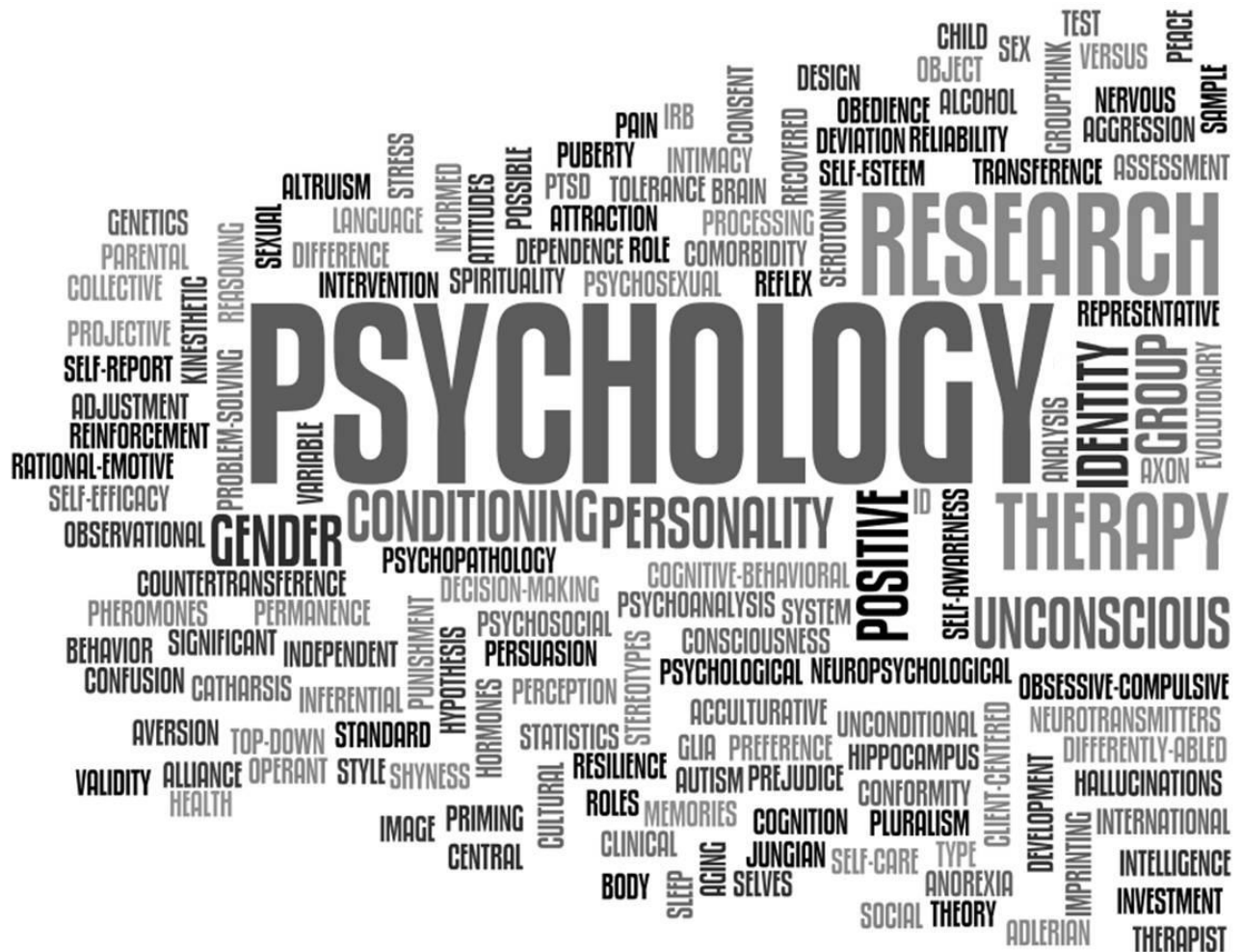


# MASTER'S PAPER MANUAL

2018-2019



## PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMS

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*Please note that due to the nuances of field coding and other word processing requirements, we could not prepare this Manual in American Psychological Association (APA) format.*

## INTRODUCTION

The policies and procedures in this Master's Paper Manual will be followed by all students registering for *PSYC530 (Research Paper)* from Fall 2017 forward.

All Applied Clinical Psychology Master's students are required to write and successfully defend a Master's Paper as a capstone experience. To successfully complete your Master's Paper, you must delineate a question of a psychological nature, develop a framework that will allow you to investigate this issue, present your findings in the appropriate written format, and orally defend your paper. Regardless of the specific nature of your project, in every Master's Paper, a student must demonstrate knowledge of the research process—relevant theory, literature, methodology, and writing—at a level appropriate for a Master's-level professional.

Below you will find a complete list of the steps and procedures involved in planning, writing, and defending a Master's Paper. You are expected to be familiar with the content of this *Psychology Programs Master's Paper Manual* and that you will take the initiative to identify and adhere to the deadlines discussed below. Your Master's Paper Chair will help guide you through the process. Moreover, the other members of your committee and the Professor-in-Charge (PIC) are also available for consultation. However, the ultimate responsibility for the successful completion of your Master's Paper lies with you.

# **POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND EXPECTATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY GRADUTE PROGRAMS**

Please consult the *Psychology Graduate Programs Handbook* (hereafter *Handbook*) for pertinent policies, procedures, and expectations regarding your academic, moral, ethical, and professional conduct in your studies, clinical experience, and research here at PSUH, including your Master's Paper work. However, we repeat two critical policies here for you.

## **Time Limitation for Degree Completion**

All requirements for the M.A. in Applied Clinical Psychology and Applied Psychological Research (including completion and acceptance of the Master's Paper) must be met within 8 years of admission to degree status. The Applied Clinical Psychology and Applied Psychological Research programs require that all your course work and your final Master's Paper be completed and turned in by the end of the Spring semester of your 8th year of study. For example, if you begin your program in Fall 2015, you will have until the end-of-semester deadlines in Spring 2023 to complete all requirements.

## **Programs Deadline: Master's Paper Proposal Defense**

You must have your Master's Paper proposal successfully defended by Spring of your 6th year of study, counting from your semester of admission. For example, if you begin your program in Fall 2015, you must have your proposal successfully defended by the given deadline in Spring 2021 if you do not, you will be terminated from the program. No appeals or leaves of absence will extend this time limit. Please see the *Handbook* for further information.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Adhering to Penn State's Academic Integrity standards is critical in the Master's Paper process. To this end, we underscore our Academic Integrity stance for you. We expect students of Penn State Harrisburg Psychology's graduate programs to conduct themselves professionally, responsibly, and ethically in their classwork, research, and field experiences. To uphold this standard, we will not tolerate academic dishonesty. For breeches of academic integrity in any manner (e.g., cheating, assisting another's cheating, plagiarizing), of any magnitude (short assignment or Master's Paper), we will file academic dishonesty charges with the College Academic Integrity Committee. We will push for the maximum penalty possible, including suspension or program dismissal. Even if you are not dismissed, be aware that a violation can result in a permanent indication of academic dishonesty (an XF grade, or "Failure, Academic Dishonesty") on your academic transcript.

