

Instructions for the M.A. Thesis Defense
Psychology Department. UTEP
(version: April 6, 2017)

**Graduate School Documents Needed
for the MA Thesis Defense and Graduation**

Application for Graduate Degree.

This form can be downloaded from the Graduate School website.

Graduation Final Degree Plan.

This form can be downloaded from the Graduate School website.

Completion/Defense Form.

This form can be downloaded from the Graduate School website

**Psychology Department Documents Needed
for the Thesis Defense and Graduation**

Thesis Learning Outcome Assessment.

A pdf of this assessment form is included in this packet. A Word copy is also posted on the department website..

Instructions for Thesis Chair:

Learning Outcome Assessments.

A pdf of this form is included in this packet.

Evaluation by Graduating M.A. Student.

A pdf of this evaluation form is included in this packet. A Word copy is also posted on the department website..

Other Documents Needed for the Thesis Defense and Graduation

Signature Page of Thesis.

A pdf example of a signature page is included in this packet. The M.A. candidate should create and print a similar signature page for their own thesis.

PDF copy of final form of approved thesis.

This copy must be made by the M.A. candidate at the same that he/she submits a copy to the graduate school.

Before the Thesis Defense

A. At the beginning of your last semester in the program, visit the Graduate School website and review the pages that explain the requirements and procedures for submitting theses and graduation. Some of the most important webpages on this site deal with (a) "Graduation Information"; (b) "Graduation for Master's Students: Deadlines"; (c) "Graduation for Master's Students: Timeline," and (d) "Forms." The Graduate School website contains crucial information that is not included here. In addition, the Graduate School offers workshops that provide helpful information to students nearing graduation.

B. Fill out the Application for Graduate Degree and the Graduation Final Degree Plan from the Graduate School. After obtaining the necessary signatures, submit these two completed forms together to the Graduate School. The deadlines for submitting these documents are usually in mid-September for Fall graduation, and in mid-February for Spring graduation. However, late submissions are accepted by the Graduate School (although there is a late fee). For more details and more precise information about submission deadlines, consult the Graduate School website.

C. Print one copy of each of the following documents and take to the defense:
Completion/Defense Form (from Graduate School)
Signature Page of Thesis.

D. (i) Print enough copies of the department's "Thesis Learning Outcome Assessment," so that you can give a copy to each member of your committee (except the chair) at the Defense.
(ii) Prior to the Defense, fill out the first page of each assessment with the following information: (a) Your name; (b) Date of defense, (c) Name of committee member.
(iii) You will also need two manila envelopes big enough to hold all of the Learning Outcome Assessments.

E. Before the Thesis Defense, give your chair one of the manila envelopes and the "Instructions for Thesis Chair: Learning Outcome Assessments." The chair should be familiar with the instructions *before* the Defense. Bring the second manila envelope to the defense as a precaution in case the chair forgets to bring the envelope you already provided.

F. Graduate School deadlines typically require that the final version of a thesis, with all signatures, must be submitted to the Graduate School within the two weeks following Dead Day. To meet this deadline, the thesis defense should probably be scheduled no later than Dead Day. The Graduate School rules allow an M.A. Defense to be scheduled during Finals week. However, scheduling a defense during Finals week is inadvisable, because only a short amount of time will be left to revise and re-format the thesis before it is submitted to the Graduate School.

During the Thesis Defense

A. At the beginning of the Defense, give each committee member (except the Chair) their copy of the "Learning Outcome Assessment." Tell each committee member that they can fill out the form during or at the end of the Defense, and that the Thesis Chair will collect the assessments at the end.

B. At the end of the Defense, after your committee members have approved your thesis but before they leave the room, remind them to complete the Learning Outcome Assessments. Obtain their signatures on the following documents and retain the signed documents:

Completion/Defense Form. (from Graduate School).
Signature Page of Thesis.

Sometimes the committee members may decline to sign the Completion/Defense Form or the Signature Page of the Thesis until you have made appropriate changes. If this happens, you must make arrangements to obtain the signatures at a later time when the members are ready to sign.

After the Thesis Defense

Once you have signatures from all your committee members, carry out the following steps.

