MASTER'S DEGREE EXIT PROJECT GUIDELINES

The exit project provides International Studies graduate students an opportunity to integrate and apply what they have learned in the International Studies master's degree program. It is required for graduation.

The exit project is based on original research and may vary in comprehensiveness, format, and approach. It should be a comprehensive original research project, generally involving the application of knowledge to 1) a theoretical issue, 2) to the solution of a particular problem at the international level, or 3) involving a critical and analytical appraisal of a current international problem or issue. The exit project assumes the existence of a problem or issue of international importance.

Although there are only two alternative formats for an exit project -- thesis or capstone project -- students may take different approaches to each one. For example, an exit project may be conceptually or empirically oriented; it may involve a case, a comparative study, or a piece of empirical research. A project may also involve a combination of approaches. All projects should include a literature review. Students must register for a maximum of 1 credit while developing their exit project proposal. If you are writing a thesis, register for 1 INTL 503 thesis credit with your advisor, while developing a thesis proposal. If you are doing a capstone project, register for 1 INTL 601 research credit with your advisor, while developing a capstone project proposal. Before registering for any more credits, students must submit a signed "Exit Project Approval form" (orange sheet), a finalized proposal and have a proposal defense with all committee members present. Consult with your faculty adviser for further clarification.

After the proposal defense (either thesis or capstone), students completing a thesis must register for at least 1 credit of INTL 503 Thesis each term until graduation. Similarly, students completing a capstone project must register for at least 1 credit of INTL 601 Research each term until graduation.

Thesis (minimum nine credits)
Students choosing to complete a thesis must meet all formatting requirements and deadlines of the Graduate School. A thesis should be framed around a thesis question and is usually grounded in an empirical study. Your electronic thesis will be stored by the library in the Scholars' Bank, the UO's digital repository of scholarly work. Anyone can access theses in the Scholars' Bank (unless you request that it be restricted to campus only). Thus, there is potential global access to information about your research.

Capstone Project (minimum nine credits)
A capstone project can take on many forms, such as a video documentary accompanied by a research paper or a stand-alone policy paper. For instance, if you write a policy paper, it should: (1) present information which increases understanding of the nature, dimensions, seriousness, or causes of a particular problem or issue; (2) evaluate the effectiveness of a current problem-solving policy or program and present recommendations for how it might be made more effective; OR (3) identify a particular problem and present analysis about possible alternative solutions, select a preferred solution, and justify the choice. Capstone projects must meet standardized academic formatting standards although they are not required to meet all formatting requirements and deadlines of the Graduate School. Unlike the thesis, these projects are not presented to the Graduate School. They are not made available to the international academic community and the public through the UO Libraries nor microfilmed for the University of Oregon archives or the Scholar's Bank. However, the International Studies Department will submit them to the Scholar's Bank and archive them in the International Studies library.

Expectations in terms of quality and extent of writing are the same for both theses and capstone projects. Copies of theses and capstone projects by former graduate students are available for checkout from 175A PLC. Please check these out through the IS Graduate Coordinator.

PROCEDURES FOR THE EXIT PROJECT

Mid-Program Review
Students are required, approximately midway through their graduate work, to initiate a discussion with their adviser about the nature of an appropriate exit project. This discussion should result in the selection of one paper option and bring into focus the general subject matter to be examined and the approach(es) to be followed. At this time, the faculty adviser will discuss requirements and procedures relating to the exit project with each student. The faculty adviser will approve in writing the student's choice of a paper option on the mid-program review page of the Program Planning Chart (page 2). The faculty adviser will also suggest possible committee members to assist and guide the student in completing the exit project.

At that time it would also be helpful to review the master's degree requirements of the Graduate School http://gradschool.uoregon.edu/node/216 *You* are responsible for meeting both Graduate School and International Studies Program requirements.

Student Exit Procedures
Students nearing completion of their academic program are ready to proceed with their exit project. Students should register for 1 thesis credit while developing a project proposal (see below). Select an exit project committee in consultation with your faculty adviser, and then secure the written commitment of committee members to serve.

Mandatory Proposal Defense and Exit Project Approval
An oral presentation and discussion of the project proposal with your committee is required. When the committee is ready to approve your proposal, please pick up an Exit Project Proposal Approval Form (orange sheet) in the International Studies office. After your committee members have signed the Exit Project Proposal Approval Form,, please return it with a copy of your proposal to the International Studies office to be placed in your file. At such time, you will then be allowed to register for additional thesis or research credits.

Guidelines for Selecting Exit Project Committee Members

1. The committee will have a minimum of three members.

2. The chair of your committee must be your International Studies faculty adviser. (Remember that you always have the option to change advisers.) This is the person with whom you sign up for thesis/research credits.