In the event you are dismissed, there is an extremely low likelihood that you would, at any future time, be readmitted to your former program. There is also an extremely low likelihood that you would ever be admitted to another program at Penn State Harrisburg (i.e., Applied Clinical Psychology, Applied Psychological Research, Applied Behavior Analysis, or Community Psychology and Social Change).

As a Penn State University student, it is your responsibility to know what constitutes violating academic integrity. Refer to University guidelines for more information:

<http://www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html>

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS

### **Ethics in Research**

The Applied Clinical Psychology and Applied Psychological Research M.A. Programs demand that students exhibit and promote the highest academic, moral, ethical, and professional standards in their research. Penn State has a solid foundation of integrity and ethics. You will see our emphasis on strict ethical conduct infused throughout your curriculum. Your Master's Paper project, of course, should be a shining example of research integrity. You will find available to you numerous University resources for education and assurance of the responsible conduct of research. It is up to you to be familiar with and follow all ethical policies at all times. Please see the *Handbook* for more information.

### **Research Misconduct**

Research misconduct includes but is not limited to: falsification of data, failure to obtain proper Institutional Review Board approval for research, improper treatment of human subjects (including privacy violations) and animal subjects, and using others' data without permission. Penalties and procedures for the Programs' treatment of research misconduct are described in the *Handbook*.

## THE MASTER'S PAPER

### Acceptable Project Types

For your project, you will work with faculty to identify a psychological topic of interest to you and create and execute a research project that addresses the phenomenon. The following are among the types of projects that are acceptable for the Master's Paper:

- an empirical study (e.g., an experiment, a survey)
- a systematic literature review (consult *Psychological Bulletin* for examples)
- a theoretical or conceptual analysis (consult *Psychological Bulletin* for examples)
- a secondary analysis of existing data
- the development or validation of a new test or measures
- a program evaluation
- a meta-analysis
- a well-designed qualitative study

### Project Quality

Whereas we do not insist that your final project be published in a scientific journal, this capstone research project must make a unique contribution to science. As an example, you are not advancing scientific knowledge if you author a literature review of a topic that was already recently reviewed and published in a scientific journal. Your Chair can help you delineate what is acceptable and unacceptable research for the purposes of the Master's Paper.

Furthermore, your Master's Paper is the capstone of your Master's work. Your Master's Paper must be approached with the utmost professionalism, and your work must reflect Master's-level writing (e.g., science writing, grammar, spelling, organization). Deficits in these realms may lead to a substantially reduced grade for the Master's Paper or other penalties. Please refer



to the *Handbook* for information about satisfactory scholarship.

### **How Long Will the Process Take?**

Although this will vary from one project to the next, you should plan on at least 1 year from the time you begin seriously working on identifying a topic to the completion of the final paper. However, there are many factors (e.g., the complexity of the project, your statistical and writing skills, problems with obtaining participants) that can influence this timeframe upwards or downwards.

It has been our experience that most students greatly underestimate the time needed to complete their Master's Papers. You should not wait until the end of your coursework to begin your planning. Rather, your Master's Paper project should be in ongoing development from early in the program. Ask any graduate student who is now working on his or her Master's Project—you will find that you will be ahead of the game if you plan ahead and start early.

### **Project Proposal Deadline**

Remember, you must have your Master's Paper proposal defended by the semester deadline in the Spring of your 6th year of study, counting from your semester of admission. If you do not, you will be terminated from the program.

### **Your Master's Paper Chair**

Selecting a faculty member as one's Master's Paper Chair is an important task. The student and Chair will spend a great deal of time working together, and the mentoring that the Master's Paper Chair provides is integral to the student's degree progress and success. You should select your Chair based on that faculty member's match to your area of interest as well as his or her availability. If you need advice on selecting your Chair, you can speak with your

academic adviser or the PIC. **You should consult the *Handbook* for faculty expertise and contact information.**

Please note that a Master's Paper Chair is distinct from an academic adviser. Although you may choose to include your academic adviser on your Master's Paper committee, you are not obligated to do so, nor are you obligated to appoint your academic adviser as Chair of your Master's Paper committee if this individual is in fact included on the committee.

The earlier you select and begin working with your Master's Paper Chair, the better. Ideally, you should choose this person in the conceptual stage of your Master's Project. The other committee members need not be selected at the same time as your Chair. In fact, your Chair might suggest other members for your committee. Your Chair can also help to develop and refine your topic. For instance, it might be possible to carve out a piece of this person's ongoing research program for your own research project.

**Faculty Availability.** It is important for you to be aware that faculty are not under contract to the University from mid-May through mid-August. Faculty have professional or personal obligations that make them unavailable to work with you, attend proposal meetings, or attend oral final defense meetings during summer and winter breaks, holidays, and faculty sabbaticals. Be sure to discuss your timeline with your prospective Chair and committee members early in the process.

**Changing Master's Paper Chairs.** Due to the depth of mentoring involved in the process, and because the Master's Paper Chair likely has an intellectual stake in the project at hand, it is highly atypical for a student to change Chairs once one the arrangement has been made. The selection has occurred when a student asks a faculty member to Chair the Master's Paper and the faculty member agrees.

Whereas you may change Chairs, you may not automatically complete your current Master's Paper project with a new Chair. If you have already made arrangements with a faculty member for him or her to serve as your Master's Paper Chair and you would like to change Chairs, if you desire to retain the current project, you must petition to the current Chair (via your PSU email) to make the change and copy (cc) the PIC on this correspondence. The current Chair must then release the project in writing via email, clarifying his or her stake in the project (e.g., none; authorship order; any restriction in the project's future use). The original Chair will make this decision to release the current project based on his or her intellectual stake in the project. That is, the Chair may decide that you may not work on your current project with another faculty member. This might happen, for example, if you were working on a project using the original Chair's data or other component of his or her program of research. The Program will not interfere with the Chair's decision about whether or not you may continue work on a project you conceived of under his or her direction and/or based on the Chair's data.

If you want to change Chairs and have not begun any work on your Master's Project, from your PSU email, you must send a notice of the reasons for the change to the current Chair, and you must copy the PIC on the correspondence. Then, of course, you have to make arrangements for a new Chair. Note that switching away from your current Chair does not grant you *de facto* access to a new Chair; you must make that arrangement with a qualifying faculty member.

Be aware that the Chair or a committee member may terminate a Master's Paper relationship with a student at any time during the Master's Paper process. The Chair or committee member will communicate to the student the reasons for recusing himself or herself and will copy the PIC on the correspondence.

## **Your Master's Paper Committee**

A critical aspect of the Master's Paper process is the selection of your Master's Paper committee, which must consist of a Master's Paper Chair as noted above and two other members. This committee will decide whether or not to approve your Master's Paper at both the proposal and the oral defense stages.

The second member of your committee must also belong to the Penn State Harrisburg Psychology Graduate Faculty. The third committee member can be another Penn State Harrisburg Psychology Faculty member, a Penn State Harrisburg Psychology adjunct, a faculty member from another discipline and/or institution, or a nonacademic professional in a psychology-related field (e.g., an individual from an institution where you intend to collect data) who holds a doctoral-level degree. You can petition to the faculty to have a qualified master's-level professional serve as the third committee member. If you would like to choose somebody from outside of the Penn State Harrisburg Psychology Faculty, make sure that you first get the approval of your Master's Paper Chair and from your Psychology Program via the PIC.

