

Department of Integrated
Studies in Education

Master's Thesis
Supervision
Guidelines for
Students &
Supervisors



Supervision Guidelines for Masters Students and Supervisors (THESIS)ⁱ

These guidelines should be regarded as something to help in the planning and conduct during the MA Thesis program. The purpose is to make expectations explicit between supervisors and masters students at an early stage. Clear expectations about the responsibilities of both parties are essential to a successful supervision relationship. If the research changes substantially, these guidelines should be reviewed. It is recommended that the supervisor and supervisee revisit and update agreements on a regular basis.

Minimum expectations¹

Supervisors

Only Tenured and Tenure-track faculty as well as ranked Contract Academic Staff (including Faculty Lecturers) may supervise graduate theses. Course lecturers are not permitted to supervise graduate theses.

Expectations:

- ✓ uphold and transmit the highest professional standards of research and scholarship
- ✓ provide guidance in all phases of the MA thesis student's research
- ✓ meet with MA thesis student regularly (frequency to be agreed upon in the MA Thesis Supervision Letter of Understanding – see Appendix A).
- ✓ provide prompt feedback when work is submitted including drafts of the thesis (frequency to be agreed upon in MA Thesis Supervision Letter of Understanding – see Appendix A)
- ✓ clarify expectations regarding collaborative work, authorship, publication and conference presentations

MA Thesis Students

(may be enrolled full time or part time)

Expectations:

- ✓ inform themselves of program requirements and deadlines
- ✓ work within academic program deadlines
- ✓ communicate regularly with the supervisor
- ✓ work within timelines agreed upon by the supervisor and MA thesis student

More information about specific expectations is outlined throughout this document as well as on the GPS website:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gradsupervision/supervisees/supervisor-supervisee-relationship>

Advance Notification

If either the MA thesis student or supervisor cannot attend a scheduled meeting, each agrees to notify one another in advance. If either the MA thesis student or supervisor will not be available for extended periods of time, the MA thesis student or supervisor will notify the other ahead of time.

No-fault Termination

The MA thesis student and supervisor will discuss and attempt to resolve any conflicts as they arise. If, however, the MA thesis student or supervisor needs to terminate the relationship for any reason, the MA thesis student and supervisor agree to abide by one another's decision. If the MA thesis student or supervisor decides to terminate

¹ Adapted from the McGill GPS Policies and Guidelines on Student Advising and Supervision with input from the DISE faculty.



the supervisory relationship, they must meet with one of the Graduate Program Directors for guidance and to complete the correct form to document the change.

Suggested Timeline for Completion

The two timelines below represent suggested milestones for students planning to complete the program in two years. Timeline One applies to students planning to complete in Winter of their second year and graduate in June of their second year. Timeline Two applies to students planning to complete in Summer of their second year, and graduate in the following October/November. Students should meet with the graduate program coordinator to apprise themselves of respective deadlines and associated fees.

Note that full-time MA thesis students may extend their studies and thesis completion into a third year. Additional fees apply.

Part-time MA thesis students are permitted four and a half years to complete. Part-time MA thesis students and their supervisors should discuss and develop a plan the appropriate course of study and associated milestones

Timeline One (Full-time MA thesis students):

| | Fall | Winter | Summer |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Year One | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete required, complementary and elective courses ✓ write draft research proposal ✓ Obtain a supervisor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete required, complementary and elective courses ✓ Ongoing research and literature review ✓ Submit Thesis Proposal to supervisor for approval ✓ Preparation of Research Ethics application and submission to McGill Research Ethics Board (REB) (if applicable) (Plan for approximately 3-4 months to receive ethics approval) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ongoing research and literature review ✓ Data collection (if applicable) ✓ Analysis ✓ Thesis writing |
| Year Two | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete any remaining required, complementary and elective courses ✓ Analysis ✓ Thesis writing ✓ Identify and secure Examiner ✓ Receive feedback from supervisor. Note: We recommend that MA thesis students aim to send the supervisor a final draft of the complete thesis at least 12 weeks before the intended submission date ✓ Initial thesis submission to GPS by Dec 15 deadline. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Receive feedback from examiner ✓ Revise thesis accordingly ✓ Final thesis submission by April 15 deadline. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Graduation/Convocation in June |
| Year Three | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Full-time MA student may extend the milestones into a third year. Note that additional fees apply. | | |

