

**DEPARTMENT  
OF  
TEACHER EDUCATION**

Graduate Student Handbook of  
Policies and Procedures  
FOR MASTERS OF ARTS CANDIDATES

**BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY**

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## PREFACE

This handbook has been prepared to assist you as a graduate student in understanding the requirements, policies, and procedures for the graduate program in the Department of Teacher Education. Additional information about university resources, policies, and procedures is available through the Graduate Studies website ([graduatestudies.byu.edu](http://graduatestudies.byu.edu)). Use the *Prospective Students* and *Current Students* tabs for access to information. Use the *Resources* tab for access to the [forms](#) and [policies and procedures](#) links, for current details about Graduate Studies.

We invite you to take advantage of faculty expertise, and the other resources available to you as you complete your graduate program. Work closely with your graduate committee in understanding program requirements and in planning and completing your thesis. We trust that our association with you during this experience will be rewarding and satisfying and wish you success in this professional endeavor.

## STATEMENTS ON BELONGING

### **The University's Statement on Belonging**

We are united by our common primary identity as children of God (Acts 17:29; Psalm 82:6) and our commitment to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (BYU Mission Statement). We strive to create a community of belonging composed of students, faculty, and staff whose hearts are knit together in love (Mosiah 18:21) where:

- All relationships reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor (BYU Mission Statement);
- We value and embrace the variety of individual characteristics, life experiences and circumstances, perspectives, talents, and gifts of each member of the community and the richness and strength they bring to our community (1 Corinthians 12:12–27);
- Our interactions create and support an environment of belonging (Ephesians 2:19); and
- The full realization of each student's divine potential is our central focus (BYU Mission Statement).

### **McKay School of Education Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement**

The David O. McKay School of Education is committed to fostering an environment that values diversity, promotes equity, and invites belonging for all students, faculty, and staff as we strive to fulfill Brigham Young University's mission "to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life."

We recognize the divine worth of each child of our Heavenly Parents, and we endeavor to accept each other with understanding and respect for our differences. Christ's example inspires our approach to learning, teaching, and leadership. As educators, we actively seek to overcome biases that limit people's educational opportunities. As fellow human beings, we consciously seek to embrace all people "regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or other distinguishing feature."

Recognizing there is work to do, the McKay School of Education invites all students, faculty, and staff to join in our commitment to a culture of love and unity. Together, we must humbly heed our prophet's admonition "to lead out in abandoning attitudes and actions of prejudice, . . . promote respect for all of God's children," and teach others to do so.

We look forward to living and working in greater harmony with all. We invite you to join us in these efforts in your homes and communities and as part of your profession.

## DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

### Master of Arts in Teacher Education

The aim of the Master of Arts (MA) in Teacher Education program is to provide a rigorous program focused on inquiry that prepares candidates to improve their practice as teachers, become teacher leaders in schools, districts, and other educational agencies, and prepare for doctoral studies or other advanced scholarship.

#### Intended Learning Outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the MA in Teacher Education program are grounded in the following five commitments of the BYU Public School Partnership. That is...

- We commit to prepare educators who model and teach the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for civic virtue and engagement in our society. (Civic Preparation and Engagement)
- We commit to develop educators who are competent and caring, and who promote engaged learning through appropriate instructional strategies and positive classroom environments and relationships. (Engaged Learning Through Nurturing Pedagogy)
- We commit to develop educators who are committed to and actively provide equitable access to academic knowledge and achievement through rigor and mastery of curriculum content and instructional skill. (Equitable Access to Academic Knowledge and Achievement)
- We commit to assist educators in becoming responsible stewards in their schools and communities by dedicating themselves to shared purpose, renewal, and high standards of educator competence and learner performance. (Stewardship in School and Community)
- We commit to foster in educators a commitment to renewal through consistent inquiry, reflection, and action within their professional practice, resulting in continuous improvement. (Commitment to Renewal)

Therefore, the intended learning outcomes that serve to aid candidates who complete the MA program are as follows:

#### Effective Analysis and Problem Solving

Candidates will develop their ability to analyze complex educational problems

and marshal the resources and evidence to improve practice by engaging in rigorous inquiry.

**Effective Communication**

Candidates will develop their ability to make sound arguments grounded in relevant literature and evidence.

**Research Ethics**

Candidates will develop their ability to recognize and address ethical concerns related to conducting research with human subjects.

**Education and Lifelong Service**

Candidates will develop their ability to recognize and strengthen the link between education and participatory democracy.

**Professional Development**

Candidates can identify changes they have made or actions they have taken to improve schools or their own practice.

**Graduate Thesis Committee**

Upon admission to the program, you will be assigned a temporary “orientation advisor,” a graduate faculty member who will assist you as you begin your graduate work. Your orientation advisor can answer your questions about graduate work in general and will help you identify “good-fit” possibilities for your graduate committee chair, the faculty member who will work most closely with you throughout your graduate program.

During your graduate studies you will work directly with a committee. This graduate thesis committee will include a chairperson (chair) and at a minimum, two other members. All members of the committee must be graduate faculty, and the chair must be from the Department of Teacher Education. The graduate thesis committee members’ major role is to guide you through the program and assist in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of your thesis research.

The selection of your committee chair is ultimately your responsibility. Therefore, early in the program, we encourage you to get to know the faculty by attending orientation events, consulting with your orientation advisor, visiting faculty members to discuss their research interest, and exploring a range of possibilities of faculty to serve on your graduate committee. For further information on the graduate faculty and their research interests, you can read their brief biographies [here](#). Once you have selected a committee chair, requested that he/she serve as your chair, and the faculty member has agreed to serve, you will work with her/him to select at least two committee members whose



interests and expertise will complement one another, and who will help you conduct your thesis research.

You will officially submit the names of your graduate committee before you submit your Program of Study online via GradProg (see Program of Study section below). If the need arises to make a change to your graduate committee, you will need to request the change through the graduate program manager. Once approved, the change will be reflected in GradProg. It is the student's responsibility to inform committee members of any requested change.

### **MA Program Courses**

The MA in Teacher Education program is a two-year, part-time evening (Fall, Winter Semesters, Spring Term) and Summer-intensive program. Classes are scheduled so that you may continue your work as a teacher while completing your master's degree. The courses you will take during your master's program are designed to both broaden and deepen your knowledge about teaching, learning, and education. In order to complete the MA in Teacher Education program, you must successfully complete four core courses (3 credits each), two research courses (3 credits each), three elective courses (3 credits each), and six hours of thesis credit, for a total of 33 credit hours.

### **Core Courses**

The core courses will provide a thorough understanding of theories and practices related to your educational practice and will provide opportunities for considering your role in supporting and sustaining democratic social aims:

- **T Ed 610 Foundations of Teacher Education** (3 credits) *A course that will engage candidates in the study of issues and the contending viewpoints about those issues that currently shape the discourse about teaching and teacher education in America*
- **T Ed 611 Theories of Learning and Teaching** (3 credits) *An examination of seminal theories of learning in relationship to the practice of teaching and schooling*
- **T Ed 612 Teacher Learning, Development, and Mentoring** (3 credits) *An examination of teacher learning, development, and mentoring across disciplinary literatures*
- **T Ed 613 Curriculum Theory, Design and Assessment** (3 credits) *An examination of the nature of curriculum design for potentially educative environments*

## Research Courses

The research courses will prepare you for conducting your own research and completing a thesis:

- T Ed 694: **Introduction to Inquiry, Part I** (3 credits) *This foundational class is the first in a two-part series that introduces the purposes and processes of research in the context of education.*
- T Ed 695: **Introduction to Inquiry, Part II** (3 credits) *This class is the second course in a two-part series in which the purposes and processes are elaborated on through the application of various methods of inquiry in the context of education.*

## Elective Courses

Elective courses will allow you to tailor your program of study to your interests and needs. With the help of your chair, you will select at least three, 3-hour graduate-level courses, either from within or outside the Department of Teacher Education, to complete your study list.

## Thesis Credits

Thesis credits are awarded when you have successfully proposed and conducted an original research study, prepared a formal report of your research (your thesis), and defended that written report of your study. You must register for 2 Thesis hours up through and including the semester that you defend your thesis.

- T Ed 699R **Master's Thesis** (6 credits) *Formal report and defense of substantive original research that makes a contribution to the field of education*

Table 1

*Projected Schedule of Courses for MA in Teacher Education*

Program Requirements							
TEd 694	TEd 695	TEd 613	No Courses	2.0 Thesis Hours	2.0 Thesis Credits	2.0 Thesis Credits	2.0 Thesis Credits until Graduation (as necessary)
TEd 612	TEd 611	TEd 624		Elective 1			
TEd 610				Elective 2			
1 <sup>st</sup> Summer	1 <sup>st</sup> Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Winter	1 <sup>st</sup> Spring	2 <sup>nd</sup> Summer	2 <sup>nd</sup> Fall	2 <sup>nd</sup> Winter	
	+ 3 credits	+ 3 credits	+ 4.5 credits				
International Students							

### Program of Study

No later than the third week of fall semester following your admission, you must submit a **Program of Study** in GradProg. This program lists the **courses** you will complete during the program and cannot be submitted until your full committee has been selected and they have accepted. The required core and research courses, along with the required thesis credits will be listed on GradProg. Additionally, you and your chair should explore possible elective courses to be included on your Program of Study. Once your Program of Study is completed, submit it online via GradProg for your committee members to approve. The Program of Study sets forth the approved courses that you must complete to qualify for graduation. If you make any changes to your Program of Study, it will need to be requested through the program manager and be approved by your committee on GradProg.