You *should* make in-person requests to the three individuals whom you would like to have on your committee, although we understand this is not always possible. Be prepared to give an overview of your ideas and your timeline to each person. It is likely that these individuals will raise questions and point out potential problems to help you further refine your topic.

## **Working with your Chair/Committee over Breaks**

Your Chair and your committee are most likely not available to work with you on your Master's Paper project (any stage) during holidays and academic breaks, and they may not be

available to work with you over winter or summer breaks. Make sure you clarify your Chair's and committee members' availability when you are recruiting them. Moreover, there are absolutely no proposal or final defenses held after the deadlines provided below.

### **Master's Paper Committee Form**

Once you have a fairly good idea of your topic, obtain a Master's Paper Committee Form (see Appendix A) from the Psychology Staff Assistant or from the Psychology Programs web site, complete the required information (including the proposed title of your paper and a description of your project), and obtain signatures from your committee members to verify their willingness to work with you. Return the original to the Psychology Staff Assistant in Olmsted W311, distribute a copy to each member of your committee, and retain a copy for yourself.

### **Registering for PSYC530 – The Master's Paper Course**

PSYC 530 Research Paper (3 credits). Supervised research in psychology for degree candidates. Prerequisites: Admission to the Applied Clinical Psychology or Applied Psychological Research programs; PSYC 520; PSYC 521; and permission of program.

You will register for PSYC530 (*Research Paper*) in the Fall of your second year. You will register for it as a by-arrangement course with your Master's Paper Chair noted as the instructor of record or with the professor on record for the course depending on the modality of course administration. (Of course, then, you need to have selected a Chair prior to registration.) Prerequisites for registering for PSYC530 are satisfactory completion of PSYC520 (*Research Methods*) and PSYC521 (*Statistics*), being a student in the Applied Clinical Psychology or Applied Psychological Research Programs, and permission of the Program. These prerequisites will not be waived under any circumstances. The Psychology

Staff Assistant can help you locate the form necessary for registration for PSYC530.

This registration allows you to begin serious work on your Master's project at least 1 year before your desired graduation date. However, you may not want to wait until your second year to begin your project. If you have not successfully defended your master's paper at the conclusion of your internship and completion of other required courses, you must continuously enroll in at least one credit of PSYC594 in order to continue to have access to Penn State databases and work with your master's paper chair.

In consultation with the Chair/instructor of record for PSYC530, each student will set deadlines for project benchmarks, including but not limited to: topic development; literature searching; project proposal creation in whole or in part; data collection; and final paper creation in whole or in part. Stated another way, your Chair and you will decide on your topic, and he or she will help you with idea development, scientific writing, and creating a cogent argument. Note that your Master's Paper Chair may instruct you to seek the help of the Learning Center for grammar, organization, APA style, and other technical aspects of writing. It is Program policy for you to follow these instructions.

Upon registering for PSYC530, you have one academic year to complete your Master's Paper. For example, if you register for PSYC530 in Fall 2018, you have until the end of Spring 2019 to complete your work. If you do not complete your work by then, you likely will only be able to receive an R grade and not a quality grade on your project (see below for an explanation of R grades).

### **Earning a Grade for your Master's Paper**

Make sure you clarify with your Chair expectations for your performance in terms of grading. Just like other classes for which you register, your Chair (instructor of record for

PSYC530) establishes criteria for grading your work.

When you register for PSYC530 in a given semester, you must make satisfactory progress on your Master's Project. This progress will be assessed by your Chair/instructor of record for PSYC530. If your progress is satisfactory, but you are not yet ready to orally defend your final project, you will be assigned a grade of R (described below). If your performance is unsatisfactory in areas such as (but not limited to) topic development, writing, argument, literature searching, literature comprehension, and oral presentation, you may be assigned a B- or below. Note that violations of academic integrity will likely result in sanctions including but not limited to a failing grade for the Master's Paper. Please see your *Handbook* with respect to the retention consequences of receiving grades below B-.

### **“R” Grade**

A grade of R is sometimes issued in place of a letter grade for PSYC530. An R gives no indication of quality; thus, it does not influence your GPA. If the Master's Paper is completed within one year of registered for PSYC530, a quality grade (A-F) may be assigned. If the Master's paper is not completed within one year of registration for the PSYC530 credits, the grade cannot be changed from R. Although you can graduate with an R on your transcript, in the event that you require more than one year to complete the PSYC530 research, you may want to re-register for PSYC530 credits to be able to receive a grade.

When you successfully defend your final Master's Paper, your Chair may assign you a final, passing letter grade.

### **Deferred Grade (DF)**

It is rare to be assigned a deferred grade (DF) during the Master's Paper process. An R grade is appropriate when the project is underway, has made satisfactory progress, yet is

incomplete. According to The Graduate School: “It is not appropriate to use the DF either casually or routinely to extend a course beyond the end of the semester or to extend a course for a student who has failed so that the individual can do extra work to improve the grade.”

All Chairs/instructors of PSYC530 will follow The Graduate School’s policy on deferred grades, including deadlines, found at

<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/academicprocedures/procedures6> .

### **Publication Credit**

Once your project is complete, it is possible that your Chair, committee, or you, would like to present your Master’s Paper work in a various other forums such as a journal or conference. Thus, it is very important that you and all members of your Master’s Paper committee have a clear understanding regarding publication and other intellectual property rights issues. Make sure that you approach your committee members as early as feasible to discuss the scope of their involvement, their authorship expectations, and related concerns. As appropriate, this dialogue should continue throughout the research and publication process. It is particularly important that you and your Master’s Paper Chair have clear agreement on these issues.

Membership on a Master’s Paper committee does not in and of itself entitle a committee member for authorship on any resulting publications or presentations. Rather, the committee member must make a significant contribution to the project. Please check PSU and APA guidelines for further details.

Typically, a student should be listed as principal author (first author) on any multi-authored article or presentation that is substantially based on the student's Master’s Paper if the student developed the topic, collected data independently, did not require extensive



supervision while completing the Master's Paper, and was primarily in charge of submitting and revising the manuscript for publication/presentation. However, if the Master's Paper is directly based on a Chair's/committee member's work or existing data set, or otherwise lacks this degree of independence, the student might not warrant first authorship.

### **Policy Note: In-person Defenses**

You must defend both your Master's Paper proposal and final Master's Paper at a formal meeting. This process is described below. Note that it is Psychology Program policy that you must defend your proposal and your final Master's Paper in person. We do not allow Skype, phone-ins, Facetime, etc., for defenses. It is therefore prudent to plan your work, travel, vacation, etc., accordingly.

## **STEPS IN THE MASTER'S PAPER PROCESS**

The major steps in the Master's Paper process are discussed at length below and are summarized in Appendix B. You will find it useful to refer to this list often and to check off each step as you complete it.

For ease of presentation, here is a brief synopsis:

- Identify a topic
- Conduct a literature review to understand the topic
- Design your study (considering ethics)
- Write your proposal
- Defend your proposal
- Execute your project
- Write your Master's Paper
- Orally defend your Master's Paper

### **Identify a Topic**

As stated earlier, you should begin to think about some possible ideas for your

Master's Project early in the program. It will be helpful at this stage to share your thoughts with Psychology faculty who are knowledgeable about your topic area. If you are unsure of whom these individuals are, your academic adviser can help guide you, as can the faculty profiles provided in the *Handbook*. Preliminary discussions can be very helpful in identifying the individuals who will ultimately constitute your Master's Paper committee.

