

Option I: Thesis

Writing a thesis is one of the two options presently available for completing the MAEL program. A thesis is the written result of an original research project planned and conducted by the student, working closely with the thesis advisor and other committee members chosen by the student.

A. Selecting a Topic

Writing a thesis gives students an opportunity to identify and explore a research topic on an area of literature that truly interests them in order to contribute to furthering knowledge in the student's field of study.

In addition, completing the thesis will improve their writing, research, and critical thinking skills. Thus, the thesis option can be a rewarding experience for students interested in pursuing careers in academics and a beneficial option for students planning to continue their studies in a doctoral program.

As students take their first courses, they should be thinking about the periods that are of particular interest to them from their general reading as well as from their undergraduate studies. Students should take notice when questions occur to them that have not been answered or have not been answered to their satisfaction.

B. Writing the Thesis

The procedure for writing a thesis involves planning, research, and materials development. In this process, the student first defines initial goals more precisely, reviews the relevant current research, figures out how his/her topic fits into this research, identifies specific objectives, and selects the method(s) and sources to be used in the research. These planning stages become part of a thesis proposal. Students work closely with their committee Chair and other committee members in developing the proposal. Visit the following site for a guide on how to prepare proposals, theses and projects (*Guías para la preparación de propuestas, tesis, proyectos y disertaciones*) <http://grad.uprm.edu/oeg/EstudiantesActivos/Normas/quia.php>.

Please note that students cannot begin their research until their proposals have been approved by all the committee members and required proposal materials have been submitted to the OGS and the English Department.

After the proposal is approved by the student's committee, the student will conduct research, analyze findings and/or texts, and write the thesis manuscript. The student's proposal focuses this process of research and often serves in creating the standard initial section/s of the thesis. The length and organization of theses vary, but should be agreed upon by all members of the student's committee (75 pages is considered the norm). When working on the thesis, students enroll in INGL 6999; for the first two times the course must be taken for three (3) credits. After that, students register for zero credits until thesis completion. A student must be enrolled in INGL 6999 in order to defend their thesis. –

It is expected that the student will be able

- to demonstrate, in writing and orally, familiarity with scholarly conversations in a given field of study;
- to use, in writing, Modern Language Style or another appropriate system of citation in the thesis;
- to incorporate theory to support an interpretation or reading of a literary text or texts in the thesis;
- to defend, in writing and orally, an interpretation or reading of a literary text or texts;
- to conduct research independently in a given field of study;
- to write a thesis of approximately seventy-five double spaced pages; and,
- to present their research to the university community

C. Defending the Thesis

When the student's committee agrees the thesis is completed, the student defends their project before an examining committee composed of the student's thesis committee and a representative of the Director of the OGS, chosen from among the UPRM faculty. According to the OGS Norms, the established timeframe for the oral examination (thesis defense) is no less than two hours and no more than four hours. The thesis defense begins as an open forum in which the student delivers an oral presentation of their research project and addresses questions and comments from the public. Subsequently, the chair requests the public leave the room and the student is expected to respond to additional questions posed by the examining committee. After this exchange, the student is asked to leave the room for the examining committee to deliberate, in private, about both the oral defense and the thesis manuscript. The committee may pass or not the student on the oral defense; in case of failure, the student may repeat the defense once. With regards to the thesis manuscript, the committee may accept it as submitted, request revisions (and establish a timeline for the submission of revisions), or not accept it.

For additional information on thesis guidelines, students should consult their committee Chairs and refer to the *Graduate School Guidelines for the Preparation of Proposals, Theses, and Project Reports*, available at [Guías-para-la-preparación-de-propuestas-tesis-proyectos-y-disertaciones.pdf \(uprm.edu\)](https://www.uprm.edu/graduate-school/guidelines)