

## What is a Thesis?

A Master of Urban Planning thesis is an investigation that demonstrates a student's ability to conceive, conduct and report the results of a substantial individual study in the field of urban design and planning. The essential value of the thesis is in the process of doing it rather than in the product that results, though some theses do also make valuable additions to the literature of the profession. The educational values are, first, the opportunity to pursue some area of interest to a level of depth, completeness and conclusiveness that is not possible in other courses; and secondly, to work on an individual basis with faculty who are informed and interested in the subject. The topic of the thesis may be broad or narrow, academic or applied, synoptic or analytical, empirical or theoretical, and anywhere within the wide range of urban planning concerns. It is limited only by the need to focus on an area relevant to urban planning, by faculty interests, and by the resources of the University. Because urban planning is a broad field, the range of appropriate topics is very broad. Typically the thesis topic relates to the student's area of specialization. Urban Design Certificate students, for example, are required to select an urban design-related thesis topic. Each student should examine carefully his or her choice of a topic, proposing work that can be accomplished within one or two quarters.

Each person must also find his or her own answers to questions such as: "What can I gain from this study?", "What may others gain?", and "Will I be able to utilize my skills and abilities in a way that will be academically enriching for me, my committee, and the University?" These and related questions require answers at the proposal stage.

## Registering for Thesis Credits

Students must register for a minimum of 9 thesis credits. The credits may be divided between quarters. For example, a student may register for 4 thesis credits in Winter quarter, and 5 thesis credits in Spring quarter, for a total of 9 credits. Students can register for more than 9 credits if needed, but only 9 will count towards the degree. You must be registered for a minimum of 2 credits during the quarter in which you graduate.

Prior to enrolling in URBDP 700, students must be enrolled in or have completed URBDP 512 Research Methods. In addition, students should complete the following preparatory work:

1. Prepare a preliminary thesis proposal to include:
  - Tentative title
  - Intent or purpose of the work
  - Scope of the work
  - An indication of the available literature or other resources to be used (including faculty)
  - The methodology or approach to be taken
  - An outline of tasks to be accomplished
  - A schedule of milestones and committee meetings to be completed within one or two quarters.
2. Identify your Supervisory Committee, which consists of a committee chair and committee member(s). See Attachments A & B regarding which faculty are eligible to participate. Present your preliminary proposal (above) to your proposed committee chair to review.
3. Complete the URBDP 700 Student/Faculty Agreement Form (located here: <http://urbdp.be.washington.edu/programs/mup-graduate-degree/forms/>).

Obtain signatures of your committee chair and member(s) on this form, and then submit it to the Graduate Program Advisor by the **3<sup>rd</sup> day of the quarter** in which you plan to register to allow time to process it before the late add fee period begins. (You can register for thesis credits beyond the first week of the quarter, but late fees will apply. Please refer to the UW Academic Calendar for further details: <http://www.washington.edu/students/reg/calendar.html>.) The Department Chair will then review and sign the form. Once the Department Chair has signed it, the Graduate Program Advisor will email the add code to you to register for URBDP 700 thesis credits. A copy of the signed agreement form will be emailed to you for your records.

If you are doing a collaborative thesis with another student, please see Attachment E.

## Professionals Council Poster Event

In the spring quarter of the academic year in which a student completes their MUP program, the Professionals Council sponsors a poster event to recognize the work done. **All students who anticipate graduating in spring or summer are expected to present their thesis or professional project work during this event.** All students, faculty, and Professionals Council members are invited to attend. Details (date, time, place, presentation template) are provided early in spring quarter via email from Department staff. Students should plan to make 30"x 40" landscape poster of their work. Later, the poster can be used as a visual device during the defense.

## Thesis Schedule

It is highly recommended to follow a schedule as you work on your thesis. A schedule provides structure and helps students stay on target for timely completion. It also establishes expectations for both the student and the supervisory committee, although it is the responsibility of the student to keep to the schedule.

Below is a general guideline to follow in the quarter in which the student expects to graduate (typically Spring). Please note that the student is responsible for developing a timeline with their committee chair at the beginning of winter quarter. The timeline may differ from the one below based on the chair's preference and/or schedule, and/or other factors.

