Millersville University
College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning

Thesis & Dissertation

Guidelines and Requirements

Revised December 2017
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Introduction

A Master’s Thesis or Doctoral Dissertation serves as a contribution to a field of study through the knowledge and demonstration of scholarship and research techniques that represent the culmination of your graduate studies. You will take justifiable pride in this project since it not only satisfies a degree requirement but also positions you within your discipline and advances your field of study with original work, especially when your manuscript is made available to other scholars and readers worldwide.

The College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning created these guidelines to assist with your project. Please read these pages carefully before preparation, understanding this tool is to be used in conjunction with guidance from your program faculty and advisory committee. We encourage high standards of accuracy and soundness of research. Significant variances from these guidelines should be arranged through consultation with the Graduate Dean.

As a condition of graduation each student’s project must be electronically submitted for inclusion in the University’s digital repository, a free online archive of research done by the members of the University community.

We strive to assist you in producing the best possible product, one that will bring you and the University pride for many years to come. We are happy to help with any questions you have throughout the process. Please stop by our office, email us or call for an appointment.

The College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning
Lyle Hall, Second Floor
717-871-4723
goffasst@millersville.edu
Research Support Funding

Several sources of on-campus funding are available for undergraduate and graduate students seeking to conduct course-related or degree-related research. You may be eligible for this funding to aid you in completing your thesis or presenting your thesis at professional conferences or meetings.

Student Research Grant Program - Both graduate and undergraduate students are eligible for these grants, which have a maximum award amount of $500. This funding is made available through an Academic Affairs’ performance funding allocation. Consult the Graduate Studies website for current deadlines, guidelines and applications.

Noonan Endowment Fund Grant Program - Undergraduate and graduate students may also be eligible to apply for Noonan Grants. Current deadlines and information about Noonan Endowment Grants is available at the Academic Affairs/Provost’s website.

Undergraduate and graduate students should also consult their academic department to determine if additional department or university sources of funding are available to them.

Library Research Support

For support and consultation on using the research tools and resources available at McNairy Library, please visit the library website at http://www.library.millersville.edu/ or contact the library to make an appointment with a research librarian or subject librarian.

Policies on Research with Human Subjects or Animals

All systematic investigations involving human or animal subjects that are performed to meet academic requirements (e.g., thesis) or designed for public dissemination under the aegis of Millersville University require approval from the appropriate entity.

If your thesis involves research using human subjects, you will need to follow the procedures to have your research approved by the IRB. Proposals requiring a full Board review must be submitted ten days in advance of the board’s meetings. A current meeting schedule as well as additional details on the IRB and their processes are available at their website at http://www.millersville.edu/~irb/.

If your thesis or dissertation involves research using animal subjects, you will need to have your research proposal approved by IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee). The Millersville University IACUC should review any research proposals that involve the use of laboratory animals and will work with grant seekers to ensure that the proposed research incorporates adequate safeguards for and appropriate treatment of laboratory animals.
Acceptable Formats

Before beginning the preparation of your manuscript, you should consult with your advisor concerning the proper style to be used for your discipline. Some of the style guides approved for disciplines at MU are:

- University of Chicago. Chicago Manual of Style.

Final Preparation and Submission of the Thesis, Dissertation or Scholarly Project:

Word Processing Aids: Students are referred to their appropriate style guide for answers to questions related to word processing. Theses must be free of blemishes and typographical and grammatical errors. Regardless of the style guide followed, the student is expected to conform to appropriate citation forms.

Text: Double-spaced. One side of page only. Use 8 ½ x 11 paper size settings.

Font: No smaller than 12-point. Times New Roman or Arial. Script and italicized not acceptable except where necessary.

Margins: 1” from left, right and top. 1.25” from bottom.

Pagination: Every page in your document, including those with tables and figures, must be counted. Use lower case Roman numerals for the front matter and Arabic numbers for the text. All page numbers should be centered at the bottom of the page. No word “Page” or pagination embellishments (dashes or periods) are permitted. The title page does not show a number, though it is page i. The Approval page is page ii. The Abstract should begin on page iii. The text of the thesis/dissertation begins on page 1. Allow reasonable space between page numbers and text.

Footnotes/Endnotes: Single-spaced, with a double space between each note.

Tables and Appendices: Are part of the document and must conform to similar margin sizes and page numbering.

Order: Title Page, Approval Page, Abstract Page(s), Acknowledgments (opt), Table of Contents (opt), List of Tables (opt), List of Figures (opt), Body, Endnotes, References/Bibliography, and Appendices (opt).

Keywords: Supply keywords appropriate for your topic. These words will be searchable by researchers interested in your topic to help them more efficiently locate your publication in our repository. Choose keywords that best describe the content of your document.

