Thesis/Dissertation 101

A step-by-step guide from inception of idea to final electronic upload.

Office of Research and Graduate Studies
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Revised November 2013
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Thesis / Dissertation 101

Students and residents enrolled in advanced education programs are required to complete a research project as a part of their academic experience. Those seeking an advanced degree (MS or PhD) are required to submit and defend a thesis/dissertation.

Baylor College of Dentistry has adopted the following provisions in an effort to assure optimal quality in theses/dissertations:

1. The thesis/dissertation proposal will be prepared after completion of a prescribed program of course work and mastery of prescribed tools of research.

2. Only members of the graduate faculty may serve as a member of the thesis/dissertation committee. Appointments to the committee are subject to the approval of the Graduate Faculty Credentials Committee and the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies.

3. The Thesis/Dissertation Committee shall consist of at least three graduate faculty members. For most committees, at least one member should be from the Biomedical Sciences Department for those majoring in a clinical specialty, and one qualified member should be from a clinical specialty area for those majoring in Biomedical Sciences. Questions concerning committee composition should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.


5. Although the Thesis/Dissertation Committee chair, who is usually also the research mentor, has primary responsibility for close supervision of the research and thesis/dissertation preparation, the full Committee must be directly involved in all stages. Frequency of meetings and standards adopted has a direct relationship to the quality of work. In those instances in which the chair of the committee and the research mentor are not the same person, the chair of the Committee has primary responsibility. However, the research mentor has the responsibility of making sure the research project is completed and the results presented accurately in the oral defense, in the thesis/dissertation document, and in any articles published as a result of the research.

6. See “Research Requirements and Awarding of the Certificate and the Graduate Degree” to determine the length of time available for the completion of your degree requirements, including the thesis/dissertation.

7. Time limits are imposed to assure that the data being presented is timely.

8. Thesis/dissertation formatting guidelines are available online and will assure quality of presentation and conformity with recognized standards of writing.


9. The committee-approved thesis/dissertation will be submitted to the TAMU Thesis Office via the electronic submittal system, Vireo.

10. The Dean of the College and/or the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies or their representatives, may participate at the defense examination. The defense date, time, location and topic must be posted, ideally 7-10 days before the scheduled defense.
Research Course

An offered course in Research Design and Methodology is designed to develop the student’s comprehension of the research process, including scientific writing and biostatistics. The writing and evaluation of research protocols provides them with the opportunity of early submission and approval of their research projects by the thesis/dissertation committee.

Thesis/Dissertation

The thesis/dissertation should
• deal with a topic related to the major field of study,
• embody the results of individual research,
• possess a unity of theme,
• demonstrate an understanding of the literature on the subject,
• establish mastery of appropriate research tools and techniques and
• require at least the greater part of six months to one year for preparation.

In addition, the thesis or dissertation should
• provide evidence of originality and critical judgment,
• illustrate the development of broad capabilities, as well as an intensive focus on the subject of research,
• meet the special criteria of the College,
• be written in a creditable scientific and literary style,
• constitute a contribution to knowledge, and
• be worthy of publication.

Step-by-Step ... Form-by-Form

The following steps will aid you in navigating the T/D process regardless of whether you are in the Oral Biology or SGS program.

These steps are in place to help you, not to create hardships ... following them in the correct order will result in a smooth process. Failure to follow these steps could result in delays in starting/conducting research and awarding of the diploma.

All of the many forms have been developed by the various records offices to facilitate accurate account of your progress.

ALL FORMS ARE MANDATORY.
The online location for the appropriate form to use is printed at the end of each step. The following forms MUST be on file in the Office of the Registrar in order to be approved for award of the degree.

- Degree Plan
- Thesis Committee Approval
- Proposal for Thesis/Dissertation Approval
- Request/Announcement to Defend
- Oral Defense Evaluation
- Written Defense Evaluation
- Written Thesis Approval Form
- Copyright Form

Questions may be directed to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS).

Dr. Larry Bellinger, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies
Jo Spears, Director, Research and Graduate Studies
Colleen West, Administrative Assistant, Research and Graduate Studies

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies is located in room 483.
Step 1. Choose a mentor

WHEN: Usually near the end of first year

Consult with your program director to determine the appropriate mentor.

The faculty member (mentor) who assumes the responsibility of thesis committee chair for coordinating the student’s/resident’s thesis/dissertation research should reasonably be from the department in which the student is majoring.

In addition to peer review approval for graduate faculty status, the mentor should be productive in scholarly activity and dedicated to the educational importance of quality theses/dissertations within the graduate program.

Responsibilities of the thesis committee chair and/or mentor:

A. The mentor should establish a close rapport with the graduate student/resident, facilitating communications and cooperation with committee members, and instilling in the student a strong desire to achieve excellence.

