

Final Project for the Master of Science

Guidelines and recommendations



Final Project Written Guidelines

Steps to complete

Step 1: Meet with your advisor to discuss the project requirements and timeline. This should be approximately 3 to 6 months prior to your graduation.

Step 2: Define your project and choose your subject. Create a preliminary outline with at least two research questions or concepts that you will investigate. Submit this to your advisor for approval.

Step 3: Determine the main points of the paper, how you intend to conduct the research / investigation, and write a one-page proposal for the project. A diagram is helpful for some but is not required. This should include your title, approved research question / investigation topic, hypotheses (if appropriate), the method you will use to answer your research questions / investigation, and what resources you will use to conduct your research / investigation. This is a high-level document (think of an abstract). Submit this to your advisor for feedback.

Step 4: Visit the U of Wyoming IRB website and read the criteria for research / investigations that include human subjects. (If there are no human subjects in your project you may omit this step – however interviewing just one person is considered the involvement of human subjects)

<https://www.uwyo.edu/research/compliance/human-subjects/>

Complete a request for Exemption form on the IRB web page. Submit the form to your advisor, and they will work with other track directors to determine whether submission to the IRB is necessary. We will not be conducting any projects that require full IRB approval. All projects will either qualify for Exemption or will not require any IRB action.

Step 5: After conducting your research, provide a rough draft of the paper at a point and time that you and your advisor agree upon. Include all references, documentation, graphics and tables (if included), etc. Your advisor will provide you with feedback so that you can finalize your paper.

Step 6: Submit final paper

Choosing the Subject (The most critical aspect of a research paper)

- Ideas
- Clearly stated / defined
- Adequately focused
- Well supported
- Do general literature review
- Knowledge and background about subject
- Relatively high in the order of knowledge
 - Orders of knowledge
 - Comprehension
 - Application
 - Analysis
 - Synthesis
 - Evaluation
- Masters level subject depth

Defining the topic

- Preliminary Outline
 - Must provide sufficient justification for the research. Is there a gap in the extant literature on this topic or is there an unanswered question relative to your practice site?
 - Generate two questions that you will investigate
 - They should be clearly stated
 - Is your question too broad to be answerable or too narrow to be useful to others?
- Determine main points
 - Break into sub-points to narrow focus
 - Formulate precise questions on sub-points
- Failure to define your topic
 - If you do not have a clear focus for your paper, you may waste time investigating irrelevant information and not complete your project.
 - Without a clear focus, the paper will lack unity and a clear answer to your research questions
 - Even a clearly defined topic can still lead to rambling if not adequately focused

Selecting the Sources / Literature Review

- Journals
- Books
- Internet
 - Appropriate sources for graduate level work
- Taking notes
 - Importance of keeping track of sources
 - Log of key concepts that support your topic decision
 - Log of controversy in the topic area
 - Preparing bibliography as you move forward
- Giving credit
 - Directly quote – even single phrase
 - Borrow /use ideas not generally known
 - Facts from independent scholarship
 - Borrow/use statements, facts, ideas that are controversial
 - Protection through documentation
- Determine what previous studies or papers have been written
 - Use the U of Wyoming Library Research Launchpad. <http://www-lib.uwyo.edu/>
 - If articles are not available in full text through the library, they can often be requested through interlibrary loan
 - Use a standard referencing system consistently throughout the paper

Analyzing your evidence:

- Examine all the evidence you have discovered, and evaluate the significance of that evidence within the context of your literature review and the question you have asked
- Resist the temptation to reformulate your question simply because you have found better answers to a different question - Stay in your lane
- Summarize your evidence using tables, charts, graphs, and written descriptions

Project proposal outline

- Title
- Abstract
- Background
- Research question / investigative topic
- Hypotheses (if appropriate)
- Methods
 - Examples:
 - What is the design, population, primary endpoint, measurements?
 - Will you pilot (pre-test), complete a meta-analysis, run statistical parameters?
 - Others?

- Rough draft
 - Revision of outline
 - Documenting referenced materials
 - Proofreaders
- Product
 - Research paper, Manuscript, Study report...
- References
 - Consistency of design
 - Follow the guidelines of an acceptable footnote format
- Abbreviations
 - Careful – mixed meanings
 - Specific to profession
 - Spell out the first time used

Required resources

- Timeline (chart)
 - Estimates of milestones
- References
- Appendices

Submitting final paper

- Your paper reflects your effort
- Your paper reflects your thought process
- Your paper reflects your decision making
- Your paper reflects on you

Written Grading Outline and Recommendations

Recommendations and guidelines for individual paper:

- Written at an appropriate graduate course level
- Double spaced with appropriate font size
(Arial 12, Courier 12, New Times Roman 12, Tahoma 12)

- Logical flow and organization

- Minimum 15 pages of text
 - Excludes title page, bibliography, appendices, tables, charts, graphs
 - Maximum of 25 pages including all materials
 - References / appendices

- No Spelling and/or grammar errors

- Reference bibliography from literature search

- Papers fully and appropriately referenced

- Appropriate use of footnotes
 - (Consistent with current standards for journals)