Submitting Your Document: Be sure your document is properly and completely formatted. Approval page should be replace with typed names and “Signature on File” noted, as no signatures should appear in the document to be uploaded to the MU Institutional Repository. Be sure to submit the original Approval page with actual signatures and the “Permission to Digitize Thesis, Dissertation or Scholarly Project” form to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. Current embargo option is up to 3 years, after which there is an auto release. Some considerations for choosing an embargo are patents pending, sensitive or classified information or impact to an existing or potential publishing agreement. A student can opt out of the electronic repository only by request to the Graduate Dean. Repository items have a permanent URL and the institution is committed to maintaining the service into the future.
Copyright:

As you submit your thesis/dissertation/scholarly project, we recommend that you select this Creative Commons copyright license:

**Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs**

CC BY-NC-ND: This license is the most restrictive of the six main licenses, only allowing others to download your works and share them with others as long as they credit you, but they can’t change them in any way or use them commercially.

If you would like to choose a different Creative Commons copyright license agreement, please select from the following:

- **Attribution**
  - CC BY: This license lets others distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon your work, even commercially, as long as they credit you for the original creation. This is the most accommodating of licenses offered. Recommended for maximum dissemination and use of licensed materials.

- **Attribution-ShareAlike**
  - CC BY-SA: This license lets others remix, tweak, and build upon your work even for commercial purposes, as long as they credit you and license their new creations under the identical terms. This license is often compared to “copyleft” free and open source software licenses. All new works based on yours will carry the same license, so any derivatives will also allow commercial use. This is the license used by Wikipedia, and is recommended for materials that would benefit from incorporating content from Wikipedia and similarly licensed projects.

- **Attribution-NoDerivs**
  - CC BY-ND: This license allows for redistribution, commercial and non-commercial, as long as it is passed along unchanged and in whole, with credit to you.

- **Attribution-NonCommercial**
  - CC BY-NC: This license lets others remix, tweak, and build upon your work non-commercially, and although their new works must also acknowledge you and be non-commercial, they don’t have to license their derivative works on the same terms.

- **Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike**
  - CC BY-NC-SA: This license lets others remix, tweak, and build upon your work non-commercially, as long as they credit you and license their new creations.

Creative Commons copyright licenses: [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/)

Copyright ownership means you have the exclusive right to print, reprint, copy, sell and prepare derivative works based on your work. Copyright law protects an author against infringement of these rights. You may insert the copyright notice on your title page, though it is not required. You may choose to register your claim to copyright by requesting a TX application form from the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. 20559 or consult their website at [http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/](http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/). This makes a public record of your copyright and provides addition protections if another party violates your copyright.
THESIS

Definition of a Thesis. Why to Complete One.

A master’s thesis is an approved creative project or an interpretive, analytical work that offers evidence of an original point of view, supported by original research and the results of that research. In completing a thesis, the student demonstrates a capacity for independent research, an ability to organize and present empirical evidence logically and proficiency in the use of scholarly language. The final written thesis demonstrates originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate format, organization and thorough documentation. In certain circumstances, a thesis may be a literary review.

A thesis is different from a research project in that it is greater in scale, complexity and time to produce. A thesis will result publishable and electronically accessible paper which is submitted to the academic department and the MU Institutional Repository. If you are completing a research report rather than a thesis, you should consult with your advisor concerning requirements. Research reports are not submitted to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. Students must fulfill departmental requirements in the completion of a research report.

Students enrolled in programs of study in which there is currently no defined thesis option can explore the completing a thesis by obtaining permission from the program coordinator.

If you are planning to pursue a doctoral program, you may want to strongly consider completing a thesis as part of your master’s degree requirements. Many doctoral programs look to this as a requirement for admission.

The master’s degree programs at Millersville that offer an option for a thesis:

M.Ed. Art
M.Ed. Elementary Education
M.Ed. Language and Literacy Education
M.Ed. Early Childhood Education
M.Ed. Gifted Education
M.A. English
M.Ed. French, German, Spanish
M.A. French, German, Spanish
M.A. English
M.Ed. French, German, Spanish
M.A. History
M.Ed. Math
M.Ed. Language and Literacy Education
M.S. Clinical Psychology
M.S. School Psychology
M.Ed. School Counseling
M.Ed. Special Education
M.Ed. Sport Management
M.S. Technology & Innovation
Choosing a Topic and Advisor

The student is responsible for selecting a topic and finding a graduate faculty member who is willing to serve as an advisor. In general, the student should follow these steps in selecting a topic and an advisor:

1. Begin by exploring topics that match your interests, knowledge and skills.
2. Discuss your ideas for the master’s thesis or dissertation with faculty members who have an interest and expertise in the area of your selected topic. You may explore possible topics with several faculty members before selecting your final topic.
3. Select an advisor based on mutual interests and the availability of the faculty member to direct the thesis or dissertation project during the appropriate semester(s). Keep in mind a thesis or dissertation is rarely completed in one semester; often a full year is utilized to complete it.
4. Note that departments may use different procedures for thesis or dissertation proposal approval: some departments through discussion and a written tentative outline, other departments through a more detailed proposal.