B. The mentor should have a substantial background in the essential methodology for the proposed project and dedicated interest in the research. He/she should possess the expertise to guide the student/resident in a credible scientific design during the development of a research proposal and concomitantly integrate thesis/dissertation committee and Research Committee pertinent recommendations to improve quality.

C. The mentor should have knowledge of college/HSC requirements and procedures to guide the student/resident through the process.

D. He/she must have time for personal reading and research and for counsel and supervision of his/her students/residents. Consequently, he/she cannot properly accommodate more than a relatively small number of students/residents, usually a maximum of three at any particular time.
Step 2. Establish the Thesis/Dissertation Committee

WHEN: End of first year

The committee will be appointed following satisfactory completion of prescribed course work to assure an adequate background in essential methodology and pertinent literature. Generally, appointments will be made near the end of the first year.

A. A Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Committee must be appointed to guide each student in his or her thesis research. The student must complete the Thesis/Dissertation Committee Membership Approval form, and get it signed by all committee members and the program chair.

Minimally, the Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Committee must be comprised of

1. a mentor, who acts as the primary research-thesis/dissertation advisor and chair of the graduate thesis/dissertation committee, and
2. two additional faculty members.

B. The mentor must be a regular Member of the Graduate Faculty of the Baylor College of Dentistry. The mentor serves as chair of the thesis/dissertation committee.

Under special circumstances, a non-TAMHSC-BCD faculty may be approved as a Special Member of the Graduate Faculty in order to serve as the mentor. In that case a co-mentor, who is a regular member of the Graduate Faculty must also be identified who will be responsible for all institutional academic issues at TAMHSC-BCD.

C. Committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty of TAMHSC-BCD or must receive prior approval by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and the GEC as a Special member.

D. The graduate student and mentor jointly determine the most appropriate faculty for membership on the Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Committee. Selection of faculty for membership on the Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Committee should be based primarily on the following factors:

1. unique background, experiences and abilities related to the proposed research area;
2. willingness to assist the graduate student in the research project; and
3. availability.

E. The standards maintained by the committee have a direct relationship with the quality of the research project and the thesis/dissertation.

F. In most cases, at least one should be from the Biomedical Sciences Department for those majoring in a clinical specialty.

G. When appropriate, one qualified member should be from a clinical specialty area for those majoring in Biomedical Sciences.

H. Additional members are frequently appointed to enhance some aspect of the research problem.

J. Once the committee has been determined, a signed committee approval form must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.

Form to Use:

The Committee Membership Approval Form may be found online at http://sgs.tamhsc.edu/forms/7.-committeeemembershipapprovalform.pdf

WHEN: Beginning of second year

A. It is the responsibility of the Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Committee to affirm that the proposed research is appropriate for a Master’s thesis or Ph.D. dissertation and that the research:

1. is significant and original;
2. has appropriate study design;
3. meets all criteria related to research compliance; and
4. has adequate resources and other support.

B. Upon successful defense of the proposed research project to the thesis/dissertation committee, a Proposal Title Page for Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study form must be signed by the thesis/dissertation committee members and the Program Director or Department Chair before it is submitted to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies with a copy of the proposal.

C. After the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies has approved the research proposal, the student/resident may then:

1. Apply for compliance approval if the project involves either animals or humans. See Step 4.
2. Apply for research funding. See Step 5: Grant in Aid Intramural Funding.

DO NOT submit either the funding request or the compliance applications attached to the thesis proposal and Proposal Title Page for Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study form (or vice versa). All three must be submitted as separate packages.

D. This form is required to be on file in the Office of the Registrar before an application to graduate will be approved and a diploma ordered.

Form to Use:

The PROPOSAL for Thesis/Dissertation may be found online at http://sgs.tamhsc.edu/forms/dissertation-proposal-review-assessment.pdf
Step 4. **Compliance Approval**

WHEN: As soon as possible following approval of the thesis proposal.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)** approvals must be on file before a project can begin if human subjects or animals will be used in the study.

You must request approval even if not using live subjects but only animal or human material (tissue, bones, teeth, etc.), if using radiographs or other records, or conducting surveys. The project may be deemed exempt by the committee but you are required to submit the project for review.

**Separate applications** are required for IRB or IACUC approval. All compliance application must be submitted online through iMedris (https://imedris.tamu.edu/). More information regarding compliance applications may be found on page 28 of this guide.

Your compliance application may be submitted at the same time as the proposal approval or as soon as possible afterwards in order to avoid delays in beginning your research. However, compliance approval will NOT be awarded nor is research allowed to begin until all thesis/dissertation forms are approved and on file in the Graduate Office.

***IMPORTANT: Data obtained prior to the approval date on IRB or IACUC letter may NOT be used in the thesis/dissertation.***
Step 5. Thesis Research Intramural Grant Funding

WHEN: As soon as possible following approval of the thesis proposal.

