

CLU MS Clinical Psychology Thesis Handbook

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Chapter 1

Goal

The goal of this handbook is to provide students with the information needed to successfully complete the master's thesis in the MS in Clinical Psychology Program (MSCP) at California Lutheran University (CLU). The manual should be understood as a supplement to the broader policies and procedures defined by the program and university.

1.1 Comprehensive Exams or Thesis?

The comprehensive exam is a closed book/note essay test that covers all the material studied during the course of the MSCP program. The test is offered at the end of the spring semester during the second year. The exam consists of a morning session (9AM-Noon) and an afternoon session (1PM-4PM). During each session, students choose to respond to 3 of 5 essay style questions.

Upon enrolling the MSCP program, students are expected to complete the comprehensive exam in order to complete the degree. Students can, however, choose to complete a thesis project which would replace the requirement of the comprehensive exam. Students must select the thesis option

1.2 Thesis Project

Students who choose to work on a thesis must follow the procedures and guidelines in this manual in order to stay in the thesis track. Students who fail to follow any of these steps will be moved back to the comprehensive exam option. Students can, however, continue to work on their research project as an *independent project* and not for partial fulfillment of the requirements of the program (i.e., credit).

Bottom line: The main benefit of the thesis project is that it provides students with the opportunity to conduct their own independent research project with the support of faculty. Whether you choose to do this as a *thesis* or an *independent project*, in reality, matters little to future doctoral program. Instead, futural advisors will be looking at the **quality** of work regardless of the status of the project.

Chapter 2

Thesis Checklist

Instruction: Students who wish to pursue the thesis option are required to meet with the Dr. Bedics at the end of every semester to review the required material for that semester. Students who miss any of the following steps will be automatically removed from the thesis option and required to complete the comprehensive exam. The student can, however, complete a research project but not for the partial fulfillment of the degree (i.e., credit).

	Task	Date Due	Year	Finished
1.	Thesis Topic Approved	October 1st	First Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Literature Review Draft Psych 564	December 15th	First Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Academic Good Standing	December 15th	First Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Method Section	May 1st	First Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Literature Review Revision	May 1st	First Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Academic Good Standing	May 15th	First Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Committee Assignment	June 30th	Summer	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Reader
8.	Academic Good Standing	July 3rd	Summer	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Enroll in PSYC 565	August 1st	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Committee Approval of Proposal	October 1st	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	IRB Submitted	November 1st	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Academic Good Standing	December 15th	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Enroll in PSYC 566	December 15th	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Draft to Dr. Bedics	May 1st	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Committee Approval of Final	May 10th	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Reader
16.	OSF Approval	May 1st	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	Thesis Commons	May 15th	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	Thesis Binding	Optional	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	GitHub Blog	Optional	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	Shiny App	Optional	Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/>

Several, but not all, of the above tasks are detailed more fully in the following sections.

2.1 Thesis Topic Approval - “Defining the Problem Area” (#1)

The general thesis topic is required to be selected during the beginning of the first semester of the first year. The thesis topic, does not, however, determine the hypotheses, methodology or general approach taken by the student to understand the problem (e.g. experimental, quasi-experimental, meta-analytic methods).

2.2 Literature Review - “Understanding the Problem” (#2, #5)

The development of the literature review on the selected topic begins during the fall of the first during PSYC 564 Advanced Research Methods. The literature review will become the “introduction” section of the final thesis project. The literature review shows the student’s mastery of the literature. More importantly, the literature review shows the students understanding of the *problem* to be addressed and answered by the methodology. The literature is to be worked on throughout the duration of the program.

2.3 Method Section - “Solving the Problem” (#4)

The method sections defines the procedures of the thesis project. The method section consists of the participant selection, selection of methods of measurements or materials, and the procedure. The method section can be worked on in PSYC 552 Psychometrics during spring of the first

2.4 Committee Assignment (#7)

Committee members are faculty or experts in the field that support the students work on the thesis. Students work with the program director to find the most appropriate committee members to support their research project.

- Students select 2 committee members including a chair and a reader

- One committee member must be affiliated with CLU; the second committee member can be from CLU or another institution
- Committee members typically hold doctoral degrees in areas that support the students research
- Students typically select a committee member who has domain expertise (often the chair) and one that has methodology expertise (reader).
- All committee members are approved by Dr. Bedics.

2.5 Committee Approval of Proposal (#10)

During the summer following the first year, committee members read the literature review and method section and provide a general statement of approval to Dr. Bedics. Based upon this approval, students are allowed to progress to the *thesis track*. The rest of the thesis process is guided through coursework including PSYC 565 Research Practicum in the fall of the second year and PSYC 566 Thesis in the spring of the second year.

2.6 Academic Good Standing (#12)

Academic good standing refers to maintaining a GPA above a 3.0 throughout the entire program and acting consistently with all policies and procedures defined by the program (see Program Handbook) and university (see university policy and procedures). Any student who receives below a B- in any course is not allowed to complete the thesis for course credit and partial fulfillment of the degree.

Chapter 3

Formatting

Chapter 4

Methods

We describe our methods in this chapter.

Chapter 5

Applications

Some *significant* applications are demonstrated in this chapter.

5.1 Example one

5.2 Example two

Chapter 6

Final Words

We have finished a nice book.