Timeline

Deadlines and timeline may fluctuate depending on your academic discipline, your topic and your advisor. This timeline is intended as a general guideline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One year prior to graduation:</th>
<th>Explore possible topics on your own and with potential faculty advisors.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Select topic and advisor and consider additional committee members (at least three committee members are required).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Thesis proposal submitted for approval (depending on your department, requirements for approval may vary). Your thesis committee should also be finalized at this time. Regardless of approval requirements, a “Thesis Proposal Approval Form” should be signed and submitted to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. **This must be completed before the semester in which you plan to apply for graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Begin research; prepare abstract, bibliography and outline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Meet with your advisor to review thesis progress (at a minimum). During the entire thesis process, you should remain in communication with your advisor to ensure successful progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the semester you plan to complete your thesis:</td>
<td>Fill out “Thesis/Dissertation/Scholarly Project Request Form” to register for the thesis course in your program. (Generally, the thesis is a 3 or 6 credit course registered for in one semester; however, it will most likely take you more than one semester to complete the thesis. Generally a thesis from start to finish will take about a year).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Give first draft of the thesis to your advisor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Submit revised, final version of the thesis to your advisor and committee (allow a few weeks for review).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 month prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Schedule thesis defense presentation with your advisor and committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3 weeks prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Thesis grade should be recorded via Banner web grading by the student’s advisor, or via the standard grade change form if the student had previously taken an “incomplete.” Thesis Examination Report should be submitted at this time to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks prior to graduation:</td>
<td>An electronic MS word copy of the final form of the thesis must be submitted to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning for format review. Please consult with Thesis Checklist before for final submission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduation:</td>
<td>Attend the Graduate Studies and Adult Learning Commencement Ceremony. You must purchase or rent regalia. Contact the University Store for more details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Following Graduation:</td>
<td>Electronic copies are uploaded by the Graduate Studies and Adult Learning to the MU Institutional Repository and the student’s academic department.</td>
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Roles & Responsibilities of Student, Committee, Advisor, Coordinator & College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning

**Student**
The graduate student has the primary responsibility for the master’s thesis from the creation of the subject matter to the preparation of the thesis document. The student is responsible for ensuring that the thesis manuscript meets accepted standards for scholarly writing and has thoroughly proofread the documents for accuracy including spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The student should read MU Thesis & Dissertation Guidelines and Requirements thoroughly and know the requirements and guidelines for preparation of the thesis. The student also should identify and become familiar with a recognized academic style manual appropriate to his/her academic discipline. Both documents should be used in the preparation of the thesis.

**Thesis Advisor**
The thesis advisor, who must be a member of the MU Graduate Faculty, accepts and assumes the major responsibility to work directly with the graduate student in the research or creative project. The thesis advisor will work closely with the student in all aspects of the thesis experience, including the development of the research proposal, the implementation of the research design, the analysis of the data or supporting evidence and the writing of the thesis. The thesis advisor has the responsibility to edit the thesis for accuracy in terms of both content and format. Prior to the submission of the thesis to the thesis committee, it is the responsibility of the thesis advisor to review the document and ensure that it is of high quality in content and literary style.

**Thesis Committee**
The student's departmental thesis committee is comprised of the thesis advisor and at least two additional members. The majority of the committee must be MU Graduate Faculty; in other words, one member of a three person committee may be an outside member. The outside member should be a subject matter expert and must be approved by the department. Each department determines the composition of the thesis committee and the roles of its members. The members of the committee should be available to the student for consultation and advisement.

**Graduate Coordinator**
The graduate coordinator monitors thesis progress and ensures that the student is making acceptable progress on the thesis in a timely manner for the student’s intended graduation.

**Graduate Studies and Adult Learning**
Graduate Studies and Adult Learning oversees and implements all policies and procedures governing graduate theses. It publicizes and disseminates the articulation of these policies to the graduate community. Graduate Studies and Adult Learning uploads thesis copies to the MU Institutional Repository. Graduate Studies and Adult Learning sends thesis information on a yearly basis to the Master’s Theses Directories for categorization and publication in a directory which is distributed to college and university libraries across the United States and Canada.
Thesis Grading Policy

Theses are evaluated by the student’s thesis committee on the basis of H (Honors), P (Pass), F (Fail) or I (Incomplete). Requirements for receiving a grade of “H” are set individually by departments. Please speak with your advisor regarding departmental grading guidelines. An incomplete grade may be assigned to a thesis and you will have one year to complete the thesis and have the incomplete changed to an assigned grade by the department.