Clinical Master’s students may request up to $1,500 in Thesis Research Grant funds from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

Before any funds will be approved, students must have an approved committee and the committee must have approved the research proposal (forms must be on file with the ORGS).

If requesting funds,

1. an itemized budget must be submitted,
2. and a signed Allowable & Non-Allowable Expenses form must accompany the budget request.
3. Expenses incurred prior to receiving approval from the ORGS will not be reimbursed by Thesis Research Grant funds.

Once Thesis Research Grant funds have been approved, an account number specific to your project will be requested from the Finance Office. You will receive an award letter providing the account number, amount funded, and instructions for access to the funds.

All orders placed electronically through FAMIS must be submitted using your specific ORGS account number. Departmental accounts will not be reimbursed from the ORGS for orders/payments submitted through FAMIS on a non-ORGS account number.

All expenses not placed electronically through FAMIS (patient petty cash payments, interdepartmental charge tickets, print shop or media work orders) must have signed approval from ORGS personnel. While your departmental administrator may submit requests for purchase/charges against an ORGS account, they do not have authority to approve such expenditures.

Form to Use:

The Thesis Grant-in-Aid Application form may be found online at
http://bcd.tamhsc.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-pdfs/grant-in-aid-app-form.pdf
http://bcd.tamhsc.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-pdfs/allowable-grad-res-expenses.pdf
Step 6: Preliminary exams

WHEN:

A. Master’s students may or may not be given preliminary exams prior to the thesis defense.

B. Ph.D. students usually are given 2 preliminary exams and a final exam prior to the dissertation defense.

C. A Report of Preliminary Examination form must be signed by the individuals administering the exams for all pre-defense examinations and submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies as soon as possible following the exams.

Form to Use:

The Oral Preliminary Exam Evaluation may be found online at http://sgs.tamhsc.edu/forms/oral-preliminary-exam-evaluation.pdf

or

The Written Preliminary Exam Evaluation may be found online at http://sgs.tamhsc.edu/forms/written-preliminary-exam-evaluation.pdf
Step 7: Write the Thesis or Dissertation

At Texas A&M University, each master’s thesis option and doctoral program calls for completion of an electronic thesis, dissertation or record of study (ETD) in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of the degree. The ETD should be presented in a scholarly, well-integrated and properly documented manner and should report the original work done by the student under the supervision of the advisory committee.

ETDs must be submitted to the Thesis Office for compliance review and approval in time to meet appropriate deadlines for graduation in a given semester or obtain official certification of completion by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. Format requirements are outlined in the Thesis Manual and semester deadlines can be checked online.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University students must adhere to the Aggie Honor Code when preparing the ETD. The ideas or data of others must be properly used and acknowledged, and when necessary, permission must be secured from copyright holders. All research must be conducted following appropriate ethical standards for the responsible conduct of research. For further information see the following:

- Aggie Honor System Office (http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/)
- Copyright Basics; Copyright Resources (http://scholarlycommunication.library.tamu.edu/scholarly-communication-issues/copyright/copyright-basics.html; http://guides.library.tamu.edu/copyright)

Copyright of ETD

Except in special circumstances, the graduating student is the copyright owner of the ETD, thus he/she retains the right to publish or otherwise distribute it (for exceptions, see Intellectual Property section of Graduate Catalog). At the time of submittal, however, the student must sign a non-exclusive distribution license giving Texas A&M University rights to archive, maintain, and make the work available on the Internet via the Texas A&M Universities Libraries in perpetuity.

Post-Submittal Changes

After the ETD is submitted electronically to the Thesis Office, students may make only those corrections required by the Thesis Office. Additional corrections requested by the student, the chair, or other committee members will be accepted only in rare and exceptional circumstances.

Publication and Embargo

Texas A&M University is a public institution, and therefore all research is performed for the ultimate benefit of the public. Following graduation, all ETDs are available on the Internet via the Texas A&M University Libraries. In addition, dissertations are published electronically by ProQuest (UMI) and are available from that source.

An embargo, or delay in public release, is possible in limited instances. Release of the ETD may be delayed temporarily only for patent/proprietary or publication issues. Committee chairs are cautioned against allowing a student to use classified or proprietary information in ETDs because these documents become available to the public upon submittal to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.
Beginning fall 2011, Texas A&M University policies allow three options regarding release of ETDs:

1. Release ETD for immediate access on the internet.
2. Restrict access to ETD for an indefinite period for resolution of patent/proprietary issues.
3. Restrict access to full text of ETD for two years for resolution of publication issues (with possible one-year extension). Title, abstract, author and program information will be accessible during restriction period.

**Time Limits for Submittal and Clearance**

ETDs may be submitted to the Thesis Office only after the student has successfully passed the final exam and the advisory committee has officially approved the content of the ETD. All signatures must be complete on the Written Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form prior to submittal.

