

THESIS PROSPECTUS

The prospectus is a paper in which you identify the nature of your study and the type of research you will pursue. In the MA/MSJ programs, you have the following options,

Thesis - in the thesis option the student pursues a research topic that will

contribute new knowledge or understanding to the general body of knowledge in the field. An on-campus oral defense is required to complete this option.

Advanced Coursework - in this completion option, students complete six hours of additional coursework followed by a written comprehensive examination. The courses can be electives or readings courses that relate to the student's primary focus of study and as approved by the College.

By the time you write your prospectus, you must know which of the above completion options you plan to pursue so that your prospectus will accurately reflect your research plan. If you choose to complete the Advanced Coursework option, you will not be required to complete a prospectus.

Your committee chair will determine the scope of your prospectus and may suggest revisions. However, to start, the College anticipates a work of approximately 10 pages and recommends that the following be included:

1. Statement of topic
2. Rationale for the topic: a discussion of its importance which indicates how it relates to your core study in the MA/MSJ program.
3. Method of research or research design (including data source, if applicable). This step will also indicate whether you need to contact the Institutional Review Board for approval of research involving human subjects. The IRB review is a critical step in the development of your research (see below).
4. Preliminary literature review
5. Proposed outline of sections/chapters
6. Preliminary bibliography
7. Estimated timeline - this is especially helpful for distance students so they and their faculty members can anticipate progress and keep on track for a timely completion of the program. Since it estimates the timing of your defense or comprehensive examination, it also points out potential scheduling problems that need to be resolved at this time.

HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

One of the most important elements of the prospectus is the identification of the method of research you intend to use. If you determine that you will be using human subjects as part of your research, you must apply to the Institutional Review Board for permission to conduct such research. Failure to comply with this step can lead to a charge of research misconduct.

The Office of Research Administration has full authority in this area. Neither your committee chair nor the College of Liberal studies can determine the status of your research if it relates to human subjects. You can access the full Human Subjects in Research Policy, the required tutorial, and the application forms at:
<http://www.ouhsc.edu/irb-norman//default.asp>.

You can contact that office directly at:

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