Checklist for Thesis

- **Thesis Proposal Approval Form** is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. All committee members must be assigned and listed before submission.
- **Thesis/Dissertation Request Form** is submitted to the advisor. Dean of College is final signature and forwards form to the Registrar for registration.
- Submit an **Application for Graduation** by the appropriate deadline.
- **Thesis Examination Report** is completed by the advisor after initial defense and submitted to Office of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.
- Required pages are in proper order:
  - Title Page
  - Approval Page
  - Abstract Page(s)
  - Acknowledgments (opt.)
  - Table of Contents (opt.)
  - Body
  - Endnotes (can be incorporated at the end of each chapter)(opt),
  - References/Bibliography,
  - Appendices (opt.)
- Submit electronic copy of **final document** in Word format to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. **Thesis Approval** page should have typed student and committee members’ names and “Signatures on File” notated on the form.
- Submit original **Thesis Approval** page with actual signatures to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.
- Submit 6 keywords to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.
- Submit signed “**Permission to Digitize Thesis, Dissertation or Scholarly Project**” to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.
- Copyright permission letter(s) from copyright owner(s) must be included if copyrighted material is used outside of the guidelines of fair use.
- A letter from the owner of the software license granting permission to use their software must be attached if executable software owned by another party is used in the thesis.
THESIS/NON-THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM**

Student’s Name: ____________________________ MU ID #: __________________

Degree: ____________________________ Major Area: ____________________________

Thesis Title: ____________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Expected Completion Date: ____________________________

*Human Use Committee (IRB) chair approval (as required): ____________________________

(date of approval)

*Animal Use Committee (IACUC) chair approval (as required): ____________________________

(date of approval)

Thesis Proposal Approved:

__________________________ date
Chair signature

__________________________ date
Member signature

__________________________ date
Member signature

__________________________ date
Member signature

__________________________ date
Member signature

*If IRB approval is required, the IRB protocol form (available on the IRB webpage) must be submitted with this form to the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. If approval of IACUC is required, appropriate documentation and signature of IACUC chair must accompany this form.

**Suggested accompaniments to this form: as per your department requirements.

Submit completed form directly to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning in Lyle Hall.
### THESIS/DISSERTATION/SCHOLARLY PROJECT REQUEST FORM

#### PART 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT

<table>
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<th>Student’s Last Name</th>
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<th>Student Signature</th>
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<th>Thesis/Dissertation/Project Advisor Signature</th>
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<tr>
<th>Thesis/Dissertation/Project Advisor Printed Name</th>
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#### PART 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY ADVISOR

#### CHECK ONE:

- □ THESIS  SUBJECT/COURSE #______CREDITS____
  
  **TOPIC**
  
  **TITLE:**
  
  **ABBREVIATED TITLE FOR TRANSCRIPT:** (max 22 spaces)
  
- □ DISSERTATION/PROJECT  SUBJECT/COURSE #______CREDITS____
  
  **TOPIC**
  
  **TITLE:**
  
  **ABBREVIATED TITLE FOR TRANSCRIPT:** (max 22 spaces)

#### COURSE INFORMATION:

- Fall _____  Summer 1 _____
- Spring _____  Summer 2 _____
- Winter _____  Summer 3 _____

#### PART 3: SIGNATURES REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL AND PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Chair</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Dean of College</th>
<th>Date</th>
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For Registrar’s Office use only: CRN__________________  c: Graduate Studies Office
Millersville University
College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning

THESIS EXAMINATION REPORT

_________________________________________   _________________________
Student’s Name                      MU ID #

_____________               __________ s.h.
Department                      # of credits

Date of Examination                  Program

Title of Thesis

_____________________________________________________________________________

Action taken on Thesis:

_______ Approved

_______ Approved with revisions suggested by committee and to be checked by chair

_______ Schedule a re-exam after corrections or revisions have been made

_______ Not Approved (Specific reasons in writing should be attached)

_______ Other (Please explain)

Names of Examining Committee:

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

Chair of Committee signature

* Please note this is for notification of approval only, grade must be submitted via Banner web grading to appear officially on transcript.

Submit completed form directly to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning in Lyle Hall.
Permission to Digitize Thesis, Dissertation or Scholarly Project

Author: ___________________________________________ Manuscript Date: _________________

Title: ________________________________________________________________________________

Permission to scan and redistribute. I grant to Millersville University of Pennsylvania the nonexclusive right to create a digital version of the above-named publication (the “Manuscript”) and to make my Manuscript available as part of the collection in the MU Institutional Repository. I understand that the full text of my Manuscript will be available to the public in digital form without restriction as part of the collection, and I give my permission for the University to reproduce, distribute, display, and transmit my Manuscript in order to make it available online.

Non-exclusive and perpetual license. I understand that this permission constitutes a non-exclusive, perpetual, royalty-free license, and that I retain all other rights to the copyright in my Manuscript, including the right to use it in other works such as articles and books.

Authority to grant license. I represent and warrant that I am the sole author and owner of the copyright in my Manuscript, and that I have full and sole authority to grant this permission. I also represent that this Manuscript does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe or violate any rights of others. I have obtained any third-party rights, if necessary.