## **International Students on F1/J1 Visa**

**Maintaining student status.** During the Summer, students are enrolled in 9 credits, which is considered full-time. During Fall & Winter semesters the program typically only offers, and requires students to enroll in, up to 6 credits. International students who are F1/J1 visa holders will have to take additional courses in order to meet the requirement of full-time student status. This must be worked out in a formal agreement between the department of Teacher Education, the Office of Graduate Studies and the Office of International Student and Scholar Services. Courses can be taken across departments as long as they are graduate level offerings and can be justifiable as integral to the MA in Teacher Education. Courses must be approved by the student's committee chair as part of the Program of Study. Responsibility for remaining current in the appropriate amounts of credit (9 F/W, 4.5 Sp/Su) is that of the individual student. International students must complete the International Student Program of Study form in addition to submitting the Program of Study in GradProg which includes the required program courses as well as the additional required credits needed to maintain full-time status. This form must be approved the International Student and Scholar Services office and the department.

Thesis (or R credits) can be accepted as fulfilling full time requirements if that is the normal program requirement after course work is completed. After the first year of course work, there is no limit to the amount of R (Thesis) credit a student may enroll in, as long as they are making normal progress toward graduation.

**Support.** International students who are not working in local schools may find work on campus. They are eligible to be Graduate Assistants or Teaching Assistants. The department does not guarantee GA or TA positions. Students are responsible for finding their own employment on campus, if so desired. Additional information and support for graduate students can be found at the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (<https://iss.byu.edu/>).

## **Pacing and Timeline**

University policy requires completion of the program of study for a master's degree within five years of the first admission date. However, you are entering the program with a cohort group who is expected to complete the program in about two years. Extending your program beyond the suggested two-year time period will increase the overall cost of your degree.

Once admitted to the Department of Teacher Education MA program, you should register for and complete the core and research courses taught each semester. These

required courses will be offered during the first year of your program, and each of these courses is scheduled to be taught only once in a two-year cycle (see Projected Schedule above). You will also enroll in the elective courses of your choice when those courses are available. The timing of those courses will vary. Finally, you should enroll in thesis credits when appropriate, usually during the second year of your program, though you can begin work on your thesis research before you enroll in T Ed 699R. Work with your chair to create a schedule for taking the elective courses and the thesis credits, setting a pace that will work for you. Keep in mind the university requirement that you register for at least 6 credits each academic year of your graduate program, with 2 credits the semester you defend your thesis (see Minimum Registration Requirement section below).

We encourage you to work on your thesis at a reasonable pace, designing and conducting your study as you complete your coursework. Working too quickly may compromise the quality of your work but working too slowly may delay your graduation within the expected time period. You will find that engaging in research and coursework simultaneously will enrich your experience with both. Because Graduate Studies requires you to enroll in at least six credits each academic year you are in the program (see minimum registration requirements section below), you will want to be strategic about the semesters in which you enroll in T Ed 699R. See [https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation\\_aids.html](https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html) for graduation deadlines and timelines.

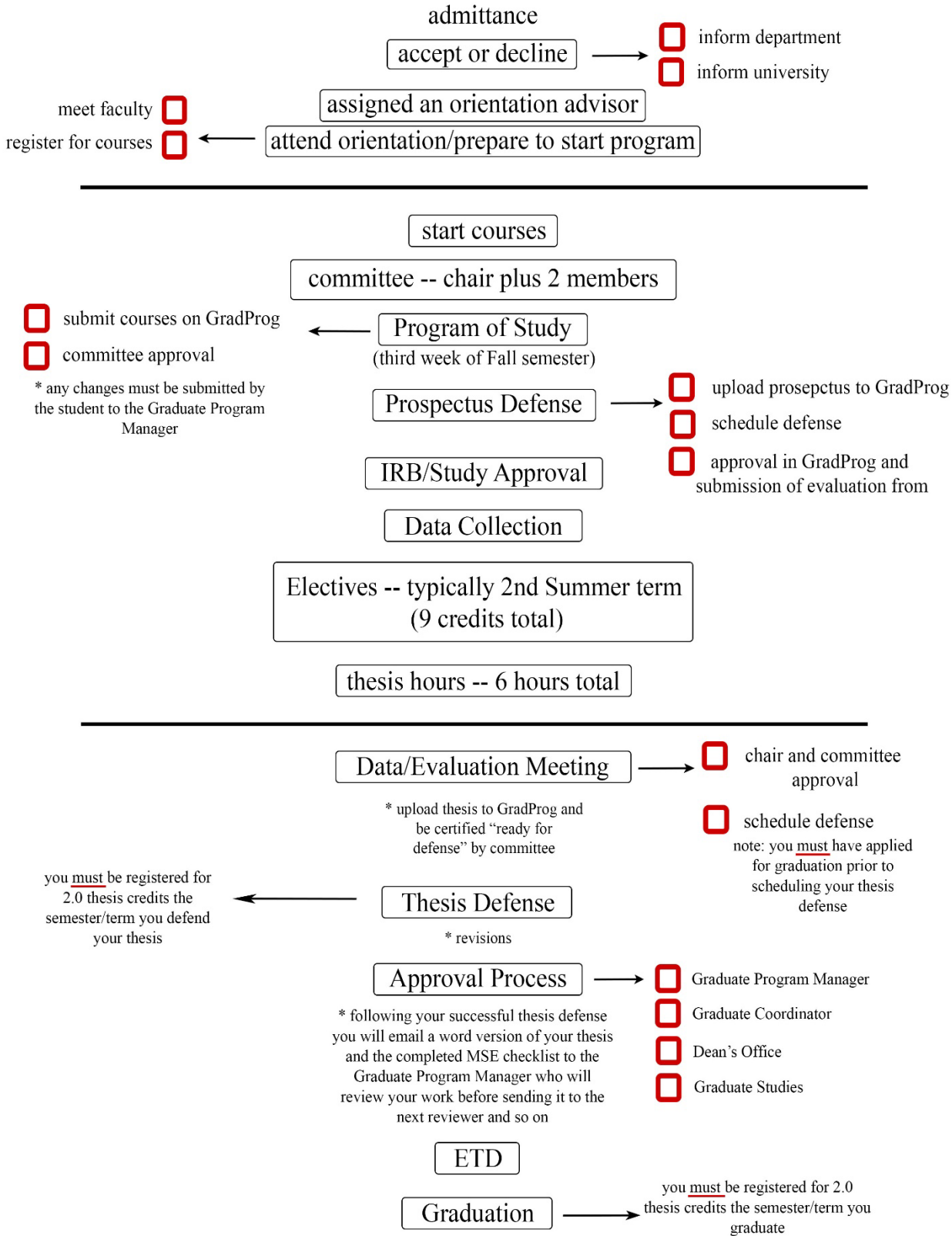
Graduate Studies may grant a leave of absence for the following reasons: **medical**, **military**, or **mission**. While on leave, you would be excused from minimum registration requirements (i.e., 6 credit hours per academic year; 2 credits of TED 699R in the semester you defend your thesis) and from reviews of your progress toward graduation. However, the *five-year time limit for the MA will still apply*. To request a leave of absence, you would need to submit [\(ADV Form 5\)](#) along with the appropriate supporting documents.

### **Minimum Registration Requirement**

All degree-seeking graduate students are required by BYU Graduate Studies to meet minimum registration requirement. That is, the university requires you to register for and complete with acceptable grades at least six semester hours during each academic year to avoid being dropped from the program. Further, you must be registered for two credits of TED 699R (Thesis) the semester you defend your thesis. Therefore, it is important to plan your Program of Study carefully, and to make every effort to stay on the schedule you set. If you extend your coursework or thesis beyond your projected graduation date, you must continue to register for at least two thesis credit hours each semester. During this extended period of time, *if you do not meet minimum registration*

*requirements, Graduate Studies will drop you from active status and you will be required to apply for readmission. In order to resume work on your program, you would then need to submit [GS Form 6](#). Your previous work will be re-evaluated, and readmission will not be automatic.*

### Program Timeline



## Assessing Student Performance

The Department of Teacher Education uses several methods to assess your performance and progress as you complete your MA program. Specifically, those methods include your Graduate Progress Report, Evaluation of Student progress, your Student Self-Assessment, and your course grades. Your growing proficiency in academic writing is also evidence of your progress as a graduate student.

### Graduate Progress Report (GradProg)

Your Graduate Progress Report is maintained by Graduate Studies on the university's GradProg system. You may access it any time through *MyBYU*. GradProg tracks your individual Program of Study with the courses you have completed and provides a summary of your progress to date (committee, Program of Study, prospectus, thesis defense, and ETD). It is important for you to check GradProg on a regular basis, so any errors can be promptly corrected.

