

Getting your M.A. thesis done!

Completing a thesis while also taking on your classes, assistantship, and other responsibilities is challenging. It is strongly suggested that you receive your M.A. by the **end of your second year**. However, this journey will look different for everyone and whether you complete "on time" will not hinder your success or progress in this program. We hope that this guideline can be helpful in knowing various deadlines and setting up a realistic timeframe for completion. Always consult the [Graduate Policy Handbook](#) and other important documents. Feel free to reach out to grad students and faculty if you have questions. You got this!

Thesis Topic and Committee



It is highly recommended that you have your thesis topic and committee formed by the **end of your first year**. Utilize the classes you're taking to get to know faculty and brainstorm research ideas. You are strongly encouraged to reach out to other faculty (through email) to see if they're a good fit.

You need **3 committee members** for your thesis. The chair must be in our department. You can have 1 committee member who is outside of the department. Once you've established your committee, fill out the [Supervisory Committee Notification](#) and email it to the grad director and Tammy (tsimpson@udel.edu).

Methodology and Data



Are you interested in doing a qualitative or quantitative project? Using secondary data or collecting your own? Everyone who has received their M.A. through our department has had a wide range of experiences in relation to methodology and data. You're encouraged to hear other students' experiences and talk to prospective committee members about these topics. Ultimately, your thesis should include elements that interest you while also keeping the recommended time frame in mind.

Publications and Conferences



You're encouraged to turn your thesis into a journal article(s). It is helpful to get an idea of the journal that you'd like to eventually be published in, although this doesn't have to be determined until after your thesis is completed. Knowing the journal ahead of time can help you format your thesis according to their guidelines (e.g., word limit, citation format, figures) and save you some time later. You are also encouraged to present your research at conferences. Your thesis doesn't have to be completed; you can present preliminary findings or one section of your thesis during your second year if you wish.

Registering for M.A. Credits



While you're completing your thesis during your second year, you need to register for M.A. credits (**SOCI 869**). Generally, you register for 3 credits in the fall, and another 3 credits in the spring. You'll email Deanna (dgurcz@udel.edu) prior to the start of each semester, requesting to be registered for 3 credits of SOCI 869 with your committee chair.

UD Institutional Review Board (IRB)



If you're working with human participants, you will need to get IRB approval and be mindful of how this factors into your thesis timeline. You'll make an [IRBNet](#) account, which is where you'll submit your protocol and other important documents. Consult the [UD IRB](#) website to be aware of monthly meetings, what kind of review you may need, and other important info. If you need to make modifications to your project along the way, you will need to provide updates and get approval before implementing those changes. Work with your committee to ensure that the IRB process goes smoothly. You should aim to get approval asap, such as **during the summer before your second year** so you can begin data collection.

Thesis Proposal Defense (Highly Recommended)



You should aim to complete this by the **end of fall semester**. Requirements may vary, but typically you will finish the "front end" for your proposal (Intro, Lit Review, Methods). You will present this part and receive feedback/questions from your committee. Work with them to establish a date/time and be aware of other requirements. Let Tammy know when your defense is and provide a Zoom link if necessary.

Required documents (emailed to grad director and Tammy): 1) [Defense Notification Form](#), at least 10 days before your proposal defense. 2) Copy of your proposal. 3) "Signature page," which is the [Supervisory Committee Notification](#).

Graduate College Deadlines



Consult the [Graduate College](#) website for specific dates regarding when your thesis and advanced degree application should be turned in for you to receive your M.A. by the end of spring. *Otherwise, your degree will be pushed back.* Remember to only list classes that are required for your M.A., not Ph.D. Once you submit your application, you should eventually receive an email from Mary Martin (marym@udel.edu) with detailed, updated instructions for submitting your thesis. Contact her if you have questions.

Required documents: 1) [Advanced Degree Application](#), due by the **second week of spring semester**.

Thesis Defense



You should aim to defend by the **end of spring semester**, at least a week before you officially submit your thesis. Similar to the proposal, you present your research and answer questions from the committee. You will receive their decision sometime afterwards. Work with them to establish a date/time and be aware of other requirements. Let Tammy know when your defense is and provide a Zoom link if necessary.

Required documents (emailed to grad director and Tammy): 1) [Defense Notification Form](#), at least 10 days before your defense. 2) Copy of your thesis (in its current format at this time).

UD Thesis Template



The [UD Thesis and Dissertation Manual](#) gives you detailed information on how your thesis should look upon submission to the Graduate College. You can download a direct Word document [here](#) to help begin formatting your thesis. Remember to also email Tammy your final, updated thesis once you are done.

Revising your thesis and making sure it's appropriately formatted can take a *long time*. You will also need to get multiple signatures. Take this into account as you are writing and attempting to meet the submission deadline. If you plan to graduate by the end of spring, your thesis will be due by the **end of April**.

Graduation



You did it! Take the time to celebrate and walk at graduation. You'll receive an email from UD asking you to update relevant info for your diploma in UDSIS, such as your name and address. You'll also be notified by UD when graduation tickets become available, which is usually at the beginning of April. Regalia can be bought from the UD Barnes & Noble store on Main Street.

Completing your thesis is a great accomplishment, one of many that you'll have in this program. The SOCI/CJ Graduate Student Council and faculty are here to support you throughout your graduate journey. Congratulations!