Master of Education Program
Vermont College of Union Institute and University

Thesis Handbook

[Everything you ever wanted to know, and more, about the thesis!]

February 2007
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What is the Purpose of the Master’s Degree Thesis?

The thesis is many things to many people; however, within the Vermont College M.Ed. Program, we think that it serves several functions:

- to allow the learner to immerse him/herself in a topic more deeply
- to explore the integration of theory and practice
- to synthesize, enhance, and culminate the learning that the learner has accomplished in the Program
- to push the boundaries of experiential and academic learning
- to demonstrate authority and/or expertise on a topic in education

Most M.Ed. students use the thesis term as an occasion to bring together and draw upon the learnings and resources from previous terms, and to add to their knowledge through some new reading and thinking. For learners not seeking licensure within their programs, the thesis may be spread over two terms.

Identifying the Topic

The thesis must focus on a central question, problem, or issue. We encourage each student to select a question that has meaning for him/her, and that will contribute in some way to the field. The question must be narrow (or specific) enough for the student to cover in depth, and broad enough to be meaningful.

For the most part, the thesis question or topic should grow out of the student’s program, and allow the student to probe more deeply into the area of interest. There is certainly room for new knowledge, for experimentation, for discovery within the context of the thesis, but there should be a connection to the rest of the student’s M.Ed. program.

The choice of a thesis question or topic is critical. It must be “do-able” within the time frame. It must be specific, focused, and narrow enough to be able to get beyond the surface. It needs to be “fence-able,” meaning that the writer will have the ability to frame the study appropriately without spilling into too many other areas. Optimally, the topic or question will grow out of and/or incorporate studies undertaken during the program.

As with a term study, students should begin by asking: “What do I want to learn?” Other questions that some students find helpful to consider include:

- How will I know when I’ve answered the question?
- Does this question interest me enough to stick with it?
- Have other people studied this?
- Is this important to me, and/or to the field?
- In what way(s) does it matter? [Some people call this the “so what?” question.]

Students should discuss potential questions and topics with the advisor, who should be able to help in framing and focusing the study. The development of a research question may take considerable time and reflection. A note of caution: if the question can be answered “yes” or “no,” it’s probably framed inappropriately for the thesis!
Determining the Type of Thesis

The type of thesis will depend on the question, and the type of research chosen. Several types of thesis are possible, including:

- theoretical research
- qualitative research
  case study, historical, ethnographic
- action research
  participant observation, naturalistic research
- quantitative research

Learners should carefully examine definitions of the types of research in sources such as Borg, Gall, & Gall (2002), McMillan (1997), or Suter (1997), or any one of a number of other educational research texts available in the library.

As the thesis in the M.Ed. Program is for six credits and must be completed in a four-month term, many students undertake theoretical research, which may be more manageable in the time frame. Students who wish to do qualitative or quantitative research should plan on developing their instruments – surveys, questionnaires, interviews, observations – in the term prior to writing the thesis. Students undertaking action research projects should undertake and probably complete the action research itself prior to the thesis-writing term.

The research may lead to several kinds of products which may be included in the thesis in addition to the theoretical argument or foundation, for example:

- the development of a curriculum unit or sequence
- a case study, of an individual, a group, a class, or an institution
- a program design
- a set of guidelines or recommendations for curriculum, programs, policy, etc.
- a policy proposal
- and/or, may include a theoretical argument

In all cases, the thesis will include reflection on the product, or reflection on the possibilities for a product, even when the product is only outlined or suggested, as in sets of guidelines or recommendations.

Developing the Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal should provide an overview of the thesis, including:

- thesis statement – the central question or problem
- purpose – the reason(s) for undertaking the project, the personal and professional context for the research

- areas of inquiry – the disciplines and/or topics to be included
- methodology – the type of research to be used and why it is appropriate
- **type of product**, if applicable
- **significance/contribution/implications** – how the research may contribute to the field and/or to practice
- **proposed bibliography** – to include works already studied which will be used, as well as the 4-8 new book length resources to be used, making clear which are new and which are from previous terms.

All proposals for research and writing the thesis in the coming academic year are submitted to the faculty in the first week of the summer residency. First, the student sends a draft of the proposal to his/her advisor prior to arriving at the residency. During the residency, faculty will review and return the proposal with feedback, including suggestions or recommendations for revision, and often requesting a revision. Students must work on and gain approval for a thesis proposal prior to leaving the residency, in order to have a clear path. Most thesis proposals are between two and five pages in length, excluding the bibliography.