### Student Self-Assessments

Twice a year, you will complete your portion of the student rating report, which is a self-assessment of your progress, and then use that self-assessment as a guide in a conversation with your graduate committee chair. Your chair will report on the self-assessment and conversation to the Graduate Faculty as part of the process of completing your Student Rating Report (described below). Students who fail to complete a self-assessment and/or meet with their graduate committee chair may receive an *Unsatisfactory* rating on their Student Rating Report. Additionally, failure to submit two reports a year carries the consequence of being denied financial support from this or other state, federal or financial institutions.

### Student Rating Report

The Office of Graduate Studies requires the department to monitor your progress and submit a student rating report at least twice each year. For each report, your graduate committee chair must evaluate your academic status as *Satisfactory*, *Marginal*, or *Unsatisfactory* based on the criteria listed below. In Fall and Winter semesters of each year, your committee chair (see **Appendix A: Student Rating Report**) and you meet together to review your progress and complete the form signifying that you have read and understood the evaluation. Once completed, you will send the report to the graduate secretary. If there are concerns about your progress, discussion on remediation will take place in a graduate faculty meeting in which your chair will discuss the rating and any actions you may need to take to improve your performance. The department will report your current academic status to Graduate



Studies and it will be recorded on GradProg. Failure to submit these reports will result in being denied financial support (departmental, federal, financial institutions, and state aid).

Criteria for a *Satisfactory* rating include (a) successful completion of courses on your study list (maintaining a 3.0 GPA or better and earning at least a B- in each course); (b) regular contact (e.g., face-to-face meetings, email, telephone conversations) with your committee chair; (c) consistent progress toward completion of your thesis (e.g., prospectus, IRB clearance, data collection and analysis, written drafts, committee meetings/defense); (d) timely submission of required paperwork and forms (e.g., self-evaluations, study list, application for graduation).

If you receive **two** *Unsatisfactory* ratings, or an *Unsatisfactory* and *Marginal* in a row, your program of study will be terminated at the end of the semester. In order for you to be allowed to continue, the department must file a Petition for Exception with Graduate Studies presenting a convincing case that you be given another semester to demonstrate satisfactory progress. A copy of a **contract to completion** listing student and faculty responsibilities and a **timeline** must be attached. This document will include the signatures of you and your graduate committee. It is important to note that if the exception is granted, the original five-year deadline for completion of your degree will be shortened based on the contract to completion.

### **Course Grades**

Your instructors will evaluate you as you complete your course work and your thesis. A minimum GPA of 3.0 in your graduate work is required to continue in any graduate program. No "D" credit may be applied toward your MA degree.

If your overall GPA on your Program of Study courses falls below 3.0 during your program, your case will be carefully reviewed by faculty and you may be dropped from the program. Further, a grade lower than B- in any course may result in a rating of *Marginal* on your Graduate Student Rating and a failing grade in any graduate class will result in a rating of *Unsatisfactory*.

### **Scholarly Writing Proficiency**

Scholarly writing will play a major role in your graduate program at BYU, and many people will evaluate your writing ability. By attending carefully to feedback you receive from course professors and your graduate committee members, you will become better at communicating your ideas in clear, concise written language. If you need help in developing your writing proficiency, you should seek out that help. Expect to produce multiple drafts of major writing projects, recognizing that

careful revising and editing is fundamental to the process of writing in an academic setting. Of course, to become a better writer, you must engage in the act of writing. Procrastinating written assignments leaves little time for refining your initial ideas and only makes things worse.

All writing within the department, including your thesis, is to conform to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.; APA). **You must purchase a copy of this manual for use throughout your graduate program.** APA style is required for all theses in the McKay School of Education and is recommended by many professional journals in which education faculty and students publish the results of their work. These style guidelines should be used in the preparation of written class assignments, term papers, class projects, proposals, as well as your master's thesis.

## Available Resources

### Graduate Student Enrollment in Religion Courses

Graduate students are eligible to attend religion courses on a space-available basis without incurring any additional tuition costs. To qualify for this privilege, do not formally register for a religion course. If you formally register, tuition will be assessed. Instead fill out [ADV Form 6](#), Graduate Request for No-Cost/No Credit Religion Course. **Note:** No credits are earned, or grades received. Details about this privilege are available from Graduate Studies, 105 FPH, (801) 422- 4091.

### Writing Assistance

Academic writing is challenging. Because this type of writing may be somewhat new to you, we suggest you begin early to improve your academic writing skill. Avail yourself of resources available through BYU or elsewhere:

- The BYU Writing Center is one place for you to obtain writing help. For information about tutorial appointments, online and video support materials, or obtaining online assistance, visit the Writing Center website at: <http://writingcenter.byu.edu/>
- The McKay School of Education has provided a similar online writing guide, but this one is tailored to the style of academic writing that will be expected of you as a graduate student. It is also available online as a document that you can download and use as a reference in your writing. (See **Dissertation Aids**.) Bibliographic information for this guide is:

Black, S. (n.d.). *APA for novices: A struggling student's guide to theses, dissertations, and advanced course papers*. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University.

The McKay School of Education provides a [list of external editors](#) who for a fee can assist students with editing needs. Editors listed on this website are not necessarily endorsed by BYU.

### **BYU ID**

Graduate students who are registered for at least 2.0 credit hours per semester or 1.0 credit hour per term receive a university activity card (ID card) and are eligible for all on-campus privileges afforded students who are registered full time (i.e., library privileges, on-campus employment, student housing, student insurance, intramurals, use of physical education facilities, graduate parking permits, and discount admission to sporting and cultural events). You can obtain your ID card at BYU ID Center (1057 WSC). You can access their website at <http://idcenter.byu.edu/>.

### **McKay Building Facilities**

The second floor of the McKay Building (MCKB) is almost entirely available for department use. Faculty and secretarial offices are located in 201, 205, and 206 MCKB on the second floor. A student lounge area containing several tables and vending machines is available on the first floor of the building. The Technology Education Computing lab (TEC Lab) is located on the first floor of the MCKB. It has approximately 6,000 sq. ft. of space and includes a computer lab and technology classroom. This facility is available for student and faculty use. See <http://education.byu.edu/teclab> for current information about the services and resources available. Conference rooms are also available in different locations in the MCKB.

### **Library**

The Harold B. Lee Library (HBLL) at Brigham Young University is a remarkable resource to the entire university community. President Gordon B. Hinckley remarked, “A library is the very heart and substance of a university. Without access of vast quantities of information, neither faculty nor student can do an accurate job. It is the foundation of research. It is the source of information, both old and new. It is a place for the ever-present challenge to dig for knowledge beyond that which is given in the classroom.” (at the dedication of the addition to the HBLL, November 15, 2000)

The HBLL currently has more than 8 million items in its various collections including 3.3 million books, 27,000 journal titles, 250,000 maps, 3 million microfilms and more than 1 million photographs and prints. The library is 665,000 square feet in size, has seating for nearly 5,000 patrons including 800 computer stations, and is the equivalent of 2½ football fields from North to South. Over 15,000 patrons enter the building each day. Group study rooms of various sizes can be reserved through the library website (see <https://groupstudy.lib.byu.edu/>).

As a graduate student, you will do well to become acquainted with the variety of resources available through the HBLL, particularly the reference materials available through the library website <http://lib.byu.edu/>. The Education Librarian, **Rachel Wadham**, is knowledgeable about the availability of resources within the library, and the process for obtaining additional reference materials. She can be contacted by email at [rachel\\_wadham@byu.edu](mailto:rachel_wadham@byu.edu) or by phone at **801-422- 6780**.

### **Funding**

The department has limited funds available for graduate students. Some funds are made available for student tuition, reimbursement for required books, assistance with out-of-pocket costs for thesis research, and for graduate students to travel to conferences to present their work. The amount of funding varies from semester to semester. Receiving funding one semester does not guarantee funding for subsequent semesters. You will need to demonstrate that you are making satisfactory progress in your program to receive graduate funding. Those who receive ratings of *Marginal* or *Unsatisfactory* progress may not be eligible for graduate funding. The department will notify you when funds have been approved and/or allocated to your student account.

For additional information to help you locate other graduate grants and scholarships, see <https://gradstudies.byu.edu/page/costs-financial-aid>

**Student loans.** Two types of student loans are available to graduate students who qualify: BYU loans (short-term; see [BYU Financial Aid](#)) and Federal Stafford Loans (see [BYU Financial Aid](#).) Only degree-seeking students who are making satisfactory academic progress will be considered for loan approval. International students are not eligible for Federal Stafford Loans.

**Professional presentation awards.** Graduate Studies provides funding annually to assist qualified graduate students in presenting research and/or creative works at conferences or other forums. Professional Presentation Award applications are solicited twice yearly, in Fall and Winter Semesters. If you present your research between January 1 and June 30,

you apply at the beginning of Winter Semester. If you present between July 1 and December 31, apply at the beginning of Fall Semester. Interested students may complete a Professional Presentation Award Application online at the Graduate Student Society page of the Graduate Studies website <https://gradstudies.byu.edu/page/professional-presentation-award>). Each application must be accompanied by an online recommendation completed by a professor of your choice. Each application is reviewed by members of the GSS Council and your graduate coordinator.

