RESEARCH REQUIREMENT

Professional Project or Thesis

The purpose of the professional project and thesis are to enable students to integrate research, curricular information, and professional experiences/problems into their study to demonstrate proficiency and critical thinking in hospitality management.

Students pursuing an Online M.S. in HM will select from two alternatives to satisfy the research component of the degree: professional project or thesis. The choice of professional project or thesis is made in consultation with the student’s Master’s Advisory Committee (MAC) based on the individual’s educational training and goals, and is declared in the Program of Study form. Students can register for their first 3 credit hours of professional project/thesis after completion of 12 credit hours of coursework with satisfactory grades (B or above). The final 3 credit hours cannot begin until 27 hours of coursework have been successfully completed (3.0 GPA).

Professional Project

Students who choose the professional project option can complete the research requirement through applied research. A minimum of 6 hours of non-thesis directed research credit must be completed. Before students can enroll in non-thesis professional project, the Program of Study form must be approved by the student’s MAC and filed with the HM-MPD. To file a Program of Study form, the student must have a designated faculty as his/her Master's Advisor, a MAC, and a tentative topic for the professional project. The faculty advisor for the professional project will provide a syllabus, which describes specific expectations including measurable outcome(s) or product.

The research outcome/product for non-thesis students can take one of the four forms:

- A poster or oral presentation accepted and scheduled for a professional conference at the state level or beyond*
- An article manuscript submitted to a peer-reviewed journal**
- A grant proposal submitted to an external funding agency**
- A presentation at a departmental, school, or university-wide research event*

* Student must be an author and presenter. Presentations must include clear objective statement, background literature, description of methodology, summary of findings, and discussion. Proof of presentation along with the presentation slides or a legible image of the poster should be made available to the MAC. Presentations at the university-level 3MT (Three-minute thesis) competition do not count, but can be done in addition to a larger presentation. Presentations for credit in another course do not count.

** Student must be an author (of the manuscript) or co-investigator (of the grant proposal). Proof of submission along with the manuscript/proposal draft should be made available to the MAC. Submission of an abstract or a paper submitted for a conference proceeding does not count. Successful completion of the professional project constitutes passing the Master’s final exam.
**Thesis Option**

The primary objective of a thesis research component is to expand the existing knowledge base. The thesis must be a well-reasoned and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study, and provide evidence of high scholarly achievement. The student’s MAC is the primary source of guidance in the planning and preparation of the thesis. Instructions for preparation of the thesis are available from the Graduate School.

A minimum of 6 credit hours of thesis credit must be completed over at least two separate academic terms. The Program of Study form must be filed with the HM-MPD before students can enroll in thesis credits. A thesis proposal can be submitted and presented to the student’s MAC for approval during or after the semester in which the student is enrolled in at least 1 credit hour (but no more than 3 credit hours) of thesis credit. The thesis defense cannot be scheduled before the proposal is approved by the student’s MAC, and may not take place in the same semester during which the proposal is presented. Note that the entire summer months are considered as one semester.

The thesis defense must be scheduled no later than 14 days prior to the intended date of presenting it by submitting GS7 – Authorization for Final Oral/Written Examination form to the Graduate School. The thesis defense can be scheduled, with MAC approval, when the student has completed all other degree requirements including 6 hours of thesis credit, or the student is expected to complete them in the semester during which the defense takes place. The student must be enrolled in 3 or more graduate credit hours in the semester of the defense (or 1 or more credit hours if the defense is during summer).

A final thesis draft must be provided to the MAC no later than 14 days prior to the scheduled defense date.