

Master of Arts in Sustainable Communities

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Some Guidelines for Master of Arts in Sustainable Communities Thesis Committees

1. It must be interdisciplinary.
2. It must address the program theme of “Good and Sustainable Communities.”
3. It must have both a theoretical and applied component.

The expectation is that the SUS thesis will be written with clarity, exhibit a depth of attention to the issue that is engaged, and be grammatically correct. It is the responsibility of the student to achieve these goals. But the student is much aided by committee feedback on both written expression and mastery of the content.

It is the student’s responsibility to maintain communication with his or her committee. Students are encouraged to develop a timeline to completion that is approved by the committee. Students will need committee members to give them feedback in a timely fashion; they will also need to give their committee members sufficient time to respond to their written work.

At the prospectus approval meeting, please consider the following:

1. Does the thesis project meet your expectations for master’s level work?
2. Do you have suggestions for the bibliography/literature review?
3. Do you have suggestions regarding the research questions and the method?
4. Does the timeline to completion fit with your schedule?
5. How will you want to work with the student? Will the chair be the main respondent? Will each committee member read every chapter or only a chapter on which they have expertise? How much lead time do you need between the time you receive a draft and the time you can give a response?
6. Will you be available to work with the student during the summer months?
7. Which citation protocol do you wish the student to use?

Please note that SUS students are required to successfully pass an oral defense. Before the oral defense can be scheduled, the chair of the committee must notify the SUS director that the student is prepared to move to this stage.

Finally, all SUS students must give a public presentation of their work to the SUS and NAU community. That presentation is usually scheduled for the Thursday evening before graduation. It is meant to be a celebratory evening. We request that a member of the committee introduce the student to the audience.

The SUS program is indebted to faculty who agree to serve on SUS thesis/final project committees. We recognize that this is additional work that you take on out of your personal generosity and your commitment to your academic fields and the things that enrich life. Thank you!