

Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling

Marriage, Couple and Family Therapy MS Track Guidelines

This document provides general guidance for students interested in conducting a thesis to pursue a MS Degree. Please read the guidelines carefully and consult with your advisor concerning any questions you have about your readiness to conduct thesis.

Readiness to pursue a thesis in the MCFT program involves a faculty evaluation of performance in the following areas:

Transcript review

Evaluation of syllabi and content of research courses taken; grades

Working knowledge of APA Style

Demonstrated knowledge of the APA writing manual or be willing to learn its guidelines independently, and commit to implementing APA guidelines in the thesis process and its writing.

Previous research work

Documented prior involvement as a research assistant and/or examples of research writing.

Writing

Assessment of writing level (grammatical consistency, vocabulary, sentence structure, quality of expression, punctuation) based on samples of prior writing (i.e., previous research or major papers written for MCFT courses). The Graduate School does not provide technical assistance in writing or formatting your document. Students are responsible for submitting documents that are grammatically correct and that follow the APA guidelines to faculty mentors.

Potential for working independently

Must be a self-directed learner, demonstrate a high level of comfort and skill in learning new material without requiring substantial feedback and follow-up support, and be able to deal well with ambiguity. Demonstrate outstanding time management skills while participating in a variety of courses and program related activities.

Relevance to future professional and academic goals

Topic is well-focused with well supported arguments.

Availability

Demonstrate time available to complete an intensive research project; i.e., full time student with limited additional time demands.

Fit with faculty research interests

Faculty in the MCFT program will mentor students interested in conducting a thesis only within their established lines of research or current research interests. Exceptions can be considered at the discretion of each faculty member. Only a limited number of thesis proposals will be accepted by faculty per year.

TIMELINE AND BRIEF OVERVIEW FOR COMPLETING A THESIS

Year 1: Fall	Meet with faculty to learn about their research interests
Year 1: Spring	Take MCFT 530 (2 units)—as in standard MA program
Year 1: April 1	Submit application and required supporting documents to MCFT Program Director
Year 2: Fall	Register for CPSY 594 Proposal Writing (1-2 units) – Thesis chair listed as the instructor
Year 2: Spring	Take CPSY 531 Research Methods and Stats II (3 units) or CPSY 537 Qualitative Research Methods (2 units)
Year 2: Spring	Defend thesis proposal. Submit application to IRB.
Year 2: Summer Year 3: Fall, Spring	Register for CPSY 595 Master's Thesis Research (1 unit each term).
Year 3: Spring or Summer	Defend thesis

DETAILED OVERVIEW AND TIMELINE

YEAR 1: FALL AND SPRING

- 1) Familiarize yourself with the research agendas of the MCFT faculty
- 2) Begin considering research topics within areas of faculty interests
- 3) Talk with faculty about your ideas; confirm that your interests are within at least one faculty research agenda for the year in which you will be completing your thesis
- 4) Notify MCFT advisor that you are planning on completing the MS track
- 5) Submit the following to the MCFT Program Director **by April 1:**
 - Thesis application
 - Two samples of writing (i.e., previous research and/or major papers submitted for MCFT courses)
 - Statement of relevance of your thesis research to future professional and academic goals
- 6) If your application is accepted, you will be assigned a thesis chair. Meet with your chair to develop a mentorship plan. Determine whether to register for 1 or 2 units of CPSY 594: Proposal Writing. Your chair will request a special section of CPSY 594 to be created for you. You will register in the summer to take this course in the fall.

YEAR 1: SUMMER

- 1) Engage in background reading as per mentorship plan.

YEAR 2: FALL

- 1) Take CPSY 594: Proposal Writing (1-2 units). Your instructor will issue an 'In Progress' grade at the end of the term.

2) Meet with your thesis chair to further develop topic, consult on literature review, and identify possible thesis committee members.

YEAR 2: SPRING

1) Take either CPSY 531 Research Methods and Stats II (3 units) or CPSY 537 Qualitative Research Methods (2 units).

