This is a brief overview of the thesis process for Social Science. For a more detailed explanation of university guidelines, please read the [Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines Manual](#).

The student bears primary responsibility for the thesis from inception of the idea through preparation of the final document. The student is to maintain contact with the thesis chair and committee members, and is solely responsible for the substantive content of the thesis.

### The Thesis Process

Before registering for thesis credits, the student is to find a committee chair, or thesis advisor, who will manage and oversee the thesis process. The student must maintain regular contact with the thesis director to regularly report progress and get vital feedback. The thesis advisor must be full time Towson University faculty in the student’s disciplinary emphasis. If there are no faculty members within the student’s disciplinary emphasis that specialize in the topic the student would like to research, a thesis advisor may be chosen from a different discipline with the approval of the Social Science program director.

Once a faculty member agrees to serve as thesis advisor, the student and the thesis advisor identify at least two committee members to serve on the thesis defense panel. Committee members must be full time faculty and at least two disciplines within the Social Science program must be represented. Students are also required to maintain contact with thesis committee members as well.

The student is then to submit a five (5) page research statement as well as an [Enrollment Permission Form](#) to the Social Science program director for approval. The student must get the research statement approved by the thesis chair before submission to the program director. Students will either enroll in one semester of SOSC 897 (6 credits) or two consecutive semesters of SOSC 898 (3 credits each).

The student will then begin preliminary research on the thesis topic and is to thereafter submit a fifteen (15) page thesis proposal, along with the [Thesis Proposal Form](#) to the program director. This proposal must contain:

- Statement of Research Topic
- Assessment of the Literature of the Field
- Statement of Research and Analytical Methodology
- Proposed Table of Contents
- Annotated Bibliography
- Statement of Time Table for Completion of Research and Writing

The thesis proposal is to be approved by the thesis advisor and submitted along with the Thesis Proposal Form. It is to be submitted within three (3) weeks of enrollment in the thesis course for students taking SOSC 897 (6 credits) or six (6) weeks of
enrollment in the first semester of thesis courses for students taking consecutive semesters of SOSC 898 (3 credits each).

Once the thesis proposal is approved by the Social Science program director, the student will begin the primary research and compose drafts of the thesis. The student is required to regularly meet with the thesis advisor to discuss the student’s progress, and review and revise drafts before submission of the final draft. Once the final draft is completed and approved by the thesis advisor, the student is to distribute it to thesis committee members for review. This must be submitted to committee members within seven (7) weeks of the end of the term in which the student completes the final thesis course, and three (3) weeks before the thesis defense. The student will then meet with committee members to schedule a time date and time for the oral defense of the thesis. The thesis must be defended at least four (4) weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the student completes their final thesis course.

The student is to submit a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Defense Announcement Form to the Office of Graduate Studies at least ten (10) working days prior to the defense date. The Office of Graduate Studies will post defense announcements in Towson Tigers Today. Thesis defenses are open to all members of the Towson University academic community, and to guests invited by the student.

The student is to prepare one (1) copy of the Thesis Approval Page prior to the oral defense. If the manuscript requires little or no revisions, the committee chair and committee members sign the approval. If the manuscript requires revision, the student is to make them prior to obtaining the signatures of the committee chair and committee members. The Thesis Approval Page is to be in the same font and format as the thesis itself. The student is to submit the signed approval page to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Within two (2) days following a successful defense, the student should meet with the committee chair to discuss necessary modifications specified by the committee during the oral defense. The student will make these modifications and submit it to the committee chair and committee members for final review at least fifteen (15) working days before the end of the term. This will allow them five (5) business days to complete the review before the final deadline for students to submit their theses to the graduate school. If longer is required to revise the thesis the student may need to postpone graduation to the following academic term.

The student is then to submit the final approved thesis, signed Thesis Approval Page, Thesis Format Review Page, and the Internet Release Page in electronic form to the Office of Graduate Studies at gradstudies@towson.edu at least ten (10) business days prior to the official end of the term in which the student intends to graduate. The Office of Graduate Studies evaluates an electronic copy of the thesis, after it has been approved by the committee, to ensure compliance with the procedural and formatting requirements stipulated in the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines
Manual. For a list of specific due dates and deadlines, students should consult The Office of Graduate Studies’ timetable and deadlines.

Once approved, the Office of Graduate Studies will forward the electronic copy to Cook Library. Students are welcome to produce paper copies and have them bound for themselves, their committee chair, committee members, and others, and may request bindings of a personal copy through Cook Library for a nominal fee. Hard bound copies are not required by the Office of Graduate Studies or Cook Library.

Students are expected to maintain registration in a thesis course (or continuum) each academic term until they successfully complete all of the requirements of the thesis. If a student is working with their chair or committee during the summer and/or minimester, they must enroll in thesis courses during these semesters as well.

If the thesis is not completed in the term of the final thesis course (whether SOSC 897 or 898), students must register for one (1) unit of SOSC 899: Thesis Continuum each term until the thesis is completed. Students are to consult with their Thesis Director to determine if and when they should register for continuum units. Students must abide by the seven (7) year time limit for completion of their degree. This includes all course work, transfer courses, and thesis completion.

**Formatting**

Though the Social Science department does not adhere to a specific formatting style (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.), students are required to use uniform formatting throughout their thesis, and are encouraged to use the standard formatting style of their track discipline. It is suggested that students consult their thesis advisor regarding appropriate formatting. In general, however, all formatting issues are addressed in the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines Manual. The formatting section begins on page 8.