Timeline Two (Full-time MA thesis Students):

| | Fall | Winter | Summer |
|--|------|--------|--------|
|--|------|--------|--------|



| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Year One | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete required, complementary and elective courses ✓ Write draft research proposal ✓ Obtain a supervisor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete required, complementary and elective courses ✓ Research, literature review ✓ Submit Thesis Proposal to supervisor for approval ✓ Begin preparation of Research Ethics application (if applicable) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Submit Research Ethics application to McGill Research Ethics Board (REB) if applicable (May) (Plan for approximately 3-4 months to receive ethics approval) ✓ Literature review ✓ Data collection (if applicable) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete any remaining required, complementary and elective courses ✓ Research, literature review ✓ Data collection (if applicable) ✓ Analysis, Writing Thesis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Analysis, Writing Thesis ✓ Receive feedback from supervisor. Note: We recommend that MA thesis students aim to send the supervisor a final draft of the complete thesis at least 12 weeks before the intended submission date (in some cases, the supervisor might recommend more or less time). ✓ Identify and secure Examiner ✓ Possibly submit initial thesis and accompanying forms to GPS by April 15 deadline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Submit initial thesis and accompanying forms to GPS by mid-June at the latest. ✓ Receive feedback from examiner ✓ Revise thesis accordingly ✓ Final thesis submission by August 15 deadline. ✓ Graduation/Convocation in October/November |
| Year Three | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Full-time MA student may extend the milestones into a third year. Note that additional fees apply. | | |

Time Limitation Policy

Candidates for MA thesis degrees must complete the degree within three years of initial registration. If the degree is pursued strictly on a half-time basis, it must be completed within four and a half years of initial registration. If students do not complete their program by the respective deadline, they will be withdrawn from the University and will enter “time limitation.” At this point, a student can continue to work on their thesis (should their supervisor agree to continue supervising). When they are ready to submit, they will need to re-register. Students are registered for ‘Thesis’ courses when in the process of researching and writing their thesis.

Change Policy

MA thesis students may only change from thesis to non-thesis or vice versa once during the course of their MA degree.



Part A: Finding a Thesis Supervisor

Full-time MA thesis students should secure the collaboration of a supervisor by the end of their **first semester of graduate study**. Only Tenured and Tenure-track faculty as well as ranked Contract Academic Staff (including Faculty Lecturers) may supervise MA Thesis research. Course lecturers are not permitted to supervise graduate research. To identify a supervisor, MA thesis students are encouraged to browse the department's website under the "About Us" tab. Here MA thesis students will find a list of departmental professors along with a description of their research interests. The student may consider co-supervisors based on the needs of the proposed research. For example, one supervisor may have a distinct methodological expertise of benefit to the MA thesis student while another supervisor may be more of a content expert. If co-supervision is well suited to the needs of the MA thesis student, co-supervisors and the MA thesis students should create clear responsibilities for each co-supervisor.

Once the MA thesis student has identified a potential supervisor, they should initiate contact via email. Potential supervisors may request a CV, transcript and/or draft proposal. MA thesis students are advised to tailor contact to each professor. The student should state why they are approaching this particular professor, and why their research interests and goals are a good match.

If the potential supervisor agrees, they should communicate to the Graduate Program Coordinator that they have agreed to formally supervise the MA thesis student. The supervisor and students should complete the [Graduate Supervision Confirmation \(MA or PhD\) form](#) and submit this to the Graduate Program Coordinator who will add this to the MA thesis student record.