For a comprehensive thesis schedule that includes a thesis timeline and administrative due dates, see Attachment C.

Week 3 – Submit draft Thesis to Committee Chair

Week 5 – Get comments from Committee Chair

Week 6 – Incorporate edits into your draft

Week 7 – Submit draft Thesis to Committee Member(s)

Week 8 – Get comments from Committee Member(s)

Week 9 – Submit final Thesis to Committee for their review prior to your defense

Week 10 – Hold defense

Week 11 – Incorporate edits from your defense into your Thesis

Week 12 – upload Thesis and Supervisory Committee Approval Form to the UW ETD Administrator Site

## Oral Examination – aka “the Defense”

A final oral examination by the supervisory committee is required. The nature and format of this exam is determined by the chairperson of the committee. The oral examination will primarily concentrate upon the thesis topic, although the committee's discussion with the student may range more widely in endeavoring to establish the student's general competence.

Be prepared to explain: (a) What you did, (b) Why you did it, (c) How you did it, (d) What you found, and (e) What the results mean. The defense may include visuals in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, poster, etc. Typically, they should include (a) An overview or outline of your presentation, (b) Introduction (including research question, rationale and hypothesis, if any, and definition of key constructs), (c) Method (including design, methodology, etc.), (d) Results (including tables or figures summarizing your findings) and (e) Discussion (including reasons for new or unexpected findings, contributions and limitations, and practical implications).

It is expected that the student, chairperson, and all members of the committee be present at the defense. In certain circumstances in which a committee member is not available in person (ex, due to unavoidable travel), it is permissible for them to participate via conference call, Skype, etc., as long as the committee chair approves. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate schedules of their committee members when picking a date for the defense.

Typically, only the committee chair and committee member(s) attend the defense. However, you may invite others to the defense in circumstances that warrant it. Please check with your committee chair for their preference.

The defense is, on average, one hour long. The Gould 410 conference room and projector are available for students to use. Please use the conference room and equipment reservation binders in Gould 410 to reserve them.

Please bring the following to your defense:

- Copy of your final thesis
- Warrant (explained below)
- Supervisory Committee Approval Form (explained below)

Please also see the “Checklist for Defense” – Attachment D

## Steps to Graduate

MUP students must meet the graduation requirements for two entities: the MUP program and the UW Graduate School. Each has different forms and procedures.

To view the Graduate School’s required sections of the thesis and electronic thesis submission process, see: <http://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/thesisdissertation/>

The MUP program’s requirements are thoroughly outlined in these Thesis Guidelines. See Attachment C for comprehensive timeline.

In general, the thesis is complete once the student produces a defensible thesis AND has completed 9 credits of URBDP 700 AND the committee members have “signed off” on the Warrant, which is issued by the Department staff during the graduation quarter.

**There are two main required administrative forms:**

- **Master's Supervisory Committee Approval Form**  
This form must be signed by all committee members when they have approved the final version of your thesis. It must be uploaded to the UW ETD Administrator Site in conjunction with the submission of your thesis no later than the last day of the quarter in which you graduate. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain signatures from their committee members. You can obtain this form from the Graduate School's website (see link above).
- **Warrant for the Master’s Degree**  
The warrant must be signed by all committee members when they have approved the final version of your thesis. It must be submitted to Diana Siembor on the last day of the quarter in which you graduate.  
To obtain the warrant you must first submit a Master’s Degree Request with the Graduate School:  
<https://apps.grad.uw.edu/student/mastapp.aspx>  
Please file as early as possible in the quarter in which you anticipate graduating. The last day to file is the first Monday of the last week of the quarter (check the link for dates). The warrant will be emailed to you as a pdf. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain signatures from their committee members

**Important Dates and Deadlines for the Graduation Quarter:**

<b>Week 2</b>	<b>File your Master’s Degree Request</b> (see link above) Concurrent degree students submit two requests: one for each program
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Warrant for Master’s Degree emailed to students by Diana Siembor.</b> (see Required Forms above)
<b>Date TBD</b>	<b>Participate in MUP Poster Event</b> MUP students who graduate in Spring or Summer are expected to present a 30x40” landscape poster of their thesis in Spring. Information about the event will be emailed to students in Spring.
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Hold your defense</b> It is recommended that you hold your defense two weeks prior to the last day of the quarter.

