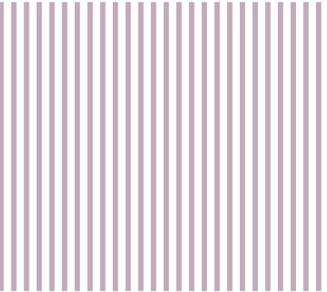


FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM
THESIS/PROJECT
Student Handbook 2021–22



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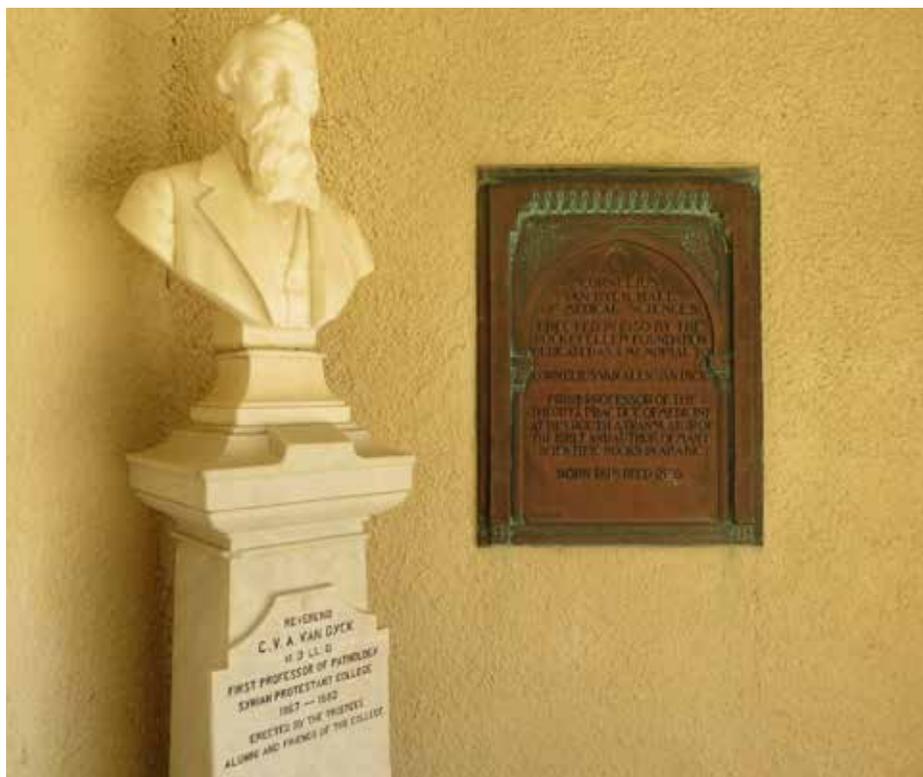
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INTRODUCTION

A Master thesis/project aims at answering one or more research questions that meet your professional and educational goals. It provides you with the opportunity to conduct independent research and comprehensively apply concepts and methods acquired through the Master level courses. After completing your thesis/project, you will become competent in applying skills that you have already obtained throughout the program.

This handbook presents the thesis/project guidelines for the Master of Science (MS) programs offered at the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) at the American University of Beirut: MS in Epidemiology program and MS in Environmental Health program. The information presented incorporates information extracted from the (1) University Graduate Catalogue under the section “General University Academic Information”, and (2) the Institutional Review Board (IRB) manual posted on the IRB website. This handbook also includes information on the roles and responsibilities of MS coordinators, students, and advisers, in addition to a timeline for completing the thesis/project dissertation and defense. The purpose of this handbook is to ensure a smooth thesis process.



THESIS/PROJECT TIMELINE CHECKLIST

The timeline required to complete your thesis/project is one year for full-time students and up to 2 years for part-time students. It is usually dependent on your choice of the thesis topic and how much you know about it, the research methods you choose to apply, and your knowledge of the thesis/project requirements, in addition to your individual skills in time management and organization. In addition, you need to expect that some delays may occur throughout the process, emerging from multiple causes. It is important to relay all your concerns to your thesis adviser and make sure resources required for your project are available at FHS and AUB. The timeline provided in this manual applies to a full-time MS thesis/project student and is useful to both the student and his/her adviser. The checklist is intended to help you manage your time more efficiently and effectively; however, you will still need to check the dates set by the Office of the Registrar for each academic year, and maintain regular follow-up with your registration adviser. In addition, the timeline provided is tentative and it is desirable to adjust it continually based on your needs, and in communication with the adviser.

A student who plans to collect primary data that involve human subjects need to consult with the thesis adviser to ensure that the time needed is feasible for the planned time of graduation and for the maximum number of residency permitted. In addition, if a student plans to use data collected by a third party, he/she needs to ensure obtaining the data, the administrative and the IRB approval on time from the third party.

The Timeline checklist recommended for thesis/project completion

General Information	Progress
Read the General University Academic Information	Between August and September of Year 1
Meet with the MS coordinator to discuss matching research interests	First or maximum second term of Year 1
Identify possible thesis and project adviser	Second term of Year 1 or summer of Year 1
Register for thesis/project course and for the comprehensive exam ³	As soon as you complete your courses
Tentative proposal title /research question	Summer of Year 1/Early fall of Year 2
Identify thesis/project committee member(s)	Summer of Year 1/Early fall of Year 2
Discuss and seek approval of committee members	Fall of Year 2
Approval of proposal by the Graduate Student Council (GSC) Make sure that the form attached in Appendix II (Thesis Title and Thesis Committee) is submitted to GSC.	Fall of Year 2 At least four months before thesis defense
Submit to IRB (for thesis/projects that involve human subjects)	As soon as GSC approval is obtained ¹
Complete the comprehensive exam	No later than the fall term of Year 2 ²
Start data collection and analysis (as applicable)	As soon as you obtain IRB approval (if applicable) or GSC approval (If exempted from IRB approval)
Send drafts of the thesis to Adviser for feedback	As you progress (get feedback at least once for each section/chapter)
Schedule a meeting with committee members (if needed) in coordination with your adviser for feedback	As you progress
Schedule Thesis /Project Defense	One month earlier than the deadline of the thesis defense (no later than the beginning of April of Year 2)
Submit a final draft of your thesis/project to committee members	AT LEAST 2 weeks before your defense. You MUST negotiate this with your committee. Some members may need more time. (By end of March of Year 2)