2) Work with your thesis chair to complete and defend your thesis proposal. At the end of this term, your chair will submit your grade for CPSY 594: Proposal Writing.

3) Submit IRB application to the Human Subjects Research Committee

YEAR 2: SUMMER & YEAR 3: FALL

1) Take CPSY 595: Master's Thesis Research (1 unit per term)

2) Collect data with support of thesis chair

3) Analyze data with support of thesis chair

YEAR 3: SPRING

1) Take CPSY 595: Master's Thesis Research (1 unit)

2) Complete and defend thesis

YEAR 3: SUMMER

1) Make corrections to final version

2) Submit electronic and bound versions for thesis completion and graduation

**Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling
Marriage, Couple, and Family Therapy
MS track Application**

(Due April 1 of Year 1)

Name:

With which MCFT core faculty member(s) have you discussed their research interests?

Your topic of interest:

Describe the proposed time you will commit to completing a thesis:

Please submit the following documentation with this application to the MCFT Program Director:

1. Updated resume
2. Two samples of prior writing (i.e., previous research or major papers submitted in MCFT courses)
3. A one-page statement of the relevance of your thesis research to your current and future academic goals

I understand that if this application is accepted, the program will assign the thesis chair. Please sign below to acknowledge:

RESEARCH TRACK EVALUATION RUBRIC (acceptance into the thesis track involves an integrated assessment of all the elements listed)

	Needs significant improvement	Needs improvement	Good	Excellent	
Writing	The paper has grammatical errors or issues with spelling & punctuation that substantially detract from comprehensibility of the paper.	The paper has some grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors that interfere with reading the paper; some problems (e.g. in the level of formality; consistent errors in certain areas of grammar)	The paper has rare grammatical errors or issues with spelling that do not detract from the paper; no major difficulties in appropriate language use; follows the main discourse conventions of the family therapy field.	The paper is free of grammatical errors and spelling & punctuation, vocabulary, and style is appropriate to the topic and intended audience; closely follows the main discourse conventions of the family therapy field.	
Working knowledge of APA Style	Errors in APA style detract substantially from the paper. Word choice is informal in tone. Writing is choppy, with many awkward or unclear passages.	Errors in APA style are noticeable. Occasional inappropriate word choices. Writing has a few awkward or unclear passages.	Rare errors in APA style that do not detract from the paper. Scholarly style. Writing has minimal awkward or unclear passages	No errors in APA style. Scholarly style. Writing flows and is easy to follow.	
Previous research as listed on current resume	No experience as a graduate assistant and no participation in prior research	Minimal work as graduate assistant (e.g., data collection only)	Graduate assistant experience (e.g., collection & analysis)	Completed research work and there is a writing sample of it.	
Potential for working independently	Student sometimes needs reminder and assistance in completing routine assignments.	Student is beginning to demonstrate self-directed learning and sometimes requires feedback regarding basic directions and follow up support	Student is a self-directed learner and demonstrates a high level of comfort and skill in learning new material, but still depends on feedback and follow-up support; needs improvement in dealing with ambiguity	Student is a self-directed learner and demonstrates a high level of comfort and skill in learning new material without requiring real-time feedback and follow-up support, and deals well with ambiguity	

Proposed Time Commitment	Student has not demonstrated good time management skills while participating in a variety of courses and program related activities.	Student has demonstrated some time management skills while participating in a variety of courses and program related activities	Student has demonstrated good time management skills while participating in a variety of courses and program related activities.	Student has demonstrated outstanding time management skills while participating in a variety of courses and program related activities.	
Relevance to professional and academic goals	Unclear relative to topic; too short and unfocussed, lacking any form of clear argument.	Difficulty in focusing and dealing with the topic; narrow scope; needs elaboration	Appears focused and relevant to topic and task; thorough coverage with only minor aspects missing.	Appears well focused and relevant to topic and task; thorough coverage; well supported arguments	