Following submittal, students must ensure that all corrections have been made and that the ETD clears the Thesis Office within one year from the date of the applicable final exam. In extenuating circumstances, the student may submit a formal request for extension to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, but the extension is not valid until approved and granted by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

**Use of Pre-Published Material**

A graduate student may have authored material that has been previously published but needs to be used as part of the ETD. Copyright agreements signed when a journal accepts an article for publication, or in other instances of previous publication, assign defined copyrights to the publisher. In some cases, all rights are assigned to the publisher.

The student is responsible for ascertaining the status of copyrights for any material used in the ETD. When appropriate, the student must obtain written permission from copyright holders to include copyrighted material in the manuscript even if the student authored the material. If the permission is not obtained and/or rights have not been retained by the student, copyrighted material cannot be included in the ETD. In all cases, proper acknowledgment must be made in the text.

**Editorial Style of ETD**

ETDs must follow accepted editorial styles. Style considerations affect such items as:

- Margins and page numbering.
- Organization.
- Capitalization of headings and subheadings.
- Figure captions and table title location and format.
- Citation and reference format and content.

The *Thesis Manual* provides guidance regarding traditional academic style that is generally applicable to ETDs. However, students are responsible for determining if their academic departments or disciplines call for a specific editorial style. For example, some ETDs follow the style of respected, scholarly journals well known in the relevant subject matter field. Standard editorial styles such as those detailed in the *Modern Language Association Handbook, Chicago Manual of Style*, or *American Psychological Association Manual* might be applicable in some fields. The *Thesis Manual* indicates formatting that is not allowed in an ETD, regardless of chosen style.
Organization of ETD

ETDs may follow either traditional dissertation organization or organization based on journal articles, an option allowed by TAMBCD. Using journal article organization and style allows authors to compose ETDs in a manner that facilitates publication in journals. More information regarding the traditional versus journal options can be found in the Journal Article Style Thesis/Dissertation Format handout or on the Department of Educational Psychology website.

The journal organization option centers around a common research theme that enables the chapters to be separated into stand-alone documents or combined to create a single cohesive manuscript. The manuscript created must:

1. follow the organization and editorial style of one well-respected academic journal,
2. be approved by the student’s department, and
3. fulfill the requirements of both the academic committee and the Thesis Office.

Either organization option, traditional or journal, must meet Thesis Manual requirements.

Copyright and authorship issues are two factors of particular consideration when deciding which organization option to choose, as both pre-published material and articles the author intends to publish come with copyright considerations.
Step 8: Apply to graduate/order diploma

WHEN: During first month of last semester

You must submit an application to graduate and pay the accompanying fee online at the MyHSC portal. Diploma orders are placed based on applications submitted/paid.

Students/residents should discuss with their mentor/program directors projected timelines for completing the degree. Those close to completion should apply to graduate if there is a reasonable expectation that they will finish that semester. (Certificates are ordered throughout the year with confirmation from the program director that all requirements have been completed.)

You will receive a notification of the deadline for applying at the start of each semester. Deadlines are set by the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Student Services, and are not negotiable. Deadlines are in January for May graduation, in June for August graduation, and in September for December graduation.

- Students who do not meet the requirements for graduation will be awarded the master’s/Ph.D. diploma at the next conferment date.
- Students must be registered for the semester in which the degree is conferred.
- BCD confers master’s degrees in Oral Biology only twice yearly, in May and December.
- The SGS confers master’s and Ph.D. degrees in Biomedical Sciences three times per year, in May, August and December.

In early January you will also be notified with instructions for ordering regalia for the spring commencement ceremonies. Those awarded degrees in August or December may participate in commencement ceremonies the following May, and their awards will be published in the commencement program whether or not they participate in the ceremonies.

Candidates in thesis/dissertation programs who complete the required courses and an approved thesis/dissertation, will take a comprehensive oral examination. The thesis/dissertation committee is the examining committee.

BEFORE the Oral Defense:

A. Verify with your advisory committee, program director, and Office of Research and Graduate Studies that all course work is complete, all requirements have been fulfilled, and all forms are up to date and on file.

B. Request of the ORGS permission to schedule the final examination (thesis/dissertation defense). Submit the signed Final Defense and Oral Examination Request and Announcement form.

Form to Use:

The Final Defense Request and Announcement form may be found online at http://sgs.tamhsc.edu/forms/finaldefenseoralexamrequestannouncement.pdf

AFTER the Defense:

A. Return the completed and signed Defense and Oral Examination Outcome form to the ORGS and the Written Defense Evaluation form to the OGS.