All MA Thesis students in DISE are provided with an **advisor** for the first semester of their studies. The role of the advisor is to support the student in finding a supervisor, in applying for scholarships, and in providing guidance as needed.

Additional information on supervision can be found on the Graduate & Post-doctoral student [SUPERVISION](#) page. And a video presentation is [here](#).



Part B: MA Thesis Supervision Roles and Responsibilities

1. Securing a Supervisor

MA thesis students must secure the collaboration of a supervisor by the end of the **first term** of graduate study. When contacted, the supervisors may request a CV, transcript and/or draft proposal. For students having trouble obtaining a supervisor, the student should contact one of the Graduate Program Directors for assistance.

2. Meetings

During all phases of the MA thesis program, the supervisor must meet with the MA thesis student regularly, provide prompt feedback when work is submitted (including drafts of the thesis), and uphold the highest professional standards of research and scholarship.

3. Thesis Proposal

Based on the submitted documents, the supervisor will provide feedback on the proposal to help guide the MA thesis student as they engage in the research process. A research proposal allows the masters student to demonstrate awareness of current research and the ability to write a research proposal. The research proposal should be approximately 5-10 pages double spaced and should clearly state the applicant's:

- a. Discussion of the research trends relevant to proposed research
- b. Main research questions
- c. Suggestions for how proposed research will be conducted
- d. Conclusion
- e. Selected bibliography of relevant works.

4. Research Ethics Board Approval

The supervisor must approve Application for Ethics Approval, which the MA thesis student must submit to the appropriate Research Ethics Board for approval before undertaking research involving human participants. Both the MA thesis student and the supervisor must have completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement² (TCPS²) online tutorial **before** the application can be reviewed.

5. Graduate Student Academic Intervention

If the graduate student is not meeting expectations, the supervisor should meet with the GPD to determine a plan for improvement.

6. Thesis

A thesis is a public document and once submitted for the degree, exists in the public domain unless the candidate and the thesis supervisor request to [withhold a thesis from circulation temporarily](#). Graduate students have the right to use the data they have generated for their thesis. In case of a conflict, the student and thesis supervisor can make a request to Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) to temporarily withhold the thesis from circulation (up to one year). A thesis must be written in English or French. The University requires that all theses conform to the specifications for MA theses. Unless the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has given their consent in advance, departures from these norms will render a thesis unacceptable to fulfill the requirements for the degree.

- A thesis for the MA thesis degree must show familiarity with previous work in the field and must demonstrate the ability to carry out research, organize results, and defend the approach and conclusions in a scholarly manner according to disciplinary norms.



- An exhaustive review of work in the particular field of study is not necessarily required. Expectation for the level of original scholarship at the Master's level varies with the discipline.
- The thesis must be written in compliance with norms for academic and scholarly expression and for publication in the public domain (see section: [withholding a thesis from circulation temporarily](#)).

A thesis can be written and organized either in the traditional monograph style or the manuscript (article)-based style. It cannot be a mixture of the two. Theses must conform to the requirements provided by McGill Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, as described [here](#).

Normally, a Master's thesis does not exceed 100 pages in length. GPS considers 150 pages to be the maximum (including title page, abstracts, table of contents, contribution of authors/preface, acknowledgements, bibliography/reference list, and appendices).

An optional practice within DISE is that a second reader is selected, to read and give feedback on the final draft before the thesis is submitted for examination.

As the student moves through the phases of the thesis, their thesis grade on Minerva is recorded as In Progress (IP) until they graduate.

7. Initial Thesis Submission

Initial thesis submission is processed through the McGill myThesis platform. More information can be found [here](#). Supervisors are required to approved the selected examiner and thesis and will receive notifications to do so in the system.

8. Thesis Examination

- A Master's thesis must be examined by a single academic specialist (examiner)
- Supervisors may not serve as examiners of their own Master's students
- For Master's theses, no oral defense is required

For a Master's thesis, the examiner must be a scholar of established reputation and competence in the field of the thesis research. The examiner may be from inside or outside the University. A member from within DISE who is not in [conflict of interest](#) may serve as examiner.