Permission Granted By

_________________________________________  __________________________________________
(Print Author’s name)  (Signature of Author)

_________________________________________  _____________________________
Address  City/State/Zip

_________________________________________  _____________________________
Date  Phone Number or E-mail address

Mail or email a completed, signed form to:
College of Graduate Studies & Adult Learning
P.O. Box 1002
Millersville University
Millersville, PA 17551
goffasst@millersville.edu@millersville.edu
This Thesis for the Master of Education Degree by

John A. Smith

has been approved on behalf of the

Graduate School by

Thesis Committee:

__________________________________________
Research Advisor

__________________________________________
Committee Member

__________________________________________
Committee Member

(Create as many lines for committee members as necessary)

__________________________________________
Date

(NOTE TO STUDENT: A copy of this approval page with original signatures should be submitted to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.)
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

(INsert ThESis TiTle)

By

(Student Name)

Millersville University, (Year)

Millersville, Pennsylvania

Directed by (Advisor’s Name)

Your Abstract should begin here, and begin with the STATEMENT OF PROBLEM followed by the SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION (300 words).

Signature of Investigator ____________________________ Date_____________

(NOTE TO STUDENT: Three copies of this approval page must bear original signature prior to submission to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning)
APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

Please complete this form, obtain adviser and graduate coordinator signatures, and return it to the College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning on or before the date indicated on the graduate calendar for the term you plan to graduate. This information will be used to order your diploma and for printing the commencement program; the form, therefore, must be completed fully and accurately. Please be aware that submission of the application will prompt the $30 degree/transcript fee to be assessed to your student account on MAX and must be paid prior to the release of your final transcripts and diploma.

Print your name exactly as you wish it to appear on your diploma:
_____________________________________________________________   MU ID#____________________

Current Mailing Address (this is the address your diploma will be mailed to):

Street_________________________City/State_________________________Zip_________________________
Phone No.___________________________

E-mail Address (this will be used to send Commencement information)
_____________________________________________________________

Expected Completion of Degree Requirements:
(check one)                                                       Degree:

☐ Winter (January)                                               ☐ M.A. ☐ M.Ed. ☐ M.S. ☐ M.S.N ☐ M.S.W.
☐ Spring (May)                                                   ☐ E.D.D ☐ D.N.P. ☐ D.S.W.
☐ Summer I                                                      Major:
☐ Summer II                                                     __________________________
☐ Summer III                                                    __________________________
☐ Fall (December)                                                __________________________

Program requirements in progress
(including courses, research, exams, internship, etc.):
___________________________________________________________________________________

Expected Completion of Degree Requirements (check one):
☐ Winter (January)
☐ Spring (May)
☐ Summer I
☐ Summer II
☐ Summer III
☐ Fall (December)

Program requirements in progress
(including courses, research, exams, internship, etc.):
___________________________________________________________________________________

The graduate student commencement ceremony is held in May for all students who have completed their program in the summer-spring terms of the concluding academic year.

I will attend the commencement ceremony for which I am eligible ............ ☐ YES ☐ NO

If you are a student completing your degree in summer after the ceremony, and have a maximum of 3 credits (not including a thesis or internship) remaining as of the prior May commencement, you are eligible for exception to walk in that ceremony in consultation with your program coordinator.

I am a summer graduate and am requesting this exception to participate in the May ceremony prior to completion of all my degree requirements............ ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A

Signature of Student _________________________________________________ Date____________________

Signature of Program Advisor ___________________________________________ Date____________________

Signature of Graduate Coordinator ______________________________________ Date____________________

Signature of Department Chair (if required by dept.) ___________________________ Date____________________

Graduate Studies Office Use Only: Application entered into Banner: _____ C:_____ A:_____ E:_____ GPA:______
Definition of a Dissertation

In order to achieve your doctorate degree, you are required to complete the research, theory, experimentation, and writing of your dissertation. A dissertation is a technical endeavor that documents and sets forth proof of your original thesis. Dissertations should be complete and written for technical audiences, but do not have to be meticulously comprehensive.

Writing your dissertation will require you to use the scientific method. The scientific method means that you will start with a hypothesis, and then collect evidence that supports or denies that hypothesis. The majority of the doctoral dissertation writing process is collecting and organizing the pieces of evidence you collect into an orderly and presentable form. The essence of a dissertation is demonstrating critical thinking skills, not presenting experimental data.

Analyzing research, presenting concepts, and stating all lessons learned, not just the facts, is the application of the dissertation. Each statement within your dissertation should be supported by a reference to published scientific literature, or by your own original work. However, a dissertation shouldn’t repeat the details of the published sources critical thinking and analysis, it should instead use the published work’s results as scientific fact and refer readers to it as a source for additional detail.