Form to Use:

The Oral Defense Evaluation form may be found online at http://sgs.tamhsc.edu/forms/oral-defense-evaluation.pdf

The Written Defense Evaluation form may be found online at http://gsbs.tamhsc.edu/forms/written-defense-evaluation.pdf
Step 10: Submit Committee-Approved Thesis to the TAMU Thesis Office

Training and Resources
Templates, pre-submittal training, as well as other tools are accessible via http://thesis.tamu.edu to assist all students with successful preparation of the manuscript. The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) Thesis Office will hold special sessions (face-to-face and via TTVN) to provide guidance and training to HSC students on thesis preparation, submission, and approval.

Fees
Texas A&M University students currently pay a fee ($170 doctoral; $110 master’s) for Thesis Office services. Thesis Office fees were not be assessed for HSC students graduating in December 2013, but will likely be assessed beginning with the Spring 2014 semester.

Deadlines
HSC students should adhere to the OGAPS dates and deadline calendar posted at http://ogaps.tamu.edu/current-students/dates-and-deadlines. These deadlines are also posted on the TAMBCD web page http://bcd.tamhsc.edu/graduate-studies/currentstudents/thesis-dissertation.html.

Forms
HSC students will need to complete Thesis Office required forms: 1) Approval Form of the Written Thesis/Dissertation, 2) Copyright and Availability Form, 3) Combined online Survey of Earned Doctorates and AAUDE Graduate Student Exit Survey (for research doctoral students only). A specific Approval Form of the Written Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study will be prepared by OGAPS for HSC students to use. Students who may have already submitted the Approval form to their respective HSC office will not be required to submit a new form. Forms are accessible from http://ogaps.tamu.edu/incoming-students/student-forms-and-information/#thesis. A copy of all forms should be provided to the Thesis Office prior to clearance from the Thesis Office.

Submission
Once the student has successfully completed the final, oral exam, the student is eligible to submit the Texas A&M University Written Thesis/Dissertation/Record of Study Approval Form (designated for HSC students) and the committee approved electronic thesis/dissertation. For December 2013 degree candidates, the forms and manuscripts should be submitted to the appropriate HSC office (similar to previous semesters) by the Texas A&M University posted thesis/dissertation submission deadline.

Review
Electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) should be reviewed for uniformity and consistency in format and style, utilizing the guidelines posted in the Texas A&M University Thesis Manual. HSC office reviews should proceed as in the past; however, once complete, students should be directed to upload the revised document as a single pdf document via the ETD Submission and Management System: Vireo (https://etd.tamu.edu) instead of to the ProQuest ETD administrator or via paper for binding. Vireo submissions should be completed no later than the Texas A&M University posted Thesis Office Clearance Deadline (i.e., the last day to submit final corrections of thesis). Students will have access to log into Vireo with existing HSC netid login credentials. Thesis Office staff will complete additional reviews to verify standards for format have been met, as well as review submitted paperwork, prior to Thesis Office clearance.
For any additional corrections needed, Vireo will be utilized as the mechanism for managing the review workflow. Any corrections requested by the Thesis Office will be uploaded to Vireo, where they can be retrieved by the student, and a notification will be sent to the student via email. The student, likewise, will upload revised manuscripts to Vireo for further review. Vireo will store the final, University approved document for each student.

If desired, Thesis Office staff will be available to provide training and tools to HSC staff persons involved with thesis/dissertation review, or consult individually with HSC staff on the review process.

Clearance

Thesis Office clearance must occur within one year of the final defense date. In order to clear the Thesis Office, the student must complete the following steps:

1. Meet Thesis Office standards for format of the thesis/dissertation
2. Complete and submit required forms
3. Be registered for the semester of graduation
4. Apply for graduation

Once clearance requirements are met, Thesis Office staff will notify the appropriate Registrar’s staff, the student, faculty chair, and HSC office contact via email.

Publication

All theses and dissertations will be published in the Texas A&M University institutional repository and through ProQuest (doctoral students only). Availability will be subject to the policies stated in the Copyright and Availability Form, including the option to temporarily delay access for publication, patent, or proprietary purposes. Manuscripts with an immediate release or journal hold will be submitted to Texas A&M University Libraries (and ProQuest, for doctoral works) once all degree candidates for the semester have been certified by the University. Document metadata, including abstracts, will be available through these entities for the duration of the embargo. Patent holds will be held in Vireo until such time as an embargo is no longer necessary.

The Thesis Office is committed to make this transition process as smooth as possible and ensuring that student graduation is not impacted. We have every confidence that HSC students will be able to meet all requirements for Thesis Office clearance in time for December 2013 graduation, as long as they stay in communication with their respective HSC office and the Thesis Office, as appropriate, to address identified format issues and other Thesis Office requirements for clearance.