### Last Day of the Quarter, 11:59pm\*

Submit (upload) to [UW ETD Administrator Site](#):

- Electronic Thesis
- **Supervisory Committee Approval Form** (may be submitted in multiple pages if not all signatures can be collected on one form as long as it's uploaded as ONE pdf)

Submit via email attachment to the MUP Program at [udp@uw.edu](mailto:udp@uw.edu):

- **Signed Warrant for Master's Degree** (may be submitted in multiple pages if not all signatures can be collected on one form as long as it's uploaded as ONE pdf)
- **Preferred email address upon graduation** – you will be added to our alumni email list for job postings

**Other Housekeeping:**

- **Vacate Gould Hall locker, if applicable**

*\* The Graduate School recommends that you file by 4:00pm. That way, if you experience problems submitting, you can contact them for assistance before they close at 5:00pm.*

Please also see the "Checklist for Graduation" – Attachment C

## Late Submission of Thesis Document

If you have completed all degree requirements and have successfully presented and defended your thesis but are not able to meet the June 10 submission deadline, you can pursue the late submission option. Please refer to the Graduate Registration Waiver Fee to determine if you qualify: <http://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/general-graduate-student-policies/graduate-registration-waiver-fee/>

**Contact your thesis committee *before* the last week of the quarter to notify them of late submission and communicate the late submission deadlines.** Make sure they are available to sign your approval forms as many faculty are away from campus during the break.

### Within Two Weeks after the Last Day of the Quarter:

Pay the \$250 Graduate Registration Waiver Fee (see link above for deadline)

### First Day of the Quarter

**File a new Master's Degree Request.**

<https://apps.grad.uw.edu/student/mastapp.aspx>

The system opens up on the first day of the quarter. Students pursuing the late submission deadline must file another Master's Degree Request. You technically graduate in this quarter.

### Two Weeks after the Last Day of the Quarter, 11:59pm\*

Submit (upload) to [UW ETD Administrator Site](#):

- Electronic Thesis
- **Supervisory Committee Approval Form** (requires the signatures of all committee members; may be submitted in multiple pages if not all signatures can be collected on one form as long as it's uploaded as ONE pdf)

Submit via email attachment to the MUP Program at [udp@uw.edu](mailto:udp@uw.edu):

- **Signed Warrant for Master's Degree** (requires the signatures of all committee members; may be submitted in multiple pages if not all signatures can be collected on one form as long as it's uploaded as ONE pdf)
- **Preferred email address upon graduation** – you will be added to our alumni email list

**Other Housekeeping:**

- **Vacate Gould Hall locker, if applicable**

*\* The Graduate School recommends that you file by 4:00pm. That way, if you experience problems submitting, you can contact them for assistance before they close at 5:00pm.*

**If you miss these deadlines, you must register for 2 credits of URBDP 700 Thesis in the following quarter to graduate.** (If you miss the deadline in spring quarter, it is acceptable to skip summer and register for autumn.)

**ATTACHMENT A - SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Applicable portions of the Graduate School Memorandum No. 13 have been excerpted and modified for these guidelines as follows:

- A. A Supervisory Committee is expected to function to give responsible advice, guidance and assistance to a graduate student working for an advanced degree at the University of Washington, and to evaluate the student's performance. For these purposes it is desirable that the Supervisory Committee be established in the quarter preceding the start of the thesis.
- B. Supervisory Committees for graduate students should be appointed in the manner and with the composition set forth below:
  - 1. For theses and professional projects, the supervisory committee shall consist of two to four members. At least two of the committee members must be graduate faculty members; and at least one of the graduate faculty members must be from the Department of Urban Design and Planning.
  - 2. For students completing the MUP degree only or an informal concurrent degree, the supervisory committee chair must be an Urban Design and Planning graduate faculty member and the other graduate faculty member(s) may be from the Department of Urban Design and Planning or any other UW department(s). Additional members may be graduate or non-graduate faculty members from the Department of Urban Design and Planning or any other UW department.
  - 3. For formal concurrent degree students, the supervisory committee must include at least one graduate faculty member from each department. The committee chair must be a graduate faculty member and may be from either department. Additional members may be graduate or non-graduate faculty members from the Department of Urban Design and Planning or any other UW department.
  - 4. Prior to enrollment in URBDP 700, the student must propose the Chairperson and Supervisory Committee to the Department Chair for approval. The student shall obtain written signatures of the committee members to serve using the URBDP 700 Student-Faculty Agreement Form.
- C. Names and titles of all Supervisory Committee members should, as a matter of courtesy, appear in the Acknowledgement section (or elsewhere) in the thesis.

