

Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures: Master's Theses and Master's Projects

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Format and Submission

Master's theses submitted for graduate degrees must follow a prescribed university format. The approved format is based on the Estrin/Roche manual: Guidelines for Scientific and Professional Theses. The manual is on reserve in the NJIT Library. The Office of Graduate Studies provides seminars, guidance documents, and continuing assistance for students. The office or its web site should be consulted for more information. A Master's project is not an archival document. Its format is determined by the program.

Office of Graduate Studies policies on number of copies, deadlines, fee payments, information documents, and grade submission for acceptance of the final master's thesis and for degree certification are to be followed. The Office of Graduate Studies provides guidance and assistance to students working on the final details of the master's thesis. Students should contact the office for appointments early in the final semester. The review of format should proceed well in advance of final document approval and thesis defense.

Master's Thesis Advisor, Committee, and Defense

A master's thesis committee should be formed at the start of the second semester of thesis registration (or at the start of the first semester if a single semester completion seems certain). The committee must have at least three members. All members of the committee must hold faculty rank at NJIT.

The chair of the committee must be a tenured or tenure track faculty member in the department or program offering the degree. At least one other member of the committee must be a tenure or tenure track faculty member or a research professor in the department or program offering the degree. Approval of the committee is made by the program director and reported to the Graduate Studies Office on a standardized thesis committee appointment form. The master's thesis should be a scholarly publication of the quality to warrant conference presentation or paper submission to reputable journals. Each program has its own policies on scheduling and submitting drafts to members of the thesis committee. Students are responsible for following their program's thesis policies.

The thesis must be defended in a publicly announced oral defense. Each program has its own policies on scheduling and submitting thesis drafts to members of the committee. Students are responsible for following their program's policies. Successful defense of the thesis is determined by vote of the thesis committee. The chair of the thesis committee, one other person who is a tenured or tenure-track faculty or a research professor, and the other members of the committee must be present to hear the defense unless other arrangements have been made in advance and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Every member of the thesis committee must sign and date the approval page of the final thesis document. A report on passage, conditional passage, or failure of the defense is completed by the thesis committee chair, signed by the thesis committee members, and sent to the Graduate Studies Office on a standardized form.

Grades

Grades for master's theses and master's projects are S or U until completion. Students who do not complete a master's thesis or master's project in a semester, regardless of accumulated credits, must register again for these in the following semester. Grades of S or U cannot be changed after a semester is over to show retroactive completion or to avoid the additional registration(s).

The final grade for a completed and approved master's thesis is P. Theses require a successful defense before the master's thesis committee after which the P is assigned. Theses are submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. Projects are submitted to the project graduate advisor. The final grade for a project is a regular letter grade such as A, B+, B, C+ and C.

Progress towards Degree

Students may not register for master's thesis or master's project credits until they arrange for a department- or program-approved faculty advisor to supervise the work. Continued registration for additional master's thesis or master's project credits will be allowed as long as the advisor grades the work to show that there is satisfactory progress. Credits for which a U (unsatisfactory) grade is given are not counted as degree credits toward completion of the master's thesis or master's project.

Master's thesis or master's project registration must be at least 3 credits during a semester or summer session until the total thesis credit requirement is reached, at which time 3 credit registrations are permitted.

All students must have their advisor's signature and section identification each time they register for a master's thesis or master's project. Students must register for master's thesis or master's project work within the deadlines established by the registrar.

Maximum credit registration each semester is 6 credits for the master's thesis and 3 credits for the master's project.

Once a student has begun a master's thesis or master's project, the student must register for these courses each semester until the master's thesis or master's project is completed. Unapproved interruptions in master's thesis or master's project may be subject to billing for omitted credits.

Students must be registered in master's thesis or master's project in any semester or summer session in which completion is expected. The advisor for master's thesis assigns a final grade when the Office of Graduate Studies confirms it has received all documents in final and approved form and all related bills have been paid.

Approval by the graduate program advisor and the Office of Graduate Studies must be obtained if the student wishes to interrupt the master's thesis or master's project for a semester or more. Students may neither maintain registration, nor fail to register without notifying and getting approval from the graduate program advisor and the Office of Graduate Studies. If a master's project is not completed after two semesters' registration, a final grade of F is given. Failure to complete a master's project by students who received financial support to do the project may result in dismissal. The university complies with all state and federal laws related to military service.

No more than four semesters and two summers of registration for a master's thesis are permitted. Failure to complete a master's thesis within this period will result in a final grade of F, and may result in dismissal.

Students who require additional time to complete a master's thesis or master's project should appeal for an extension, in writing, to the graduate program advisor, the academic department, and the Office of Graduate Studies.

Intellectual Property and Copyright Ownership

NJIT believes its role as an educational institution is best served by disclosing to the public all academic research, projects and master's theses developed by students during the course of their studies or employment at the university.

Master's theses and master's projects created by students shall be governed by the following provisions as outlined in NJIT's copyright policy under "Ownership and Disposition of Copyrightable Materials":

A. Copyright ownership of master's theses and master's projects generated by research that is performed in whole or in part by the student with financial support in the form of wages, salaries, stipend, or grant from funds administered by the University shall be determined in accordance with the terms of the support agreement, or in the absence of such terms, shall become the property of the University.

B. Copyright ownership of master's theses and master's projects generated by research performed in whole or in part utilizing equipment or facilities provided to the University under conditions that impose copyright restriction shall be determined in accordance with such restrictions.

C. Copyright in master's theses and master's projects not within the provisions of Categories A and B of this policy shall be the property of the author. However, the student must, as a condition of a degree award, grant royalty-free permission to the University to reproduce and publicly distribute copies of the master's thesis or master's project.

Requests for permission to publish Category A and B should be addressed to the Office of Intellectual Property.

In accordance with university policy, NJIT retains all right, title and interest to any and all intellectual property (i.e., inventions, discoveries, creative works, trade secrets and know-how) developed by NJIT students during the

course of their studies or employment at the university or while using university facilities.

To protect against premature disclosure of an invention and/or publication of anything that may be of a proprietary nature, students must immediately report their intent to do so to the [Office of Technology Development](#). Students must neither publish nor discuss proprietary information with anyone other than the Office of Technology Development or members of the University's Intellectual Property Committee. When a master's thesis or master's project covers material that is potentially proprietary, both the student and the advisor must report the existence of such material to the Office of Graduate Studies and the Office of Technology Development; so that the University may expedite its review of such material and determine whether or not it is proprietary and should be protected under the University's guidelines for protecting its Intellectual Property. If necessary, the Office of Graduate Studies and the Office of Technology Development will take steps to sequester patentable material in archival documents such as Master's Theses. If the University applies for a patent, the student will sign an appropriate assignment agreement. All income derived from such intellectual property will be shared between NJIT and the student in accordance with the University's published policy.

(see <http://www.njit.edu/research/officetech/inventors/inventors.php>)

For further information, call the Office of Intellectual Property, (973) 596-5825.