

**ITHACA COLLEGE  
DIVISION OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
THESIS PREPARATION GUIDELINES  
Master of Science Degree  
Revised 2001-02**

**VII. THESIS PREPARATION GUIDELINES – Master of Science Degree**

To facilitate that process and to ensure that your thesis is of the best academic quality, the following checklist has been developed by the graduate faculty.

The process of writing a master's thesis combines previous research and academic writing skills that you have developed during your undergraduate and graduate study.

### ***Process for selecting a topic and approval***

1. Familiarize yourself with the current research literature on your topic of interest, including unpublished materials (thesis and dissertations) as well as published books and articles. Be sure to read the "future recommendations" sections of these works. Talk to faculty for ideas.
2. Discuss potential thesis topics with faculty members with expertise in the topic area/s in which you are interested. In consultation with your graduate program chair, select a thesis topic, adviser, and faculty readers for your thesis committee (which normally consists of two or three members, including the adviser).
3. Work with your thesis adviser to prepare a thesis proposal as well as a proposal for the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) where needed. Thesis proposal guidelines are available from your graduate program chair. For HSRB, you need the "Guidelines for Proposals" and HSRB deadlines for review submissions from the Provost's Office.
4. Work with your thesis adviser and committee members to review and finalize the proposal and set a proposal presentation date.
5. Give an oral presentation of your thesis proposal to your thesis adviser, committee members, graduate chair, and others invited according to your graduate program's guidelines.
6. When HSRB approval is required, complete the following steps:
  - a. Complete the application for HSRB and submit it to your thesis advisor for review and signature, allowing time for review by your adviser and revisions.
  - b. Submit the application to the HSRB according to the deadline schedule.
  - c. Following approval by the HSRB, begin subject recruitments and data collection.

### ***Writing the thesis and the thesis format***

1. Academic honesty: All writing is expected to conform to the Ithaca College standards for academic honesty. Citation and proper and accurate recognition of the work is essential to academic writing. If in doubt, check with your adviser or graduate program chair and the Ithaca College Student Handbook.

2. Proofreading: All writing is expected to conform to the highest standards of form, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Students are expected to proofread and check their work for spelling and grammar. It is often difficult to see one's own mistakes, particularly when materials have been read many times. Therefore, it is often helpful to have someone else proofread for errors, omissions, and lack of clarity. Work will not be considered complete until it is acceptable to the thesis adviser.

3. With your adviser, select a thesis format (traditional or manuscript), depending on program requirements. Examples of each format can be provided by your graduate program chair. A model of the key elements for each format is attached. General thesis writing guidelines and a model of the key elements for each format are found below. Work with your adviser, and committee members where appropriate, to complete the analysis and writing of the thesis. Writing style manuals are commonly used in thesis preparation at the discretion of your graduate program; check with your adviser.

### ***“Do’s” and “Don’ts” for your thesis project***

- DO:**
- \* Complete a literature review on your topic and keep it updated with monthly searches of new research.
  - \* Review other theses in your concentration area before writing your proposal.
  - \* Learn to use appropriate computer software yesterday!
  - \* Make sure you have backup copies of your work on separate disks at all times.
  - \* When submitting a draft of anything, allow two (2) weeks for your thesis adviser or committee members to read it. Many times it will be read earlier, but two weeks is reasonable.
  - \* Prepare. Thoroughly understand your topic, previous literature, methodology, data collection, use of any required equipment, etc.
  - \* Before each meeting with your adviser or committee member, prepare a list of your questions or concerns. Prior to your meeting, have a clear understanding of your goal and the problems you are encountering. You are responsible for actively participating in these meetings and are expected to present your ideas. BE PREPARED!!
- DON'T:**
- \* Don't try to conquer the world by yourself. Seek advice from your adviser during all stages of the project to keep on the right track.
  - \* Don't hesitate to seek assistance from others—classmates, friends, when in need.
  - \* Don't waste anyone's time. If you are using human subjects, know your data Collection procedures well and practice them in advance.

