

2011 - 2012
Teaching and Curriculum
MASTER'S ESSAY GUIDELINES

The Master's Essay provides an opportunity for the candidate to develop a well-organized report on a topic of significance in the field of education. A reasonable length for this essay is 25-35 double-spaced pages, excluding references. Candidates submit two bound copies of the essay to her/his advisor. The first reader of the essay will always be the candidate's advisor. The chair of Teaching and Curriculum, in consultation with faculty, will determine the second reader. Both readers must approve the essay for it to pass. If a candidate fails on the first attempt, he/she may revise and resubmit only one more time.

Prior to proceeding with the essay, the candidate must prepare a 2-4-page proposal describing the scope, rationale, and organization of the essay to be handed in prior to the due dates listed below (specific dates to be negotiated with the advisor, but will typically be due several months before the final thesis deadline). The candidate's advisor must approve this proposal (see attached form). Candidates choose one of the master's essay formats below.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

<i>Expected graduation date:</i>	<i>Final essay due date:</i>
March 2012 graduation:	December 5, 2011
May 2012 graduation:	April 2, 2012
October 2012 graduation:	May 7, 2012¹
March 2013 graduation:	December 3, 2012

MASTER'S ESSAY FORMATS

1. Library Research

Candidates will identify a significant issue or problem in contemporary U.S. education, do a review of the relevant literature, locate the research in a theoretical framework, state their position, and support it with conceptual arguments or empirical evidence in current educational theory and research. Candidates should also compare and contrast this position with others in the literature. The implications for education, educational theory, and future research must be clearly stated.

2. Field Research Project

Candidates will address a specific educational issue or problem through reporting and analyzing a research project they have undertaken in an educational setting other than their own classroom. Like option 1, this essay should identify the problem they examined, locate the research in a theoretical framework and, in a review of the relevant literature, describe what has already been done to study it. The essay must also describe how the research was conducted and analyze the findings. The implications for educational practice, theory, and future research should be clearly stated. For example, how do these findings contradict or support current educational theory and research?

3. Examining Your Own Educational Practice

¹ If this deadline is missed, the late submission deadline is August 27, 2012 and will require you pay continuing enrollment for fall semester.

In this essay format, candidates conduct research that examines their own teaching practice. Candidates should locate the rationale for the research in current educational theory or research (literature review). The research question/s that candidates explored systematically during their experience should also be clearly articulated, located in a significant educational problem, and grounded in a theoretical framework. A rich and detailed description of the practices examined, how the research question was explored, and an analysis of the results should constitute the body of the essay. This section should incorporate or refer to attached artifacts, such as teacher materials, lesson plans, examples of student work, videotapes of classroom events, etc. The implications for the candidate's own practice, in particular, and for curriculum development, educational practice, and school reform in general should be clearly stated. In other words, what are the bigger questions that come out of your research for the field?

Academic presentation counts!

1. Your essay should have a clear introduction, identifiable argument, logical structure, and effective use of evidence (from the research literature and/or your own data collection). See rubric for more detail, and consult the *APA Publication Guide*.
2. Use an engaging title to predispose your reader to an enjoyable experience.
3. Include a Table of Contents with page numbers.
4. Include a running head with your name and abbreviated essay title.
5. Follow APA bibliographic, citation and subhead style.
6. Double-space and paginate your essay, including appendices.
7. Use subheads generously to help your reader follow your argument easily in this long essay.
8. There should be no grammatical or mechanical errors. Find someone to do a final proofreading.
9. Change all names of school districts, schools, teachers, and students to pseudonyms.
10. Use an attractive binding that is appropriate for keeping together the kinds of artifacts you have included.

MASTER'S ESSAY APPROVAL FORM

Candidate Name: _____

Name of First Reader: _____

I. PROPOSAL: Proposal must be attached to this form.

Date Proposal Submitted: _____

Date of Expected Completion: _____

Proposal Approved: _____
(Advisor Signature) (Date)

II. ESSAY APPROVAL:

Date Essay Submitted: _____

First Reader Evaluation: (Circle One)

Pass No Pass

First Reader: _____
(Signature) (Date)

Second Reader Evaluation: (Circle One)

Pass No Pass

Second Reader: _____
(Signature) (Date)

This form must accompany the essay when it is submitted.