**NOTE:** A study plan for the thesis term is required. You should include the dates and contents of planned submissions, as well as a “draft table of contents,” which will give you and your advisor an outline from which to work.

Faculty will advise whether the student needs to seek approval of the Institutional Review Board. If so, this should be done **immediately** following approval of the thesis proposal by the M.Ed. faculty, using the guidelines and procedures in the Union IRB Handbook. Approval for human subjects research must be gained in the term prior to the term in which the student works on or writes the thesis. Students **may not begin research involving human subjects without** approval.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

[See Appendix G for more information.]

Any research that involves human subjects needs to be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to reduce the possibility of harm. Many educational research proposals can be reviewed by an IRB Expedited Review Team, which speeds the process considerably.

The IRB must review questionnaires, interview protocols, treatments, and sample selection methods, and requires copies of Informed Consent Forms to be used with participants in the research. A proposed reference list should be included.

The intent of the IRB is to protect human subjects from harm, and the higher education institution from risk. The intent is **not** to discourage learners from engaging in research with human subjects. Proposals are often strengthened through review of the IRB.

Some examples of research that does and does not require IRB review are:
- The effects of three reading programs on fifth grade students’ achievements in reading are studied, as measured by scores on standardized tests. If the reading programs were already being taught and achievement measured through the tests, this would not require approval. If, however, the researcher wanted to use pre- and post-questionnaires of attitudes about reading, or interview children about their perceptions, human subjects approval would be necessary.
- The researcher is interested in systems of distributive justice and how each of three systems might effect change in school funding and equity if applied in a particular state. The research is being conducted through library research. This would not require human subjects approval.
- The researcher is studying a group of five college students: how they interact when studying together, how their interactions affect their grades and attitudes toward education, and how they perceive their study group in terms of its importance to their sustained success. This would require human subjects approval.

In general, if the research is going to involve human subjects in anything other than their daily routine, review is required. Again, IRB approval is required prior to beginning research. Students follow the instructions on the Union IRB website to create their proposals, and then send them by email attachment to the Program Coordinator, who will distribute them to the appropriate person(s).

**Research Involving Children**

You may not realize that research that involves children as subjects requires the consent to participate from both the child and the child’s parents or guardians. The child’s consent must be obtained if he or she is capable—even in a limited way—of understanding the implications of participating in the project. (UI&U’s IRB defines a “child” as anyone under the age of 18.)

It can be a real challenge to design an informed consent process (including a written informed consent form or “script” for verbal presentation, whichever is appropriate) in language that the child can understand. The informed consent process with the child’s parents or guardians, in addition to providing all usual informed consent information, needs to include provisions to ensure that the adult(s) will not try to influence the child’s decision.

A helpful hint for developing appropriate informed consent language for children: consult with experts, such as teachers or child psychologists who regularly work with children similar in age and cognitive levels to those you intend to ask to participate. Recognize that you may need to have several informed consent forms if your subject population will include children at various levels.

**Key Elements of the Thesis**

**Organizing Information** (structure), including:

- Title page (see Appendix C) (p. i, not numbered)
- Abstract (p. ii)
  
  The abstract is a formal summary of the thesis that prospective readers may use to decide whether or not the thesis is relevant to their own interests. As such, it should
include a brief re-statement of the thesis statement or question; an overview of areas of inquiry and major themes and/or concepts, possibly mentioning major theorists upon which the study is based; the methodology employed; summary of results, findings, or outcomes; and a brief summary of the conclusion, including implications for future research, practice, or policy. The abstract should be written in third person.

The abstract should be one paragraph, under 250 words, and in general, it should answer these questions:
- Why was this study done?
- How was the study done?
- What was discovered?
- What does it mean?

Most writers find that the abstract is best written after the first full draft is completed. The abstract should be well written and polished, as it will determine for the most part who reads the thesis later on.

- Table of Contents (see Appendix D) (p. iii)

Chapters (organizing the content):

Ordinarily, the chapters of the thesis will be as follows. Please note that there is room for variation, depending upon the specific thesis and author! Chapters, including the Introduction and the Conclusion, are often titled beyond their function, although only the function is described here. For example, one might call a third chapter that serves as the discussion, “Swimming through the Waters of Critical Pedagogy.” Or, one might simply call it, “Discussion and Interpretation.” For further examples, see the sample Tables of Contents in the Appendices.