Once you have a working idea for your Master's Paper, you will need to further refine it. The identification and refinement of your research topic can take weeks or months and will require familiarity with the relevant literature and ongoing discussion with your committee members, particularly your Chair. It will be very helpful if you can find a review article or a meta-analysis that summarizes the current state of research in your chosen area, but this is not always possible.

### **Conduct a Comprehensive Literature Review**

Regardless of the nature of your project, it will be necessary for you to conduct a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. Starting this process early will assure that you have time to identify all available references and to receive any requested interlibrary loan material. Summer is a good time to search and read the literature, but do not neglect this process during the academic year.

Most Master's Papers reference at least 25 sources; the actual number will depend on the nature of your Master's Project, your topic, and the requirements of your adviser. It is imperative that you familiarize yourself with the most current literature (within the past 5 or so years), but older articles may also provide valuable information. Avoid using textbooks, "pop psychology" books, or non-scientific websites (e.g., Wikis) as references. Stick with articles from reputable, professional, peer-reviewed journals or with books/book chapters

written by credible experts in the field.

The ideas for your Master's Paper must be based on science (e.g., *a priori* hypotheses). Your committee will not approve unsupported ideas.

As you proceed with your literature review, you should continually refine your ideas until you have a clear sense of how you want to proceed with your project and writing. Feel free to consult with your Master's Paper Chair throughout this process.

**Additional steps for empirical projects.** Because most Master's Projects involve some sort of data collection, it is important to discuss some of the issues involved in empirical Master's Papers. Among the things that you will have to do before you are ready to begin data collection is to narrow your focus until you have a research question that is both meaningful and practical (e.g., in terms of time constraints, cost, and gaining access to participants). Then, develop your methodology, and determine your analyses. Other types of projects have their own unique demands.

### **Design Your Study**

It is very important to have a tightly designed, methodologically sound study. Among the decisions that you will have to make are what research technique you will use and the nature of your research design, variables, measures, sample, and procedures. If you intend to conduct your study off campus, you will also have to identify an appropriate research site(s). You must obtain written permission from any organization or institution from which you wish to recruit participants. Moreover, if you work for an organization or institution outside of Penn State on your Master's Paper or other research, you must obtain Penn State IRB approval, since you are under the auspices of the University.

Many existing psychological tests and questionnaires have copyright restrictions, and

this means that you cannot simply make copies for your own use; you will need to contact the outlet that supplies the instrument and pay a fee. However, many other measures are under public domain. The best and fastest way to obtain an instrument is to personally contact the author for information. Many researchers will happily forward their materials (along with instructions and coding manuals) to you for free.

Ethical concerns should be fully considered throughout the decision-making process and your project must meet all requirements of the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, Penn State's Institutional Review Board, and the review boards of any cooperating institutions.

Remember that a systematic literature review also requires a sound Methods section. That is, you must tell your committee the databases, keywords, and timeframe you are searching so as to yield empirical studies you are highlighting in your review. You can ask your Chair for advice on generating these search parameters.

## **Write the Proposal**

When you are sufficiently familiar with the literature and have carefully considered the other important aspects of your Master's Project, you will be ready to prepare a written Master's Project proposal. For empirical projects, the Master's Paper proposal typically a literature review/delineation of your research questions (this will serve as the basis for the Introduction section of your final Master's Paper), a description of your research design and methodology (this will serve as the basis for the Method section of your Master's Paper), an indication of how you intend to analyze your data (this will ultimately be incorporated into the Results section of your Master's Paper but can be included as a subsection of your Method section for purpose of your proposal), and a References section.

The nature of your written proposal will differ from this if your project is review (non-empirical) in nature. Because the specific organization of your proposal will depend on the type of project that you undertake, it is not possible to delineate all possible formats here. Your Master's Paper Chair will help you to develop a format that is appropriate for your specific project.

**Work with your Chair until she or he says you may forward your written Master's Paper Proposal or final Master's Paper to your committee.** It will probably be necessary for you to prepare several drafts of your Master's Project proposal before it is approved by your Master's Paper Chair. It is only after you have received such approval that you will be permitted to proceed with your proposal meeting. Remember that you must give your Chair *two weeks* to read each draft, so plan your work and your schedule accordingly. You must give your committee two weeks to read your proposal and your final paper prior to the date of each defense.

### **Have a Proposal Meeting**

The proposal meeting is the first of the two formal in-person meetings with your entire committee that are required as part of the Master's Paper process. When your Master's Paper Chair informs you that you are ready to schedule your proposal meeting, arrange a date and time with your committee members (proposal meetings generally require a maximum of 1.5 hours) and ask the Psychology Staff Assistant to reserve a room. At least 2 weeks prior to the meeting, you must distribute your written Master's Project proposal to each member of your committee. Send out a confirmation of the meeting date, time, and room a week in advance.

Whereas it is most preferable for all committee members to attend your defense in person, two out of three of your committee members must attend the proposal defense

meeting, or the meeting must be rescheduled.

At the proposal meeting, we require you to summarize the rationale and the other important aspects of your proposed Master's Project (e.g., your background, research design, methodology, and analyses). Use PowerPoint, Prezi, or some other tool to make your presentation professional. We require you to answer any questions that your committee raises. Thus, make sure that you are prepared! DO NOT read from your proposal document word-for-word, and do not read extensively from your presentation slides word-for-word. Present key words on your slides and elaborate for your committee. Of course, you may use notes or cue cards, but the point of the proposal meeting is to convince your committee that your topic idea is viable and that you possess the topic knowledge and research skills to carry out the project. Simply reading from your paper or slides overrun with information does not convince your committee that you are ready for the challenges of the project.

Please see Appendix I for tips on giving a successful Master's Paper Proposal and Final Defense presentation. We also provided for your reference, with permission, a former student's proposal slides.

**All proposals must have unanimous committee approval to move forward.** At the end of your proposal meeting, your Master's Paper Chair will let you know the committee's decision along with any changes that you must incorporate into your project or your proposal. If there are only minor issues, your committee may grant approval to continue to the next step, contingent on your making the requested revisions. If there are more serious issues, you will have to rewrite the problematic portions of your proposal and to share the revised version with your Master's Paper adviser or the entire committee before you will be allowed to proceed.

### **Execute the Project**

The next step in the Master's Paper process requires that you address the issues that you raise in your proposal. The specific nature of these tasks will, of course, differ depending on the nature of your Master's Project. For instance, if you are conducting an empirical study, you will have to collect, analyze, and interpret your data. All work must meet the standards presented in the American Psychological Association's most recent [Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#) and, if relevant, undergo review by the [Penn State Office for Research Protections \(ORP\)](#). Further, as you continue to progress with your project, you should continue to expand and refine your literature review.

**Additional steps for empirical projects.** All Master's Projects that entail the collection of data or a secondary analysis of existing data must be approved by the Penn State University Office of Research Protection's (ORP's) Human Subjects [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#). Although highly atypical in our Programs, if you are conducting research using vertebrate non-human animals, you must follow the policies and procedures of Penn State's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). If you are conducting your project in collaboration with other institutions, it will be necessary for your proposal to be reviewed there for approval. Consult with your Chair and the ORP for more information.

