

Culminating Experience Preparation Checklist

Check each item as you complete it.

- _____ Secure sponsor
- _____ Secure second reader
- _____ Complete thesis/project reservation form the semester prior to enrolling in 504
- _____ In consultation with 290 instructor, sponsor, second reader, collect relevant literature to use for methodological overview and literature review
- _____ In consultation with 290 instructor, sponsor, and second reader, draft petition
 - ++Follow CHDV Dept. format and strict format guidelines for the APA Style petition (see APA Manual and this handout)
- _____ In consultation with 290 instructor, sponsor, second reader, draft Human Subjects form (as applicable)
 - ++Use CHDV dept. forms at 1)
http://edweb.csus.edu/departments/chdv/PDF%20files/CHDV_HSC.pdf
AND CSUS required submission forms at 2)
<http://www.csus.edu/research/humansubjects/#forms>
- _____ In consultation with your sponsor, work toward the final draft of the petition and Human Subjects forms
- _____ Once final draft of petition is deemed ready for submission by your sponsor (and 290 instructor, if relevant), complete the Petition Cover Page in its entirety, including obtaining signatures of your sponsor and second reader
 - ++As necessary, your petition must be accompanied by your complete and finalized Human Subjects forms
- _____ Submit package of signed original and 3 copies of Human Subjects form, Petition Cover Page, and final draft of Petition to department office
 - ++ forms must include signatures of sponsor and second reader as indicated



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT CULMINATING EXPERIENCE PETITION COVER PAGE

Brighton Hall 137
Phone: (916) 278-7192

Name:		
Address;		
City & Zip Code		
Phone	wk	home
E-mail		
Student ID #		
Culminating Experience advisors	Sponsor:	Second Reader:
Circle the option you plan to complete:	Thesis	Project
Requested semester of registration in course	Spring _____	Fall _____
Date of Advancement to Candidacy		

The following signatures are required. See next page for detailed information about the required petition guidelines. Submit **3 copies** of your petition to the department by the deadline.

Student _____

Sponsor _____ Second Reader _____

For Department use Only	
Date form received in Dept.	Course call no:
Graduate Coordinator Approval	Date:
Deadline date for submission to Department of completed thesis/project for format approval:	Fall Graduation: November 1 Spring Graduation: April 1 Summer: July 1
Continuous enrollment (CHDV 599) will be required if project/thesis is not completed by:	
You will be required to reregister to complete the project/thesis unless it is submitted by:	

Petition Format

Directions: Please answer the following questions about your proposed thesis/project. Your answers should be in paragraph form using the questions as headings, with APA-style citations and format.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to develop a researchable question, you must first identify a problem that your question intends to address. State clearly and explicitly the nature of the problem you are proposing to study. Provide a general idea of the problem or area in which you are interested. One goal of this question is to justify to your reader that you have selected a real and worthwhile problem to study. Include a reference or two relevant to your problem statement.

Example: Children are reading less than ever, both at home and in school. Yet, previous research has confirmed that the amount of time a child spends in recreational reading is related to children's attitudes toward reading as well as to their reading ability (e.g., Jones, 1995; Smith, 2004).

2. PURPOSE OF YOUR STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

After considering the problem laid out in question #1, describe the specific purpose of your study – in other words, what will you do in your study to address the problem you have selected? Make your purpose statement as specific and explicit as possible. Remember that a good research question clearly defines your variables, their relationships and how you will study them, and is actually researchable. Include citations to relevant literature in support of your purpose and research question(s).

Example: The purpose of the proposed study is to compare effects of two different modes of recreational reading in the classroom on students' reading ability and attitudes toward reading. Because previous studies have examined each mode separately (e.g., Smith et al., 2006), ...

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR STUDY

Why is your research important to the profession – to other professionals, and to those whom these professionals serve? What new knowledge will your study contribute to our understanding and solving of the problem? Who will it impact and how? Include citations and a brief review of relevant literature that help to explain the significance.

Example: In their report of a national survey of effective reading instruction, the International Reading Association noted the strong relationship between reading achievement and students' participation in recreational reading (IRA, 2000). In addition, states continue to report slow progress in improving reading achievement, particularly in certain populations of at-risk students (see National Assessment of Educational Progress).

