CHECKLIST:

PROJECT/THESIS EXPERIENCE

**FIRST YEAR:**



☛ **Within the first semester of the program,** we encourage you to decide on the general topic of your proposed thesis or project.

☛ **By the end of your first year** (preferably your first semester), you will have secured a project/thesis

**advisor** and will begin the process of working with that person to determine your other 2 committee members.

**How to find a faculty advisor?** We recommend you **review the graduate handbook** in order to identify relevant faculty. You will then need to approach faculty and have a conversation to determine if collaboration is possible. Often, your exact, hoped-for topic is not going to be your final work; please understand you may need to adjust your ideas for true collaboration and mentoring opportunities.

# DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR PROPOSAL AND

**TO COMPLETE APPLICATION TO ENROLL IN 597 OR 598**

Most often students are ready to propose when there is a solid plan in place which is documented via strong, logical and well-researched responses to the content **(in bold)** below. Sometimes your advisor will require that the first 2 or 3 chapters of your thesis/project are also written. Discuss with your advisor what he or she expects prior to proposing and enrolling in 597/598 units.

Once you are ready to propose, work with your identified committee members to organize a meeting date so that you may present your thesis/project idea. You and your advisor will determine how involved your other 2 committee members need to be prior to your formal proposal. Be sure to give your committee enough time to review a copy of your proposal and timeline prior to your proposal meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to receive feedback on the writing, content, and timeline. The proposal document **NEEDS TO** include the following information in **APA format**:

## **Cover page** [Project Title, Your Name & Committee Members’ Names, University Name]

1. **A statement of the problem** that motivates your project/thesis [1- 3 sentences]
2. ***For thesis* include your research questions** [2-4 sentences]
3. **Your thesis hypothesis** OR your **project objectives/goals** (e.g., how do you plan on answering your research questions or suggesting solutions for the problem)
4. **Review of the relevant literature** [this will be several pages long]

## **Theoretical framework** for the project/thesis (i.e., the theories you are using to answer your research questions)

1. ***For thesis* include methodology** for gathering data, testing the hypothesis, and answering the research questions.

***For project* include procedures** for producing intended product (i.e., develop curricula, website, etc.) and the intended audience.

## **Timeline** for the completion of your project [list expected deadlines to complete each portion of thesis/project, anticipate any potential problems and include your expected completion date]

1. **Reference List** in APA format [include all references used in proposal]

## *Optional:* Your thesis/project advisor may require other items such as IRB approval or other relevant information for your specific goals.

**PROPOSAL MEETING PREPARATION**

* **When your advisor agrees you are ready to propose formally,** work with the gerontology office to reserve a room for your formal proposal presentation meeting.
* **Obtain the form entitled “Application for Gerontology Gero 597/ Gero 598.”** After your proposal meeting, and if the committee agrees you are ready to move forward, the committee will sign-off on this form. Return the completed and signed form to Karen Wong, Gerontology Department Advisor, along with a complete copy of your proposal.

### Note: The semester you enroll in Gero 597/598 is not the semester you will necessarily complete your project or thesis. Indeed, give yourself at least a year to complete your project or thesis.

**Note: GS700 is not an option until the semester *after* you enroll in Gero 597/598, assuming all other coursework is complete and you are making steady progress toward completion of the thesis/project.**

**Note: Graduation is contingent upon successful completion of the thesis/project, not enrollment in Gero 597/598.**

**DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR DEFENSE**

For the defense, the thesis/project document **MUST** include the following information in **APA format**:

## **Cover page** [Project Title, Your Name & Committee Members’ Names, University Name]

1. **An abstract** that briefly summaries the project/thesis [150-250 words].
2. **A statement of the problem** that motivates your project/thesis [1- 3 sentences]
3. ***For thesis* include your research questions** [2-4 sentences]

# Your thesis hypothesis OR your project objectives/goals

1. **Review of the relevant literature**

## **Theoretical framework** for the project/thesis (i.e., the theories you are using to answer your research questions)

1. ***For thesis* include methodology** for gathering data, testing the hypothesis, and answering the research questions.

***For project* include procedures** for producing intended product (i.e., develop curricula, website, etc.) and the intended audience.

## **Findings** - the results from your data analysis for thesis OR the completed product for project.

1. **Discussion** and analysis of your findings and the relation to the theoretical body of knowledge on the topic in your profession.
2. **Reference List** in APA format [include all references used in proposal]

*For more detailed guidelines of components for thesis/project defense, please review the relevant handouts available on the Gerontology Department website*, <http://hss.fullerton.edu/gerontology/currentstudents/>

# DEFENSE MEETING PREPARATION

* Once your advisor determines your thesis/project document is complete, please notify the Gerontology Academic Program to arrange a room for your defense. Ensure you give your committee enough time to review your full, complete draft of your thesis or project. Often, this is 2-3 weeks to read (which gives time to make suggested changes) prior to your scheduled defense date.

### Note: Many faculty are not available for proposal or defense meetings in the summer. Please plan your time accordingly.

* Anticipate an hour-long meeting for the defense, including a 10-15 minute PowerPoint presentation discussing all sections of your thesis/project. Be prepared to answer follow-up questions. You are welcome to invite friends, family, and faculty. Food is allowed but not required.
* When defending your project/thesis, please remember to bring at least three signature pages to be signed in black ink by your committee. **It is the student's responsibility to get these signatures.**
* After the defense the committee will deliberate possible outcomes. **Expect revisions and suggestions**, which may need to be done before you can obtain signatures. Allow time for revisions, especially if trying to meet campus-wide thesis deadlines.

# DEADLINES

☛ **Proposal deadline** for thesis/project is the last day of classes in the semester; signed paperwork for the application for Gero 597/598 must be completed by this deadline in order to enroll in 597/598 the following semester. \*\*\*

☛ ***For thesis*,** defense (final filing) deadline is set by the university Graduate Studies office. Please see the Graduate Studies office website for all required forms and for more information: <http://www.fullerton.edu/graduate/current_students/thesis.php>.

☛ ***For project***, defense (signed paperwork) deadline is the last day of finals week for the semester.

\*\*\*This deadline is recommended by this office and is subject to change pending discussion with your Committee Chair and Advisor. While students technically have until the class registration deadline to get signatures for enrollment in 597/598, most professors are unavailable during most breaks (Winter, Summer). Continuous enrollment is required in the MSG program, so if you do not enroll in 597/598 you may need to enroll in another course (either an elective or core course) to stay as an MSG student.