You can find all necessary IRB information and forms on the ORP website, <http://www.research.psu.edu/orp>. As explained on this site, you must pass all required courses offered through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program (CITI Training) before you are allowed to make an IRB submission or begin data collection. For more information, see the Penn State Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) website: <http://www.research.psu.edu/training/sari> and consult with your Chair. You will visit these requirements in depth in your PSYC500 (*Ethics*) course.

Your Master's Project must be approved by the Penn State IRB even if you intend to conduct your study off campus. Your project must also meet the review requirements of any collaborating organizations or institutions. No research can begin until all required research review committees have approved the project in writing.

Because the specifics of your research design and methodology might be modified as a result of your proposal meeting, you should typically not submit your Master's Project for IRB review until your Master's Paper committee approves it at your proposal meeting. However, if circumstances warrant, it may be possible to apply for IRB approval beforehand with the permission of your Master's Paper Chair. When this is done, the IRB must be notified of any changes that result from the proposal meeting.

**Collecting and analyzing the data.** It is critical that you carry out your Master's Project exactly the way that it was approved. Even seemingly benign changes can have disastrous effects on the integrity of your study. Therefore, it is critical that your Master's Paper adviser preapprove any changes that you are contemplating. Unauthorized modifications can jeopardize your entire Master's Paper, jeopardize your standing in your program, and have serious legal consequences.

Once you have collected your data and coded, entered, and analyzed it (typically using [SPSS](#)), you can write up your Results section of your Master's Paper. Note that you should be able to access SPSS from college computers.

## **Write the Master's Paper**

You should be working on writing and revising your Master's Paper throughout the above steps with the goal of preparing a final document that reflects your best possible work. The organization of your paper will differ depending on the nature of your Master's Project.



In all cases, though, your written proposal should serve as your starting point.

Papers for empirical projects will begin with an Introduction section that reviews the relevant literature and delineates your research questions. This is followed by a Method section that describes your research design and your methodology; a Results section that presents your analyses and findings; and a Discussion section that provides a non-statistical summary of your results, draws conclusions based on these results, links your findings to previous research and to relevant theoretical constructs, addresses any limitations of your study, and outlines avenues for future research. Applied Clinical Psychology students might want to include a Clinical Implications subsection in their Discussion; consult with your Chair about this.

The organization of your Master's Paper will differ from this if your project is non-empirical in nature. Because the specific organization of your paper will depend on the type of project that you undertake, it is not possible to delineate all possible formats here. Your Master's Paper Chair will help you to develop a format that is appropriate for your specific project.

You will prepare your final paper to the best of your ability, and then submit it to your Master's Paper Chair. Your Chair will review your work and provide you with feedback and guidance. Be aware that it will likely be necessary for you to prepare several (or many) drafts of your Master's Paper before it is approved by your Master's Paper Chair. The actual number of drafts will depend on how thorough of a job you do on each one and how responsive you are to your Chair's feedback. It is only after you have received such approval that you will be permitted to submit your Master's Paper to your other committee members and schedule your oral defense.

**Quality of Writing.** Your committee will expect your Master's Paper to reflect professional-quality, APA-style, scientific writing, and you will not be able to proceed to your proposal meeting or to your oral defense until your Master's Paper Chair is satisfied with the quality of your written work. All writing must follow the format and style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.).

### **Orally Defend the Final Master's Paper**

As with your proposal, you must successfully orally defend your final Master's Paper. The oral defense is the second of the two formal in-person meetings with your committee that are required as part of the Master's Paper process. When your Master's Paper Chair informs you that you are ready to schedule your oral defense, arrange a date and time with your committee members (oral defenses generally require a maximum of 1½ hours) and ask the Psychology Staff Assistant to reserve a room for your defense. At least 2 weeks prior to the oral defense, you must distribute a completed copy of your Master's Paper to each member of your committee. In other words, what you must send to your committee is your best, complete, final version of your Paper. Make sure you send out a confirmation of the meeting date, time, and room a week in advance. Oral defenses are open to anybody who chooses to attend, so feel free to invite your colleagues, friends, and family.

Whereas it is most preferable for all committee members to attend your Master's Paper final defense in person, two out of three of your committee members must attend the proposal defense meeting, or the meeting must be rescheduled.

You will give a formal presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi), summarizing all facets of your Master's Project and to justify your rationale, research design, methodology, analyses, and conclusions. Again, make sure that you are prepared! DO NOT read from your proposal

document word-for-word, and do not read from your presentation slides word-for-word.

Present key words on your slides and elaborate for your committee. You may use notes or cue cards, but the point of the proposal meeting is to convince your committee that you were able to conceive of, execute, and interpret research at the Master's level, and from this you have gained knowledge and insight of the topic at hand. You will also be asked to address any other questions that arise.

You committee will then ask you to leave the room while your committee decides to approve your Master's Paper as is, approve it conditional on making changes, or not approve it. When you are invited back into the room, your Master's Paper Chair will let you know the committee's decision along with any changes that you must incorporate into your Final Paper.

**All Master's Papers final defenses must have unanimous committee approval to pass.**

If your Paper is approved as-is, it is time to celebrate! If the committee requires you to make changes (which is likely), these must be completed within 2 weeks of the defense. If there are only minor issues, your committee will announce that you have passed contingent on your making the requested revisions. If there are more serious issues, you will have to rewrite the problematic portions of your proposal and to share the revised version with your Master's Paper adviser or the entire committee before you will be allowed to proceed.

### **Presentation Time Limitation**

Both your Proposal defense and your Final Paper defense presentations must be under 15 minutes. Make sure you time yourself accordingly. Your committee will likely ask you questions during your presentation, thereby extending your time on the floor, which is acceptable.

### **Limitation on the Number of Proposal and Final Defense Attempts**

You have two chances each to successfully defend your Master's Paper proposal and your final project. That is, if you fail your first defense, you may make one more attempt. If you fail the second attempt, you will have to start a whole new Master's Paper project. You must pass each by unanimous decision of your committee (Chair plus members). Keep in mind that the time limits still apply—both the eight-year limit to graduate studies and the sixth-year deadline for successful defense of the proposal. Further, keep in mind that your Master's Paper is graded, and academic dismissal policies apply.

### **Allotted Time for Draft Review**

You must give you Chair and your committee at least two weeks to read each draft of your submitted, written work, so plan accordingly.

### **Information on Using Consulting Services in Your Master's Paper Work**

**You may** use [The Russell E. Horn Sr. Learning Center](#) for writing and organization assistance. Professional writing tutoring to support your work on your Master's Paper is available through the Learning Center, which is located in the Student Enrichment Center. Among the things that the Learning Center can help you with are the development of your ideas, objective feedback during the drafting process or on completed drafts, and APA format. Students may schedule up to 2 hours of appointment time per week.

**You may** ask a colleague to read over your Master's Paper. A “second set of eyes” might catch grammar, argument, or APA style issues. However, **you may not** have someone else write your Master's Paper, in whole or in part, or you will be brought up on academic

integrity charges.

**You may not use paid statistics and research consultants.** The use of paid statistics or research consultants is not allowed, and your Master's Paper committee reserves the right to reject your Master's Paper and/or Master's Project if there is reason to believe that you have paid for statistical or research consulting. We also reserve the right to file academic integrity charges against you.

