

School of Computing
College of Computing, Engineering, and Construction
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Masters Thesis Policy

In order to qualify for the Master of Science in Computer and Information Sciences, a student must complete at least 6 credits of the thesis course, CIS 6970, culminating in a creditable Masters thesis. It is the purpose of this document to provide the policy framework within which students must operate to satisfy this particular requirement for the degree.

A student usually begins thesis considerations upon completing a sufficient number of 6000-level courses to identify one or more areas of personal interest and a potential thesis adviser for each such area of interest. Typically, the thesis adviser and thesis topic correspond to an instructor and material the student has encountered in a 6000-level course. Normally, a Masters student takes 3 credits of thesis each of the last 2 terms at UNF. Within the first 3 credits, the student will normally prepare a prospectus for the thesis, complete a substantial portion of the literature review for the thesis, and make substantial progress towards producing the content material upon which the thesis will be based. The last 3 credits normally represent the effort of completing the material basis for the thesis and for writing the thesis.

Students are to enroll in CIS 6970 for any term in which they are actively under the guidance of their thesis adviser.

1. The thesis adviser

The first step for a student is linking up with a thesis adviser. The student should initiate the contact with the faculty member who is the choice for thesis adviser. The choice may be at the suggestion of the School's graduate administrative personnel, or may be the result of student interest generated from contact with the faculty member in graduate courses. The student and faculty member should explore common research interests and settle on 1 or more possible thesis topics mutually agreeable to both. The faculty member may decline to serve as the student's thesis adviser and the student may look elsewhere for a thesis adviser if a satisfactory thesis topic cannot be agreed upon.

The thesis adviser must be a member of the School's graduate faculty.

The thesis adviser is responsible for supervising the student's research, chairing the student's thesis committee, supervising and screening the writing of the student's thesis, and supervising the organizing of the thesis presentation (including publication, when under University sponsorship).

2. The thesis committee

The thesis adviser, upon accepting a Master's thesis student, should register that information with the School's Graduate Director and set in motion the establishment of a thesis committee for the student. Thesis committee appointments are made by the School's Graduate Director with the advice of the thesis adviser.

The thesis committee consists of 3 graduate faculty members, is chaired by the thesis adviser, and its members are normally selected from the School's graduate faculty. If appropriate for a particular thesis topic, 1 member of the committee may be from outside the School.

The committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the thesis prospectus, for reviewing and approving the thesis in final form as prepared by the student, and for reviewing and approving the presentation of the thesis.

3. **The thesis topic**

When the thesis adviser and student have agreed upon a topic, the student, in consultation with the adviser, should prepare a prospectus which provides descriptive information regarding the topic and provides a (screened) list of references which will be reviewed by the student to increase background in the topic area. The prospectus will typically run 3 to 5 pages in length (excluding references); however, a given topic or adviser/committee combination may require greater detail for the prospectus to gain approval.

The thesis topic should reflect a research area of the computer and information sciences. If the topic involves activity undertaken by the student in connection with place of employment, a strong case must be made regarding the research nature of the activity with the understanding that no restraint will be placed on the direction of the research or the dissemination of the results. The student should also be aware that inventions or copyrightable material produced as part of thesis work may be considered the property of the University as well as the student, and that the University may share in any proceeds that derive from this material.

The student must present and defend the topic prospectus to the thesis committee. The committee must unanimously agree that the topic is appropriate for a Master's thesis and that the prospectus adequately presents the scope of what the student is to accomplish.

4. **The thesis content**

The thesis should represent a research effort on the part of the student. The outcome of the research effort may or may not reflect an original contribution to the field. The thesis should be presented to the satisfaction of the thesis committee. At least a portion of the thesis should be of sufficient quality such that if it were extracted from the thesis, it would compare favorably with current work in the thesis area, particularly work regularly appearing in the form of professional presentation and publication.

The thesis must be prepared according to University guidelines, with bound copies of the thesis (at the student's expense) placed in the University library and within the School. The finished thesis must meet with the unanimous approval of the thesis committee.

The thesis advisor's signature on the signature page included with the thesis attests that the finished thesis meets minimal standards for technical writing. The thesis advisor may require the student to have the thesis professionally edited at the student's expense. The thesis submitted to the School must be accompanied by a copy of the thesis/project editorial certification form, signed either by the thesis advisor or by the editor, in which case the form must also include a statement of the qualifications of the editor.

5. **The thesis presentation**

The thesis must be presented orally in the form of a thesis defense to the thesis committee. There will be at least 5 members of the School's graduate faculty present at the thesis defense. The presentation will be open to any interested parties. The candidate will address questions from the committee and audience to the satisfaction of the thesis committee. The thesis defense must meet with the unanimous approval of the thesis committee. The presentation should summarize the significant results of the thesis in a form similar to that used in presenting research to technical conferences.

Adopted 5/12/89 (adjusted 10/1/90 to reflect nomenclature change from Division to College;
adjusted 9/1/92 to reflect nomenclature change from College to Department)

Revised by vote of the Department faculty 2/9/05 to add a 3rd paragraph regarding editing of the thesis
(adjusted 10/31/06 to reflect nomenclature change from Department to School)