**ATTACHMENT B - GRADUATE FACULTY ROSTER**

Daniel B. Abramson

Marina Alberti

Christine Bae

Rachel Berney

Branden M. Born

Gordon A. Bradley (adjunct, Forest Resources)

Christopher Campbell

Manish Chalana

Qiuzi Cynthia Chen (adjunct, Civil and Environmental

Engineering)

Andrew Dannenberg

Sofia Dermisi

Himanshu Grover

Joaquin Herranz, Jr. (adjunct, Public Affairs)

Jeffrey Hou (adjunct, Landscape Architecture)

Philip M. Hurvitz

Edward D. McCormack (adjunct, Civil and Environmental  
Engineering)

Robert Mugerauer

Jeffrey K. Ochsner (adjunct, Architecture)

Vikramaditya Prakash (adjunct, Architecture)

Mark H. Purcell

Nancy D. Rottle (adjunct, Landscape Architecture)

G. Scott Rutherford (adjunct, Civil and Environmental  
Engineering)

Qing Shen

Fredrick W. Wagner

Jan M. Whittington

Kenneth P. Yocom

**ATTACHMENT C**

**CHECKLIST FOR GRADUATION – Intended for the Graduation Quarter (typically Spring quarter)**

**Weeks 1-2:**

- Submit a Master's Degree Request with the Graduate School: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/student/mastapp.aspx>
- Review requirements of thesis submission process: <http://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/thesisdissertation/>
- Schedule reviews of your drafts with your committee for the quarter (refer to timeline on page 2)
- Submit draft thesis to committee chair

**Weeks 3-4:**

- Warrant emailed to you as a pdf. To receive your warrant, you must first submit a Master's Degree Request, linked above

**Week 5-6:**

- Get comments back from committee chair
- Incorporate edits into your thesis draft
- Schedule your defense no later than two weeks before the end of the quarter and inform the Graduate Program Advisor of your defense date. You can book the 410 Gould conference room for your defense by using the reservation binder in Gould 410.
- Create a poster of your work, size 30"x40", landscape. This will be displayed at the Professionals Council Poster Event, to be held in late Spring.

**Weeks 7-9:**

- Submit thesis draft to committee member(s)
- Get comments back from committee member(s)
- Incorporate edits from committee member(s) into your draft
- Submit final thesis to your committee for their review prior to your defense
- Participate in MUP Poster Event

**Week 10:**

- Print the "Supervisory Committee Approval Form", located on the Graduate School's website prior to your defense: (<http://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/thesisdissertation/>)
- Hold your defense. Bring the thesis, the Warrant and Supervisory Committee Approval Form. Sometimes the committee will sign the forms at the defense, or they may delay signing until you incorporate edits. Carefully coordinate getting their signatures so you can submit the paperwork electronically by the deadline.
- Incorporate edits from defense into final thesis
- RSVP for the College of Built Environments' Graduation Ceremony, if attending (further details will be emailed by the CBE Dean's Office in spring quarter). This is the main graduation event for MUP students.

**Week 12:**

- Return the signed "Warrant" either in-person or via email to Diana by 11:59pm on the last day of the quarter.
- Upload your completed **Thesis** and signed **Supervisory Committee Approval Form** to the UW ETD Administrator website by 11:59pm on the last day of the quarter: (<http://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/thesisdissertation/>)  
\*\*Note: you do not need to submit an electronic version of your thesis to the MUP program.
- Vacate your Gould Hall locker, if applicable
- Provide Diana with your preferred email address, so you will receive job announcements from the MUP program.