Form to Use:
The TAMU Thesis Office Copyright and Availability Form

The TAMU Thesis Approval form
If you or your mentor/department want or require a hard-bound copy of the thesis/dissertation, you may arrange to have the document bound by Proquest/UMI when you upload or you may choose any bindery you prefer. Two options are:

**Library Binding Company**  
2900 Franklin Avenue, Waco, Texas 76710  
Phone: (254) 753-2464 | Toll-free: (800) 792-3352  
Fax: (254) 754-4972  
[www.librarybinding.com](http://www.librarybinding.com)  
Email: sales@librarybinding.com

**The Book Doctor**  
310 W. 7th Street  
Dallas, TX  75208  
Phone: (214) 946-1760  
[www.thebookdr.com](http://www.thebookdr.com)
MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION
Terminology, Definitions and Descriptions

Function of the Committee
The first function of the committee will be to help plan and carefully prepare, in an acceptable scientific style, the proposed research project. Intramural funding for the proposed project will only be considered following receipt of the proper documentation and strict compliance with the guidelines for research support and/or human/animal studies.

During the progress of the student research and the writing of the thesis/dissertation, the committee will hold frequent meetings to provide guidance and counsel to the student and to insure that this work is of the highest possible quality. The quality of the research and thesis/dissertation will be a reflection of the effectiveness of the committee.

The thesis/dissertation committee has the primary responsibility for insuring that the style and format of the thesis/dissertation complies with official standards before giving it approval for final word processing.

The committee administers a vigorous comprehensive examination in which the thesis/dissertation must be defended and all aspects of the major field of specialization and all course work are reviewed. The scheduling of the comprehensive examination will be arranged by the major department, with notice being given to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

Disagreement Resolution
In the event it becomes known that a disagreement has developed between members of the committee and the student, or between committee members, regarding the quality and/or quantity of work acceptable for the degree, the committee will be requested to meet and discuss these differences with the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. It would be expected that only unusual situations would not be resolved by this mechanism.

If the committee is unable to resolve the issue, the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies will request each committee member’s position be stated in writing and forwarded to his/her office. The committee’s comments, along with major department chair’s recommendations, will be duplicated and forwarded to each member of the Graduate Education Council for open discussion and recommendations. Their recommendations will be presented to the Dean of the College.
**Thesis/Dissertation Examination**

Candidates in thesis/dissertation programs who complete the required courses and an approved thesis/dissertation, will take a comprehensive oral examination. The thesis/dissertation committee is the examining committee.

In these examinations, the candidate will be given an opportunity to show some mastery of a given field of learning, acquaintance with methods of research and evidence of independent thought. The oral examination will be conducted by the committee and may consist of two parts:

1. questions related to course work, clinical procedures, etc. and
2. in-depth queries concerning the research and thesis/dissertation.

The research mentor, the chair of the committee, and the program director share responsibilities in advising the student/resident regarding pertinent information concerning all aspects of the examination.

Committee members have been encouraged to use their own criteria to evaluate the merits of the research and thesis/dissertation. In an effort to achieve a degree of standardization and a more meaningful evaluation of academic performance, consideration should be given to the assessment of at least five parameters:

1. Research plan
2. The research problem selected should be initiated by the student. An in-depth analysis of the problem is essential in developing pertinent questions to be answered.
3. A clear and concise statement of the problem is essential. The problem should be sufficiently limited so that it is amenable to investigation.
4. The approach to solving the problem should be valid and should clearly reflect experimental design within the framework of a formulated idea or hypothesis which will produce meaningful data.
5. A comprehensive understanding of the methodology used in obtaining and evaluating data should be sought in all analytical and interpretative procedures.

If a candidate fails the comprehensive exam, a second exam may be taken only with the approval of the department and the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. In no case will the exam be given until at least an interval of one semester has elapsed.

In the event it becomes known that a favorable vote cannot be given by the committee, each member’s position should be stated in writing with regard to the student’s deficiencies. The following will occur:

1. A list of potential expert reviewers, preferably who are off campus, will be developed.
2. The committee members will be requested to identify which of the potential reviewers may have a conflict of interest or who may not be suitable for other reasons.
3. Two reviewers will be selected by the Associate Dean, following consultation with the committee.
4. The thesis/dissertation will be given to the reviewers with a list of queries concerning their opinions of the quality of the work.
5. The reviewers’ opinions and recommendations will be forwarded to the committee for consideration. If the committee votes affirmatively, the matter has been resolved.
6. If they still cannot reach an affirmative decision, the matter can be resolved by the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies or by the Graduate Education Council, but will require the Dean’s approval.
GRADUATE M.S. THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES
General Information and Instructions

INTRODUCTION
The Texas A&M Health Science Center Baylor College of Dentistry supports a Master’s of Science in Oral Biology that requires completion of an acceptable thesis representing original scholarly research.

The principal goals of the M.S. thesis research are to: (1) enhance development of critical thinking and analysis by the Graduate Studies student through independent experience in the scholarly investigation and (2) advanced understanding of problems in the oral health sciences, especially as they relate to the scientific foundations and clinical practice of dentistry, and to dental education.