Opening chapter: Introduction
Includes some or all of the following:
- Context [personal as well as professional]
- Thesis statement/purpose
- Significance
- Limitations of the study
- Methodology [what, why, and how limited by]
- Brief overview of the thesis, that is, a roadmap of the sequence of the chapters that follow

Chapters for Literature Review and Discussion, Findings, Analysis, and/or Interpretation (usually 2-4 chapters)

The chapters will vary according to the type of research undertaken. Qualitative, action, and quantitative research projects will all have one or more of these categories, usually a combination. Library research might have two or more chapters which present and critically examine the literature; the review of literature in this case could comprise the entire thesis, other than the first and last chapters.
For the most part, each chapter should have an introduction or lead in section, and a summary or conclusion section. Writers should follow the old guideline: Say what you’re going to say; say it; say what you said. Sections and sub-sections make understanding the thesis’s message easier for the reader. They also help to keep the writing organized.

Closing chapter: Conclusion
Includes: Summary of discussion and/or of findings/results, and interpretation
Articulation of conclusion
Reflections (optional)
Implications for practice [explication of results belongs in the previous chapter]
Limitations of the study

Implications for further study: So what? Now what?
Afterthoughts, lingering questions

Reference List: All references cited in text must appear in the reference list; conversely, each entry in the reference list must be cited in text. See the APA Publication Manual for specific information.

Bibliography: (optional) If there are numerous resources used but not cited, then the student might choose to include a bibliography as well as a reference list.

Appendices: These are labeled Appendix A, Appendix B, etc., and listed in the Table of Contents. Each appendix should appear because it was referenced in the text. It is not necessary to include items that were not referenced. Items might include: assessment rubrics, interview protocols, survey (or other) instruments.

Writing the Review of the Literature (Literature Review)

The literature review is in most cases the most formal part of the thesis. It is always written in third person, never in first person. It is essentially theoretical rather than practical or applied. While some breadth is expected, generally this is the place in which the depth of knowledge and understanding is demonstrated.

The purpose of the review is multilayered. It is the place for the writer/researcher to establish his/her credentials in terms of expertise in the field (what makes one a “Master”); it is also a demonstration of understanding and knowledge. Often it is the place in which the language of the thesis is established, the terms which are being used. The review “sets the stage” for the presentation and analysis of the research itself. Students whose thesis is based on library research may or may not do a literature review as such. Their library research may supplant the literature review (See Appendix C, Sample 1). Or they may still include a literature review, which precedes the central discussion of the thesis (See Appendix C, Sample 2). But one point of
the review is that the writer establishes him or her self as qualified and ready to enter the conversation.

Reviews are seldom exhaustive, and never comprehensive; in other words, there is always more to read, more to explore. And the length of the term (as well as the student’s program) requires that each student set some limits on him/her self, be prepared to “let go,” and respect the fence s/he has erected. No thesis or review of the literature should ever be considered the writer’s final opportunity to think, read, and/or write about the topic. Often it is challenging to “let go” of certain facets of the topic, or even of the desire to “solve” the problem, but it is truly necessary.

When writing the review, some questions to consider are:

- Have I included the major voices in the field?
- Have I shown where and how theorists differ and agree?
- Have I organized the ideas according to themes?
- Have I enough depth and breadth to provide a foundation and context for my research?
- Have I shown how the work cited is connected to my thesis topic?
- Have I shown why the work cited is important to my thinking and/or the field?

Going study by study through a large body of literature relevant to the subject may be a beginning point in developing the literature review, but there is more. What stands out? What is abundantly in evidence? What is without merit? What begs the question? The review should be organized in conceptual terms that emerge from the review itself, perhaps incorporating particular theorists or researchers, findings, historical periods, methods. While there are numerous ways to organize, it must be organized, and the organization should be explained/introduced in the beginning of the chapter. One of the expectations of graduate level inquiry is that the learner is able to critically reflect upon and synthesize the work of previous scholars.

Another important feature of the Review of the Literature is the clear connection to the research question and purpose. There should be a logical explanation of why this particular concept and/or group of studies are included.