**ATTACHMENT D – CHECKLIST FOR DEFENSE**

Use this checklist as you count down towards your defense.<sup>1</sup>

One month prior to defense...

- Have you clearly stated and defined your central question, hypothesis, or creative challenge, in terms that can be answered or addressed with your available data, analytical/creative methods, and time?
- Have you explained why your question/hypothesis/challenge is important to you, personally?
- Have you explained why your question/hypothesis/challenge is important to the world?
- Have you identified your audience?
- Have you cited the existing literature and/or practice to summarize what the world already knows about your question/hypothesis/challenge?
- Have you included your bibliography (list of cited references), and are all references in the bibliography cited in the body of the thesis, or in the sources of figures?
- Have you identified what information is needed to answer/(dis)prove/address your question/hypothesis/challenge in your particular case?
- Have you gathered/generated and analyzed that information?
- Have you included your conclusions, and distinguished between “implications”, “lessons learned” and/or “recommendations”?
- Does your analysis and presentation of information support your conclusions?
- Have you presented your information and analysis in a logical sequence?
- Have you made optimal use of graphics and tables to present your information and analysis?
- Are graphics (including text and labeling) all at a readable size and printable resolution?

One week prior to defense...

- Does the thesis title match the substance/message of the thesis?
- Are all sentences complete, and checked for spelling and grammar?
- Is the thesis formatted according to Graduate School guidelines (title page, abstract, etc.)?
- Is a bibliography or list of references included?
- Are all footnotes, endnotes and bibliographic references complete and properly and consistently formatted?
- Do all references to internet sources include your access date and a permanent URL (e.g. by using <http://www.webcitation.org>, or other permanent internet referencing tool, if necessary)? Research which tool/service seems most stable and use that. Ask the UW library for advice.
- Do all figures and tables have numbered captions with complete sources, and are they cited in the text? (Tables and Figures have separate numbering sequences; table captions are above the table; figure captions are below the figure.)
- Is the table of contents, list of figures, and list of tables all included?
- Are all figures and tables properly located on the page, and near the relevant text?
- Are font color, size, style and numbering consistent for each type of text (e.g. headings, subheadings, main text, captions, etc.)?
- Are page breaks in appropriate places in the text, e.g. no orphaned or widowed headings and leading/ending lines of paragraphs?
- Have you scanned the whole text for spelling and grammatical errors?
- Have you eliminated passive voice, repetitive statements, vague language and jargon? (E.g. write “use” instead of “utilize” except when you mean “to make useful”; instead of writing “impact” as a verb, write “affect,” “influence,” “degrade,” “reduce,” or whatever more precise word is appropriate; etc.)

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<sup>1</sup> This list is not exhaustive; it is merely a partial compilation of considerations commonly needing attention.



**ATTACHMENT E**

**COLLABORATIVE THESIS REQUIREMENTS**

By special permission of the Graduate School, two or more students may collaborate on certain aspects of their theses, provided the character of the work is such that each participant is assured sufficient opportunity for individual contribution as well as responsibility to the study as a whole. In this case a concise account of the contributions of each collaborating individual should be included in the preface or acknowledgement section of the thesis.

Students considering a collaborative effort must petition the Graduate School during the quarter in which they intend to complete the work. This will ensure that preparation and submittal requirements of the Graduate School will be met. For specific information, consult the Graduate Program Coordinator.

*Rules Governing the Presentation of Collaborative Theses*

1. Permission to present a collaborative thesis must be obtained in advance from the Graduate School. This is accomplished by means of petition.
2. Each student presents one (1) copy of the collaborative thesis to the Graduate School.
3. Each copy must show all authors' names on the title page.
4. Each student places a "collaborative thesis statement" in the thesis, following the title page. Copy of statement is shown below.
5. Each student places a standard "quote slip" (see Graduate School Policy Manual) with his/her name(s) (signatures) in the copies they present to the Graduate School.

SAMPLE - Collaborative Thesis Statement

This thesis is the result of a collaborative effort of \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,

by the authority of the Graduate School.

All work was done under the direction of Professor \_\_\_\_\_.