

Thesis

Getting Started

There are several major steps to writing a thesis, and it is easy to get bogged down and lose valuable time without some advice about how to start. This isn't supposed to be exhaustive, and you should seek the advice of other students and faculty all through the process of writing your thesis. You should start thinking about a topic and researching it, but the first major step is to seek out someone to chair your thesis committee.

Be done with thesis 6 weeks prior to defense date.

Thesis Committee

A thesis committee is made up of four faculty members, who must be classified as graduate faculty by New Mexico State; adjunct professors cannot serve on thesis committees. On your committee you must have a committee chairperson, whom you will work most closely with and who will guide your research; your chair should probably be the faculty member whose research is the closest to yours. You should also have two more graduate faculty members from the government department on your committee, graduate faculty members in the department who can be from the MA or MPA side, but probably with some connection to your research. NMSU requires each committee to have a representative from outside of the government department on the committee, the dean's representative. If you are getting a minor outside of the government department, you should use one of the graduate faculty members of that department.

Major Steps in a Thesis:

1. Picking a Committee Chair
2. Prospectus
3. Defense
4. Submitting the thesis to the Graduate School
5. Defense

Additional Information:

1. Do original work (unlikely)
2. Critique other's work
3. Combine 1 and 2 (critique and offer better information)

The graduate school has very specific requirements about the formatting of a thesis. It would be a good idea to check these guidelines before you start writing or as you write; reformatting your paper once you finish will be extremely tedious. For more information about NMSU's requirements for a thesis, please consult the NMSU Graduate School website: <http://www.gradschool.nmsu.edu/Guidelines/>

Thesis

Make sure to pay attention to deadlines for thesis:

- Submission
- Defense
- Proposal

Prospectus:

1. Idea
2. Research questions
3. Hypothesis
4. Relevance
5. Bibliography (preliminary)
6. Chapters/Sections
7. Proposed timeline
8. Definition of terms
9. What classes have I taken (graduate and undergraduate) that are relevant to topic