Headings, Subheadings, and Sub-subheadings

Each chapter of the thesis should be divided into levels of sections and sub-sections, with headings and sub-headings. Students should use a standard outline form to organize the material, which should be reflected in the draft Table of Contents. The headings themselves follow an established hierarchy, used consistently throughout the thesis; for example:

CHAPTER TITLES ARE USUALLY CENTERED, BOLD, AND CAPITAL LETTERED

Section Headings are Centered and Bold (with important words capitalized)

Sub-section Headings are Left-margined and Bold (with appropriate words capitalized)

Sub-sub-section headings are indented, and perhaps underlined, not in bold (and not capitalized, but punctuated).
Students may vary this, using common sense, so that the bigger organizing headings are clearly more prominent than the smaller sub-sections. Consistency and logic are the key!

**Process for Submission**

The timeline here refers to a thesis which is being submitted over one term. There are, of course, many variations, which advisors can help students to plan.

The thesis is usually submitted in four “packets,” separated by three weeks instead of the usual four weeks. Students often submit Chapter 1 and a draft of Chapter 2 for the first packet, then Chapters 3 and 4 for the second packet. The third packet, 9 weeks into the term, should be a first full draft, with all revisions of chapters previously submitted made. This full draft goes to both the advisor and the second reader. Once the student receives feedback from both the advisor and the second reader, s/he should complete the revisions and respond to the suggestions. The revised full copy (sometimes called packet #4) goes again to both the advisor and the second reader, at the same time as other students’ third packets. Each submission that includes revisions must include a cover sheet with revisions and page numbers noted.

**Second Reader Information**

**Selection:**
As you approach your final term, you will need to select a second reader for your thesis. The second reader provides an additional perspective and helps to ensure the quality of your work.

**Who?**
The second reader usually has some interest or expertise in your topic of study. Consider the brief biographies of the faculty to decide with whom to talk.

**What?**
The second reader can offer feedback, questions, and suggestions on content, writing, and organization. It may be especially helpful for you to be clear about your strengths and weaknesses about the kinds of assistance you would like from a second reader.

**When?**
During the summer residency before your thesis term, you need to talk with and select your potential second readers. Toward the end of the residency, you will be notified which of your choices will be working with you. You should be sure to give him/her a copy of your approved thesis proposal.

**Why?**
As indicated above, the second reader provides another perspective to improve and ensure the quality of your thesis.

**Processes for Submission and Completion of the Thesis:**
1. Student submits chapters to advisor according to schedule arranged with advisor.
2. Student continues to submit chapters along with revised portions in all packets to advisor.
3. Student submits full first draft (including some revised, some new writing) of thesis to advisor and second reader **five weeks prior to end of term.**
4. Advisor and second reader read, and, after conferring with each other, send responses directly to student.
5. Student submits revised thesis to advisor and second reader two weeks prior to end of term.
6. Second reader and faculty member confer and respond ASAP indicating any further revision needed; second reader indicates to advisor if thesis is approvable. The second reader may or may not need to see the final revisions before approval.
7. Student submits final draft and self-evaluation to advisor one week prior to end of term.
8. Advisor reviews.
9. If approved by the advisor, student submits two clean copies of final version to Program office by end of term.
10. Student submits two clean copies of final version to Program office with the Thesis Binding Request form (page 24). Up to three additional copies may be included for binding, to be accompanied by payment of $12 each per student copy for binding and shipping.

Note: All final theses must be proofread and error-free. Only theses free of errors in grammar, mechanics or format will be bound or placed in the library for other students’ use.

Roles and responsibilities:
The advisor:
- responds to student regarding both substance and writing for each draft and final version of thesis
- ensures student’s correct use of “GUM [grammar-usage-mechanics],” APA format, and adherence to M.Ed. Program guidelines.

The second reader:
- reads and responds to substance of first full draft and revised version of thesis.

Common Questions – Common (or Uncommon) Answers

Do I really need to write and submit a study plan for the term I am writing the thesis? Yes, you do! Your study plan for the thesis term should include the dates and contents of each planned submission, as well as a “Draft Table of Contents,” which will give you and your advisor an outline to work from.

What should I submit each time? Generally, each submission should include:
- a cover letter (explaining what’s included and any variations)
- a draft title page
- your draft Table of Contents, updated appropriately
- your running Reference List

Your advisor might request other pieces as well.

