

Expectations and Guidelines for
Graduate Student Progress in the MS Applied Geospatial Sciences
Adopted fall, 2013

PURPOSE: These expectations are provided to assist you with long-term planning throughout your program. Some strategic planning on your part may help prevent losing valuable time as you pursue your degree. Your faculty are dedicated to encouraging your successful completion of the degree, in a reasonably timely fashion, though it is common for graduate students to underestimate the amount of time and effort for certain requirements. While not a replacement for regular communication with your faculty advisor, these **milestones** should assist you with understanding the entire process as it is typically mapped out over the course of a graduate program.

Expectations and Sequence for Thesis or Practicum
(not including coursework)

Milestone 1: Preparing your Proposal (Typically coinciding with GSP 681)

- By Week 8: Discuss and Identify research problem (thesis) or applied project (practicum).
 - You should hold regular meetings with your advisor while you are progressing in GSP 681. **NOTE:** Determining a reasonable and justifiable research topic or practicum project is one of the more challenging tasks of this degree.
- Work on literature review, research methods, and other components of thesis/practicum proposal.
- Submit draft thesis proposal to 1) GSP 681 faculty, and 2) your advisor.
- Identify potential committee members in consultation with your advisor.

Milestone 2: Proposal Defense

- Confirm members on your thesis/practicum committee
 - You will need to approach potential committee members in advance, describe your intended project, and obtain their permission to participate in your committee.
- Complete full draft of thesis/practicum proposal; submit proposal to your advisor for initial review (this may occur during or after GSP 681).
 - Be sure to work regularly with your advisor to confirm the organization and components of the proposal. This may differ slightly from one faculty member to the next.
 - Feedback on your draft proposal will require **approximately two weeks**. Do not expect your advisor to complete this immediately given all other time and work commitments.
- Revise proposal as specified by your advisor (Depending on revisions, this can require several weeks, at least two.)
 - Repeat the feedback-revision cycle until your advisor declares it ready for review by your committee.
- Upon your advisor's approval, submit your proposal to the committee and provide them with at least two weeks to review the proposal prior to the committee meeting.
- **Proposal Defense:** Work with your committee and advisor to set up a committee meeting to defend your proposal.
 - Give committee members **at least two weeks** to review the proposal prior to the meeting. **NOTE:** Do not expect to hold a committee meeting during Finals Week. Exceptions might be occasionally possible, depending upon committee availability.
- Make changes to proposal as required by committee.
 - If committee accepts your proposal, take notes on changes that need to be made for the research and eventual thesis/practicum. This is often the outcome of a proposal defense meeting.

- Upon proposal acceptance, you are now cleared to begin your research or project!

Milestone 3: Conducting the Research or Project

- Work on research or applied project for thesis or practicum. Begin analysis of results.
- Remain in regular contact with your advisor for guidance and updates as necessary.
 - Discuss potential chapter outline for thesis with your advisor as progress and results become clearer.
- Your advisor or committee may desire an additional committee meeting to discuss progress and issues if necessary.
- **NOTE:** Applying for Graduation: You should submit the *Application for Graduation* to the Graduate College one semester *prior* to the semester in which you plan to complete your degree requirements, and no later than the **deadlines** listed at: <http://nau.edu/GradCol/Student-Resources/Graduation/>