Examiners evaluate the thesis according to the criteria in the respective thesis examiner report form for a [Master's](#) thesis. Examiners provide an overall judgment of 'passed' or 'not passed'. For Master's students, this evaluation determines whether or not the thesis fulfills the requirement for the degree, even if minor changes are recommended.

An evaluation of 'passed' should be awarded unless the revisions required are major, such as:

- The need for a new study, experimentation, or significant additional research or reformulation.
- The need for substantial stylistic or editorial changes. While these are not normally considered to be major revisions, if the quality of the presentation is so poor that extensive rewriting is required, the thesis should not be passed. Examiners are asked to identify such changes clearly in their reports.

More information on thesis examination can be found [here](#).

9. Final Thesis Submission & Approval

Once the revisions are completed following examination, the supervisor reviews the thesis to ensure the requested changes have been made and the student must upload the thesis in the thesis database. The supervisor then must approve the thesis on Minerva (Look for *e-Thesis Supervisor form*).

More information can be found [here](#).

10. McGill Graduate Studies Failure Policy

A Student will be [withdrawn](#) from the University, if they:



- fail two Courses (i.e. two different Courses, one failed Course plus a failed repeat of the same Course or one failed Course and a failed supplemental exam for that Course); **or**
- obtain two unsatisfactory Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking Reports (see appendix D & E) and the academic unit in which the student is registered recommends that they be withdrawn; **or**
- fail one course, obtains one unsatisfactory Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking Report and the academic unit in which the student is registered recommends that they be withdrawn.

The Student's transcript will thereafter indicate that the student was withdrawn from the University.



Appendix A: Department of Integrated Studies in Education MA Thesis Supervision Letter of Understanding

Setting mutual expectations between a supervisor and supervisee, and revisiting those regularly (e.g., annually), is essential to ensuring the success of a graduate student.

The following questions are intended to provide clarity for the expectations between Master's Thesis students and supervisors and to form the basis of understanding. You are not required to address every question. Instead, you are encouraged to address each question when and if it applies to the relationship as well as the nature of the intended research.

*Before responding to these questions, we encourage you to see the **DISE MA Thesis Supervision Guidelines** and [McGill's Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Supervision website](#). For information about Graduate Regulations at McGill, including protocols for who to contact when a student needs support, please click [here](#).*

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IMMEDIATELY

1. Communication: How will the supervisor and student communicate with one another?

Consider the type of communication that will be used (e.g., email, text, TEAMS, phone), speed of response, when to expect/not expect responses (e.g., holidays, weekends), etiquette for communication (e.g., it is not okay to send 10 short emails in the span of a day before receiving a response), appropriate content for communication, and how to reach one another in cases of emergency or lack of response.

2. Supervisory Meetings: How will supervisory meetings be scheduled and run?

Consider frequency of meetings, focus of meetings, support provided by supervisor during meetings, expectations for preparation for meetings (e.g., student will present a written progress report, writing, and/or agenda in advance), expectations for follow-up to meetings (e.g., student will present a written summary or a follow up email), and who will be in charge of scheduling meetings (including missed meetings). (Regular contact (meetings or emails) is important. We suggest supervisors and full-time students have a formal meeting, irrespective of the number of informal meetings, at least once per term.)

3. Writing and Feedback (General): What expectations do we have for writing and feedback?

Consider plans for publication/presentations/dissemination (including plans for co-authorship), norms around order of authorship (see DISE MA Thesis Supervision Guidelines), expected timeframe to receive feedback (including what to do if feedback is not received in that timeframe), expectations for intellectual ownership of ideas (e.g., how to avoid one person feeling that the other has appropriated their ideas), what additional writing support the student should seek out (e.g., GRAPHOS, DISE writing courses), and expected time needed for additional writing support.