Do I have to use APA format? Yes. The Vermont College Graduate Division requires that all theses within a program use the same system of documentation and presentation for the thesis. As an education program, the M.Ed. Program uses the APA style, the most frequently used method in the social sciences. We have a few variations, which can be accessed in the APA guideline summary (Appendix D).
For example, we do not require “running heads,” we allow for page numbers to be placed in one of two different spots, and we allow hanging or non-hanging indents for reference lists. Other than the noted exceptions, students should follow all APA guidelines.

**What’s the correct spacing?**
Double-spacing is required throughout the thesis, except when single-spacing improves readability. For example, single-spacing may be used in long quotations (which are indented five spaces or ½ in.), in table titles and headings, and in references (but double-spacing is required *between* references).

**How big should margins be?**
APA format requires 1” margins all around.

**When is first person (I, me, we, us, our, ours) appropriate?**
Generally, first person may be appropriate in the introduction and conclusion, and possibly in the discussion, chapters of the thesis. It is not appropriate in the Literature Review when this is a discrete chapter or the Abstract.

**Is second person (you, yours, your) ever appropriate?**
Except in direct quotations, second person, by tradition and convention, is *not* appropriate in formal writing.

**Where do my ideas get to be written/heard?**
The writer/researcher’s ideas are usually introduced or referred to in the introduction, presented and discussed in the discussion, and polished or proposed in the conclusion.

**What kind of paper do I use to print the final copies?**
Because of the wonders of modern technology, it is no longer required for final copies to be on acid-free paper; they should be on heavy, white bond paper.

**What resources do I include in my reference list?**
All resources quoted, paraphrased, or referred to in the text *must appear* in the reference list; conversely, each entry in the reference list *must be cited* in text. One exception to this is when a resource is cited by another resource. For example, Bird is quoted by Beast, and the thesis quotes Beast discussing Bird. Bird would not appear in the reference list.

**How do I cite authors in the thesis?**
Refer to the APA section in this handbook. Generally, you should not use first names or initials in the body of the thesis, unless there is a strong reason to do so.

**How long should it be?**
The M.Ed. thesis text should be between 45-60 pages. Of course, there might be occasion to be slightly shorter or longer.

**How long should each chapter be?**
There is a great deal of variation here, but generally, one might attach the following number of pages to the chapters as described earlier:
Clearly, some theses will have more chapters, with some longer or shorter chapters. Each chapter should begin on its own page. Advisors often have good suggestions to help students strengthen, lengthen, or shorten chapters.

**Should I include Acknowledgements?**
Acknowledgements are acceptable, but not required. They usually precede the Table of Contents and follow the Abstract. This is the place for the student to specifically mention people whose support has been important.

**Should I include a Dedication?**
While acceptable, a dedication is unusual in a thesis. If included, it should follow the Acknowledgements page.

**What is the concluding, completion process?**
When the final copy has been approved by the Advisor and the Second Reader, the student submits at least two copies of the thesis, on good quality paper, to the Program Coordinator for binding. Students may order additional bindings for personal use, gifts, etc., but the copies and payment must accompany their order.

**What is methodology? What do I include in this section?**
Methodology is the means you have chosen to answer your research questions. Each research project or study proceeds with a particular methodology. Tell the reader why you chose the particular approach(es). You should be able to justify why you undertook your work in the manner you did.

**Graduating Student Presentation**

Each M.Ed. student must present his/her thesis to the community at the winter or summer residency. Occasionally, due to great distance, students who will not be attending graduation have sent in a videotaped presentation. We encourage students to present in person because it facilitates feedback, dialogue, and is both satisfying for the presenter and inspiring to other students!

Presentations are scheduled for 45 minutes, and may involve videotapes, audiotapes, charts, diagrams, overheads, or other aids. Students are strongly encouraged to think about how to present their major findings or learning in ways which are engaging, interactive, and dialogic. There should always be time allowed for questions and discussion, unless these have been incorporated into the presentation itself. Advisors can be helpful in the planning of presentations.

Some examples follow:
Monica’s thesis was an exploration into the effects of three fifth grade reading programs on the comprehension and enjoyment of reading as measured by pre- and post-questionnaires, focus group interviews, and scores on standardized tests. She used three heterogeneous classrooms in one school as her samples. Her study was essentially qualitative, conducted through the questionnaires and some focus group interviews, but strengthened through the use of already recorded standardized test scores (quantitative). Her findings presented the strengths and weaknesses of the three reading programs particular to the setting.