### **Student Health Plan**

Graduate students with at least 9.0 credit hours per semester or 4.5 credit hours per term are automatically enrolled in the Student Health Plan. If you have health insurance and do not want to be enrolled in the BYU Student Health Plan, you will need to opt out by accessing your health insurance account through **MyBYU** (*My financial center > My accounts > Health Coverage*). Graduate students with at least 2.0 hours of credit are eligible for student health insurance but are not automatically enrolled. Rates for all graduate students are not included in the price of tuition and fees but require additional funds. Information describing the Student Health Center and the Student Health Plan is available from the Health Center (1750 North Wymount Terrace Drive) and online at <http://health.byu.edu/>.

### **Graduate Student Society**

All BYU graduate students are automatically members of the BYU Graduate Student Society (BYUGSS), a university-wide organization that operates in conjunction with department organizations. Presiding officers work directly with the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies to represent graduate student needs and concerns. The purposes of the BYUGSS are as follows:

- Enhance the graduate student culture by integrating graduate students into the larger BYU intellectual community
- Advise the Dean of Graduate Studies, Assistant Dean, and Graduate Council in matters of policy affecting graduate students
- Inform graduate students of research grants, seminars, and journals
- Advocate graduate students' needs with administration
- Offer workshops on professional and academic topics
- Connect with department graduate student

The BYUGSS provides workshops and symposia throughout the year. They solicit proposals and recommend funding for research presentation awards provided by Graduate Studies. The BYUGSS Council, comprised of a student representative from

each department, meets regularly to discuss the needs and concerns of graduate students. The BYUGSS Presidency consults with and makes recommendations to the Dean and Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies.

## Your Thesis Research: Overview

A major element of your MA in Teacher Education program is the *thesis*. You will conduct an original research study as a culminating activity in your graduate program, and your thesis is the written report of your original research. The thesis generally provides an opportunity for a disciplined experience in observing, gathering, interpreting, and reporting data.

Your thesis work is completed under the direction of your graduate committee. Members of your committee, especially your chair, will help you at all stages of your research. Coursework across the program will also provide instruction and support as you engage in your thesis work.

A formal proposal, called the *prospectus*, and a final written report of the thesis is required (see sections below for details about writing both your prospectus and your thesis). By its excellence and uniqueness, your thesis research and writing experience impressively demonstrates your achievement, knowledge, and skills. Your research may be conducted in conjunction with your employment or other association in school settings.

### Quality of Written Work

Both your prospectus and your thesis must be well written, and the thesis should lead directly to a publishable piece of work:

- The thesis topic should be one of consequence that makes substantial contributions to some aspect of education, and one that the graduate committee chair is well prepared to direct.
- The thesis must represent your own research.
- The written work and content are expected to be of high quality, demonstrating thoughtfulness, logical organization, control of academic writing style, and mature written expression.
- The quality of the written work is your responsibility, not that of the chair of your graduate committee or the committee members.
- Your chair and committee should encourage you to publish your work and assist you in your efforts to do so.

### **Graduate Committee Relationship During Research and Writing**

In all stages of research and writing, you should maintain regular contact with your graduate committee, particularly the chair. They will provide guidance in such matters as selection of topic, research design, organization, direction, coherence, style, and formatting of your writing. Such contact may save the time and frustration of redoing work. It is important to remember that your committee chair is willing to help you but cannot do so without regular communication.

In your work with your committee, especially with your chair, be respectful of faculty members' time. When you make appointments, keep them. When submitting your work for review, do not expect instantaneous feedback. Each faculty member will have preferences about such things as meeting schedule, mode of communication, and length of turn-around time for drafts. You should talk explicitly about the ways in which you can most effectively work together.

As you proceed through the process of planning, conducting and reporting your research, your written work will be reviewed many times and by many people. In each instance, the feedback you receive is intended to enhance your skill in academic writing and to improve the quality of your written work.

### **Thesis Format Options**

There are two basic formats for a thesis in the Department of Teacher Education. The traditional *five-chapter format* is described below. You also have the option of preparing a journal-ready manuscript as the centerpiece of your thesis. This option, also described below, is sometimes called the *hybrid format*. It combines the traditional thesis format with a journal-ready manuscript. You should discuss both options with your committee chair as you begin to design your thesis research and consider your choice of thesis format throughout the process. See [https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation\\_aids.html](https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html) for templates of both formats for your thesis.

**Traditional thesis format: Five-chapter thesis.** The traditional five-chapter thesis contains a full reporting of your research. Traditionally, a thesis in this format consists of (a) *preliminary pages* (i.e., title page, abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of tables and figures), (b) the *body of the thesis*, (c) a *reference list*, and (d) *appendices* to the body of the thesis (optional). The five chapters in the body of this format include (a) Introduction, (b) Review of the Literature, (c) Methodology, (d) Findings, and (d) Discussion.

**Hybrid thesis format: Journal-ready article.** An alternative format to the traditional five-chapter format of a thesis approved by the McKay School of Education is the



hybrid, or journal-ready article format. A journal-ready article (hybrid) thesis is similar in many ways to the traditional five-chapter thesis. It contains (a) *preliminary pages*, (b) a journal-ready article that serves as the *body* of your thesis, (c) *references lists* for the article and other sections of the thesis (see page 20, under Appendices, for further guidance), and (d) at least two required appendices (i.e., an extended literature review and a full method section, if different from the methods section of the article). Sections in the body of the article will generally mirror the chapters in the five-chapter thesis format. Any additional findings not included in the article as part of your thesis are also included in an appendix.

If you choose the hybrid format option, you will need to work closely with your chair to select an appropriate peer-reviewed professional journal as an outlet for your work, one with a solid scholarly reputation in the field related to your thesis research. You should then become familiar with recently published articles in the journal and examine the requirements and guidelines for contributors to that journal. Working within those guidelines, (e.g., manuscript length; significant contribution to the field; clarity of writing style; organization) prepare a manuscript reporting your thesis research that is of sufficient quality to be submitted to the editors for review.

### **McKay School of Education Checklist for Formats and Conventions of Theses and Dissertations**

The teacher education department uses the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) as the primary source of information about how to format your thesis documents. Refer first to the APA manual for questions about formatting your academic writing. For specific directions related to basic formatting read the [MSE Checklist](#).

## The Prospectus: Planning Your Research

Prior to undertaking intensive research work on your thesis, you will prepare a proposal for the study called a *prospectus*. This document lays the foundation for your thesis research and should reflect careful consideration of theoretical and methodological aspects of your thesis.

### Purpose of the Prospectus

Intended to eliminate major problems in your research, the prospectus is a written proposal submitted to the department, which is carefully reviewed by your graduate committee. Because the prospectus is a proposal for research that has not yet been conducted, use future tense in preparing this document. Once the prospectus is approved, it serves as a contract of sorts for your thesis work.

### Content of the Prospectus

Your prospectus will include 1) preliminary pages, 2) an introduction to your research, 3) an extended literature review, 4) a description of your proposed research method, and 5) a reference list of works cited in the prospectus. Depending upon your study, you may also include appendices in the prospectus. Whether you intend to produce a traditional five-chapter thesis or a hybrid (journal-ready article) format thesis, your prospectus should adhere to the following guidelines.

**Preliminary pages.** Preliminary pages for the prospectus include 1) the title page, 2) a table of contents, and 3) a list of tables and figures (if needed).

**Introduction.** The introduction should provide context for the issue or problem you plan to explore or examine through your study. It informs the reader why this topic is an issue of interest and why it is that you plan to study it. It should include your research question(s).

**Review of Literature.** All of the relevant research that you have read about your subject is presented in the review of literature. This is meant to establish what is already known about the topic and indicate where there is a gap in the literature that your study intends to address. It should establish the need for your research. The conceptual framework or theoretical lens that you intend to use to examine the topic should be explicated either in this section or in the method section, depending on your field; discuss the placement with your committee chair.

**Method.** The chosen theory/ framework should prompt the kind of study you conduct (qualitative or quantitative). You should justify your selection through use of theory. In

this section, you will list your plans for conducting the study (recruitment of participants, data collection, analysis, etc.), including the order in which each step will occur. Provide sufficient description so that it could be replicated by others. Since you will not have completed any of these steps, be sure to use future tense when writing this section.

**Timeline.** List the major activities or phases of the proposed research, and project an expected completion time for each activity. You may use any format for your timeline. Guides that can be used for developing a **timeline format** that has proven helpful for other graduate students are included in **Appendix B and Appendix C**.

### **Obtaining Approval of Your Prospectus**

Once you have prepared your prospectus, there are several levels of approval required before you can begin your research. See **Appendix B** for a listing of **five steps for beginning your thesis research**.

**Prospectus meeting and department approval.** You and the chair of your graduate committee should determine when you are ready to present your research proposal (your prospectus) to your committee for critique and approval. At that time, it will be your responsibility to negotiate a time for a *prospectus meeting* and to upload a reading copy of your prospectus to GradProg well in advance of the prospectus meeting. Note that some committee members may also require a Word document version of your prospectus in order to give detailed feedback.

At the prospectus meeting, your graduate committee will discuss your proposal and give you helpful feedback to make the study better. During the meeting the chair will complete a Prospectus Defense Form. It includes a section for comments and recommendations from the committee. The committee must approve your prospectus (2/3) before you can begin to carry out the study. During or after the prospectus meeting, when the committee determines that your prospectus is sufficiently developed, obtain approval from all members of your committee on GradProg. Additionally, following the meeting the chair will submit the completed form to the department and electronic copies will be distributed to the student and the committee.

