Thesis Boot Camp
Master of Arts in Teaching – Business Education

What is a thesis?
- A thesis document is an academic research study. The focus is on the research study itself; what do you want to investigate? The thesis supports the study and reports your findings.

What's the first step?
- Select a topic and a thesis advisor. You need a topic you are interested in as well as a thesis advisor with whom you will work well. Talk with several faculty members to determine the best fit, both in terms of your working relationship and interest in your topic.
- Focus on a specific topic by knowing the resources to find the articles you need, reading as much as you can about the areas in which you are interested, and narrowing the topic.
  - **Know Your Resources** - Plan to spend a day in the library to learn about the resources. Make an appointment with a reference librarian to discover the wealth of materials at your disposal to help you find the articles you need. Get to know ERIC (www.ncat.edu/library).
  - **Read as Much as You Can** - If you are open to a variety of topics, read the research that has been conducted in these areas to determine what's been done and how your research could contribute to the "wall of knowledge." Typically, you will find an article or two that "speak" to you and motivate your interest to pursue a specific focus.
  - **Narrow the Focus** - Once you’ve chosen an area of study, such as “service learning,” narrow the topic by reading the “suggestions for further research” at the conclusion of related studies. A narrowed focus of service learning might be, “the impact of a service learning experience on business education students’ end-of-course performance.”

Prepare a Realistic Timeline
- The department faculty prepared a suggested thesis timeline that outlines the typical time required to complete a thesis. Review the timeline with your thesis advisor and set specific deadlines for each part of your research.

Use the Research Class
- **Draft Your Proposal** - During the research class, begin writing the introduction (chapter 1) and review of literature (chapter 2) and share drafts with your thesis advisor. Read the MAT Thesis Guide to understand the parts and pieces of each chapter. Plan to have your proposal completed by the end of your research class. This would include the introduction (chapter 1), review of literature (chapter 2) and methodology (chapter 3).
- **Consider Your Statistical Analyses** - Think about the kind of data you will collect and how they will be analyzed. Work with your thesis advisor or select a thesis committee member who specializes in statistical analyses.

Use an Academic Writing Style
- Academic writing does not use a creative writing style. The writer should avoid first-person pronouns and opinion-based statements.
- The review of literature should be organized by topic, not by the references you found. Report the findings of other studies within an organized outline of headings and subheadings.

Create a Writing Plan
- Either devote yourself to writing a paragraph every day or
- Plan a set day with a chunk of “protected” time to write every week
- Use free writing techniques to get through writer’s block
- Use an APA Style Reference Guide

Balance Your Life
- Create a support group
- Plan time for stress-relieving activities
MAT - Thesis Timeline
Fall Graduation

January
- Determine Thesis Committee Chair and Members
- Complete School Permission Forms
- Complete CITI Modules (IRB)
  http://www.ncat.edu/~divofres/compliance/irb/training.php

February
- Conduct Review of Literature
- Draft Proposal (Chapters 1-2-3)

March
- Share Proposal with Committee Members
  (Request response/approval within two weeks of submission)
- Pilot Test Survey Instrument

April
- Submit IRB Forms including survey and pilot test data results

PLEASE NOTE: The above dates may be completed during the summer months; however, many faculty members are not available between May and August. Students working on their thesis during the summer should ensure their thesis advisor and committee members will be available before determining a summer schedule.

May – August
Collect Data (After IRB Approval Received)
NOTE: If your subjects include students, revise your timeline as necessary to accommodate your data collection procedures.

Monday, August 20
Last Day for Graduate Students to Apply for Fall Graduation

September
Run Data Analysis
Draft Chapters 4 and 5

October
Finalize thesis draft with Advisor

Friday, October 17
Submit Draft of Thesis to All Committee Members
Note: Committee needs two weeks to review prior to thesis defense.

Friday, October 31
Last Day to Defend Thesis
Note: Students should plan to defend their thesis BEFORE this date to ensure they have enough time to make suggested changes to their manuscript before the Graduate School’s submission deadline.

Monday, November 3
Defended and Approved Thesis Due to Graduate School
Note: The Graduate School will edit your thesis manuscript. Any changes they deem need to be made must be fixed and a final complete draft returned before the following date.

Monday, November 24
Approved Printed Thesis Copies Due to Graduate School
Note: The Graduate School will not allow any extensions. If your final thesis draft is not submitted on this date, you will not be cleared for graduation.

Saturday, December 13
Commencement
# MAT - Thesis Timeline
## Spring Graduation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>• Determine Thesis Committee Chair and Members&lt;br&gt;• Complete School Permission Forms&lt;br&gt;• Complete CITI Modules (IRB)&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.ncat.edu/~divofres/compliance/irb/training.php">http://www.ncat.edu/~divofres/compliance/irb/training.php</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>• Conduct Review of Literature&lt;br&gt;• Draft Proposal (Chapters 1-2-3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>• Share Proposal with Committee Members (Request response/approval within two weeks of submission)&lt;br&gt;• Pilot Test Survey Instrument</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>• Submit IRB Forms including survey and pilot test data results</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, January 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Last Day for Graduate Students to Apply for Graduation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Collect Data (After IRB Approval Received)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Run Data Analysis&lt;br&gt;Draft Chapters 4 and 5</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Finalize thesis draft with Advisor</td>
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<td><strong>Friday, March 21</strong></td>
<td><strong>Submit Draft of Thesis to All Committee Members</strong>&lt;br&gt;Note: Committee needs two weeks to review prior to thesis defense.</td>
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<td><strong>Friday, April 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Last Day to Defend Thesis</strong>&lt;br&gt;Note: Students should plan to defend their thesis BEFORE this date to ensure they have enough time to make suggested changes to their manuscript before the Graduate School’s submission deadline.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, April 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Defended and Approved Thesis Due to Graduate School</strong>&lt;br&gt;Note: The Graduate School will edit your thesis manuscript. Any changes they deem need to be made must be fixed and a final complete draft returned before the following date.</td>
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<td><strong>Monday, April 28</strong></td>
<td><strong>Approved Printed Thesis Copies Due to Graduate School</strong>&lt;br&gt;Note: The Graduate School will not allow any extensions. If your final thesis draft is not submitted on this date, you will not be cleared for graduation.</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 10</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
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