**Additional Questions and Concerns**

Students are strongly encouraged to read, in full, the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines Manual (linked at the top of this document). Not only is there a fuller discussion of the process, including the role of the committee chair, but there is a detailed breakdown of the formatting rules as well as a checklist prior to thesis submission. For questions not answered by Thesis Guidelines, the student should turn first to the thesis advisor and next to the program director.
Permission Request to Enroll in Thesis
SOSC 897 (6 CREDITS) OR SOSC 898 (3 CREDITS)

Student Name: ________________________________________________

☐ I hereby request permission to enroll in SOSC 897 (6) in FL _____/SPRING_____/SUM_____.

☐ I hereby request permission to enroll in SOSC 898 (3) in FL _____/SPRING_____/SUM_____.

Professor ________________________________ of the department of

in the college of ____________________________ agrees to serve as my thesis director.

Two additional members of my thesis committee will include:

______________________________________________

Professor Title Department

______________________________________________

Professor Title Department

Proposed date for Thesis defense is _______________________(Enter mo/day/year).¹

☐ I have attached a five-page research statement approved by my thesis director. I understand that I will submit a formal thesis proposal to my thesis director, my committee members and the SOSC program director within 6 weeks of enrolling in my first semester of thesis. (Within 3 weeks for students enrolled in SOSC 897).

______________________________________________

Thesis Director Title Date

______________________________________________

Department Chair of Thesis Director Date

______________________________________________

Director of M.S. Program in Social Science Date

¹ Students applying for January graduation must defend by November 30th; May graduation must defend by April 30th; August graduation must defend by July 10th.
M.S. Program in Social Science

Student Name: ___________________________________________________

M.S. Thesis Proposal Requirements

Students enrolled in SOSC 897 (6) or in SOSC 898 (3) must submit a formal thesis research proposal to their thesis director.

SOSC students enrolled in SOSC 898 (3) must file the proposal, accompanied by the signature of the thesis director, within 6 weeks of enrolling in their first section of SOSC 898 with the SOSC program director. SOSC students enrolled in SOSC 897 (6) must submit the approved proposal within 3 weeks of the beginning of enrollment in SOSC 897 (6).

The formal thesis proposal is distinct from, and in addition to, the permit request to enroll in thesis, which must be submitted the semester prior to enrollment in thesis.

A formal thesis proposal must be no fewer than 15-pages and contain the following components:

1. Statement of Research Topic
2. Assessment of the Literature of the Field
3. Statement of research and analytical methodology
4. Proposed table of contents
5. Annotated Bibliography
6. Statement of a timetable for completion of research and writing
7. Signature of Thesis Director approving proposal

Note: Individual thesis directors and/or committee members may require additional components to the thesis proposal.

Please submit a signed copy of the thesis proposal page and the proposal to the Director of the M.S. Program in Social Sciences according to the deadlines mentioned above.

_________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of Thesis Director  Date

_________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of Committee Member (1)  (not required)  Date

_________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of Committee Member (2)  (not required)  Date

_________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of receipt, M.S. Program Director  Date
Student’s Name: ________________________________________________________________

Department/Program: ____________________________________________________________

Chair, Thesis/Dissertation Committee: _____________________________________________

Committee Members: _____________________________________________________________

Title of Thesis/Dissertation: _______________________________________________________

Date of Defense: __________________________________________________________________

Time of Defense: __________________________________________________________________

Location: ________________________________________________________________________

Abstract:
Towson University
Office of Graduate Studies

Thesis Approval Page

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by _______________________________
entitled ________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Has been approved by the thesis committee as satisfactorily completing the thesis
requirements for the degree Master of Science.

__________________________________________  __________________________
Chair, Thesis Committee                      Date

__________________________________________  __________________________
Committee Member                            Date

__________________________________________  __________________________
Committee Member                            Date

__________________________________________  __________________________
Committee Member (if applicable)             Date

__________________________________________  __________________________
Committee Member (if applicable)             Date

__________________________________________  __________________________
Dean of Graduate Studies                     Date
### Office of Graduate Studies Timetable of Deadlines for Finishing Thesis/Dissertation Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Fall Term</th>
<th>Spring Term</th>
<th>Summer Term (Tentative)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis Draft to Advisor</td>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>June 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Announcement Form to Graduate Studies Office</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>June 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Defense</td>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>July 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Oral Defense Meeting</td>
<td>November 26</td>
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<td>July 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Corrections to Committee Members</td>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>July 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Committee Approval</td>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>July 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Signatures</td>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>May 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approves Draft to Graduate Studies Office</td>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>July 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Format Corrections</td>
<td>December 5-12</td>
<td>May 7-14</td>
<td>July 26-August 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Submission to Graduate Studies Office</td>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>August 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of Grade by Committee Chair</td>
<td>December 19</td>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>August 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Students are encouraged to submit their work earlier, as these dates reflect the latest deadlines for submission.

2. Students are to abide by program or department guidelines if they are earlier than those required by the Office of Graduate Studies.

3. All thesis/dissertation submissions to the Office of Graduate Studies must be submitted electronically as an attachment in either Word or PDF format. The Thesis/Dissertation Approval page with signatures of all committee members, Internet Release and Format Review forms must have the original signatures. The student should make sure the forms are formatted correctly; otherwise, the signatures might have to be obtained again. The approval page and forms with original signatures can be scanned and emailed to gradstudies@towson.edu or faxed to 410.704.3129. **Electronic signatures are not accepted by USM.** The Office of Graduate Studies staff will notify the student of any necessary format corrections via email. The corrections should be made before sending the final version—again, electronically.