**Institutional Review Board approval for the use of human subjects.** Many (but not all) theses studies involve the use of human subjects (participants). If data for your research are to be generated through interactions (e.g., observation, survey, interview) with either children or adults in any setting, you will be required to obtain approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Prior to submitting your IRB application, you must complete training through [Collaborative IRB Training](#)

Initiative (CITI). Select the option for “Social & Behavioral Research Investigators” and complete all required modules.

If your study involves human subjects, you must NOT begin data collection until your study has been approved by the IRB and from the district and school where your study is located (if applicable). Prior to data collection you will prepare an IRB application. Your thesis chair will need to be the Primary Investigator (PI) listed on your IRB application and you will be named as either a Co-PI or Research Personnel. The IRB application will first be submitted to the MSE Scientific Review Committee, who will provide a checklist upon approval. You should work closely with your chair in completing any IRB application. All applications will be completed and submitted through the iRIS online system. These materials and other information about IRB clearance can be found on the IRB website at <https://orca.byu.edu/irb/index.php>.

**IRB Approval.** This milestone is a department milestone meaning that it is a department requirement rather than a university requirement. Currently this step is set up to be completed following the Prospectus defense and prior to the Ready for Defense. Ready for Defense will not be able to be completed until after this step has been approved. This step requires the student to upload one of two things. Either the completed and approved IRB approval email or the completed department IRB Exemption Form. Regardless of which document is uploaded, this step must be approved by the chair, the committee members, and the Graduate Program Manager.

**School and district approval.** For research conducted in school settings in any of the BYU-Public School Partnerships (and likely in other school districts, as well), you will need to obtain permission to conduct research in that district. Contact the district office for procedures required in that district. You will also need permission of the principal of any school where you intend to conduct research.

**Implementing your prospectus.** Following approval of your prospectus, execute your proposed research, allowing yourself ample time for data analysis and writing up the results of your research. During the implementation of your proposal, including data collection and data analysis, maintain close contact with your thesis chair. Depending on the particulars of your study, the time devoted to implementation will vary.

## The Thesis: Reporting Your Research

Clarity in writing should govern the content and formatting of your thesis. Do not use a past work submitted to your department as your guide. Rather, refer to current standards and guidelines, and check your work carefully against these university documents before submitting your thesis to your committee, department, and the Dean's Office for final approval.

Planning ahead is an important tool for completing your thesis. Setting forth a reasonable plan for the writing of your thesis, then pacing yourself through that plan will increase your chances of finishing your thesis on time. Allow ample time for analyzing data and writing your report with enough time to meet the Graduate Studies submission deadline for your intended graduation date. Refer to the Graduate Studies website (<https://gradstudies.byu.edu/academics/graduation>) and the college website here: [https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation\\_aids.html](https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html) for the current deadline dates. Note that the dates listed are for the final submission; please plan ahead to allow for submission through the department and Dean's office prior to the final submission to Graduate Studies.

Writing your thesis is an iterative process of writing and revising that will result in multiple drafts of your work. For some, that process may begin even as data collection continues. For others, the majority of the writing will occur at the end of the study. Whatever your situation, you would be wise to write as much as you can as soon as you can. This will not only reduce the amount of writing you have left to do at the end of your study, but it will also reduce your anxiety about the overall task to be done. Sharing the early products of your work with your committee chair will alert you to problems early in the writing process, while making adjustments, is easier.

Your prospectus will serve as a base for your thesis, but you will need to update all three chapters to reflect your current knowledge and the ways your research actually unfolded. For example, your literature review should continue to evolve as the research process proceeds, and the methods section of your thesis must reflect refinements or changes you made to the procedures in your prospectus. You will also need to report the results of your study and discuss your findings in two final chapters. Because the thesis is a report of research that has already been conducted, use past tense when referring to background, methods and procedures of your study. See **Appendix D** for a flowchart of the thesis writing and defense process.

## Content of the Traditional Five-Chapter Thesis

While your thesis may vary slightly in the organization of your ideas, the following sections should appear in your document.

**Preliminary pages.** Preliminary pages of the five-chapter thesis generally follow the same format as those of the prospectus, although there are additional pages that were not required as part of your prospectus. The formatting of preliminary pages, including numbering the pages, is governed by university guidelines, so you must attend carefully to those guidelines. These preliminary pages are essentially the same for both traditional and hybrid thesis formats. PDF templates of the approved formats are found on the MSE website and include the correct format for the preliminary pages, as well as the other sections listed below, required for the thesis ([https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation\\_aids.html](https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html)). Use of these templates is strongly recommended as they already have all of the formatting criteria embedded within them.

- **Title page.** The title page of the thesis is similar to that of the prospectus but includes the names of your committee and your copyright information. Use your official name as it appears on university records and see that there is an exact match between your name on the author line and the copyright line.
- **Abstract page.** The abstract is a summary of your thesis with emphasis on the findings of the study. Your abstract must be 250 words or less and fit on a single page. The abstract is single-spaced and printed in the same font and size as the rest of the work. At the bottom of the abstract page, include no more than six keywords. These should be words that are indexed through ERIC at <http://eric.ed.gov/>, words that would help someone locate your work when doing a topical search in a data base.
- **Acknowledgements page.** You may wish to express appreciation to those who have helped you in your graduate studies. The content of this page allows for individual expression but should be simple and in good taste. This page is optional.
- **Table of contents.** The contents, order, and formatting of the table of contents is the same for the prospectus and the thesis, however, there is no timeline in the thesis. Include all headings level 1-3 in the table of contents in your thesis. Indent subheadings under their respective headings and see that the page numbers are right justified.

- **List of tables and figures.** If your study requires tables and/or figures as support material, include a listing of the tables, then the figures, on a separate page for each list. These are placed immediately following the Table of Contents.

**Body of the thesis.** For a traditional five-chapter thesis, the body of the thesis contains: Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Review of Literature, Chapter 3: Method, Chapter 4: Findings and Chapter 5: Discussion. The content of Chapters 1–3 will be essentially the same as for the prospectus, so a description of those chapters will not be repeated here. See description of the contents of the prospectus beginning on p. 12 of this handbook for details.

You will need to update Chapters 1–3 to reflect the new understandings you have developed as your study has unfolded. You will likely need to adjust (e.g., extend, shift focus, refine) your review of the literature based on your experiences in data collection and analysis. You will also need to revise your methods chapter, substituting future tense for past tense and providing additional detail about your context, participants, and procedures as they actually occurred.

In addition to updating the content of chapter 1-3 from your prospectus, you will need to prepare the following chapters:

- **Chapter 4: Results/Findings.** Depending on the design of your study, you will either have a Results section (quantitative) or a Findings section (qualitative/mixed methods). In this section of your thesis, you will report what you learned through your study. Your research question(s) should guide your presentation of the results of your research. Clearly describe what you found about each question.

The organization of your findings is very important to the clarity of your report. Use headings and subheadings to alert the reader about the structure of your written report. Subheadings within a given section should be grammatically parallel. Do not use a single subhead within a section—you need at least two subheads within any given section of your findings. It is not necessary to have the same number of heading levels for each section of your thesis. The format for all headings should follow the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.).

The design of your study and the method you select to address your research questions will influence the structure and content of the findings section. If your study is qualitative, you will need to provide sufficient detail about the context of

your findings, present examples or quotes, or use other means to establish the trustworthiness of your findings. If your study is quantitative, you will need to present the results of the statistical techniques that were applied to the data and the results of each analysis. Include appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics to clearly convey the results. For each statistical hypothesis make a summary of findings and a statement indicating whether the hypothesis was supported or not. Do not report conclusions or recommendations in this chapter.

Use tables or figures to present findings in summary or graph form only if the tables or figures add clarity to the presentation. (See APA guidelines for preparing tables and figures.) Be cautious when deciding how many tables or figures you include in your thesis. The purpose of any graphical element is to facilitate understanding of your ideas, so you should carefully consider the contribution of each table or figure. Graphic displays should supplement rather than duplicate information in the text.

Tables usually present numerical data in rows and columns and may include descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, and the results of tests of significance. Other tables may include summary text information. In either case, tables should facilitate comparison and reveal relationships.

Figures are any non-tabular presentation of information such as a diagram or chart. Figures in the results sections are usually graphical presentations of data. Figures and tables must follow guidelines found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.).

An important point to remember is that the narrative in the findings section should refer to each figure or table and draw the readers' attention to important aspects of the findings reported there. Always tell the reader what to look for in tables and figures and provide sufficient explanation to make them readily intelligible.

Tables and figures should be inserted into the text as closely as possible following the paragraph containing the first reference to that table or figure. If there is insufficient space for the entire table or figure immediately following the paragraph in which you first refer to it, you should insert the table or figure at the end of the first paragraph on the following page. If you refer several times to the same table, you need only include the table or figure after the first reference to it.

- **Chapter 5: Discussion/Conclusion.** In the last section of your thesis, interpret the results of your study, draw conclusions and implications, and make recommendations. Also discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the



findings and make recommendations for future action. In this part of the report, you may express ideas, explore opinions, and examine implications of your study in more breadth. You may want to discuss possible revisions or additions to existing theory and encourage future studies designed to extend theories in ways suggested by your findings. In this section of the thesis, you may also discuss any unforeseen events which occurred which might have affected the results in terms of their seriousness and probable consequences.