For her presentation, Monica brought samples of the reading programs and divided the audience into three groups, each with one program, and had the groups anticipate the reactions of the students. She then summarized her findings, and talked about the challenges and possibilities the study offered. To conclude her presentation, Monica took questions from the group about the methodology employed, her findings, and her conclusion.

Robert studied systems of school funding in an attempt to propose an equitable system of funding for his state. He looked at the three major systems currently in use, and recommendations from the literature for alternatives. His “product” was a policy proposal for school funding which would provide equitable funding for each child, and reasonably equitable facilities for each community.

For his presentation, Robert brought an experiential game he had created which increases capital for the “winners,” while making it difficult for the “losers” to make gains. He then facilitated a discussion on the experience, and finally, presented his proposal to the group.

Rita explored the concept of school climate, and the possible or purported connection between climate and school violence. She did an extensive literature review, and then analyzed the research for five predictors of school violence. She proposed a set of recommendations which she asserted would improve school climate and reduce school violence.

For her presentation, Rita shared her recommendations (on an overhead), and then asked the group for their own views. She then asked them to consider whether or not their own school communities were using or could use her recommendations. She created small groups whose task was to choose one recommendation and “play it out” in their own communities. The small groups reported their work back to the whole, and Rita facilitated a discussion and answered questions that arose.
Appendix A: Thesis Proposal Form

MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAM
VERMONT COLLEGE OF UNION INSTITUTE & UNIVERSITY
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
802-828-8810

Thesis Proposal

preliminary _______ date _______
revised _______ date _______
final _______ date _______

Student’s name _________________________ Advisor’s name _________________________

Concentration: Adult & Higher Education Curriculum & Instruction Educational Leadership
(Circle one) Guidance Issues in Education

Current term: ___________________________ Thesis term: ___________________________

Endorsement area: (for licensure candidates only) ________________________________

Working title: ______________________________

Following the guidelines for the thesis proposal and using as many additional pages as necessary, complete this form and record your proposal for your thesis including each of the elements below:

_____ thesis statement
_____ purpose
_____ areas of inquiry
_____ methodology
_____ type of product, if applicable
_____ significance/contribution/implications
_____ proposed bibliography

Human subjects research proposal needed? _____ Yes _____ No

Student’s signature: _________________________ Advisor’s signature: _________________________

Date: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Appendix B: Title Page

A Thesis

entitled

[thesis title]

by

[student name]

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Education Degree

in

[concentration]

at

Vermont College of Union Institute & University

(Include this statement if a proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board or the Expedited Review Team.)

To the best of my knowledge, the plan of conduct for this research conforms with the policies and procedures for the use of human subjects at Union Institute & University.

________________________________________________________________________
[student name] Date

________________________________________________________________________
Advisor Date

________________________________________________________________________
Second Reader Date

________________________________________________________________________
Program Director Date

________________________________________________________________________
Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs/Director of Master’s Programs Date

NOTE: Where brackets [] appear, students need to insert their own information.
Appendix C: Table of Contents Sample 1
Thesis based on library research, without a separate literature review

[Title: Inequality in Schools: The Scandal that Persists]

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Thesis based on library research, with a literature review

[Title: Moral Education: Problems, Perspectives, and Possibilities]

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Thesis based on library research, including library research and a proposed curriculum

[Title: Art Education and Adolescent Development: Identity, Voice and Meaning]

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Thesis based on qualitative, action, or quantitative research

[Title: Full Service Schools: Communities, Schools and Families Working Together]

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Appendix D: Vermont College M.Ed. Program APA Guidelines

APA Style Essentials

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed., 2001) provides a comprehensive reference guide to writing using APA style, organization, and content. Students should plan on using the *Publication Manual* to answer detailed questions not answered by this *APA Style Essentials* document. The purpose of this document is to provide a common core of elements of APA style for any assignment that specifies APA style.

All academic writing done in the M.Ed. Program should be done using APA style. (See Thesis Guidelines for specific information concerning the Master’s thesis.)