Choosing a Topic and Dissertation Chair

The student is responsible for selecting a topic and finding a graduate faculty member who is willing to serve as a committee chair. Some things you can consider when choosing a dissertation topic:

1. Begin by exploring topics that match your interests, knowledge and skills.
2. Consider what is happening in your professional field. New innovations can be explored further.
3. Choose a topic that will keep you engaged; one that interests you long term.
4. Discuss your ideas for the dissertation with faculty members who have an interest and expertise in the area of your selected topic. You may explore possible topics with several faculty members before selecting your final topic.
5. Select a committee chair based on mutual interests and the availability of the faculty member to direct the dissertation project during the appropriate semester(s). Things to consider:
   - Is the professor someone with whom you find it helpful and easy to brainstorm?
   - Have you found the feedback on earlier work with that faculty member helpful?
   - Is her or his intellectual and professional approach one you find compatible?
   - Do you feel that the professor has an interest in your research and will be a strong advocate for you on the dissertation committee?
6. Submit a formal request for your chair selection, as required by your program.
**Timeline**

Deadlines and timeline may fluctuate depending on your academic discipline, your topic and your committee chair. This timeline is intended as a general guideline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One year prior to graduation:</th>
<th>Explore possible topics on your own and with potential faculty advisors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Select topic and committee chair. Also consider two additional committee members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Defend the comprehensive paper or equivalent requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Oral defense of proposal. Prepare and submit signed “Dissertation Proposal Approval Form” to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning (regardless of your program approval requirements). Your dissertation committee should also be finalized at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Submit IRB proposal. Begin research; prepare abstract, bibliography and outline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Continued research and writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Meet with your committee chair to review progress (at a minimum). During the entire dissertation process, you should remain in communication with your committee chair to ensure successful progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Submit a completed “Thesis/Dissertation/Scholarly Project Request Form” to the Registrar to register for your Dissertation II course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Give first draft of the dissertation to your committee chair. Submit the “Application for Graduation” to the Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. Indicate your intention to attend the May Commencement Ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Schedule dissertation defense presentation with your committee. Submit revised, final version of the dissertation to your committee chair (allow a few weeks for review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month prior to graduation:</td>
<td>Defense.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2 weeks prior to graduation: | Submit required revisions, if any. Dissertation grade should be recorded via Banner web grading by the student’s committee chair, or via the standard grade change form if the student had previously taken an Incomplete grade. “Dissertation Examination
Report” should be submitted at this time to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. Please refer to the Dissertation Checklist before final submission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 week prior to graduation:</th>
<th>Dissertation II</th>
<th>An electronic MS Word copy of the final form of the dissertation must be submitted to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning for a format review before upload to the MU Institutional Repository.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend the Graduate Studies and Adult Learning Commencement Ceremony. You must purchase or rent regalia. Contact the University Store for more details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Graduation:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Electronic copies are uploaded by the Graduate Studies and Adult Learning to the MU Institutional Repository and the student’s academic department.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roles & Responsibilities of Student, Committee, Advisor, Coordinator & College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning

Student
The doctoral student has the primary responsibility for the dissertation from the creation of the subject matter to the preparation of the final defense. The student is responsible for ensuring that the dissertation manuscript meets accepted standards for scholarly writing and has thoroughly proofread the documents for accuracy including spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The student should read this document thoroughly and know the requirements and guidelines. The student also should identify and become familiar with a recognized academic style manual appropriate to his/her academic discipline. Both documents should be used in the preparation of the dissertation.

Dissertation Committee Chair
The dissertation committee chair, who must be a member of the MU or joint program institution graduate faculty, accepts and assumes the major responsibility to work directly with the graduate student in the research or creative project. The dissertation committee chair will work closely with the student in all aspects of the dissertation experience, including the development of the research proposal, the implementation of the research design, the analysis of the data or supporting evidence and the writing of the dissertation. The dissertation committee chair has the responsibility to edit the dissertation for accuracy in terms of both content and format. Prior to the submission of the dissertation to the dissertation committee, it is the responsibility of the dissertation committee chair to review the document and ensure that it is of high quality in content and literary style.

Dissertation Committee
The student's departmental dissertation committee is comprised of the dissertation advisor and at least two at large voting members. Committee members should be chosen together, with your chair, to compose a complementary dissertation committee. They are often chosen to provide thematic or methodological expertise. Or they may be faculty with whom you have a good “brain-storming” relationship, or who you find to be particularly good readers. In many cases they will not be involved in the everyday progress of the dissertation but will weigh in at the discretion of the dissertation chair. Qualified persons include: graduate faculty, instructors, lecturers, retired and emeriti professors, and other University faculty or staff. Your dissertation chair will determine their eligibility for dissertation committee service.

Graduate Coordinator
The graduate coordinator monitors dissertation progress and ensures that the student is making acceptable progress on the dissertation in a timely manner for the student’s intended graduation.

Graduate Studies and Adult Learning
Graduate Studies and Adult Learning oversees and implements all policies and procedures governing graduate dissertations. It publicizes and disseminates the articulation of these policies to the graduate community. Electronic copies will be added to the MU Institutional Repository. Graduate Studies and Adult Learning sends thesis information on a yearly basis to the Master’s Theses & Dissertation Directories for categorization and publication in a directory which is distributed to college and university libraries across the United States and Canada.
**Continuous Enrollment**

The continuous enrollment policy applies to all students writing a doctoral dissertation. Doctoral students must register for the required coursework each semester until the defense is complete. Failure to register will result in the student being charged a continuous enrollment fee of 1 dissertation credit, along with applicable late registration, technology and activity fees. The only exception to this policy is if the student’s major professor is on leave or otherwise unavailable. In such case, the approval of the Graduate Dean is required. In the case of serious medical circumstances, a student may request a leave of absence, also subject to the approval of the Graduate Dean. Retroactive approval will not be granted.