You may find it helpful to discuss your findings in light of your original hypothesis(es) or research questions. You should also discuss your findings as they relate to previous results obtained by researchers in other studies. It is often useful, then, to explore congruence and/or contrasts with the existing literature.

It is easy to stretch beyond the findings of your study in the discussion section. Do not over-generalize your findings or draw conclusions that are not supported by the evidence of your study. Similarly, do not wander into a discussion of issues or topics that might be related to your research, but are not directly drawn from your evidence. Keep your discussion directly tied to the findings of your study.

In Chapter 5, also discuss implications of your findings for educational practice. The implications of your study may be difficult to identify. When searching for implications of your work, you might find it helpful to ask yourself “so what?” or “who cares?” questions.

It is common to end Chapter 5 with recommendations. Depending on your topic and the method used in your study, your recommendations might focus on practices, policies, or other education-related areas of interest. Share any insights regarding ways to improve procedures so that other researchers may profit from your experiences. Recommendations can take the form of calls for future research, suggesting next-step studies designed to investigate another dimension of the problem you investigated. You can suggest studies designed to replicate your study in other settings, with other subjects, and in other critical areas, in order to extend the application of your findings.

**References.** Just as in the prospectus, you should list in the reference section all the sources that you directly used in writing your thesis. See that every source cited in the body of the thesis is included in the references, and every entry listed in the references appears in the body of the paper. When you have finished writing all sections of the thesis, you should check to see that this correspondence is still correct. Because your

work will proceed through many iterations, it will be easy to overlook new references you have added or those you have omitted in the process. As in every other phase of the thesis process, use the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) as a guide in typing references. Do not include secondary sources in the reference list.

**Appendices.** Appendices include information and data related to the study that either are not sufficiently integral to the study to be included in the main body of the report or are too lengthy. In the five- chapter thesis, only one appendix is required, in which the official forms are included (e.g., IRB approval). Documents or other items should be placed in an appendix when they would disrupt the flow of the writing if you included them in the body of the prospectus, and yet you want to provide access to those items, such as instruments used in data collection.

It should be noted that not every piece of documentation related to your project should be included in the appendices. Select items carefully. Worksheets, records of calculations, printouts, or similar items may be carefully filed away for future reference but need not always be included in an appendix.

### **Content of the Hybrid Journal-Ready Article Thesis**

The content of the hybrid journal-ready article thesis varies slightly from the traditional five- chapter thesis. There are three options for the hybrid: 1 article with an annotated bibliography, 1 article with extended literature review/ methods, and 2 articles with extended literature review/ methods sections. Regardless of the option you choose, the following sections should be included:

**Preliminary pages.** Preliminary pages of the journal-ready article thesis follow a similar format as those of the traditional five-chapter thesis (see description of preliminary pages above).

- **Title page.** The title page of the journal-ready article thesis is similar to that of your prospectus, and identical to that of the traditional five-chapter thesis. It includes the names of your committee and your copyright information. Use your official name as it appears on university records and see that there is an exact match between your name on the author line and the copyright line.
- **Abstract page.** The abstract in the preliminary pages of the hybrid journal-ready article thesis should summarize the entire thesis, including the appendices containing the Extended Review of Literature and the expanded Methods. This will likely overlap the abstract you will submit to the journal as part of your

manuscript but will be more extensive. As in the five-chapter thesis, your abstract must be 250 words or less, and fit on a single page. The abstract is single-spaced and printed in the same font and size as the rest of the work. At the bottom of the abstract page, include no more than six keywords. These should be words that are indexed through ERIC at <http://eric.ed.gov/>, words that would help someone locate your work when doing a topical search in a data base.

- ***Acknowledgements page.*** The acknowledgements page of the journal-ready article thesis is identical to that of the traditional five-chapter thesis. Here, you may express appreciation to those who have helped you in your graduate studies. The content of this page allows for individual expression but should be simple and in good taste. This page is optional.
- ***Table of contents.*** The content, order, and numbering of the table of contents for the journal-ready article thesis is slightly different than that of the traditional five-chapter. See the template for what is included. Include all headings level 1-3 in the table of contents in your thesis. Indent subheadings under their respective headings and see that the page numbers are right justified.
- ***List of tables and figures.*** The lists of tables and figures of the journal-ready article thesis are identical to that of the traditional five-chapter thesis (see description above). List tables and figures found in both the journal-ready article as well as any additional tables and figures appearing in the appendices of the thesis.

**Body of the thesis.** The first page of the body of the journal-ready thesis is a “Description of Thesis Structure and Content.” Even though it is necessary to the article, the Description of Thesis Structure and Content is not the first page of the article. So Arabic numbers should not start on this page, but on the first page of the text (where the background or introduction of the paper begins). Describe the structure of your thesis here. Explain the hybrid format (e.g., that the preliminary pages reflect requirements for submission to the university; that the thesis report is presented as a journal article and conforms to length and style requirements for submitting to your selected journal, etc.). Include information about the journal; explain that the literature review is included in Appendix A and that this thesis format contains two reference lists—the first reference list contains references included in the journal-ready article only, and the second includes all citations in the review of the literature (for further guidance on reference lists, see “Appendices” on the next page). You may want to comment on how the content of your thesis fits within current research/practice in the field. The only references to appendices

should appear in the Description of Thesis Structure and Content. There should be no other references to Appendices.

The body of the journal-ready article thesis is the manuscript you have prepared for submission. Regardless of the style required by the journal you have selected (e.g., MLA, Chicago), your thesis must adhere to the style guidelines for headings, citations, and formatting of tables and figures found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). You can make adjustments to the style of your manuscript prior to submitting it for review. See that the article meets the guidelines for publication in the targeted journal, including organization, clarity, writing style, contribution to the field, and page length. Headings in the body of the article should include two to four levels in APA style. Be sure headings accurately represent what will be covered in each section. Do not use questions or complete sentences as headings.

Include the abstract you will submit with your manuscript on the page following the Description of Thesis Structure and Content if it is different from the thesis abstract. Begin the journal-ready article with a heading (e.g., title of article, background, context) to signal the start of the body of the thesis.

**Reference list.** The first reference list placed in the article will include only the sources cited in the article. As with other parts of the article, format the references using APA formatting. For guidance on other reference lists, please see the next section.

**Appendices.** An in-depth review of literature must be included in the journal-ready thesis and possibly an extended methods section, if necessary. Label the literature review as Appendix A. The extended description of your research method should be included as Appendix B (if needed). This section will be informed by Chapter 3 of your prospectus but will be presented in past tense. Include additional details about your methods and procedures that unfolded as your research proceeded.

A reference list should be part of Appendix A. If you include both an extended literature review and extended methods section in your appendices, you either need to include a reference list for each (containing only references cited within each section), or you may choose to combine the reference for all appendices into one reference list and call it “References for Appendices” (this would be the best option if your other appendices also have citations). Whatever way you choose to do these reference lists, make sure it is very clear in the Description of Thesis Structure and Content.

If any other part of your thesis (other than the appendices or body of the thesis) contains citations, it would be best to instead include a reference list for the whole thesis. This

reference list should include the article citations as well as entries for literature used in the extended literature review and/or extended methods section, and any references cited in the overall abstract, the Description of Structure and Content, other appendices, and other places not included within the journal-ready article.

## Review of Your Thesis

Once you have prepared a draft of your entire thesis, there are several levels of review of your work. Your chair, your thesis committee, the department graduate secretary, graduate coordinator, and the MSE associate dean will all review your thesis, some multiple times. With each review there are deadlines to meet. The details can be confusing, but your chair can help you work through the review process step-by-step. For additional help in tracking the steps in the approval process see **Appendix C: Seven Steps for Finishing Your MA** in the Department of Teacher Education. To locate MSE deadlines related to your thesis approval process and timeline, see [https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation\\_aids.html](https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html). To locate university deadlines related to your graduation, refer to <https://gradstudies.byu.edu/adv-form-8>.

### **Pre-defense/Data meeting**

When you and the chair of your graduate committee determine that you are nearing completion of your thesis, you will confer with your committee in a meeting called the pre-defense, or data, meeting. The purpose of the pre-defense meeting is to examine the findings and discussion chapters of your thesis and to determine if you are ready for the final defense of your thesis. Your graduate committee will provide feedback and guidance in the final stages of preparing your full thesis. You may not schedule a final defense of your thesis until you have held a pre-defense meeting. It is helpful to determine possible dates and timeline for a defense at this meeting. It is helpful that the committee members have up to two weeks to read your thesis prior to the defense date.

During the pre-defense meeting, committee members will focus on both the content of your thesis and your formatting of the document. In addition to the criteria applied to the prospectus, committee members will evaluate the clarity, organization, depth and coherence of the results or findings of your study, as well as the grammar, punctuation, style and quality of your writing throughout the document. Your committee will also focus on the discussion section of your thesis, including your conclusions, implications, and recommendations. Allow enough time following your pre-defense meeting to revise your work and prepare the *reading copy* of your thesis well in advance of the published university deadlines. The reading copy is the copy you will provide to your graduate committee members prior to the final defense of your thesis. Following your meeting

your chair and committee must complete approvals in GradProg before scheduling the thesis defense.

