

Guidelines for M.A. and M.S. students in the Department of Geosciences

- 1) All students are initially admitted to the M.A. and M.S. programs in the Department of Geosciences on the non-thesis option. During the first semester, the Graduate Program Director of the department will serve as the student's advisor.
- 2) By the second semester of full-time coursework (or at the point where part-time students have earned 12 credit hours), students should have selected a permanent advisor for their graduate program based on the student's particular interests in the geosciences. In consultation with that advisor, the student will a) determine thesis or non-thesis option status b) select a thesis committee if applicable c) select all remaining coursework in the program
- 3) Students may change graduate advisors at any point in their program with a written request that must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and the Department Chair.
- 4) Student's following the thesis option may change to the non-thesis option with a written request that must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and the Department Chair.

Selecting the Thesis Committee

- 1) The thesis committee shall be selected in consultation with the student's graduate advisor.
- 2) The thesis committee membership shall include at least three faculty members, two of which must be tenured, tenure-track or research faculty in the Department of Geosciences. The remaining member may also be from Geosciences, or can be an FAU faculty member of a cognate department with research and teaching specialties related to the topic of the thesis.
- 3) Additional members may be added from the professional community, other universities or other units of FAU if their area of expertise could make an important contribution to the thesis project. The credentials of the additional member must be considered appropriate to the student's advisor, the Graduate Program Director, the Dean of the College of Science and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Entering Candidacy

- 1) Thesis students must officially attain candidacy before enrolling in thesis credits and before conducting the bulk of the thesis research.
- 2) To attain candidacy, the student must successfully defend a research proposal in a public forum in the Department. The proposal defense must be announced to the Geosciences faculty by the student's advisor no less than one week prior to the proposal defense.

- 3) The graduate advisor of the student will notify the Graduate Program Director and Department Chair in writing at the time the student has qualified. This should be based on agreement of the entire thesis committee.

Defending the Thesis

- 1) Candidates must defend their thesis during the timeframe of an academic term.
- 2) The defense cannot be scheduled until all committee members have been given a complete copy of the thesis document. The thesis document must be given to the committee members no later than 1 week prior to the defense.
- 3) The candidate must successfully defend the completed thesis in an open public forum in the Department. The graduate advisor of the candidate must notify the Graduate Program Director and the Department Chair no less than 1 week prior to the scheduled defense. The Department Chair will announce the defense to the geosciences faculty and graduate student body.

Format of the Defense

- 1) The candidate will prepare an oral presentation of approximately 30-45 minutes highlighting the research question, methodology and contributions of the research.
- 2) The presentation by the candidate will be followed by a question and answer session covering the thesis work. The graduate advisor of the candidate will serve as the Chair of the committee and will conduct the question and answer component of the defense. The thesis committee will begin the session. Once the thesis committee has completed its inquiry of the candidate, the remainder of the audience may ask questions.
- 3) At the conclusion of the question and answer session, the thesis committee will meet alone to discuss the quality of the work and to determine any remaining changes or corrections that must be made to the final document before its submission to the Dean of the College of Science and to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The required changes and corrections will be listed in writing to the candidate by the Chair of the student's committee.
- 4) The student may not submit the thesis to neither the Dean of the College of Science nor the Dean of Graduate Studies until all committee members have signed the appropriate signature page of the thesis.