4. Scholarship Funding & Employment: What is the vision for the student's funding and employment?

Consider sources of funding (scholarships, RA-ships, TA-ships, other employment on or off campus), time spent on employment, and expectations for student and supervisor in securing funding (including support that



supervisors will provide for scholarship applications). *Note that MA Thesis students are only eligible for SSHRC and FRQSC in fall of their first year (or before).*

(for Full Time students only) Note that it is university policy that full time students should not work full time. If the student takes on substantial employment, they are required to fulfil all of the same requirements, deadlines, and expectations as other MA Thesis students. Full time students should expect to work on their coursework and research a minimum of 40 hours per week. **If the student is taking on employment, how will they ensure that they are able to maintain satisfactory progress towards their degree?**

5. Other Resources Available: What resources will be available to the student?

Consider what resources will be available (e.g., office space, data collection equipment, funding for conference travel), when they will be available, and how the student can access.

6. Expectations for Additional Learning: What additional opportunities should the student seek out?

Consider participation in research groups, teaching, seminars or workshops (e.g., scholarship funding workshops, SKILLSETS, Graphos), departmental activities (e.g., oral defense presentations, DISE talks and/or public research presentations), student groups (e.g., EGSS, PGSS), and academic/non-academic leadership.

7. Other: Is there any other information that the supervisor or student should know?



OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IMMEDIATELY (OR REVISIT AT A LATER DATE – NO LATER THAN THE END OF YEAR 1)

1. Expected Progress towards Major Milestones: What is the approximate timeline for completing milestones?

Consider when the student should start and finish working on their Thesis Proposal, Research Ethics Board training, Research Ethics Board application, data collection, analysis, writing of thesis. See suggested timeline in MA Supervision Guidelines. *Extending the timeline can have financial consequences for the student, so it is essential to have clear communication about the expected timeline and any anticipated changes.*

2. Writing and Feedback (Specific Milestones): What expectations do we have for writing and feedback for specific milestones?

Consider number of rounds of feedback for scholarship applications, thesis proposal, REB application, and thesis, dates for submission of first drafts, and what kind of feedback to expect.

3. Funding for Data Collection: Are there financial resources available to support costs of the research and data collection?

We understand the above shared expectations and will revisit them as needed.

| Names | Signature | Date Confirmed |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <i>Student</i> | | |
| <i>Supervisor</i> | | |
| <i>Co-supervisor (if applicable)</i> | | |



Appendix B: Guidelines for Authorship

What is authorship and how is it determined²?

Authorship entails a public acknowledgment of scientific or professional contribution to a disseminated piece of information (see APA, 2002) and includes involvement in various tasks associated with the project (National Health and Medical Research Council, 1997). As such, a number of interrelated factors are considered in determining authorship. The APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2002, Section 8.1.2) also addresses certain criteria for authorship by stating:

- a) Authors take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have contributed.
- b) Principal authorship and other publication credits accurately reflect the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved, regardless of their relative status. Mere possession of an institutional position, such as Department Chair, does not justify authorship credit. Minor contributions to the research or to the writing for publication are appropriately acknowledged, such as in footnotes or in an introductory statement.
- c) A student is usually listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is based primarily on the student's dissertation or thesis. Faculty supervisors discuss publication credit with students as early as feasible and throughout the research and publication process as appropriate.

Further information is available from the following sources:

[International Committee of Medical Journal Authors](#)

[PhD on track: Co-authorship](#)

[Intellectual Property Guidelines for Graduate Students & Supervisors, University of Toronto, School of Graduate Studies](#)

² Taken from A graduate Student's Guide to Determining Authorship Credit and Authorship order, APA Science Student Council, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-paper.pdf>



Appendix C: Meeting Agenda Template

Agenda for Supervisor Meeting

Week of March 20, 2017
Time TBA
Skype

Meeting called by:

Type of meeting:

Facilitator:

Note taker:

Timekeeper:

