

Instructions for Completion of the Masters Thesis Project: Cognitive Neuroscience

Students must complete a masters thesis project proposal and a masters thesis project, preferably by the 5th semester after matriculation, at the latest. Students who are double majoring only have to complete the masters project from their home program.

1. Composition of the Masters Project

The Masters Project is intended to maintain the spirit of the traditional Masters Thesis, but to allow sufficient flexibility to advance the student's career. The committee and the student, based on one of the following options, determine the composition of the project:

- a. An empirical paper written for a peer reviewed journal. This is the preferred option.
- b. A review paper written for a peer reviewed journal
- c. A National Research Service Award (F31) Grant Proposal or comparable grant submission to an extramural agency

The quality of the paper should be determined to be competitive for publication as judged by the standards of the field, or competitive for funding as judged by the standards of the granting agency.

The format of the project should be in the format required by the journal or granting agency.

2. Deadlines

- a. The deadline to complete the masters project defense is one week before the deadline to submit paperwork to the graduate school for graduation.
- b. For both the proposal and the project, students must submit the document to the assigned committee at least one month before the scheduled defense. Committee members are expected to return the document to the student, with comments, within two weeks of receipt.

3. Composition of the Committee

- a. The committee is to be comprised of at least three members of the Graduate Faculty in the Department in which the student is receiving the degree.
- b. At least one member of the committee must be a member of the Cognitive Neuroscience Program.

- c. To avoid conflict of interest, at least one member of the committee should not be an author or mentor on the submission.
- d. Additional members outside of the Department or of the University may serve as ad hoc members of the committee, provided that they have expertise in the area of study, have a graduate degree, and are approved by the other members of the committee.

4. Procedure for the Defense

The masters project proposal and the masters project both consist of a written and an oral portion. A defense is not a formality; it is intended to allow the student to evidence sufficient knowledge in the field of Cognitive Neuroscience. Students must defend both the written and oral portions.

- a. It is expected that all committee members be present at the defense, although presence through video-conference is approved by the consent of the committee.
- b. The date, time, and location of the defense must be announced publically one week before the scheduled defense. The style of announcement for the formal masters thesis should be used (see University Graduate School requirements).
- c. The student's colleagues are allowed to attend the defense.
- d. The student should proceed to the defense only with unanimous consent of the faculty on the committee.

5. Passing the Defense

- a. The student should be evaluated based on the rubrics established by the College of Arts and Sciences. The document defended to the committee should be "submission ready" for the targeted journal or grant mechanism.
- b. The student is determined to have passed the defense and may apply for graduation upon unanimous agreement of those faculty on the committee holding Graduate Faculty status at FIU.
- c. In the event that agreement is not unanimous, the student may re-defend the oral portion, the written portion, or both. If a unanimous vote cannot be obtained, the Director of Graduate Studies in Psychology will serve as mediator.

6. Signatures

- a. Signatures of all committee members are required. Students will sign the signature form provided by the Director of Graduate Studies in Psychology.