**You may use free Penn State statistics consultation services.** Students can take advantage of the free consultation services provided by the [Statistical Consulting Center](#) located at the University Park campus. Each Penn State graduate student can take advantage of two short-term consultations at no charge, one at the design stage and one at the analysis stage of Master's Paper research. Each consultation consists of two meetings with a statistics graduate student enrolled in the Statistical Consulting Center's Consulting Practicum course. At the completion of the second meeting, you will receive a written recommendation report. Further information is available at (814) 863-0281 or on their web site at <http://stat.psu.edu/consulting/statistical-consulting-center> .

## **Preparing to Graduate**

Once you have successfully defended your Master's Paper and completed all other degree requirements, your Master's Paper Chair will inform the Psychology Staff Assistant and the PIC, who will complete the final paperwork necessary to certify you for graduation (assuming that you have filed your intent to graduate, as below. However, there are still several things that you must do.

Specifically, you must:

- (a) Revise your Master's Paper as requested by your committee and have the revised

version approved by your Master's Paper adviser and, if requested, by other committee members.

(b) Prepare and have all committee members sign two copies of an appropriately formatted signatory page to formalize the approval of your Master's Paper (see below).

(c) Pay a \$25 binding fee to the Penn State Harrisburg Bursar's Office.

(d) Provide the receipt for the \$25 binding fee and two properly formatted copies of the approved paper to the Psychology Staff Assistant. The Psychology Staff Assistant will forward these copies to the PIC, who will review your paper for any format errors. If the PIC detects any problems, he/she will communicate this to your Master's Paper adviser, who will work with you to make any necessary changes. Once the PIC is satisfied that your paper meets all University requirements, she or he will sign off on it and return it to the Psychology Staff Assistant, who will forward it to the Library for binding.

(e) If you have not yet heard from the staff assistant or your Master's Paper Chair, check with the staff assistant 2 weeks after you have submitted your paper to make sure that it was approved by the PIC.

If you do not accomplish these tasks prior to the deadlines given below, you will be removed from the graduation list, and you will have to declare your intent to graduate for the following semester, taking care that all tasks are completed by that semester's deadline. In this case, you may have to complete an Application for Permission to Resume Graduate Studies form within the first week of the next semester in order to be eligible for graduation that semester.

Following successful completion of the above and all other degree requirements, your PIC will, upon request, provide you with a letter verifying the same. Ordinarily, this letter is

satisfactory proof of completion of the degree for employment purposes.

## **Deadlines!**

If all other coursework is completed or will be completed by the end of a given semester, there are two important deadlines you must meet if you wish to graduate in that semester. First, you must declare your intent to graduate on [Lionpath](#) by the University's due date. Second, you must defend your Master's Paper by the Program's given semester deadline listed below.

Remember that you must use Lionpath to file your intent to graduate before that semester's filing deadline. Doing so will ensure that your name appears on that semester's graduation list. The intent to graduate deadline, which can be found on the [Academic Calendar](#), typically occurs approximately 2 weeks into each semester.

The oral defense of your final Master's Paper (i.e., completed project and paper) must occur on or before the deadline for the semester in which you wish to graduate. These are the deadlines for Penn State Harrisburg Applied Clinical Psychology and Applied Psychological Research student work:

<i>Semester of graduation:</i>	<i>Your final Master's Paper must be defended by:</i>
Spring	The first Friday in April
Fall	The first Friday in November
Summer	Friday of the end of the second-to-last (penultimate) week of Spring classes

*For all semesters, your revised, finalized paper, approved by your Chair, must be printed in*

*final form, and turned in to the Program no later than two weeks after your final Master's Paper defense.*

Please note that these are extreme dates and not goals. That is, do not complete your work aiming for these deadlines. You should aim to have your work completed before this time and not wait until the last minute.

You can still defend your final Master's Paper after these dates in the Spring or Fall, but if successful, your graduation date would reflect the following semester. That is, if you successfully defended your final Paper after the deadline in Spring, your degree would reflect Summer; if you successfully defended your final Paper after the deadline in Fall, your degree would reflect Spring of the following calendar year. You would also have to file your intent to graduate again. **These deadlines will not be extended.** Thus, it is very important that you plan ahead to ensure your desired graduation date.

### **No Proposal or Final Defenses Over Breaks**

Note that all defenses (proposal and final) must take place by Friday of the penultimate (second to last) week of classes in the Spring and Fall semesters. This should give you two weeks to wrap up any remaining work and needed interactions with your Chair and committee and will give you time to turn in your final, printed Master's Paper following all technical requirements. There are no defenses during fall or spring breaks, the last week of classes, Final Exam week, or thereafter during the winter break or summer break, so please plan your semester workload accordingly.



## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER'S PAPER

There are strict requirements for the layout of the Master's Paper. Generally speaking, both the format and style must conform to that outlined in the *APA Manual, 6th Edition*. However, as discussed below, there are several instances where the University requires adherence to the Penn State *Thesis and Dissertation Guide* instead. This document can be obtained free of charge by at <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/etd/thesisdissertationguidepdf/>. Although there are also other differences between the format described in the *APA Manual* and that described in the *Thesis Guide*, Master's Papers are only required to follow those *Thesis Guide* requirements that are explicitly stated in the following sections.

Other exceptions to APA style are predicted on the fact that the Master's Paper is a final document rather than a manuscript intended for typesetting. These modifications, along with those dictated by the *Thesis Guide*, are specified below. Much of this material was adopted or modified from the *2011-2012 Thesis Guide*.

You are responsible for making sure that your paper is correctly formatted, and you will not be able to progress to your proposal meeting, oral defense, or graduation until your Master's Paper Chair verifies that your written work meets all applicable format and style requirements. Thus, it is in your best interest to set up your Master's Paper using the correct format from the beginning.

Copies of all Master's Papers are kept in the library, and it might be helpful for you to look at some of these. Keep in mind, though, that formatting requirements change from time to time and that there is variation in the quality of students' work.

## **Paper**

The final copies of the Master's Paper must be submitted on uniform white paper of at least 25% cotton content. Many types of 25% cotton paper feature a watermark.

## **Headings**

Headings and subheadings should be used to help organize the paper. See Sections 3.02 and 3.03 of the *APA Manual* for further discussion of this issue and for examples. At a minimum, empirical Master's Papers should contain the four major sections outlined in Sections 2.05 to 2.08 of the *APA Manual*: Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion. Appropriate headings and subheadings should also be used in other types of Master's Papers.

## **Spacing**

Text will be double-spaced. Single-spacing is allowed in certain limited cases: the Table of Contents, block quotations, Tables (including table titles and headings), Figure captions, and footnotes. It is also permitted within items in the List of Tables and List of Figures. APA style also allows judicious triple- or quadruple-spacing before and after tables in the text to improve appearance and readability.

## **Font and Size**

Text will be Times New Roman, 12-point font. At times, tables and figures may allow for the incorporation of smaller font.

## **Sections**

Begin each major section on a new page. That is, begin Methods on a new page, begin Results on a new page, etc. Do the same with each element of the front matter (list of tables, acknowledgments, etc.), the reference section, and each appendix. See the *APA Manual* for

typeface requirements.