THESIS PROPOSAL
Before initiating the thesis research project, each student must develop a detailed Thesis Proposal that is successfully defended before the Thesis Committee and approved by the Graduate Program Director and Department Chair. Following this defense, the student should submit the thesis proposal for approval by the IRB and/or IACUC, as appropriate.

The completed Approval of Graduate M.S. Thesis Proposal, with one (1) copy of the thesis proposal attached, should be submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies (room 483).

The mentor and Graduate Thesis Committee determine the specific protocol of the thesis proposal; there is no required format. In general, however, most thesis proposals will adhere to the following general outline:

A. INTRODUCTION
   1. Specific Aims. What does this research intend to accomplish? What hypothesis will be tested?
   2. Background and Significance. Critically evaluate existing knowledge. Indicate the importance of the research described in this proposal for the field of concentration.

B. RESEARCH PLAN. Describe the experimental design and procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. The following components should be included, when applicable:
   1. Materials. Discuss the materials or sample/population to be studied, including size and criteria for selection, and methods of group assignment.
   2. Methods of Investigation. Discuss the methods that will be used to collect data.
   3. Methods of Analysis. Discuss the procedures that will be used to analyze and interpret the data generated in this study. The following components may be considered:
      (a) Determination of validity (accuracy) and reliability (precision) of data, including inter- and intra-examiner errors.
      (b) Statistical analysis and determination of significance.
   4. Potential Difficulties. Potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed methodology and alternative approaches to achieve the aims of the project.
   5. Sequence of the Investigation. Proposed time course for the proposed studies.
C. **CONSORTIUM / CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS.** Describe any arrangements made with collaborating individuals or organizations. This may include, for example, agreements with individual clinicians-researchers and/or institutions relating to access to patient records, research samples or techniques, and other materials necessary for the project.

D. **COMPLIANCE.** Summarize in writing what steps have been taken to comply with guidelines for approval of the use of human and animal subjects in this research.

**Applications for IACUC or IRB approval must be submitted separately to the compliance coordinator in the ORGS office. Do NOT attach compliance applications to the back of your research proposal assuming the office administrator will notice and turn it in for you.**

1. **Human Subjects.** All research using tissues and/or information from human subjects, **including patient records and surveys,** must be approved by the Baylor College of Dentistry IRB in order to ensure compliance with federal regulations. All graduate students, faculty members, and staff who are participating in the research also must provide evidence of completion of approved training in research ethics. The IRB meets only once per month to consider protocols. Strict deadlines are adhered to and may be found on the ORGS intranet site. Investigators should see Dr. Brendan Wong, Chairman, IRB, for further information.

   NOTE: The approval process for IRB generally takes about one (1) month and may take longer if significant revisions are required.

2. **Animal Subjects.** The IACUC must approve all research involving animals (live or dead), including body parts, bones or tissue from animals. The document entitled “Application Procedures for Use of Animals in Research” must be submitted and may be found with instructions on the ORGS intranet site. After reading the entire document, the investigator must address Section VI. C. **Animals** in writing. See Dr. Bellinger, Chairman, IACUC, for further information.

   NOTE: The IACUC reviews protocols on an on-going basis so there are no deadlines for submission. The review process takes a minimum of two (2) weeks and may take longer if significant revisions are requested.

E. **LITERATURE CITED.** Complete bibliographic listing of all references cited.
Conducting Research at BCD

Conduct of research at any institution must be closely monitored for a variety of reasons. From something as simple as tracking applications and awards for reporting and audit purposes to the very critical oversight of state and federal compliance regulations.

I want to apply for a grant ... What do I do first?

Notify the TAMUS Office of Sponsored Research Services (SRS) that you plan to submit a grant application. The pre-award staff will assist you in the application and budget process.

TAMUS Sponsored Research Services
https://srs.tamus.edu/

Ruth Manning
Proposal Administration
rmanning@tamus.edu
979-845-8616

What is F&A?

F&A – Facilities and Administration – costs are those costs associated with providing and maintaining the infrastructure that supports the research enterprise (buildings and their maintenance, libraries, etc.) and which cannot easily be identified with a specific project. The HSC encourages including the appropriate F&A costs in all proposal budgets, unless the sponsor specifically prohibits them, and it expects that F&A costs will be recovered to the maximum extent possible.

The HSC strives to maximize F&A cost recovery, consistent with sponsor policy (e.g., some federal agencies and not-for-profit organizations have a lower rate that they consistently ask awardees to accept). There may be instances when a PI and college feel it is in their best interests to propose a rate lower than that which the HSC routinely receive. Investigators can request acceptance of lower rates but this should be a rare occurrence.

HSC F&A Rates

The HSC’s facilities and administrative cost rates are negotiated with the DHHS for the following categories:

- **On Campus (45.5%)**: Research and Instruction. Includes the BCD campus as well as the other HSC components.
- **Off Campus 25%**: Covers activities in facilities not owned by the University. To qualify, a project must be primarily conducted off-campus.