Milestone 4: Draft Thesis or Practicum Paper

- Complete research or applied project for thesis or practicum.
- Complete Analysis and potential chapter outline
- Begin writing Introduction and revise Literature Review (usually for chapter 1)
 - Discuss potential chapter outline with your advisor and receive guidance on how to organize and format your thesis/practicum.
- Complete the thesis or practicum draft and submit to your advisor for review.
 - **NOTE:** Expect at least 1-3 feedback-revision cycles by your advisor. EACH can take 2 or more weeks to complete.
- Student revises thesis or practicum (until advisor is satisfied).
- When satisfied with the draft document, advisor will approve its distribution to the full committee, transitioning into Milestone 5 (below).
- **Format Checking:** Submit your *electronic thesis* (ETD) to the **ETD coordinator** for format review at etd@nau.edu. Please read all instructions carefully and provide all required information.
 - Submit this electronic format document in the first two or three months of the semester you expect to graduate. **This should be done prior to your oral defense.** See the *Checklist for Proper Document Format* for specific information about the university's format requirements at the Graduate College web site: <http://nau.edu/GradCol/Student-Resources/Theses-and-Dissertations/>
Expect the format review to take at least five working days. Be aware that the format editor does not review theses during the last two weeks of each semester or during the period between semesters.

Milestone 5: Thesis/Practicum Defense Presentation

- Upon approval by your advisor, submit draft thesis or practicum to your committee. Give the committee at least 2 weeks to review before defense date.
- Work with your committee and advisor to set up a committee meeting to defend your proposal.
 - Give committee members **at least two weeks** to review the proposal prior to the defense meeting. **NOTE:** Although this may be a possibility, **do not expect to defend during Finals Week** if your committee is not available. You need to plan ahead to avoid Finals Week defenses, or plan to defend over the summer or following semester.
- The defense presentation is a public event. Please arrange for it to be announced to the entire GPR Faculty and GPR Students as soon as possible after the date and place have been set, but **at least 2 weeks** before the presentation. The announcement can be posted to our email listservs by the GPR office staff or the GPR Graduate Programs Coordinator.

- One week prior to the presentation you are to place a draft copy of thesis or practicum in the department office for review.
- **The Defense is held.** A typical defense meeting format: Present an overview of your project and research for 20-30 minutes, followed by questions from the general audience. Members of the general public are then asked to leave, and you meet with the committee only. Committee members will ask you further questions about the project until they are satisfied.
 - **Thesis Defense:** At your defense your committee will sign the *Final Oral Examination (Thesis/Dissertation Defense)—Part 1 (Pass/Fail Form)* and submit it to the Graduate College within 48 hours of your defense. This form must be the original and signed in blue ink.
 - **Practicum Defense:** Committee chair informs the Graduate College of the pass/fail decision. No forms are necessary. Chair/advisor replaces all accumulated IP (In Progress) grades with P/F.
- **Final Revisions:** Make changes to thesis/practicum as required by your committee.
 - This feedback-revision cycle may be required more than once. Often, however, final revisions can be approved by the advisor without further committee involvement.
- **Preparing your electronic thesis (ETD):** We encourage you to visit the Graduate College web site: <http://home.nau.edu/gradcol/currentstudents.asp> which provides detailed information about preparing your electronic thesis (referred to as an ETD).
- **Submit corrected final copy of your dissertation electronically to the NAU ETD website www.etdadmin.com/NAU.** After successfully defending your dissertation and making all the revisions required by your committee and the thesis coordinator, submit your final electronic copy to the NAU ETD website for approval and acceptance by the ETD Coordinator. Your thesis should not be submitted prior to the semester in which you plan to graduate. You will receive an email stating that your document has been approved. Retain a copy of the email as confirmation of submission.
 - **This submission must be made NO LATER than two days prior to the graduation date.** If you are unable to complete your document during the semester in which you defend, you must register for at least one hour of dissertation credit (799) each semester after your defense until you submit your final copy electronically to the NAU ETD website. If you do not submit your final copy within six months of the date of your defense, your defense shall be declared invalid and must be repeated.

Please Be Advised: It is better to be proactive with this schedule than not. Issues and emergencies can put you behind and you cannot expect your committee to drop their work and responsibilities in order to make up time.

SOURCES: This document was compiled by the full GSP faculty during spring and fall, 2013. It incorporates material from the ***Checklist for Thesis Students*** provided by the Graduate College at <http://www2.nau.edu/gradcol/ThesesDiss/ChecklistThesisStudents.pdf>.