4. METHOD

THESIS: Describe the specifics of how will you conduct your study. Remember that your design, data collection and analytical methods should be chosen so that they address specifically the variables and your research question.

- a. Design of the study – example: experimental study, field observation, survey study, ethnography, etc.
- b. Participants – who, how many, characteristics, how you will recruit

- c. Procedures – steps in conducting the study
- d. Data sources and instruments – what kinds of data will you collect, and how will you collect it? What specific measures or instruments will you be using?
- e. Analytical methods – in what ways will you analyze the data you collect?

PROJECT: Specify the phases or steps in the project plan and how you propose to carry those out. Be explicit in your description of what the project will entail.

Example: The study will compare the reading achievement and attitudes in two different classrooms of second grade students enrolled in a low income public elementary school. In one classroom, children will receive 20 minutes of recreational reading three times per week. The second classroom will receive the same amount of recreational reading time, but the teacher will supplement with suggested book lists and related activities. Changes in children's reading achievement and reading attitudes will be assessed using Smith's (1999) Student Reading Attitudes survey as well as scores from the school district's standardized tests of reading achievement. A t-test will be used to determine statistically significant differences between the two groups.

5. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

Reflect upon how your study is related to your previous personal, educational and professional experiences. Cite specific references to your coursework where applicable.

Example: My seven years of experience teaching second grade in a public elementary school have made me very aware of the continuing challenge of developing students' reading abilities. In CHDV 250, I was able to explore my interest in this topic through a paper assignment. Etc.....

6. DISSEMINATION

How will you share your results once your study has been completed? Please be specific, including opportunities for local dissemination as well as for conference presentations and publications. Who will be interested in your results?

Example: Findings in this study will be of interest to elementary teachers and reading specialists in particular. Results of the study will be shared with the teachers at my school and in the district through an in-service workshop. I will also pursue the opportunity to present the findings at the state California Reading Association annual conference.

DISCLAIMER: PLEASE READ!

NOTE: All graduate students are responsible for preparing the final version of their thesis or project in accordance with the format requirements of the Graduate Center. Office staff will be able to give you general guidance on this, but CANNOT proofread your project or thesis for format errors. Please see the following publications for guidance in preparation of your completed thesis or project:

CSUS Guide for Thesis/Project Format, available to the Hornet Bookstore or on the CSUS website;
www.csus.edu/rgs/gradstud/gradctr.html

Shaw, Colleen King. A Sample Master's Project in APA Format. Available at the Hornet Bookstore (see ED 250).

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
Department of Child Development
Thesis and Project Descriptions

Thesis Description*

A thesis is a written report reflecting on the systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies a problem, states major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, reviews the past relevant research on the topic and, based on this review, justifies the current study. It then sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, reports and analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished thesis must evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, clarity of purpose, and accurate and thorough documentation. How data are gathered and interpreted will vary depending on the research method used.

Examples of research studies include historical, philosophical, experimental, descriptive, case study, evaluation study, ethnographic study, discourse analysis.

A thesis adds to the already existing research knowledge base on an identified topic. In order to complete such an undertaking, the following is recommended as possible organization.

Chapter 1 Introduction (*This chapter is usually written in its final form near the completion of the thesis, to orient the reader to the document. It is to contain brief helpful descriptions of what is to come.*)

- A. The problem
 - 1. The purpose of the study
 - 2. Statement of the Problem
 - 3. Significance of the study
- B. Research hypotheses or questions
 - 1. Methodology
 - 2. Definition of relevant terms
- C. Theoretical basis for the study
- D. Limitations and assumptions
- E. Organization of the study

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

- A. A demonstrated expertise in review of relevant literature.
- B. An argument that justifies the importance of what will be investigated.

Chapter 3 Methodology

- A. Detailed information about participants and how they were gathered/recruited
- B. Detailed information about materials and procedure followed to collect data

Chapter 4 Analysis of the Data or Conceptual Framework

- A. Specific information regarding the analytical approach (e.g., how data coded; specific type of analysis)
- B. Detail specific findings from your data; often includes reference to tables and figures

Chapter 5 Discussion, Findings, Interpretations, Recommendations, Implications

- A. Brief summary of findings
- B. Relate your results to your expectations and/or to other work in the discipline
- C. Explain your findings (or lack thereof)
- D. Describe limitations of your study

Appendices

Tables

Figures

References

* A Thesis committee requires a chair and a second reader.