Federal regulations provide principles for determining which costs are applicable to agreements with the government and identify which of those costs may be charged as Facilities and Administrative Costs. Furthermore, the rules state that the distinction between direct and Facilities and Administrative Costs must be maintained consistently throughout the University regardless of the source of funding. BCD’s rates, are negotiated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Sponsor Rates

Some sponsors limit or eliminate the F&A rate an institution would ordinarily include in its sponsored projects’ budgets. The HSC will accept a different rate only when it is a stated policy of the sponsor. When this is the case, please supply a copy of the written policy and a memo addressed to the Vice President of Research requesting approval of the rate deviation when submitting the proposal for review.
Most student/resident proposals request $5,000 or less from non-profit associations or foundations. It is understood by the HSC administration that F&A awards for such grants are unlikely, thus it is not necessary for you to submit a formal waiver request. However, any F&A rate other than the standard 46.5% must be noted on the proposal routing transmittal and a Request for Indirect Cost Waiver form along with the application guidelines stipulating F&A policy of the granting agency must be attached.

Form to use:

The Request for Indirect Cost Waiver form may be found online at:
http://tamhsc.edu/departments/orgs/misc/research-forms/idc-waiver.pdf

Account Set-up

Accounts are established by the SRS in College Station.

Ordering

Once the account has been established, the principal investigator will be sent a Notice of Award (NOA) with the account number. Be sure to give a copy of the NOA to your department’s administrative assistant, or the person that submits orders to FAMIS. You will order supplies, pay patients, etc. through your department using your grant account number.
COMPLIANCE APPLICATIONS

All research at Baylor College of Dentistry is subject to review and monitoring for compliance with HSC, TAMUS, State and federal regulations. The Research Office is charged with oversight responsibilities regarding biosafety in the laboratory as well as the use of humans and/or animals in research. The Research Office staff works closely with compliance committee chairs and assists investigators through the compliance processes.

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

Kathy Svoboda, Ph.D., Chair  Richard Cardenas, Program oversight & training  
ksvoboda@bcd.tamhsc.edu  rcardenas@bcd.tamhsc.edu

Director of the Animal Resource Unit (ARU)
Phillip Kramer, Ph.D.  
pkramer@bcd.tamhsc.edu

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Emet Schneiderman, Ph.D., Chair  Richard Cardenas, Program oversight & training  
emet@bcd.tamhsc.edu  rcardenas@bcd.tamhsc.edu

Biosafety

Allen Honeyman, Ph.D., Chair  Phillip Kramer, Ph.D., Chair  
ahoneyman@bcd.tamhsc.edu  pkramer@bcd.tamhsc.edu

Radiation Safety subcommittee

What is IACUC and how do I apply for approval?

Research or teaching projects involving the use of animals or any animal parts must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Director of the Animal Resource Unit (ARU) before the animals may be ordered and/or used. Prior to submission of any grant investigators/teachers must discuss the need to use animals with the Director of the ARU and to make certain the animals can be accommodated. Some granting agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) use “just in time” for IACUC approval of grants. This means investigators who receive fundable scores have 60 days to obtain IACUC approval. However, other funding agencies require IACUC approval prior to submission of the grant application, therefore you need to determine the rules of the agency to which you plan to submit an application for funding.

All applications are submitted online at https://imedris.tamu.edu/. Applicants log in with their Single Sign On ID and password. The IACUC meets once per month to review/approve applications. All requests for revisions, clarification, etc., as well as approval notifications, are processed via email through the imedris system.
What is IRB and how do I apply for approval?

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is charged with monitoring all research (regardless of the source of financial support) carried out in this Institution which involves human subjects to assure that the rights of the human subjects are protected, as defined in the federal regulations. This requires that the IRB review each research proposal, monitor the research while it continues, and keep appropriate documentation. The primary ethical guidelines for the IRB are that the principles of “respect for persons”, “beneficence”, and “justice” govern any research which involves human subjects. The criteria for IRB approval are as follows:

- Risks to subjects must be minimized.
- Risks to subjects must be reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits.
- Selection of subjects must be equitable.
- Informed Consent must be sought from each prospective subject or the subject’s legal representative.
- Informed consent must be appropriately documented.
- The research protocol must make adequate provision to monitor the data collected to ensure safety of the subjects.
- Adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain confidentiality of data must be provided.
- When some or all subjects are likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence (e.g., children and students), additional safeguards must be included to protect their rights and welfare.

All applications are submitted online at https://imedris.tamu.edu/. Applicants log in with their Single Sign On ID and password. The IRB meets once per month to review/approve applications. All requests for revisions, clarification, etc., as well as approval notifications, are processed via email through the imedris system.