Attendees:

Agenda (sample items):

1. *Literature Review*
2. *Conference submission*
3. *Paper for course X*
4. *Question about terminology*
5. *Scheduling committee meeting*



Appendix D: Graduate Student Progress Tracking Report³

Student Name: _____ Student ID: _____
Start Year: _____ Date: _____

Progress tracking for MA thesis students is completed as needed. Students may be introduced to this report at the beginning of their program. A copy of any completed forms may be kept in the student's file with the Department of Integrated Studies in Education. The form is also available to university administrators authorized to view student records upon request. Students with an unsatisfactory report in any area will meet with the Graduate Program Directors to discuss the consequences or conditions for continuation in the program or removal from the program. Please note: TWO unsatisfactory reports warrants removal from a graduate program.

ACADEMIC STANDING

| | Academic achievement ⁴ | Research Skills | Requisite Knowledge | Adherence to timelines | Other (please indicate): | Overall |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Satisfactory | | | | | | |
| Unsatisfactory | | | | | | |
| Not Applicable | | | | | | |
| List courses with K/KE grades and dates for required completion. Ensure K contract is on file. | | | | | | |
| List courses with W grades. Ensure documentation is on file. | | | | | | |
| List courses with J, F, or KF grades. | | | | | | |

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Reports from staff, faculty or program directors regarding concerns about:

- Appropriate communication
- Adherence to program, university or school policies
- Response to requests related to student responsibilities
- Adherence to safe space statement
- Adherence to classroom etiquette statement
- Other: _____
- Report(s) attached

Appendix E: Graduate Student Progress Tracking Report Action Plan

Student Name: _____ Student ID: _____
Start Year: _____ Date: _____

Students with an unsatisfactory report will meet with the Graduate Program Directors to discuss the consequences or conditions for continuation in the program. This includes the development of an action plan to address identified. Failure to successfully meet the goals laid out in the action plan may result in removal from the program.

³ Electronic version of this form is available in the DISE website for graduate students

⁴ Refer to the GPS policy regarding failure in Graduate courses; 2 failing grades leads to removal from the program.



Explanation of concern:

Recommendations for improvement:

Timeframe for completion/target dates:

Date for next meeting: _____

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Student name: | Graduate Program Director name: |
| Student signature: | Graduate Program Director signature: |
| Date: | Date: |

Note: Any person listed who does not agree with the statements and evaluations in this report may submit an explanation, which will be attached to the report and kept on file. This must be received by the Graduate Program Coordinator within 4 weeks of the report. The Graduate Program Director(s) or GPS Associate Dean may be consulted for further information.



Appendix F: Common Elements of a Thesis

This is an example of elements that can be included in a standard thesis though format and style may vary. Consult with the supervisor for more information. See the Graduate and Postdoctoral Guidelines for [Preparation of a Thesis](#) for more details about what is required in a McGill thesis.

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of the introduction is to provide the reader with an overview of the study itself and the influencing factors in its development. This section should briefly introduce the setting and methods used in the study and present the study purpose and hypothesis. The first two to three paragraphs of this section should focus on summarizing the nature of the dissertation, including the writer's motivation for choosing the topic. Next, the writer should discuss the significance of the topic in relation to the setting or the framework in which the study occurs. In addition, the writer should include an acknowledgement of the prior research or information upon which the study is based. The scope of the study should be presented, along with a general description of what the reader can expect in the remainder of the document. Finally, the introduction should end with a brief discussion of what the writer anticipated will be the value of the research project.

2. Literature Review

The Literature Review provides the necessary background information to familiarize the reader with prior research. Three general types of literature reviews exist: the broad scan, the focused review, and the comprehensive critique.

3. Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

A theoretical framework refers to the theory that a researcher chooses to guide them in their research. Thus, a theoretical framework is the application of a theory, or a set of concepts drawn from one and the same theory, to offer an explanation of an event, or shed some light on a particular phenomenon or research problem (Imenda, 2014). Thus, a conceptual framework may be defined as an end result of bringing together a number of related concepts to explain or predict a given event or give a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest – or simply, of a research problem. The process of arriving at a conceptual framework is akin to an inductive process whereby small individual pieces (in this case, concepts) are joined together to tell a bigger map of possible relationships (Imenda, 2014).

Sometimes the theoretical framework is combined with the literature review in one chapter to form the conceptual framework.

4. Methodology

The fourth chapter of the dissertation is the Methodology and Methods, sometimes also referred to as the Study Design and Methodology. It is in this section that the writer describes the participant population, setting and procedures used in enough detail that others could replicate the study and verify its validity. This chapter often begins with a brief overview of the methodological approach used in the study. It should then provide specific information on the number of study participants, how they were chosen, and relevant demographic information. The writer may also present the rationale for the specific sample size used. Next, all data collection tools and instruments used in the study should be described and justified. If such tools are described in detail elsewhere in the literature, the writer can indicate this along with a relevant reference. Actual surveys or questionnaires will not be presented here. Instead, the writer provides an overview and then inserts copies of the tools into the Appendix at the end of the paper. Finally,



the chapter should include a comprehensive description and justification of analytic procedures and (when applicable) considerations for validity, reliability, credibility and/or trustworthiness.

5. Results/Findings

The results portion presents the analyzed data without any accompanying interpretation. This section should include, where possible, a visual representation of the data, such as in charts, graphs, or tables. Each figure should have a brief description associated with it and clearly marked labels. The results of all statistical analyses should be presented, such that the reader has enough information to determine reliability, validity, and the statistical significance of the relationships among variables. This section should also be clearly organized by subheadings.

6. Conclusion/Discussion

Here is where the writer sums up the entire project. This chapter (or chapters) should remind the reader of the initial problem statement, research questions or hypothesis and then relate that to the results from the study. The writer should then present contributions of the research to the field, implications for practice, limitations, and future directions for research. One caution when writing this chapter is not to merely reiterate the other portions of the dissertation. Instead, the writer should strive to leave a lasting impression upon the reader, conveying with the same passion that drove the research project the importance of the work completed.

Manuscript Style Dissertation⁵

As an alternative to the traditional thesis format, the thesis research may be presented as a collection of scholarly papers of which the student is the author or co-author; that is, it can include the text of one or more manuscripts, submitted or to be submitted for publication, and/or published articles reformatted according to the McGill requirements. Manuscripts for publication are frequently very concise documents. The thesis is expected to be a more detailed, scholarly work than manuscripts for publication in journals. A manuscript-based thesis will be judged by the examiners as a unified, logically-coherent document in the same way a traditional thesis is judged.

A manuscript-based thesis must:

- be presented with uniform font size, line spacing, and margin sizes (see thesis format);
- conform to all other requirements listed under Thesis Components above;
- contain additional text that connects the manuscripts in a logical progression from one chapter to the next, producing a cohesive, unitary focus, and documenting a single program of research - the manuscripts alone do not constitute the thesis;
- function as an integrated whole.

McGill specifies that there must be a minimum of 1 manuscript for a manuscript MA Thesis. Publication or acceptance for publication of research results before presentation of the thesis in no way supersedes the University's evaluation and judgment of the work during the thesis examination process (i.e., it does not guarantee that the thesis will be found acceptable for the degree). The manuscripts do not need to be submitted.

In the case of multiple-authored articles, the student must be the primary author. Multiple-authored articles cannot be used in more than one thesis. In the case of students who have worked collaboratively on projects, it may be preferable for both students to write a standard format thesis, identifying individual contributions.

⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/thesis-guidelines/preparation>



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Faculty of
Education

Department of
Integrated Studies in Education

More information on manuscript-based theses can be found [here](#).

^{i i} Information contained in these Supervision Guidelines is subject to change. In the event of conflict, information from the Office of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies will take precedence.