## *Thesis format options: The Traditional Format and the Manuscript Format*

### **Traditional Format:**

Preliminary pages: Should be in sequence numbered with lowercase Roman numerals (I, ii, iv, etc.) centered above the bottom margin. Count the title page as page one but do not print a page number. Number the approval page as ii, the abstract page as iii, etc. There are no blank pages. The ordering of preliminary pages is as follows:

- a. Title page (not numbered)
- b. Approval page (ii)
- c. Abstract page (iii)
- d. Acknowledgments and Dedication (optional)
- e. Table of Contents
- f. List of Tables
- g. List of Figures

Text: Beginning with the first page of the text and continuing to the end of the manuscript, number the pages in sequence with Arabic numerals. Count all pages and number them. Do not insert numbers such as “106a” or leave uncounted pages. Except for the first page of each chapter where the page number appears centered above the bottom margin, page numbers are positioned at the top, right margin.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 2. Review of Literature

Chapter 3. Methods and Procedures

Chapter 4. Results (Analysis of Data) including Tables and Figures

Chapter 5. Discussion

Chapter 6. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Appendix/ces

References/Bibliography

Style manuals used in thesis preparation are at the discretion of the respective graduate program. NOTE: Examples of the traditional format can be obtained from the graduate program chair or your thesis adviser.

## **Manuscript Format:**

In agreement with your thesis committee, this document should be prepared for journal submission and publication. A sample outline follows.

Preliminary pages: same as Traditional Format

Proposal

Section 1. Introduction

Section 2. Review of Literature

Section 3. Methods and Procedures

References

### ***Thesis defense and final approval***

1. Upon completion of the thesis, prepare presentation for a thesis defense. The defense should be arranged according to the guidelines of your graduate program. NOTE: The thesis defense occurs only after the thesis adviser and committee members agree that the thesis is in the final stage of approval and the candidate is fully prepared for the thesis defense.
2. Defend the thesis according to program guidelines.
3. Make final revisions to the thesis.
4. Submit final revisions to the thesis adviser and committee members for final approval and signatures. Be sure to submit at least five original copies of your CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL page since each must have an original signature. If you desire additional copies, provide them at the same time.
5. Following approval and signature from your thesis adviser (and committee members, where required), submit the thesis to the graduate program chair for approval and signature. NOTE: The graduate chair must have the signed thesis at least six (6) weeks prior to your desired degree posting date to allow time for remarks from the chair and approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies before the degree posting date. Although these dates may vary from year to year, you may assume March 15 (for May graduation), July 15 (September graduation), and November 1 (December graduation) as the submission deadlines to the graduate program chair.
6. Following approval and signature by the graduate program chair, the thesis must be submitted with all signatures to the Dean of Graduate Studies at least 30 days before

graduation (April 15, August 15, or December 1). NOTE: It is your responsibility to check specific dates and deadlines. A thesis turned in after these dates cannot be guaranteed a proper review or approval for the degree posting date.

7. Following approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies, you may now celebrate! NOTE: It is common to have one final revision in order to incorporate changes requested by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

8. Have at least four (4) copies of your thesis bound (plus any additional copies for yourself) as directed by your graduate program chair. Provide one bound copy of your thesis on 20-lb. white paper to your thesis adviser (and one to each of your committee members, according to program expectations) and one to the graduate program chair. Provide two bound copies on archival paper (25% rag content) to the library.

9. The thesis should be bound in black and the cover imprinted in gold lettering as follows: MASTER'S THESIS; thesis title; author's first name, middle initial, and last name; year. The letter size should be approximately one-quarter inch high. An example is:

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Career Termination and Transition from  
Intercollegiate Athletics:  
the Experience of  
Former Division III Female Athletes**

**Beth Howland**

**2001**

The spine of the thesis should be printed in the same style with gold letters and contain: the student's name, degree (abbreviated), year of completion, short title.

***Thesis title and approval pages***

(Format on following pages)

(Sample Thesis Title Page—Applicable to both Traditional and Manuscript formats)

**CAREER TERMINATION AND TRANSITION FROM  
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS: THE EXPERIENCE OF  
FORMER DIVISION III FEMALE ATHLETES**

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**A Masters Thesis presented to the Faculty of the  
Exercise and Sport Sciences Department  
Ithaca College**

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**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Science**

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**by**

**Beth Howland**

**May 2001**

(Sample Approval Page—Applicable to both  
Traditional and Manuscript formats)

**Ithaca College**

**School of Health Sciences and Human Performance  
Ithaca, New York**

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS**

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**This is to certify that the Thesis of**

**Beth Howland**

**submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Science in the School of  
Health Sciences and Human Performance  
at Ithaca College has been approved.**

**Thesis Adviser:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair,  
Graduate Program:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dean of Graduate  
Studies:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_