**Clearance to schedule the thesis defense.** When you have made any changes required by the committee, upload a copy of your revised thesis to GradProg. Once your committee has read through the thesis and has determined that you are ready to schedule the final defense of your thesis, usually referred to as the *thesis defense*, they will record their approval via GradProg.

Once your committee has approved of your thesis on GradProg, contact the department graduate secretary to schedule your defense. It is your responsibility to contact each member of your graduate committee to find a suitable time to hold the defense. You must also schedule a room for that defense with the assistance of your chair and the department graduate secretary. *Note: you cannot schedule your thesis defense until you have applied for graduation online through MyBYU.*

### **Final defense of the thesis**

The final examination or the defense of the thesis is a public meeting. This means that other faculty members, students, or others are welcome to attend the meeting, to listen to the presentation, and to ask questions or make comments during your presentation of your thesis research. The meeting is conducted by the chair of your thesis committee who calls the meeting to order and oversees the proceedings. Commonly, your chair will ask you to make a short presentation of your study and invite you to make a thoughtful statement about how the program and coursework has impacted your professional knowledge and practice.

After your presentation, guests will be dismissed, and the members of your thesis committee will ask you questions about your work. Once questions have been asked and answered, you will be asked to leave the room while the thesis committee deliberates about your performance. Committee members vote to (a) pass (no changes required), (b) pass with qualifications (minor changes needed), (c) recess (requires modification and a second defense will need to be held), or (d) fail. Once the decision has been made, you and your guests will be invited back into the room to discuss the decision and recommendations. If the changes required by your committee are relatively minor, committee members (except the chair) may opt to approve of your thesis on GradProg at the conclusion of the thesis defense meeting. Your committee chair should refrain from approving until you have made all required changes and the thesis is ready for further review. At that time, the committee chair will approve it on GradProg.

**Department and MSE review.** Submit a completed copy of the two-page checklist found in the [MSE Thesis Checklist](#) document (required by MSE), along with an

electronic Word document copy of your thesis to the department graduate secretary. The department graduate secretary and graduate coordinator will review the thesis, for content as well as for format.

Once you have completed any changes required by the department graduate secretary and graduate coordinator, they will submit a completed copy of your the MSE Thesis Checklist and the corrected Word version of your thesis to the Dean's Office for approval. Once you have completed any changes required by the associate dean, upload your ETD version of the thesis to the ETD section on GradProg.

**ETD approval.** Prepare a PDF version of your thesis and upload it to the university electronic thesis and dissertation (ETD) section on GradProg. You can find helpful guidelines and links to a series of YouTube videos to help you prepare your ETD <http://etd.lib.byu.edu/start.html>. Once your ETD has been submitted, you will receive electronic notification of each step in the ETD approval process. If your ETD is disapproved at any level of the review, you will need to make corrections, then upload it again to the ETD website for a new round of reviews.

You will be notified when the department graduate coordinator and the associate dean have approved the ETD. When Graduate Studies approves it, the thesis process will then be complete.

Bound copies of your thesis are not required by the university or the department, but you may opt to prepare a bound copy for yourself or others. The chair of your graduate committee might appreciate receiving a bound copy of the thesis, so you may wish to discuss that with your chair as you prepare final copies of the thesis.

### **MSE Thesis & Dissertation Approval Process**

You can find the Thesis Dissertation Flowchart [here](#). This flowchart lays out the various stages of approval your paper will have to pass through once you have submitted it to the dean's office.

### **Application for Graduation**

Graduate Studies sets the deadline to apply for graduation. These deadlines vary from year to year. Exact deadlines can be found on the current <http://gradstudies.byu.edu/page/graduation> available on the Graduate Studies website. You must apply for graduation before you schedule your final oral examination of your thesis. The usual deadlines for applying for graduation are:

- December graduation—September

- April graduation—January
- June graduation— March
- August graduation— March

Apply for graduation through *MyBYU* (*School > Apply for Graduation*). The GRADAPP page will appear and you should read it carefully. Click on the link to review your graduate Progress Report and make sure it is correct, and type in your name exactly the way you would like it to appear on your diploma. Click on *Submit Application* to complete the process. You must have a valid ecclesiastical endorsement to apply for graduation. Applications received after the deadlines will be processed for the next graduation, and students who do not meet graduation deadlines will be withdrawn from graduation and must reapply.

When ordering your cap, gown, and hood for graduation ceremonies, see that your hood and tassel are white. This is the appropriate color for the MA degree. Probably because your degree is an MA in Teacher Education, there is sometimes confusion, and someone may try to convince you that your hood should be light blue in color. Not so. The light blue color represents the Master's in Education (MEd) degree.

### **Publication of Journal Articles**

Your thesis should be suitable for publication as a journal article, allowing the research report to be shared and to contribute to the educational literature. We encourage you to co-author articles with the chair of your thesis committee as a culminating part of the study. The journal-ready article hybrid thesis format combines the traditional chapter format with journal-ready manuscript as the core of the thesis. This alternative format may facilitate the publication of your research. Consult with your thesis committee about the feasibility of the hybrid format for your thesis.

### **Changes in Policies and Procedures**

The policies and procedures described in this document are those that were in place when the handbook was prepared. There are sometimes changes in policies, procedures, and programs. The department will make every effort to keep you up to date on any changes that may occur, but you are also responsible for current information available through the Graduate Studies website (see <https://graduatestudies.byu.edu>).

### **Completion**

After you have completed your thesis/dissertation and have it approved by your advisory committee, graduate coordinator, and dean, you will upload it to the Electronic Theses and Dissertations website. Support is available for you as you prepare your work for approval and dissemination.



## Electronic Theses and Dissertations

All theses and dissertations must now be submitted as Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD).

## Available Support

In addition to the seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, you can consult the following:

1. [American Psychological Association style manual website](#) for APA style products, free tutorials, and an online course.
2. Other universities' websites (e.g., excellent online writing labs at [Purdue](#) and [Indiana University](#))
3. McKay School of Education's book *APA for Novices A Struggling Student's Guide to Theses, Dissertations, and Advanced Course Papers* written by Sharon Black, available at [http://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation\\_aids.html](http://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html)
4. Citation Builders: [EndNote](#), [RefWorks](#), [Son of Citation Machine](#)
5. [MSE departments' and programs'](#) graduate handbooks and web pages
6. [Harold B. Lee Library resources](#), including the [Education librarian, Rachel Wadham](#).
7. External editors, who have volunteered themselves to be employed to edit theses and dissertations, posted on the [McKay School Website](#).
  - a. Not endorsed by the MSE, but listed for students' convenience
  - b. Communicate thoroughness of edit desired

# APPENDIX A

## Teacher Education Graduate Student Progress Report Form

**Student:**

**Semester:**

**Chair:**

**GRADES from last semester:**

**Student Instructions:** Provide evidence of the ways in which you are meeting the learning outcomes of this program by responding to each of the following prompts in the space provided.

### 1. Learning Outcome: Analysis and Problem Solving

Provide one of the following:

- An outline of the core issues & interrelationships of a current educational topic; include either a recommendation for response or questions to pursue further.
- A report of new knowledge you have developed through the program, articulating it clearly and complexly as it relates to changes in your thinking and/ or practice.

### 2. Learning Outcome: Effective Communication

When you consider your skills of communication, what are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What additional resources/ support do you need?

### 3. Learning Outcome: Research Ethics

Identify and articulate examples of your learning and how you have grappled with ethical and equity concerns in your practice or scholarship.

### 4. Learning Outcome: Education and Lifelong Service

Based on what you are learning, identify ideas/concerns about civic engagement. In your response you might attend to issues of equity, diversity, participation in public institutions, or access to community resources in terms of your thinking and learning in this program and in your practice.

### 5. Learning Outcome: Professional Development

What ideas do you have (or can you imagine) about how your practice specifically, and education generally, might improve? What professional development might support that improvement? Make clear how your thinking is informed by your learning in this program.

Student's assessment	Chair's assessment	The student:
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets regularly with chair (i.e., keeps appts, responds to email, etc.)
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Constantly improves writing (including APA formatting)
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Is timely in completing GradProg and other reporting information
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Is making consistent progress towards completion of thesis
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Successfully completes courses (Grade of B- or better)

**Committee Chair Instructions:** In the space provided, assess the student's progress regarding meeting the learning outcomes, improvement in practice and/or completion of the thesis. Include any pertinent information that may have influence on current progress.

#### Overall rating:

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Satisfactory</b>	All criteria are met in a timely manner
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Marginal</b>	Academic or professional inconsistencies, including working with chair or in progress toward completion of thesis
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Persistent academic or professional failure including working with chair or progress toward completion of thesis

\*Note: Receiving any combination of 2 marginals, 2 unsatisfactory or marginal and unsatisfactory in a row will result in dismissal from the program.

Chair Signature:

Student Signature:

## APPENDIX B

### Five Steps for Beginning your Thesis Research (Prospectus Stage) Department of Teacher Education

- **Step 1: Work with your committee, directed by your chair, to prepare your prospectus**
  
- **Step 2: Schedule your prospectus meeting**
  - With approval of your chair, upload completed prospectus to GradProg, allowing the committee to access it well ahead of the meeting.
  - Arrange for a room and time for the meeting (contact your committee members to find a time; the Graduate Secretary can help you schedule room 221 MCKB).
  