## **Margins**

The left margin (binding side) of every page must be 1.5 inches. The other three sides must have a margin of 1 inch (more than this is acceptable, but less could require the reformatting of the entire paper.) Everything on the page (page number, footnotes, etc.) must meet these requirements. These stringent margin requirements are necessary because all page edges are trimmed during the binding process.

## **Running Heads and Page Headers**

Running heads and page headers are not permitted in the Master's Paper.

## **Page Numbers**

With the following exceptions, every page in the paper, including those with tables and figures, must be numbered in the upper right-hand corner and counted. Use lower case Roman numerals for the front matter and Arabic numbers for the text. **The text (or body) of the Master's Paper must begin on page 1.** Do not number a page with "a" or "b" or skip numbers; do not embellish page numbers with punctuation (dashes, periods, etc.); and do not type the word "page" before the page numbers.

All pages in the front matter, starting with the Abstract, should be numbered with lower case Roman numerals. Neither the title page nor the signatory page show a page number, although they are actually pages i and ii, respectively. The Permission-to-copy page is neither numbered nor counted and is required only in the official copies of the Master's Paper. You may omit the permission page from your personal copies. The Abstract page (page iii) is the first page that shows a number. Please consult with The Learning Center if you are having difficulty

formatting your page numbers.

## **Figure, Tables, and Footnotes**

Figures and Tables should follow APA style, with the exception that they should be placed within the text where the results are discussed rather than being placed at the end of the paper. Footnotes should generally be avoided.

## **Front Matter**

The term “front matter” refers to all the pages in front of the main text of the Master’s Paper. Front matter pages are numbered with lower case Roman numerals. In order, these pages are:

- Title Page (counted but not numbered)
- Permission-to-copy Page (neither counted nor numbered)
- Signatory Page (counted but not numbered)
- Abstract (page iii)
- Table of Contents
- List of figures, abbreviations, maps, tables or multimedia items (each a separate list)
- Acknowledgments

The first five of these pages are required in all Master’s Papers, and the last two must also be included under the conditions outlined below.

## **Title Page**

The title page must appear **exactly** as shown in the example in Appendix D of this manual. Type the title page of the Master’s Paper using capital letters throughout. If it occupies

more than one line, double space between lines. Use word substitutes for formulas, symbols, superscripts, Greek letters, and other nonalphabetical symbols in the title of the paper.

Use your legal name as it appears on your records in the Registrar's Office. Your name must appear in exactly the same form each time it is used in the Master's Paper. On the copyright line, use either the word "Copyright" or the symbol © (not both), followed by the year and your name (note: you own the copyright on your work whether you choose to include this notice or not).

On the date line, indicate the month and year of the degree conferral, **not** the date of the defense or the date you submit your paper. Degrees are conferred only in May, August, and December.

### **Permission-to-copy Page**

The Permission-to-copy page is placed immediately after the title page and must follow the format in Appendix E. It should not be counted or numbered, but it must be signed.

### **Signatory Page**

The final copy of the Master's Paper must include a Signatory page. The signatures on this page indicate that the committee members have approved the Master's Paper as a complete and final work requiring no further alteration (see the example in Appendix F of this manual).

In addition to being signed by the committee members and adviser, the signatory page must be signed by the PIC. If one of the signatories has a dual role (e.g., Master's Paper Chair and PIC), list both roles under the professorial title (do not list the same person more than once on the Signatory page).

Be sure that all signatories are identified by their correct professorial titles, which can be obtained from the psychology staff assistant. Administrative titles should not be included, with

the exception of your PIC. Only one administrative title should be used, as only one person is signing on behalf of the major department.

If a signatory is not available to sign at the appropriate time, a proxy signature is allowed so that the paper will qualify for final submission. The PIC may sign the name of the absent signatory and initial it beneath, thus indicating knowledge of the approval.

Type the page as shown in Appendix F. Space the names proportionally on the page and include the professorial titles and any other pertinent designations as indicated above. No specific color of ink is required for signatures.

## **Abstract**

Every Master's Paper must contain an abstract. An Abstract is a concise summary of the Master's Paper, intended to inform prospective readers about its content. It usually includes a brief description of the research, the procedures, the results, and the conclusions. An Abstract should not include internal headings, parenthetical citations of items listed in the References section, diagrams, or other illustrations.

The Abstract follows the Signatory Page and has the heading Abstract at the top. It always begins on page iii.

## **Table of Contents**

The Table of Contents is essentially a topic outline of the Master's Paper. It is compiled by listing the headings in the Master's Paper and should be single-spaced. You may choose to include first-level headings, first- and second-levels, or all levels. Keep in mind that there is no index in a Master's Paper, and thus a fairly detailed table of contents can serve as a useful guide for the reader. The Table of Contents must appear immediately after the Abstract and should not list the abstract or the Table of Contents itself. It should include everything else that appears

**after** the table of contents, including the list of figures, tables, etc. (see the example in Appendix G).

Be sure that the headings listed in the table of contents match word-for-word the headings in the text. Double check to be sure that correct page numbers are shown. In listing Appendices, indicate the title of each Appendix.

### **List of Tables, List of Figures, etc.**

Include a list of figures and a list of tables if you have one or more items in these categories. Use a separate page for each list. Show the figure or table number, the caption or title exactly as it appears in the text, and the page number of every figure and table in the Master's Paper. All entries should be single-spaced with double-spacing between entries. A sample list of tables can be found in Appendix H. Except for the heading (which should be LIST OF FIGURES), this is also the format for a list of figures.

### **Acknowledgments**

An acknowledgments page is required if the author has received permission to use copyrighted material or must acknowledge grant sources. Otherwise, this page is optional. If included, it is used to express the author's professional and personal indebtedness.

### **Back Matter**

The back matter of the Master's Paper will include a References list and, if relevant, one or more Appendices. Construct these in APA style.

## Appendix A: Master's Paper Committee Form

### Master's Paper Committee Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Description: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Committee Chair

Date

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Signature of Committee Member

Date

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Signature of Committee Member

Date



## Appendix B: Checklist of Steps in the Master's Paper Process

### STEPS IN THE MASTER'S PAPER PROCESS

Note: In addition to the steps below, to graduate in a given semester, you must defend your Master's Paper before that semester's deadline as described above.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Allow plenty of time!** Begin serious work on your Master's Paper project at least 1 year before your desired graduation date.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Select a Master's Paper adviser and two other committee members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete a *Master's Paper Committee Form* and obtain signatures from your prospective committee members. Return the original to the psychology staff assistant, retain a copy for yourself, and distribute a copy to each member of your committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify and refine a Master's Paper topic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Register for PSYC530
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conduct a comprehensive literature review and refine your ideas until you have a clear sense of how you want to proceed with your Master's Project and the accompanying Master's Paper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If your Master's Project is empirical in nature, narrow your focus until you have a research question that is both meaningful and practical, develop your methodology, and determine your analyses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a written Master's Project proposal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain the permission of your Master's Paper adviser to schedule your proposal meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule your proposal meeting (i.e., arrange a date and time for your proposal meeting with your committee members).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have the Psychology Staff Assistant reserve a room for your proposal meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ At least 2 weeks prior to the proposal meeting, distribute your written Master's Project proposal to each member of your committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send out a confirmation of the meeting date, time, and room a week in advance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare for your proposal meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Proposal meeting.

