

The Thesis/Project

The thesis documents a systematic study of a significant and researchable question in education; the project is a written document describing a significant undertaking appropriate to education, such as a curriculum design, website, or creative endeavor (i.e. performance piece, video, etc.) The thesis/project requires an extensive written product, including an in-depth literature review, that will be housed in the SSU Library.

Most theses include the following chapters:

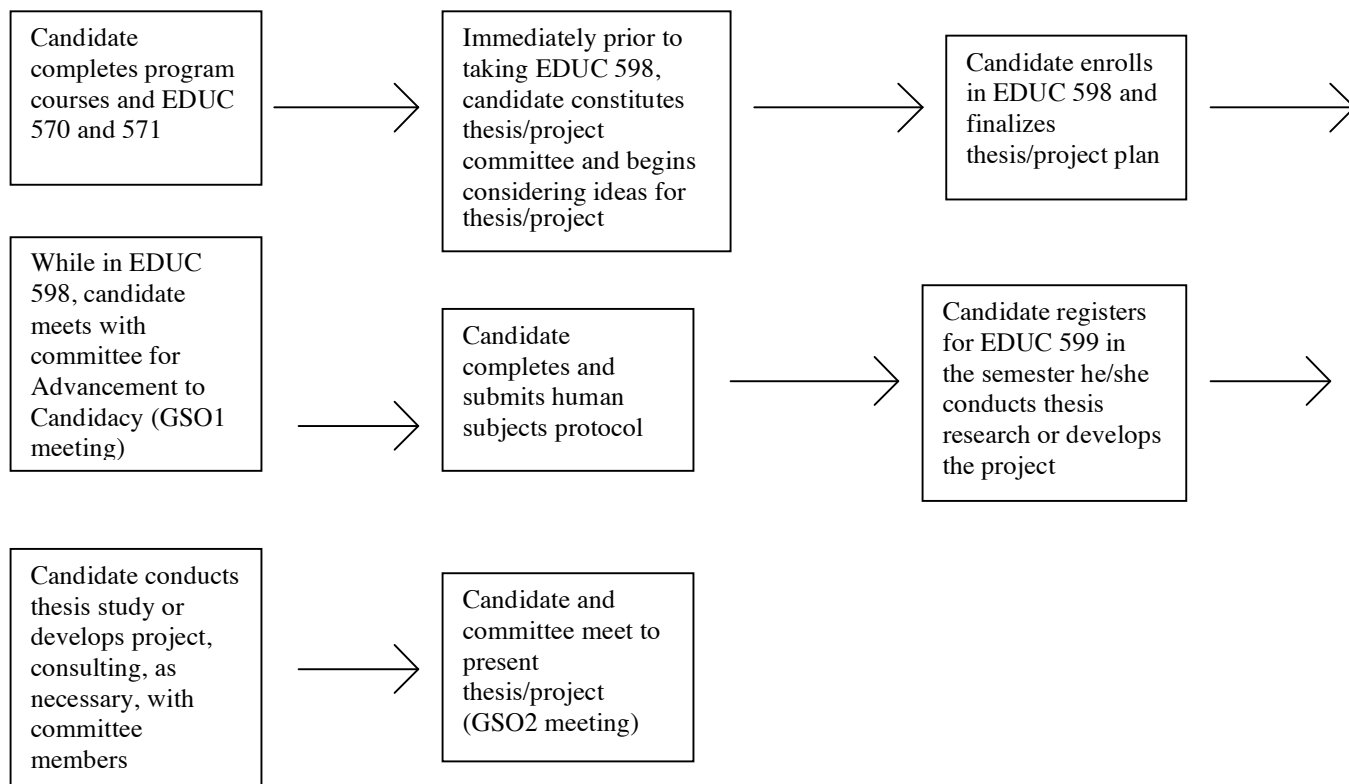
- Introduction: overview of the study, including research question(s)
- Comprehensive literature review of theory and research relevant to the study which illuminates candidate's theoretical framework
- Description of research design, including methodological framework, research sample/participants, and methods of data collection and analysis
- Results of the study
- Implications, conclusions, and suggestions for further research

Most projects include the following chapters:

- Introduction: overview of the project
- Comprehensive literature review of theory and research relevant to the project which illuminates candidate's theoretical framework
- Description of procedure for developing the project
- The project itself: the curriculum, website, video, etc.
- Reflections and conclusions: e.g. results of project implementation, suggestions for further work in this area, etc.