A. Put the Completion/Defense Form from the Graduate School in the mailbox of the Psychology Graduate Program Director, who will sign it and return it to your mailbox. Afterward take the form to the office of the Dean of Liberal Arts (in the LA Building) and obtain the Dean's signature.

After obtaining all signatures, scan the Completion/Defense form as a pdf and email it to the Psychology Graduate Program Director. Afterward, submit the form to the Graduate School, according to the instructions posted on its website. The deadline for submitting the Completion/Defense Form for a thesis is usually about two weeks after Dead Day.

B. Submit a copy of your thesis to the graduate school and obtain approval for the thesis's format.

C. Fill out the departmental form, "Evaluation by Graduating M.A. Student."

D. After completing steps A to C, scan the following documents as pdfs and email them to the Psychology Graduate Program Director:

- Completion/Defense Form.
- Signature Page of Thesis.
- Evaluation by Graduating M.A. Students.
- PDF copy of final form of approved thesis.

E. After completing step D, submit the following documents to the Graduate School. The deadlines and procedures for submission are listed on the Graduate School website:

- Completion/Defense Form.
- Signature Page of Thesis.
- PDF copy of final form of approved thesis (through UMI/ProQuest)

F. Check the Graduate School Website again for other requirements not described here.

M.A. Thesis Learning Outcome Assessment

Department of Psychology. University of Texas at El Paso

Student _____

Defense Date _____

Committee Member (printed name) _____

Committee Member (signature) _____

Instructions: Circle the number that best matches your assessment of the dissertation on each dimension. If the dimension was not assessed or does not apply, do not circle any number and indicate this in the comments. Comments are strongly encouraged if your assessment is non-satisfactory.

A copy of your ratings and comments, with this page removed, will be shared with the student and the student's mentor. Your ratings will also be included in group analyses conducted by the Psychology Department and reported on an annual basis to the university and SACS, as part of the university's assessment of student outcomes.

After you have completed this form, please sign it and place it in the envelope provided by the chair of the committee.

Standards for Rankings

“Limited”

– Significant flaws/limitations suggesting student has limited effectiveness in this dimension

“Slightly Limited”

“Effective” (Standard for Masters work)

– Minor flaws/limitations suggesting student has ability to work effectively in the dimension with guidance from a more experienced researcher or as member of a research team

“Good” (Standard for PhD work)

“Excellent”

– Nearly flawless suggesting student has ability to be very productive in this dimension

Mastery of Theoretical and Empirical Literature

Probing student about scientific literature may be particularly important when Defense is written in a more “manuscript” ready format with less breadth of coverage.

In the written document, the thoroughness and depth of the coverage regarding the theoretical and empirical scientific literature was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Limited		Slightly Limited		Effective		Good		Excellent

Comments for Student and Mentor

In the oral presentation/defense, the student's ability to discuss the theoretical and empirical scientific literature was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Limited		Slightly Limited		Effective		Good		Excellent

Comments for Student and Mentor

Justification of Research

In the introduction section of the written document, the justification of the proposed research within the existing theoretical and empirical scientific literature was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Limited		Slightly Limited		Effective		Good		Excellent

Comments for Student and Mentor

(please go on to the next page)

Using, Discussing, and Justifying Methodology and Statistics

Note: Choices about methodology and statistics can involve imperfect alternatives (e.g., both between and within subject approaches have limitations). Ratings below "Satisfactory" should not reflect these inherent limitations, but the student's understanding and/or discussion about these choices (e.g., failure recognize limitation of correlation with regard to causal inferences)

In the *written document*, the presentation, discussion, and justification of the methodology was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Limited		Slightly Limited		Effective		Good		Excellent

Comments for Student and Mentor

In the *oral presentation/defense*, the student's ability to discuss the methodology was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Limited		Slightly Limited		Effective		Good		Excellent

Comments for Student and Mentor

In the *written document*, the presentation, discussion, and justification of the statistics was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Limited		Slightly Limited		Effective		Good		Excellent

Comments for Student and Mentor

(please go on to the next page)

Using, Discussing, and Justifying Methodology and Statistics (continued)

In the *oral presentation/defense*, the student's ability to discuss the statistics was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Limited		Slightly Limited		Effective		Good		Excellent

Comments for Student and Mentor

Meaningfulness of Research Findings

In the *discussion section of the written document*, the discussion about the meaningfulness of the findings (either in terms of placing them in the scientific literature or discussing their applied benefits) was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Limited		Slightly Limited		Effective		Good		Excellent

Comments for Student and Mentor

Additional Comments for Student and Mentor Regarding the Thesis

Comments for Student and Mentor

Instructions for Thesis Chair: Learning Outcome Assessments.

