plan regarding tasks and key dates	☐	☐	☐	☐
REFERENCES	☐	☐	☐	☐
APA Formatted references	☐	☐	☐	☐