Steps in the Development of a Thesis

The following is a general set of ordered steps to follow in progression toward completion of your thesis. Timing of individual steps may change if you are a part-time student or if your program of study has alternate sequencing.

1. **Select a topic of interest.** Read about your topic and prepare to discuss it in the NMETH520 lab.

2. **Select a thesis advisor/ supervisory committee chair.** The thesis advisor is the faculty member with whom the student works most closely to develop, conduct and present the thesis, and should have expertise in the topic of interest. Students initiate the selection of their thesis advisor, also known as the chair of the supervisory committee, not later than midway through NMETH 520 OR in the second to third quarter in the master's program. Set an appointment with the faculty member to discuss the topic, form an acquaintance and explore a possible advisee/advisor agreement.

3. **With your thesis advisor, discuss competencies for the evaluation of your thesis by the supervisory committee.** Identify the substantive content and methodology of your thesis.

4. **Form the remainder of the supervisory committee.**

5. **Develop your thesis proposal.** With your committee chair (thesis advisor):
    a. Establish a timeline for your work. Establish a schedule of regular appointments with the supervisory chair in order to enhance progression according to your identified time frame for completion.
    b. Use the guidelines in 'Structural Outline of a Research Proposal' to develop your proposal.
    c. Determine when to share a draft of the proposal with other member(s) of the committee. If a committee member has expertise in certain topics or methods, you may wish to share a draft of the proposal in the early stages of its development. Committee members do not expect to get materials from the student unless the chair agrees that this should occur. Notify committee members (other than the Chair) that they are to expect something from you about two weeks prior to its arrival, so that they can plan for it in their workload. Expect a one week turn-around time. Committee members send their responses directly to your chair, who will arrange for an appointment with you to go over the comments. In the event of disagreement by committee members, the members themselves work this out and the chair has binding decision power.
    d. Edit and finalize your thesis proposal.
    e. Prepare a Thesis Proposal Title Page according to the Policy & Style Manual for Theses and Dissertations and secure signatures from each member of your committee. Approval of your proposal is achieved when all signatures have been acquired. Photocopy the signed Thesis Proposal Title Page and submit the original to Academic Services for your student file.
    f. If your study involves human subjects, use your signed Thesis Proposal Title Page when you submit your Human Subjects Application.

6. **Collect and Analyze Data.** Working primarily with your supervisory committee chair, and with the entire committee if appropriate, collect your data and begin analysis. When the analysis and the final chapters of your thesis have been completed, approval from your supervisory committee is required.

7. **Complete final quarter requirements, including applying for your degree.** An application for degree (warrant) is required for your final examination.

8. **Final Examination.** The Final Examination is the declaration of, or more traditionally "the defense" of, the thesis. Arrange your final examination with your committee during the quarter in which you expect to complete your thesis. The final examination may be written or oral; this decision is negotiated between the student and the committee members. It must be passed. All members of the Supervisory Committee participate. If your examination is written, it will consist of a special examination written by the committee; the thesis itself may not be considered the final examination. If your examination is oral, you will present your research to your committee members and other interested persons. Questions will be addressed to you by those in attendance. The exam will last approximately one hour. When the final examination has been concluded, all members of the supervisory committee sign your:
    1. Application for Degree (warrant)

2. Verification of Degree form, and
3. signature page (2) for the thesis, and the chair completes the MN or MS Program Evaluation: Scholarly Inquiry Scale, sealing it in the envelope provided for you to return to the Academic Services.

9. **Return the following items to Academic Services:**
   . Signed Application for Degree (AS will take it to Graduate School);
   a. MN or MS Program Evaluation: Scholarly Inquiry Scale, completed by Chair and placed in sealed envelope;
   b. Signed Verification of Degree form; and
   c. Abstract of thesis.

10. **Bring two (2) copies of the thesis to The Graduate School.** A 15-minute appointment is required for final submission. Appointments must be scheduled between 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-3:45 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call 206-543-5900, or e-mail blueizs@grad.washington.edu, or schedule an appointment in person with the receptionist in G-1 Communications Building. **Walk-in evaluation and acceptance of theses and dissertations will take place ONLY during Finals Week.** Copies of the thesis must be received by 5:00 p.m. on last day of quarter. Each copy should be placed in a manila envelope with a copy of the thesis title page on the outside for identification. See the UW Frequently Asked Questions on Theses and Dissertations for more information.