Project Description*

A project is a significant undertaking of a pursuit appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to a professional field. A project is a format written report of a planned activity designed to meet an immediate problem or an identified need. It must evidence originality, and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization and a rationale.

The project must clearly identify a significant problem of interest, state the major assumptions, review the past research for criteria related to the problem, set forth the sources for and methods of gathering information to develop a product which can be curriculum or research related. The conclusion section of the project must include an explanation of its significance, the impact of the discovered criteria on the final effort, an evaluation of to what degree were the criteria from the review met, and recommendation for its use.

Examples of curriculum projects are: a course of study; a teacher's guide; an instructional manual; a design for a new teaching method; inservice design and curriculum; and the development of new teaching materials.

Examples of research projects are: building a device; designing a special experiment; producing a documentary report; and producing a professional article of publishable quality.

The project addresses an applied problem. The existing research is used to develop a product in response to this identified problem. In order to complete such an undertaking, it is necessary to include the following:

Chapter 1 Introduction (*This chapter is usually written in its final form near the completion of the project, to orient the reader to the document. It is to contain brief helpful descriptions of what is to come.*)

- A. The problem
 - 1. The purpose of the project
 - 2. Statement of the problem
 - 3. Significance of the project
 - 4. Limitations
 - 5. Organization of the project
- B. The theoretical basis of the project

Chapter 2 Review of the Relevant Literature

- A. A demonstrated expertise in review of relevant literature.
- B. An argument that justifies the importance of the product to be generated.

Chapter 3 Methodology

- A. Detailed information about how information will be gathered and how the product will be developed.

Chapter 4 Discussion, Recommendation, Conclusions

- A. Brief summary of findings/results/product
- B. Relate your product to the target audience and critically analyze its potential effectiveness
- C. Describe implications of your product
- D. Discuss limitations of your product

Appendix The Finished Product

References

*A Project committee requires a chair and a second reader.

MASTER OF ARTS: CHILD DEVELOPMENT REVIEW CRITERIA FOR THESIS OR PROJECT

To ensure that your Master's thesis or project will move smoothly through the review process, we are providing the format and content evaluation guidelines that will be used in the process. You should carefully examine these criteria and use them to evaluate your thesis/project at several stages during the process of its completion. Please note that your sponsor and second reader may have some additional areas of focus that you will need to account for in your final thesis/project. **All components are ultimately the responsibility of the student, and lack of compliance will likely result in delays in filing the thesis/project in the department and with Graduate Studies.**

Format

- The generally acceptable format is consistent with the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) -- with some minor modifications to fit the requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies. Another helpful resource is Colleen Shaw's *A Sample Master's Project in APA Format*, which many students find helpful for formatting examples and clarifying basic guidelines for each chapter of the thesis or project. Both are available at the bookstore.
 - APA style is the only writing style accepted by the department
 - Errors in format (including style and grammar, punctuation, typographical, etc) will result in the thesis/project being returned to the student with possible delays in completion and/or graduation.

Writing Style will be evaluated for:

- Clarity and cohesiveness
- Scholarly, APA style
- Grammar and spelling

Chapter 1: Problem Statement

- Clearly stated
- Description of the project or thesis that was done to respond to the problem
- Ideas supported by empirical evidence

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

- Thoroughness and currency
- Use of primary sources as evidence to support ideas
- Sufficient detail of some studies and their findings
- Differentiation of data-based, opinion, and philosophical sources
- Analysis, critique, and explanation for how the data relate to the thesis/project
- Note: Use past tense in this chapter

Chapter 3: Methodology

- Thesis: Complete description of subject, procedures, and measures
- Project: Description of all steps taken to develop the project

Chapter 4: Results (for Thesis Option)

- Careful analysis and articulation of findings, including tables and figures as appropriate
- Descriptive and Inferential Statistics to be reported, in APA Style, where applicable
- Both qualitative and quantitative data need to be equally well articulated

Chapter 4 (Project) or 5 (Thesis): Discussion

- Degree to which the discussion relates to the original problem and the findings of the study or project itself
- Evidence of independent and critical thinking in drawing conclusions about the findings