Faculty will also specify in writing when additional APA style elements must be observed. This document includes sections pertinent to the thesis, such as the title page or abstract, many of which are not required for shorter papers and critical reviews.

I. General Document Guidelines
   A. Margins: One inch on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)
   B. Font Size and Type: 12-pt. font (Times Roman or similar are acceptable typefaces)
   C. Spacing: Double-space throughout the paper, including the title page, abstract, body of the document, and references.
   D. Alignment: Flush left (creating uneven right margin)
   E. Paragraph Indentation: 5-7 spaces
   F. Pagination: The page number appears one inch from the right edge of the paper on the first line of every page or centered one half inch from the bottom of the page. The title page is counted but not numbered.

II. Title Page (See Appendix B)
   A. Pagination: The Title Page is counted as page 1 but not numbered.
   B. Key Elements: Thesis title, student name, degree fulfillment statement, concentration, institutional affiliation, plan of conduct statement, and signature lines and titles.
   C. Thesis Title: Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the page.
   D. Student Name: Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following the title.
   E. Degree Fulfillment Statement: Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following the student name.
   F. Concentration: Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following the fulfillment statement.
   G. Institutional Affiliation: Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following the student name.
   H. Plan of Conduct Statement (for human subjects research only): Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following institutional affiliation.
I. **Signature Lines and Titles:** Uppercase and lowercase letters, right justified with line for signature and date.

III. **Abstract:** The abstract is a one page, usually one paragraph, self-contained summary of the most important elements of the paper. (See page 4 and 5 of this handbook.)
   A. **Pagination:** The abstract begins on a new page (page ii).
   B. **Heading:** Abstract (centered on the first line below the manuscript page header)
   C. **Format:** The abstract (in block format) begins on the line following the Abstract heading. The abstract should not exceed 250 words. All numbers in the abstract (except those beginning a sentence) should be typed as digits rather than words.

IV. **Table of Contents:** See Appendix C, Samples 1-4.

V. **Body**
   A. **Pagination:** The body of the paper begins on a new page (page 1). Sections and subsections of the body of the paper do not begin on new pages.
   B. **Title:** The title of the paper (in uppercase and lowercase letters) is centered on the first line below the manuscript page header.
   C. **Introduction:** The introduction is usually Chapter One.
   D. **Headings:** Headings are used to organize the document and reflect the relative importance of sections.
      1. Main headings (when the paper has either one or two levels of headings) use bolded centered uppercase and lowercase letters (e.g., Method, Results, Discussion, and References).
      2. Subheadings (when the paper has two levels of headings) are bolded and use flush left, uppercase and lowercase letters (e.g., Participants, Apparatus, and Procedure as subsections of the Method section).

V. **Text citations:** Source material must be documented in the body of the paper by citing the author(s) and date(s) of the sources. The underlying principle here is that ideas and words of others must be formally acknowledged. The reader can obtain the full source citation from the list of references that follows the body of the paper.
   A. When the names of the authors of a source are part of the formal structure of the sentence, the year of publication appears in parentheses following the identification of the authors. Consider the following example:

   Wirth and Mitchell (1994) found that although there was a reduction in violent behavior over a period of two weeks when children abstained from viewing television, the degree of difference was insufficient to support an outright ban.

   [**Note:** *and* is used when multiple authors are identified as part of the formal structure of the sentence. Compare this to the example in the following section.]
B. When the authors of a source are not part of the formal structure of the sentence, both the authors and years of publication appear in parentheses, separated by semicolons. Consider the following example:

Reviews of research on religion and health have concluded that at least some types of religious behaviors are related to higher levels of physical and mental health (Gartner, Larson, & Allen, 1991; Koenig, 1990; Levin & Vanderpool, 1991; Maton & Pargament, 1987; Paloma & Pendleton, 1991; Payne, Bergin, Bielema, & Jenkins, 1991).

[Note: & is used when multiple authors are identified in parenthetical material. Note also that when several sources are cited parenthetically, they are ordered alphabetically by first authors' surnames.]

C. When a source that has three, four, or five authors is cited, all authors are included the first time the source is cited. When that source is cited again, the first author's surname and "et al." are used. Consider the following example:

Reviews of research on religion and health have concluded that at least some types of religious behaviors are related to higher levels of physical and mental health (Payne, Bergin, Bielema, & Jenkins, 1991).

Payne et al. (1991) showed that ...