3. At least two of the committee members must be regular faculty members at the University of Oregon.

4. One member of the committee may be a faculty member from an institution of higher education other than the University of Oregon or may be a non-faculty person who has special expertise and competence in the subject matter of the paper. You must obtain approval from your adviser before finalizing this person's participation on your committee.

If you have been abroad doing research, you should plan to spend at least one term in residence at the UO campus working with your committee prior to graduation.

<p style="text-align: center;">**MASTER'S DEGREE EXIT PROJECT GUIDELINES**</p>

Human Subjects Research

All International Studies graduate students must first determine if their project needs human or animal subjects review before beginning their research. http://rcs.uoregon.edu/ If it is determined that your project needs review, you must begin a research clearance process with Research Compliance Services BEFORE beginning your research.

Failure to follow the required procedures below may result in a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School that the University not accept your thesis or project.

- Protocol forms and a detailed explanation of procedures may be obtained from the Research Compliance Services (541 346-2510). http://rcs.uoregon.edu/ When you submit your Application for Advanced Degree (application for graduation), you will be asked to enter your approved protocol number.

The Office for Protection of Human Subjects has created sample recruitment and consent templates covering a variety of common research scenarios. If you've never created a consent form before, here is a link with templates and more information:
http://rcs.uoregon.edu/content/human-subjects-applications-forms

More information about research ethics and compliance may be found at this Graduate School link:
http://gradschool.uoregon.edu/policies-procedures/research

Obtaining Credit for a Thesis or Capstone Project

Students selecting the thesis option must receive a minimum total of nine credits and should register for INTL 503 Thesis. Students doing a capstone project must receive a minimum total of nine credits and should register for INTL 601 Research. Students writing a capstone project cannot register for Thesis credits. It is extremely difficult to change Research credits to Thesis credits, and vice versa, so please plan carefully. In the term the degree is received, the student must register for at least 3 graduate credits; if a student is completing a thesis, registration must include a minimum of 1 thesis credit and 2 additional credits.

Thesis and research credits will remain incomplete until the exit project is finished. If a student is doing a thesis, the Graduate School will convert the incomplete(s) to pass(es) once the thesis is approved. Research credit incompletes will be converted by faculty advisers.

Writing Your Paper and Defending It

Be sure to check with the Graduate School during the term prior to the term in which you intend to graduate about completion deadlines. You must complete a Degree Application form at the Graduate School by the second week of classes of the term in which you graduate. This deadline, along with other relevant deadlines, is available online at: http://gradschool.uoregon.edu/node/262.

Theses must conform to the format outlined in the *University of Oregon Style and Policy Manual for Theses and Dissertations.* This document is available online at:
https://gradschool.uoregon.edu/sites/gradschool2.uoregon.edu/files/ETD_Style_Manual_2013_Feb_20.pdf.
Please follow the guidelines in this manual carefully. As you proceed with writing your thesis or capstone project, it is important to keep your adviser informed of your progress, and to allow ample time for your committee members to read your draft(s) and give you feedback. Check with your committee members to find out how much time they will need.

Mandatory Oral Defense
An oral defense is required for all theses and capstone projects. In consultation with your adviser and other committee members, schedule a date and time for your oral defense. Room 348 PLC (Thurber Conference Room) is available for oral defenses; please arrange for the use of the room with the International Studies Graduate Coordinator.

Before your oral defense, the Graduate Coordinator will give you an Exit Project Approval Form (green sheet) including your name and the title of your thesis. At the time of your oral defense, you will provide this form to your adviser for committee members to sign indicating they approve the written project. Your faculty advisor will return the completed form to the International Studies office for inclusion in your file.

Submission of Exit Project
If submitting a thesis, no later than the Monday of Finals Week at 5 p.m., you must upload your approved thesis and submit signed forms to the Graduate School. Instructions may be found at this link:
http://gradschool.uoregon.edu/etd

Capstone projects are not submitted to the Graduate School, but must be approved by the student's committee by the end of term. The Exit Project Approval Form (green sheet), including your name and the title of your capstone project must be approved by your committee via signature. Check with the IS Graduate Coordinator for deadlines.

After your thesis has been approved by the Graduate School, the Graduate Coordinator will retrieve a copy of your thesis from Scholar's Bank and place a copy in the International Studies Library for future graduate students to study. As a courtesy, we request you submit an electronic copy to the IS Graduate Coordinator as well for our library and possible for posting on the International Studies website. You may want to provide bound copies to members of your committee.

After your capstone project has been approved by your committee, please send an electronic copy to the Graduate Coordinator so we may archive your project for the IS library.

THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT PROPOSAL OUTLINE

The following outline is to assist in the preparation of a thesis or capstone project proposal; it is not a rigid document. Proposals for the project are recommended to be six to eight pages in length. Page length refers to double-spaced typewritten pages. Proposals are expected to be clear, concise, and logical. Please keep in mind that this is just one sample outline. Please check with your advisor to see what format they prefer.

A. Statement of the problem or what is to be studied.

      1. Identify the area of study in its broadest terms.
      2. Define the specific area of interest.
      3. Define the research or policy problem in exact terms.
      4. What is the argument you are making, e.g., what is your thesis?

B. Purpose of the study.
      1. Public purposes: if you were asking for a public hearing for the study, what would be some compelling reasons you might use to elicit such support?

    2.   Private purposes: why are you investigating this particular topic?

C. Importance and significance of the study.

    1. How does it affect the existing state of knowledge and/or research needs in a particular area?

    2. Who might use the information and how?

D. Delimitations and limitations of the study.

    1. Delimitations set the boundary on what the study is about; e.g., geographic area to be covered, time period, and so on.

    2. Limitations define some of the important constraints that are beyond the ability of the student to control; e.g., irregularities in international data sets, gaps in the available literature, and so on.

E. Definition of terms.

    Any terms used in a specific way, or in a way that may be unfamiliar to the reader or ambiguous, should be defined.

F. Data collection and analysis; or, how is the study to be conducted?

    1. Study design: comparative historical, historical time series, case study, interviews, participant observation, etc.

    2. Data collection: Elaborate how data are to be collected and from what source(s). For example, nature and selection of the sample and/or population to be studied, and the survey instrument-questionnaire, interview or observation schedule-if any, to be used. Attach a copy of the instrument(s) to the proposal as an appendix.

    3. Analysis: a brief discussion of how the data are to be presented and analyzed (statistical tests, comparative profiles, etc.).

G. Organization of chapters or sections.

    1. The descriptive materials that follow serve two purposes. The first relates to the proposal outline and suggests that the following organization-or variations on these recommendations-be cursorily treated in your outline. In other words, in your PROPOSAL simply describe how you intend to organize your paper. The second purpose relates to your final paper and suggests how the actual organization of your finished work may be accomplished, and what content should be considered for inclusion.

    2. The content of the thesis or capstone project may be organized in a number of ways. Each student should adopt an approach that best presents the information and analysis. Certain content, however, is important and should be excluded only after careful consideration and discussion with the student's faculty adviser.

    Recommended content normally includes:

        a. Title Page and Table of Contents.

b. Chapter or Section 1: Introduction. An overview of what is to be studied with a preview of the remaining topics in this recommended outline. Your theoretical argument or hypothesis should be clearly stated in this section.

c. Chapter or Section 2: Review of literature. A discussion of what others have done on both the general area(s) of the study and on the particular problem addressed by the paper. It is recommended this be structured around concepts. This section may be incorporated into the Introduction.

d. Chapter or Section 3: Methodology. Discussion of how the project was conducted-- e.g., research design, data collection and analysis procedures. Again, this section may be incorporated into the Introduction.

e. Chapter or Section 4: Presentation of data. This is an important portion of the paper since it clearly and logically presents the information collected. You may decide that this should occur in multiple chapters.

f. Chapter or Section 5: Analysis of data. This is another important portion of the thesis or capstone project. In this section you discuss relationships and explain why they exist. Through this effort you are attempting to enhance understanding of what has been studied. A word of caution: data analysis takes time, conscious concern, and the desire to understand deeply what you have studied.

g. Chapter or Section 6: Summary and conclusions, issues raised of generalizable significance, recommendations. Keep the summary short and simple. At this point you tell the reader what you intended to do, what you did, and what you learned. Address which issues that were raised that may have significance elsewhere. The conclusion should have two parts: 1) if you had to do it over, what would be done differently; and, 2) what problems need to be looked at next? Some theses and most capstone projects will include generalizations and/or recommendations as part of the final chapter or section.

h. Following the last chapter or section the student includes a bibliography and an appendix. We expect that foreign language sources will be included in your bibliography.

3. Be careful to use citations, footnotes or endnotes as appropriate, to designate the source of both quotes and ideas you use from others' works.

4. A final note: The writer of a good thesis or capstone project keeps it to the point and has a good editor go over it carefully before the committee reviews it. Spouses and friends are helpful as outside readers but their esteem for you produces a myopia a professional editor is able to avoid. The Graduate School has a list of thesis editors, and will make this available to you upon request. Lastly, drafts of your paper as well as final copies should be given to committee members in time for them to read and comment on them. Ask your committee members how much time they will need for this. Each person serving on your committee should receive a courtesy copy of your final paper or thesis.

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