(Revised 12/18/2014)

Master of Science in Criminal Justice
Procedures and Suggested Guidelines for Thesis

I. Student Considerations

1) Complete all six core courses before enrolling in thesis.

2) Spend time reading and studying the samples of the theses provided to you. Keep in mind that your thesis must conform to the American Psychological Association (APA) style of writing.

3) Complete the following three steps before discussing your thesis with the potential chair of the thesis committee: (1) select a research topic for your thesis; (2) develop the outline of the literature and the research questions of your study; and (3) plan for your study's methodology, including sampling.

4) Select three committee members (chair and two readers), two of whom must be KSU graduate faculty. The graduate faculty status can be applied for this particular purpose, and program director can assist in this process. Chair of your thesis committee should be from the MSCJ program unless permission is granted by program director. Consult with the chair of your thesis committee in selecting the other two members. One faculty member on the committee should have substantive knowledge of the topic. The three members of your thesis committee are voting members.

5) Complete **the Program of Study form** in the second semester of the program and complete **the Committee Approval form** once committee members are identified.

6) After talking to all three thesis committee members, arrange a meeting with the chair so that you can present your thesis proposal. This is not a formal proposal defense, and only the chair is required to be present. The proposal should consist of:

   (a) Introduction of the study, including the study's research questions (2-3 pages)
   (b) Review of the literature (6-7 pages)
   (c) Methodology of the study (2-3 pages).

   Submit your thesis proposal to all committee members (via the committee chair) at least **14 days** before the meeting. Complete **the Thesis Approval form** after the chair approved the proposal.

7) Do not begin collecting data for your thesis until your proposal (stated in Item 6) is approved and signed by thesis chair and until the IRB (Institutional Review Board) approves your IRB application.

8) Complete and submit **the Petition-to-Graduate form** during the semester preceding the semester of expected graduation.

9) Prepare drafts of your thesis for your thesis chair and the two committee members. **The final thesis should be between 80 and 200 pages**. Do not forget to follow the APA style and make use of the KSU Writing Center. In completing your thesis, regularly discuss with the chair and the committee members about your thesis and follow their suggestions.

10) Arrange for a thesis defense date with all three committee members and submit the final draft of the thesis to them at least **21 days** prior to the final defense. Prepare to present the thesis between 30 and 40 minutes. Complete **the Thesis Defense Outcome form** after the thesis has been successfully defended.

11) Complete **the Final Submission form** after the final version of the thesis is ready to be submitted for publication in the Digital Commons.

II. Thesis Structure

The table below provides helpful information for your thesis completion.

Purpose(s)	Describe, explore, explain, and / or apply
Design and Methodology	Use sampling procedure and advanced statistics or qualitative methods
Audience	Academic audience as well as criminal justice officials
Length	Between 80 and 200 pages
Chapter Content & Format	
• **Chapter 1 (Introduction)**	Include: • Context and background (including compelling facts or statistics from research sources) • Problem statement(to show the issue exists and is worth being studied) • Research questions • Significance of study • Defining key terms
• **Chapter 2 (Literature Review)**	• Provide an organized, informed discussion of relevant published work. • Identify what is a gap in the literature (i.e., what we do not know) • Relate your thesis topic to what has already been published. • State your hypotheses and the rationale for each one

• **Chapter 3 (Methodology)**	• Explain your research design used to answer your research questions
	  ○ Study population
	  ○ Sampling procedure
	  ○ Instrument and variables

	○ Data collection process ○ Data analysis plan (what research technique(s), why, and how)
• **Chapter 4 (Findings)**	• Report the empirical findings of the study through tables, figures, and / or charts and their interpretations
• **Chapter 5 (Discussion and Conclusion)**	• Discussion ○ Offer your evaluation of the results and when possible, relate the findings to those presented in the literature review section ○ Explain whether the hypotheses were supported ○ Provide policy implications • Conclusion ○ Summarize key findings of the study ○ Address limitations of the study that might have affected the results ○ Suggest future research based on your study's findings

III. Final Thesis Defense Dates

All theses must follow the current American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. The strict timelines for completing theses and for final defenses are provided below.

Expected Graduation	Petition Deadline	Last day to Submit Final Thesis / Project Draft to Committee	Last Day to Defend Thesis / Project	Final Copy with Edits to Committee	Final PDF Copy Submitted for Digital Publication
Fall	July 1	October 10	November 1	December 1	December 8
Spring	November 1	March 10	April 1	May 1	May 8

(12/18/2014 by Cobkit)

Procedural Guidelines for Defending Thesis

Students must be currently enrolled during the semester in which your thesis is defended and the semester in which the student files the thesis for graduation. The final defense takes place only in the fall and spring semesters. When the thesis is ready to be defended, the following steps are required:

1. The Thesis Committee chair and the student, in consultation with the committee members, agree that the thesis or project is ready for a defense.

2. The student is responsible for contacting all the committee members to find a suitable time for defense and asking the Administrative Assistant of the SCJ Department to reserve a room for the defense.

3. At the defense:
   - The final thesis defense is open to the public.
   - The defense is convened by the Thesis Committee chair who will explain the protocol of the defense.
   - The student will give an approximately 30-minute presentation of the thesis emphasizing the study's research questions, methodology, and findings.
   - After the student's presentation, the Thesis Committee chair will dismiss the audience to allow only the committee members to question the student (no more than 30 minutes) about the thesis.
   - After the questioning, the student will be asked to leave the room so that the committee members can discuss and vote (majority vote will determine the outcome) on whether the student has passed or failed the final thesis defense.
   - Once the committee votes, the Thesis Committee chair will invite the student to return to the room and inform him/her of the decision.

4. The student may expect the committee members to make suggestions for final edits. It is the responsibility of the student to take personal written notes of all the committee's suggestions and to complete all edits within a given time.

   If the student fails to defend his/her thesis or project, the student may re-defend within five (5) months of the initial defense. Failure to pass the second thesis defense or failure to re-defend within five (5) months will result in the student's dismissal from the program without the awarding for the MSCJ degree.

5. **The Thesis Defense Outcome Form** is signed by all appropriate persons only after all revisions are made and approved by the thesis committee.

6. The student is responsible for preparing the thesis in the current APA (American Psychological Association) writing style and contacting the library for publication in the Digital Commons within a given date for that particular semester. Complete and submit **the Final Submission of Thesis form.**