**Dissertation Grading Policy**

Dissertations are evaluated by the student’s thesis committee on the basis of H (Honors), P (Pass), F (Fail) or I (Incomplete). Requirements for receiving a grade of “H” are set individually by programs. Please speak with your committee chair regarding program grading guidelines. An incomplete grade may be assigned to a dissertation and you will have one year to complete the dissertation and have the incomplete changed to an assigned grade by the department. A continuous enrollment fee will be charged during this time.

**Checklist for Dissertation**

- Submit signed *Dissertation Proposal Approval Form* to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. All committee members must be assigned and listed before submission.
- Submit *Thesis/Dissertation Request Form* to your committee chair. Dean of College is final signature and forwards form to the Registrar for registration.
- Submit an *Application for Graduation* to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning by the appropriate deadline.
- *Dissertation Examination Report* is completed by the committee chair after the defense and submitted to Office of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. The chair also submits the final grade in Banner.
- Required pages are in proper order:
  - Title Page
  - Approval Page
  - Abstract Page
  - Acknowledgments
  - Table of Contents
  - List of Tables
  - List of Figures
  - Body
  - Endnotes (can be incorporated at the end of each chapter)(opt),
  - References/Bibliography,
  - Appendices
- Submit electronic copy of *final document* in Word format to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. *Dissertation Approval* should have typed student and committee members’ names and “Signatures on File” notated on the form.
- Submit original *Dissertation Approval* page with original signatures to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.
- Submit signed *“Permission to Digitize Thesis, Dissertation or Scholarly Project”* to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.
- Submit 6 keywords to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.
- Be sure your committee chair has submitted a grade for dissertation credits.
- Copyright permission letter(s) from copyright owner(s) must be included if copyrighted material is used outside of the guidelines of fair use.
- A letter from the owner of the software license granting permission to use their software must be attached if executable software owned by another party is used in the thesis.
Millersville University
College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM**

Student’s Name: ____________________________  MU ID #: __________________________

Degree: __________________________________________________________________________

Dissertation/Scholarly Project Title: __________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Expected Completion Date: __________________________________________________________________________

*Human Use Committee (IRB) chair approval (as required): ________________________________
   (date of approval)

*Animal Use Committee (IACUC) chair approval (as required): __________________________
   (date of approval)

Dissertation/Scholarly Project Proposal Approved:

____________________________________________________________________________________

Committee chair signature  date

____________________________________________________________________________________

Member signature  date

____________________________________________________________________________________

Member signature  date

____________________________________________________________________________________

Member signature  date

____________________________________________________________________________________

Member signature  date

*If IRB or IACUC approval is required, appropriate documentation and signature of IRB or IACUC chair must
accompany this form to the College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.

**A copy of the dissertation proposal must accompany this form and will be kept on file in the College of Graduate
Studies and Adult Learning.

Submit completed form directly to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning in
Lyle Hall, Room 235.
# Millersville University
College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning

## THESIS/DISSERTATION/SCHOLARLY PROJECT REQUEST FORM

### PART 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT

**(Submit completed form to Registrar’s Office – Lyle Hall)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>MI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MU ID Number</td>
<td>Graduate Program</td>
<td>Expected Graduation Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Address</td>
<td>Local Phone Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Email Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/Dissertation/Project Advisor Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY ADVISOR

**CHECK ONE:**

- **THESIS**
  - SUBJECT/COURSE #______CREDITS____
  - TOPIC
  - TITLE:______________________________________________
  - ABBREVIATED TITLE FOR TRANSCRIPT: (max 22 spaces)
    __________________________________________________

- **DISSERTATION/PROJECT**
  - SUBJECT/COURSE #______CREDITS____
  - TOPIC
  - TITLE:______________________________________________
  - ABBREVIATED TITLE FOR TRANSCRIPT: (max 22 spaces)
    __________________________________________________

### PART 3: SIGNATURES REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL AND PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Chair</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean of College</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Registrar’s Office use only: CRN____________________    c: Graduate Studies Office
Millersville University
College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning

DISSERTATION EXAMINATION REPORT

____________________________________  _______________________________
Student’s Name                      MU ID #

____________________________________
Academic Department

Date of Examination  Program

Title of Dissertation

____________________________________________________________________________

Action taken on Dissertation/Scholarly Project:

______ Approved

______ Approved with revisions suggested by committee and to be checked by chair

______ Schedule a re-exam after corrections or revisions have been made

______ Not Approved (Specific reasons in writing should be attached)

______ Other (Please explain)

Names of Examining Committee:

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Chair of Committee signature    date

* Please note this is for notification of approval only, grade must be submitted via Banner web grading to appear officially on transcript.

