

Graduate Thesis Compensation Policy

College of Liberal Arts

Preamble

Offering a Master's degree program is not mandatory. The administration of the College of Liberal Arts acknowledges that high-quality supervision of Master's theses requires significant effort and time from the supervising faculty.

Graduate programs are encouraged to reserve the thesis as the culminating activity for students they judge capable of successfully completing the thesis in a timely manner and for whom such advanced work would clearly further students' educational or career goals. Consequently, each graduate program should have in place procedures or criteria for determining which students should pursue the thesis as the culminating activity for the Master's degree. Moreover, graduate programs under the guidance of the Department Chair should actively consider the distribution of theses across faculty, and monitor how effectively thesis directors carry out their supervisory duties.

Definitions and Norms

A master's thesis is an original academic disquisition on a problem or issue of disciplinary interest, which aims at the production of knowledge. Compositionally, theses explain the significance of the undertaking, normally by stating the major assumptions and reviewing the relevant literature, and then elaborate on the methods of data collection or analysis of evidence, develop and critique the appropriate logical inferences and argumentation, and offer conclusions or recommendations for future work. The average length of the body of a Master's thesis is around 70 double-spaced pages. Theses shall be submitted for college and university review.

A non-thesis project is an artistic or technical endeavor that is appropriate for the fine and applied arts or to more professional or vocational fields. Examples might include an ethnographic film, a novel or body of creative writing, or a significantly original software program. Non-thesis projects should include a project report. The average length of the body of a project report is around 30 double-spaced pages. Non-thesis projects need not be submitted for college review.

Oral Defense

By Title V 40510, an oral defense of the thesis is required of those students who pursue the thesis option for their culminating activity. For students who pursue the non-thesis project option, an oral defense is recommended but not required.

Workload Reduction Policy and Procedure

1. Students pursuing the thesis as the culminating activity for a CLA Master's degree should enroll in 698: Thesis in their degree program. Thesis students may count no more than six WTUs of 698 toward their Master's degree.
2. The chair of the thesis committee is assumed to be the thesis director, and therefore the primary supervisor of the student enrolled in 698. (If that is not the case, the student should enroll in 698 units with the thesis director.)