- **Step 3: Attend prospectus meeting**
  - Come prepared to discuss and receive feedback on your prospectus. This meeting is conducted by your committee chair; follow their advice for how to prepare. *No formal oral presentation of your work is required at this meeting, but committee members may have questions.*
  - Following the meeting, make changes/edits to your prospectus suggested by your committee. Committee members will indicate approval in GradProg after the prospectus meeting. This must occur before submitting the IRB application.
  
- **Step 4: Obtain IRB approval (if applicable)**
  - With assistance of your committee chair, prepare the IRB application in iRIS. Download a PDF copy and send it to the MSE Scientific Review Committee for review.
  - Upon a positive review from the MSE SRC, you will receive a signed checklist. Upload the signed checklist into the iRIS system along with the IRB application and submit it for review.
  - Make any required changes for final IRB approval (required before collecting data).
  
- **Step 5: Obtain school district approval for conducting research in schools (if applicable)** If working with teachers or within your own classroom, you will need to coordinate with the necessary administration.

***You are now ready to begin data collection. Work closely with your Chair throughout this process!***

Updated October 2020

## APPENDIX C

### Seven Steps for Finishing Your MA in the Department of Teacher Education

- **Step 1: Apply for graduation (online)**
  
- **Step 2: Pre-Defense meeting (under the direction of your chair)**
  - At the Pre-defense meeting, review your thesis with the committee.
  - After the meeting, prepare the reading copy of your entire thesis that reflects all changes required by your full committee. Upload the copy to GradProg for your committee to read. **Your committee must approve of your thesis on GradProg before you can schedule your defense.**
  
- **Step 3: Schedule final defense**
  - Work with your committee chair and committee to find a date you can meet for your final defense.
  - Contact the department graduate secretary to schedule the defense. They will enter the date, time, and location into GradProg.
  
- **Step 4: Final defense (under the direction of your Chair)**
  - All members of the committee must be physically present at the meeting unless permission from Grad Studies is obtained.
  - The department will advertise the defense about a week in advance.
  - The final defense is a public meeting. During your presentation of your thesis and a summary of what you have learned in your graduate program, attendees may ask questions. Following your presentation guests will be excused for the remainder of the defense.  

There are four possible outcomes of the defense meeting: Pass, Fail, Recess and Qualifications. All committee members will indicate the outcome separately in GradProg. If any committee member selects **recess**, then a second defense meeting must be held to address the concerns brought up. If **qualifications** is indicated, then the thesis must go through the required edits prior to progressing but another defense meeting is not required. The majority of the committee must have indicated **pass** in order to progress to the next step.
  
- **Step 5: Make changes to the thesis as required by the committee**
  - Obtain your chair's approval on GradProg when you have completed all changes.
  
- **Step 6: Department review of the thesis**
  - Submit the completed [MSE checklist](#) and an electronic Word document version of the revised thesis to the Department Graduate Secretary and Graduate

Coordinator for department review of the content and form of your thesis.

- Make any changes required by the department review.
- ☐ **Step 7: Refer to the MSE Thesis & Dissertation Approval Process Flowchart**
- See [https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation\\_aids.html](https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html)

## APPENDIX D

### Thesis Writing and Defense Process Flowchart

Following approval of your prospectus, complete the IRB application under the direction of your and send it to the MSE Scientific Review Committee. Time for analysis, writing, and editing.



Once IRB approval is received, execute your proposed research allowing ample time for analysis, writing and editing.



Update your work to reflect your current knowledge and the ways the research unfolded. Use the appropriate [template](#) prepared by the MSE to assure correct formatting.



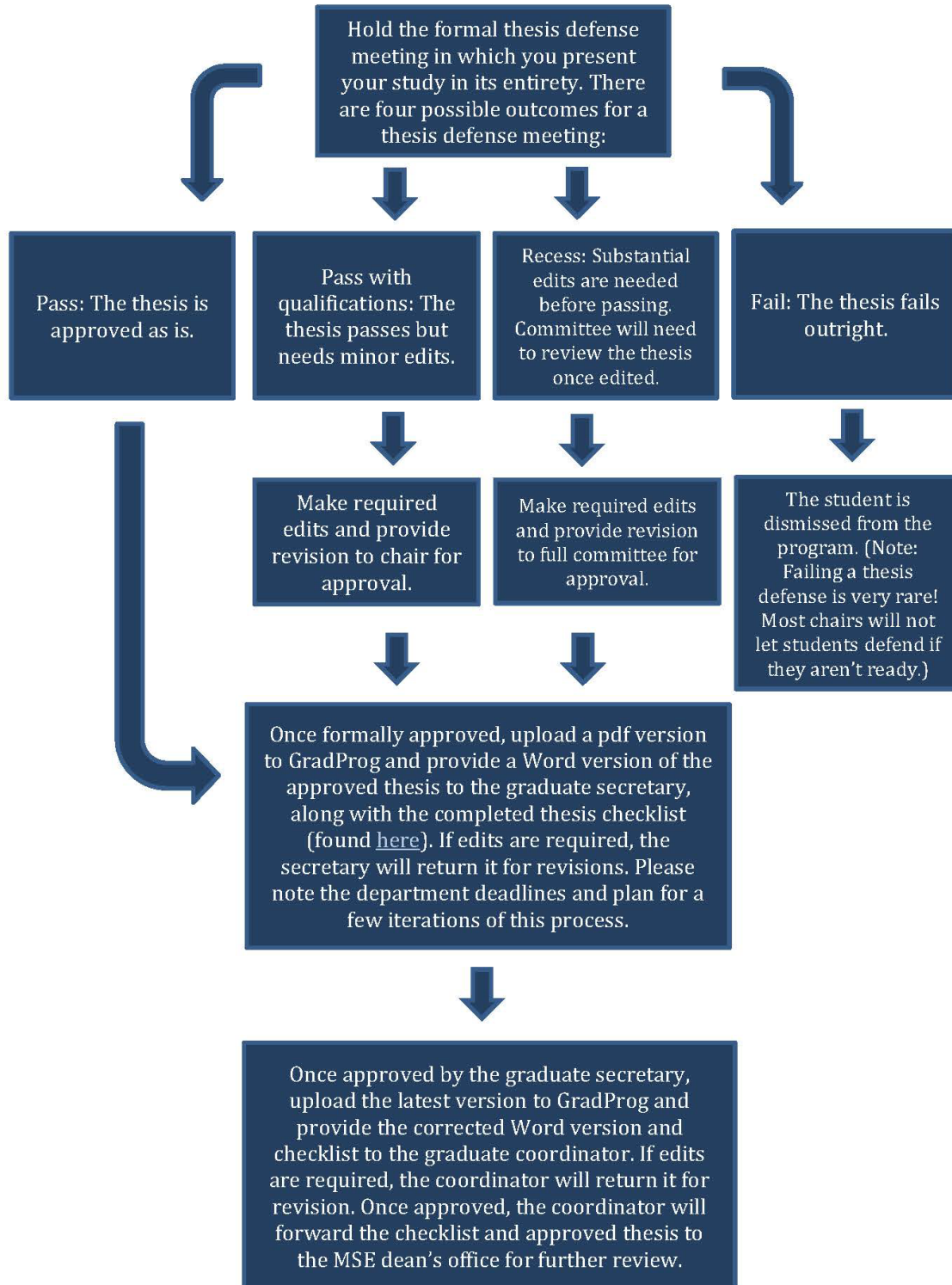
Upon approval from your chair, send the completed draft of the thesis to your committee along with dates for a data meeting. Also upload a pdf version to GradProg.



At the data meeting/pre-defense, use feedback from the committee to determine the readiness to defend. Chair and committee complete evaluation form. Agree to a date for the thesis defense. Committee members should then indicate in GradProg that the thesis is ready for defense.



Contact the graduate secretary to schedule the defense date. Make the edits as suggested & upload the corrected version to GradProg prior to the defense date; send a Word version to your committee according to the timeframe agreed upon in the data meeting.





## **APPENDIX E**

### **BYU RESOURCES RELATED TO BELONGING**

- The Full Report of the BYU Committee on Race, Equity, and Belonging
  - <https://brightspotcdn.byu.edu/12/58/d61b3164487da5946d13471e7567/byu-race-equity-belonging-report-feb21.pdf>
  
- A Place Where BYU Students and Faculty Can Become Part of the Conversation - Share your voice and your ideas!
  - <https://race.byu.edu/>
  
- BYU Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Calendar of Events
  - <https://careers.byu.edu/diversity-and-belonging/event-calendar>
  
- LGBTQ Student Resources - (Friendly Faces, Events, and Community Support)
  - <https://fhss.byu.edu/lgbt-student-resources>
  
- Racial Trauma and Empowerment Therapy
  - <https://fhss.byu.edu/mental-health-resources>
  
- BYU Magazine Article on ‘When Women Don’t Speak’
  - <https://magazine.byu.edu/article/when-women-dont-speak/>
  
- FHSS #Takethelead: Four Simple Ways to Support Underrepresented and Students of Color (video included for TA training)
  - <https://fhss.byu.edu/take-the-lead>
  
- Office of Multicultural Student Services - Make an Appointment here!
  - <https://multicultural.byu.edu/>