Submit completed form directly to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning in Lyle Hall, Room 235.
Permission to Digitize Thesis, Dissertation or Scholarly Project

Author: ____________________________________________  Manuscript Date: ________________

Title: __________________________________________________________________________________

Permission to scan and redistribute. I grant to Millersville University of Pennsylvania the nonexclusive right to create a digital version of the above-named publication (the “Manuscript”) and to make my Manuscript available as part of the collection in the MU Institutional Repository. I understand that the full text of my Manuscript will be available to the public in digital form without restriction as part of the collection, and I give my permission for the University to reproduce, distribute, display, and transmit my Manuscript in order to make it available online.

Non-exclusive and perpetual license. I understand that this permission constitutes a non-exclusive, perpetual, royalty-free license, and that I retain all other rights to the copyright in my Manuscript, including the right to use it in other works such as articles and books.

Authority to grant license. I represent and warrant that I am the sole author and owner of the copyright in my Manuscript, and that I have full and sole authority to grant this permission. I also represent that this Manuscript does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe or violate any rights of others. I have obtained any third-party rights, if necessary.

Permission Granted By

__________________________________________  __________________________________
(Print Author’s name)  (Signature of Author)

__________________________________________  __________________________________
Address  City/State/Zip

__________________________________________  __________________________________
Date  Phone Number or E-mail address

Mail or email a completed, signed form to:  
College of Graduate Studies & Adult Learning  
P.O. Box 1002  
Millersville University  
Millersville, PA  17551  
goffasst@millersville.edu@millersville.edu
A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Millersville University of Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of (Program)

By (Student’s Name)

(Date/Month & Year)
This Dissertation for the Doctoral (Program) Degree by

John A. Smith

has been approved on behalf of the

Graduate School by

Dissertation Committee:

__________________________
Committee Chair

__________________________
Committee Member

__________________________
Committee Member

(Create as many lines for committee members as necessary.)

__________________________
Date

(NOTE TO STUDENT: A copy of this approval page with original signatures should be submitted to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning.)
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

(Insert Dissertation Title)

By

(Student Name)

Millersville University, (Year)

Millersville, Pennsylvania

Directed by (Committee Chair’s Name)

Your Abstract should begin here, and begin with the STATEMENT OF PROBLEM followed by the SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION (300 words).

Signature of Investigator _______________________________ Date______________

(NOTE TO STUDENT: Three copies of this approval page must bear original signature prior to submission to Graduate Studies and Adult Learning)
APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

Please complete this form, obtain adviser and graduate coordinator signatures, and return it to the College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning on or before the date indicated on the graduate calendar for the term you plan to graduate. This information will be used to order your diploma and for printing the commencement program; the form, therefore, must be completed fully and accurately. Please be aware that submission of the application will prompt the $30 degree/transcript fee to be assessed to your student account on MAX and must be paid prior to the release of your final transcripts and diploma.

Print your name exactly as you wish it to appear on your diploma:

_________________________________________________________ MU ID#

Current Mailing Address (this is the address your diploma will be mailed to):

Street  City/State  Zip  Phone No.

E-mail Address (this will be used to send Commencement information)

Expected Completion of Degree Requirements:
(check one)

☐ Winter (January)
☐ Spring (May)
☐ Summer I
☐ Summer II
☐ Summer III
☐ Fall (December)

Program requirements in progress (including courses, research, exams, internship, etc.):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Degree:
☐ M.A.  ☐ M.Ed.  ☐ M.S.  ☐ M.S.N  ☐ M.S.W.
☐ E.D.D  ☐ D.N.P.  ☐ D.S.W

Major:

I am completing:
☐ Dissertation  ☐ Thesis  ☐ Research
☐ Project  ☐ Non-research Option

Name of Research Adviser, if applicable:

________________________________________________________________________

Title of Dissertation, Thesis or Project, if applicable:

________________________________________________________________________

The graduate student commencement ceremony is held in May for all students who have completed their program in the summer-spring terms of the concluding academic year.

I will attend the commencement ceremony for which I am eligible ............ ☐ YES ☐ NO

If you are a student completing your degree in summer after the ceremony, and have a maximum of 3 credits (not including a thesis or internship) remaining as of the prior May commencement, you are eligible for exception to walk in that ceremony in consultation with your program coordinator.

I am a summer graduate and am requesting this exception to participate in the May ceremony prior to completion of all my degree requirements........... ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A

Signature of Student ______________________________________________ Date ____________________

Signature of Program Advisor _________________________________________ Date ____________________

Signature of Graduate Coordinator ____________________________________ Date ____________________

Signature of Department Chair (if required by dept.) ___________________ Date ____________________

Graduate Studies Office Use Only: Application entered into Banner: _______ C:_______ A:_______ E:_______ GPA:_______