Procedures for completing the thesis/project pathway (see flow chart on next page)

1. The candidate completes M.A. program courses and EDUC 570 and 571.
2. The candidate constitutes his/her thesis/project committee (see strategies discussed in The Committee section) and works with committee members at the same time as completing thesis-related assignments in EDUC 598.
3. The candidate enrolls in EDUC 598 and begins working on the thesis/project proposal and literature review.
4. The candidate completes and submits the Human Subject Protocol, if necessary.
5. After completing EDUC 598, the candidate registers for EDUC 599.
6. The candidate and committee conduct the first committee meeting at which the student presents the thesis/project proposal, along with the portfolio and the GSO1 (Advancement to Candidacy) form. In most cases, the proposal will have been written as part of the student's work in EDUC 598. In the proposal, the candidate should include the following:
 - Rationale for thesis/project
 - Thesis question(s) or project goals
 - Proposed areas of study for literature review
 - Tentative research methodology for thesis or procedure to complete project
 - Timeline for completion of thesis/project
 - Significance of this thesis/project
7. After receiving the committee's approval and, if necessary, Human Subjects approval, the candidate conducts the research study for the thesis or develops the project. Throughout the process, the candidate regularly seeks the advice and approval of the committee chair and, as appropriate, the other committee members. In some cases, the committee will meet as a whole with the candidate one or more times before the thesis/project is completed. For candidates conducting research studies, it is imperative that they discuss their data with their committee chair as they are collecting and analyzing it.
8. When the thesis/project is completed, the candidate and committee members schedule the thesis/project presentation (GSO2 meeting). A draft of the thesis/project must be submitted to committee members at least two weeks prior to the GSO2 meeting. Often this presentation is referred to as the "defense." At this presentation, the candidate provides an overview of the thesis/project and responds to questions posed by the committee and others attending the presentation.



Directions for evaluating the Thesis/Project:

1. Candidate submits thesis/project to committee two weeks prior to scheduled GSO2 meeting.
2. Committee members score thesis or project according to the criteria listed on the Thesis or Project Review form.
3. Committee members meet to compare evaluations of the thesis/project. If all committee members agree that the thesis/project is satisfactory, the presentation (GSO2 meeting) will proceed as scheduled.
4. The thesis/project is evaluated according to the criteria listed on the evaluation form, each receiving a score between 1 (not at all) and 4 (excellent). The total score for a thesis must be a minimum of 23 points, with no criterion scoring lower than a 2; the total score for a project must be a minimum of 18 points, with no criterion scoring lower than a 2. Therefore, for a thesis/project to be satisfactory, at least half the criteria must earn a score of 3 or higher.
5. If the score is unsatisfactory, the chair will meet with the candidate to explain the problems with the thesis/project and to instruct the candidate to revise as needed.
6. Candidates have three opportunities to complete the thesis/project satisfactorily.
7. Once the committee has determined that the thesis/project is satisfactory, the committee will meet with the candidate for the GSO2 meeting.
8. At the conclusion of the GSO2 meeting, the committee meets privately to make one of the following recommendations:
 - Thesis/Project is finished and ready to be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office.
 - Thesis/Project will need certain minor revisions before being submitted to Graduate Studies Office.

Thesis Review Form

Candidate Name

Date

Thesis/Project Title

Committee Member Name

Please score each criterion from 1 (not at all) to 4 (excellent)

The thesis:

1. provides a strong rationale for conducting the study _____

2. provides a thoroughly researched theoretical context for the study _____

3. delineates a research design appropriate to the research question _____

4. presents data fully and in a manner congruent with the research question and design _____

5. provides a rigorous and appropriate collection and analysis of the data _____

6. draws clear conclusions that logically explain the results _____

7. explains the implications of the results, including their significance to local educational context, and provides suggestions for further research _____

8. Adheres to IRB guidelines, as outlined in candidate's Human Subjects Protocol approval _____

9. is well written and properly formatted according to APA and SSU thesis/project guidelines _____

TOTAL _____

Attach comments and recommendations, as needed.

Project Review Form

Candidate Name

Date

Thesis/Project Title

Committee Member Name

Please score each criterion from 1 (not at all) to 4 (excellent)

The thesis/project:

1. provides a strong rationale for developing the project _____
 2. provides a thoroughly researched theoretical context for the project _____
 3. describes, in appropriate detail, the process by which the candidate completed the project _____
 4. includes all descriptions, materials, explanations, graphics, etc. necessary for readers to understand all aspects of the project _____
 5. includes a conclusion that evaluates the project, addressing such matters as: _____
 - results and analysis of data collected in development and/or field test of project
 - reflections on ways to improve the project
 - challenges involved in implementation of project
 - action plan for project implementation
 - other insights or concerns relevant to the project
 - significance to local educational context
 6. adheres to IRB guidelines, if appropriate, as outlined in candidate's Human Subjects Protocol approval _____
 7. is well written and properly formatted according to APA and SSU thesis/project guidelines _____
- TOTAL _____

Attach comments and recommendations, as needed