- \_\_\_ Obtain committee approval for your proposal.
- \_\_\_ If your Master's Project is empirical in nature, complete the following steps:
  - \_\_\_ Obtain approval from the Penn State IRB and the research review committees of any collaborating organizations or institutions. (If circumstances warrant, it may be possible to apply for IRB approval before your proposal meeting with the permission of your Master's Paper adviser.)
    - \_\_\_ Collect your data.
    - \_\_\_ Code your data and enter it into your laptop or PC.
    - \_\_\_ Conduct your analyses.
  - \_\_\_ Finish writing your Master's Paper.
  - \_\_\_ Obtain the permission of your Master's Paper adviser to schedule your oral defense.
  - \_\_\_ Schedule your oral defense (i.e., arrange a date and time for your proposal meeting with your committee members).
  - \_\_\_ Have the Psychology Staff Assistant reserve a room for your oral defense.
  - \_\_\_ At least 2 weeks prior to the oral defense, distribute a *completed* copy of your Master's Paper to each member of your committee—your best, completed effort.
  - \_\_\_ Send out a confirmation of the meeting date, time, and room a week in advance.
  - \_\_\_ Prepare for your oral defense.
  - \_\_\_ Oral defense.
  - \_\_\_ Within two weeks:
    - \_\_\_ Revise your Master's Paper as requested by your committee and have the revised version approved by your Master's Paper adviser and, if requested, by other committee members.
    - \_\_\_ Prepare and have all committee members sign two copies of a properly formatted signatory page.
    - \_\_\_ Pay a \$25 binding fee to the PSUH Bursar's Office.
    - \_\_\_ Provide the receipt for the \$25 binding fee and two properly formatted copies of

the approved paper to the Psychology Staff Assistant. The Psychology Staff Assistant will forward these copies to the PIC, who will review your paper for any format errors. If the PIC detects any problems, he/she will communicate this to your Master's Paper adviser, who will work with you to make any necessary changes. Once the PIC is satisfied that your paper meets all University requirements, he/she will sign off on it and return it to the psychology staff assistant, who will forward it to the library for binding.

\_\_\_\_\_ If you have not yet heard from the staff assistant or your Master's Paper adviser, check with the staff assistant 2 weeks after you have submitted your paper to make sure that it was approved by the PIC.

\_\_\_\_\_ Go celebrate!

## Appendix C: Selected Resources for Master's Papers

**Library.** Penn State Harrisburg Library owns thousands of books, journals, and other materials for Psychology students. It also serves as a gateway to resources at other libraries, both at Penn State and throughout the country. One of the most helpful resources is the Behavioral Sciences and Education Librarian, Bernadette Lear (bal19@psu.edu; 717/948-6360), a full-time faculty member who can guide you through the literature search. She can advise you on appropriate databases and information resources for your topic, and coach you in effective search strategies. Feel free to contact her for assistance or to make a research appointment.

Through the library's online catalog (the "CAT"), you can search for materials at the Harrisburg library, University Park, and all other Penn State libraries. Penn State also provides access to *PsycInfo*, *Dissertation Abstracts*, and more than 400 other literature databases. Depending on your research topic, you may want to use databases in other disciplines, such as *PubMed/Medline* (medicine), *MIT CogNet* (brain science), *ERIC* (education), and more.

In addition, for access to materials our Library does not own, you can use Penn State's [Interlibrary Loan \(ILLiad\)](http://www.statelibrary.pa.gov/StateAgencies/StateServices/Pages/State-Library-Inter-Library-Loan-Book-Request.aspx), found at <http://www.statelibrary.pa.gov/StateAgencies/StateServices/Pages/State-Library-Inter-Library-Loan-Book-Request.aspx>

Penn State's vast electronic resources may seem to obviate the need of visiting the library, or using information in paper form. However, we are working in a "hybrid" intellectual environment where both electronic and print information are essential for a full understanding of the field. Be sure to allow yourself adequate time for trying various search strategies, consulting with the Librarian and your thesis advisors, and ordering materials from other libraries.

## Useful Web Sites

### University

Penn State Web Access: <https://webaccess.psu.edu/services/>

Academic Integrity: <http://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html>

Library: <https://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/home.html>

SARI@PSU: <http://www.research.psu.edu/training/sari>

The Susan Hirt Hagen Center for Community Outreach, Research and Evaluation (CORE):

<http://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences/research-outreach/core>

### College

Academic Calendar: <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/academic-calendar>

Schedule of Courses: <http://schedule.psu.edu/>

PSUH Disability Services: <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/disability-services>

Penn State IRB/Human Subjects Research: <http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/humans>

IRB-CATS (Centralized Application Tracking System): <http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/humans/cats-centralized-application-tracking-system-1>

Learning Center (Russell E. Horn Sr. Learning Center): <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/learning-center>

### Professional

American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org/index.aspx>

APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct: <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>

Association for Psychological Science: <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/>

Eastern Psychological Association: <http://www.easternpsychological.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1>

Pennsylvania Psychological Association: <http://www.papsy.org/>

Faculty, staff, and administration phone numbers and email address are in the *Handbook* and on the Penn State Harrisburg web site.

## **Appendix D: Title Page**

The Pennsylvania State University  
The Graduate School  
School of Behavioral Sciences and Education

TITLE GOES HERE IN THIS FORMAT

Master's Paper

by

name of student

©year name of student (separated by one space)

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

month year (separated by one space)

## **Appendix E: Permission-to-copy Page**



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signature here

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typed name here

## **Appendix F: Signatory Page**

We approve the Master's Paper of (your name).

Date of Signature

---

Name of committee chair  
Academic title of committee chair  
Master's Paper Adviser

---

Name of committee member  
Title of committee member

---

Name of committee member  
Title of committee member

---

Name of your PIC  
(if not included above)  
Academic title of PIC  
Coordinator, name of your program

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## **Appendix I: Proposal Defense and Final Defense Tips; Example Proposal Slides**



## Presentation Tips

- Rehearse your timing.
- Dress professionally.
- Come a bit early so you can set up.
- Be prepared.
- You may want to give the Committee handouts of your slides.
- Use Slides for talking points. Do not overrun your slides with text. Use key words, figures, or even pictures to demonstrate major points. In other words, use slides to highlight your points, but do not present Tolstoy's *War and Peace* on each one. You may be able to run your slides by your Chair for advice before your meeting. (Please see below for an example of a student's Proposal Defense slides that the committee deemed very successful.)
- It is not a good idea to read word-for-word extensively from slides. (This is more applicable when someone crunches everything she or he can think of onto one slide.)
- Do not read directly from your proposal document. It makes you seem unprepared for the critical thinking involved in executing a project. Some faculty may vote for a failed defense if you do this.
- Certainly use cue cards or notes if you need to do so.
- Do not exceed your given time limit. If you do, your Chair or committee will likely cut you off...which means your presentation will be incomplete.
- Defend your ideas cogently, but do not get *defensive*. It is the job of the committee to ask you to justify your research, frame your theory through alternate lenses, identify any shortcomings in your approach, generate plausible alternative explanations for your findings, etc. The committee is not attacking you—the committee is challenging you to demonstrate your expertise on the topic at hand. That's what a defense is all about.
- Although we validate that you may be nervous, try to remember that *you've got this!* You are here because of your knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Your Chair and committee WANT you to succeed.