D. When a source that has two authors is cited, both authors are included every time the source is cited.

E. When a source that has six or more authors is cited, the first author's surname and "et al." are used every time the source is cited (including the first time), except in the reference list.

F. Every effort should be made to cite only sources that you have actually read. When it is necessary to cite a source that you have not read ("Grayson" in the following example) that is cited in a source that you have read ("Murzynski & Degelman" in the following example), use the following format for the text citation and list only the source you have read in the References List:

Grayson (as cited in Murzynski & Degelman, 1996) identified four components of body language that were related to judgments of vulnerability.

VI. Quotations: When a direct quotation is used, always include the author, year, and page number as part of the citation.

A. A quotation of fewer than 40 words should be enclosed in double quotation marks and should be incorporated into the formal structure of the sentence. Consider the following example:
Patients receiving prayer had "less congestive heart failure, required less diuretic and antibiotic therapy, had fewer episodes of pneumonia, had fewer cardiac arrests, and were less frequently intubated and ventilated" (Byrd, 1988, p. 829).

When quoting or paraphrasing in text, the final punctuation follows the parenthetical citation.

B. A lengthier quotation of 40 or more words should appear (without quotation marks) apart from the surrounding text, in block format, with each line indented five spaces from the left margin.

When using an inset quotation, the punctuation stays with the quotation. Consider the following example:

It is very easy to conform to what your society or your parents and teachers tell you. That is a safe and easy way of existing; but that is not living, because in it there is fear, decay, death. To live is to find out for yourself what is true, and you can do this only when there is freedom, when there is continuous revolution inwardly, within yourself.

(1964, p. 11)

C. Use ellipses to indicate omitted material from a quotation. Type three periods with a space before and after each period to indicate an omission within a sentence. Type four periods to indicate an omission between two sentences (a period for the sentence followed by three spaced periods . . .).

VII. References
A. Pagination: The References section begins on a new page.
B. Heading: References (centered on the first line below the manuscript page header)
C. Format: The references (with hanging indent) begin on the line following the References heading. Entries are organized alphabetically by surnames of first authors. Most reference entries have three components:

  1. Authors: Authors are listed in the same order as specified in the source, using surnames and initials. Commas separate all authors. When there are seven or more authors, list the first six and then use "et al." for remaining authors. If no author is identified, the title of the document begins the reference.
  2. Year of Publication: In parentheses following authors, with a period following the closing parenthesis. If no publication date is identified, use "n.d." in parentheses following the authors.
E. Examples of sources
[Note: Italicize titles of books, titles of periodicals, and periodical volume numbers.]

1. Journal article


2. Book


3. Web document on university program or department Web site


4. Stand-alone Web document (no date). Use with caution!


5. Stand-alone Web document (no author, no date). Use with caution!


6. Journal article from database


7. Abstract from secondary database


8. Article or chapter in an edited book

SECOND READER REQUEST FORM

Student’s Name: ________________________________ Advisor’s Name: ________________________________

Concentration: Adult & Higher Education Curriculum & Instruction Educational Leadership
(Circle one) Guidance Issues in Education

Endorsement area: _______________________________________________________
(for licensure candidates only)

Thesis title: ____________________________________________________________

Areas of study: __________________________________________________________

Please record below your choices for a second reader for your thesis. We do need three choices.

1) _________________________________________________________________

2) _________________________________________________________________

3) _________________________________________________________________

Student’s signature: ____________________________________________________ Date: ______________
Appendix F: Thesis Binding Request Form

THESIS BINDING REQUEST FORM

Student Name ___________________________ Date ______________

Thesis Title ______________________________________________________________________________________

Number of Copies Sent to M.Ed. Program Office ______

Number of Copies to be bound for student _____________

Check enclosed _____________ ($12 per student copy, payable to Vermont College)

Address to send student bound copies:

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

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NOTE: Students must submit two clean copies of final version to Program Office by end of term, accompanied by this form. Up to three additional copies may be included for binding, to be accompanied by payment of $12 each per personal copy for binding and shipping. Students pay for personal bound copies only, NOT the two Program copies.
Appendix G: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Information

Access to the Union Institute & University IRB website:

http://www.tui.edu/offices/irb/?strlink=J.9

On this website you will find the IRB Handbook, which includes step by step guidelines for applying for IRB approval, and an online tutorial.