Background: As part of the SACS accreditation process, the UTEP Psychology Department collects detailed evaluations from the members of dissertation and thesis committees. These evaluations help measure how well the department is meeting its goal of teaching research skills to graduate students.

Confidentiality and Sharing of Committee Evaluations: Please maintain the confidentiality of the completed assessments. The student and mentor should *not* look at the assessments after the committee members have completed them. Instead, the completed assessments should be put unread into a sealed envelope and delivered to the Graduate Program Director, who will redact the first pages (which identify the raters) and then send copies of the redacted assessments to the student and thesis chair.

Procedures for Collecting Learning Outcome Assessments

1. Before the Defense, the student prints this set of instructions and provides it to the Thesis Chair, along with a manila envelope that the chair can later use to submit the completed assessments.
2. The student prepares the assessment forms before the Defense and distributes them to committee members (except the chair) at the beginning of the Defense.
3. Committee members complete the assessment forms during the Defense or at the end. They submit the completed forms at the end of the Defense. The Thesis Chair should *not* complete an assessment form.
4. The Thesis Chair ensures that all completed assessment forms are collected at the end of the defense and put into a manila envelope. The Chair make strong efforts to maintain confidentiality – for example, by having committee members put their completed assessments into the manila envelope themselves, rather than having the Chair put the assessments into the envelope for them. Neither the Chair nor the Student should look at or read the completed assessments.
5. After all completed assessments have been put into the manila envelope, the Chair should seal it, sign it, address it to the Graduate Program Director, and put it in the Director's departmental mailbox.
6. After redacting the first pages of the assessments (which identify the raters' names) the Graduate Program director will make a pdf of the redacted outcome assessments and email them to the student and Thesis Chair.

**EVALUATION BY GRADUATING M.A. STUDENT
UTEP PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for providing feedback and sharing insights that can help us improve the graduate program in psychology. Please answer the following questions by typing in your answers, then scan the completed form as a pdf and email it to the Graduate Program Director (Dr. James Wood, jawood@utep.ed). A blank copy of this form in Word format is available on the Psychology Department website.

Please tell us a little about what job(s) or additional graduate education you have accepted or intend to pursue after graduating.

Did your career goals change while you were in the program? If so, what led to these changes?

Are there courses that we did not offer that you think would be useful for future students?

Do you have any specific recommendations about things we could change (course requirements, non-course requirements, etc.) to make the program better?

Are there positive aspects of the program that you consider particularly important or that have been especially valuable to you?

Please add any other comments or ideas that you think are relevant.

**The following page provides an example
of how to format the signature page for a thesis.**

DEVELOPMENT OF A MEASURE OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS
OF DOG OWNERS' ATTACHMENT TO THEIR PETS

PAOLA NAYELI BALCAZAR SOTO

Master's Program in Psychology

APPROVED:

James M. Wood, Ph.D., Chair

Lawrence Cohn, Ph.D.

Daniel Jones, Ph.D.

Richard C. Williams, Ph.D.

Charles Ambler, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

TITLE OF THESIS, DISSERTATION OR REPORT, DOUBLE SPACED
AND CENTERED, ALL UPPERCASE, INVERTED
PYRAMID FORM

STUDENT'S FULL OFFICIAL NAME, ALL UPPERCASE

Master's Program in Psychology

APPROVED:

Insert Committee Member's Name, Ph.D., Chair

Insert Committee Member's Name, Ph.D.

Insert Committee Member's Name, Ph.D.

Insert Committee Member's Name, Ph.D.

Charles Ambler, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School