Incorporate all the comments received during the defense into your final thesis draft and send to thesis adviser for approval before submission to Jafet Library	Within one week of the thesis defense
Make sure that the form attached in Appendix IV (Report on thesis or project defense) is filled and signed by the adviser.	By the end of the defense
Deposit a hard copy of the approved thesis to Jafet Library. The Epidemiology and Population Health Department (EPHD) requires depositing one copy of the thesis at the EPHD Library.	Early May of Year 2. Check the table below in thesis/projects deadlines
Follow AUB guidelines for thesis/project completion forms and final submissions	

- 1 Thesis/project proposals need to be reviewed and approved by the GSC before they are submitted for IRB approval.
- 2 A student is not allowed to defend her/his thesis unless s/he has passed the comprehensive examination.
- 3 The comprehensive exam is a written exam for the MS Epidemiology students and an oral exam for the MS Environmental Health. Students can chose to register and sit for the comprehensive exam at any time between the completion of their courses and before their thesis defense.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Writing a thesis or a research project is a process that requires dedication from the student and close supervision from the thesis adviser. The process typically entails regular meetings and follow-up, back and forth email correspondence and ongoing discussion. It is also important to keep the thesis/project committee in the loop of the progress of the work to obtain, where relevant, their feedback. Although you will receive help and support from your thesis adviser and the committee members, keep in mind that you are the researcher and the one ultimately responsible for the whole research work. It is therefore your duty to initiate meetings with your thesis adviser and committee members for feedback and input.

In order to ensure an efficient process, students, advisers as well as MS coordinators need to understand the roles and responsibilities for the different parties involved in the process of the thesis work (as outlined below).

A. Student's Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Read and follow the guidelines in the checklist provided in this manual. Be especially aware of the thesis/project related deadlines such as the registration of the thesis/project, the submission to the GSC and to the IRB, and the deadline to the thesis defense
- b. Discuss with your MS coordinator and academic adviser research interests or specific research questions that you would like to explore through a thesis/project. Selecting a thesis adviser is usually based on matched research interest between the student and the adviser's research expertise
- c. Familiarize yourself with the ethical approval process by reviewing the IRB website (i.e. their forms, templates, requirements) and adhere to the IRB policies and procedures
- d. Discuss with your thesis adviser potential possibilities of delays from IRB and external participating institutions and strategize the follow-up process to prevent unexpected delays
- e. Agree with the thesis/project adviser on the thesis timeline, number and schedule of meetings and make sure you adhere to that timeline. It is your responsibility to arrange for these meetings, to arrive on time and to respect deadlines for submission
- f. Allow sufficient time for the adviser and thesis committee members to review the chapters of the thesis/project
- g. In the event you take a leave of absence, discuss with your thesis adviser adequate arrangements for supervision and how you can be contacted; and in case of any issues in the supervisory relationship, keep the adviser or the MS coordinator informed
- h. If and when you are on leave of absence, advisers are not expected to contact you to provide feedback on the thesis work and nor should you contact them

- i. Maintain a positive and a professional atmosphere in the research and supervisory work
- j. Take note of the guidance and feedback provided by the adviser on your work, and always make sure you incorporate it in the thesis work

B. Adviser's Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Provide guidance about the nature of the research process and the selection of an appropriate research topic, the expected standard of work, the use of research methodologies, as well as a timeline to ensure successful completion of the work
- b. At the beginning, discuss with students the publication/authorship guidelines. Towards end, discuss plan for publications. Preferably co-sign an agreement
- c. Guide students through the ethical approval process and direct them to read the IRB policies and procedures
- d. Remind students that they should allow sufficient time for the adviser/committee members to review the chapters of the thesis/project
- e. Advise on appropriate literature and sources beneficial to the student's area of research, and direct them to library resources for additional guidance; direct students towards supplementary courses if necessary, encourage students to maintain familiarity with relevant developments in their subject area by reading published articles, meeting with experts in the field, and/or attending relevant seminars and conferences/workshops
- f. Maintain contact with the students through regular meetings and other types of structured communication agreed upon between both sides
- g. Make arrangement to avoid delays in completion of the work and student graduation in the event of being on leave or absent (research or maternal)
- h. Follow up closely on the implementation process of the research project (such as data collection, data analysis)
- i. Provide advice and constructive criticism on the structure of the thesis, the contents of each section, the balance of the different sections and on the style and grammar; if needed, set a meeting for the committee and the student to discuss potential limitations and ways to overcome them
- j. Ensure that the thesis/project committee is established according to the graduate policies of the University
- k. Liaise with other advisers in case the student is jointly supervised and make sure the responsibilities and role of each adviser are clear and distinct
- l. Resolve any problems arising with the research site and help prevent issues of delays

C. MS Coordinator's Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Orient students and advisers on the Thesis process
- b. Resolve problems of communication between the student and the adviser
- c. Follow up on advisees thesis progress
- d. Arrange for students' supervision when the adviser is on research or maternal leave
- e. In case of any emerging problem, direct students towards the best ways to overcome pending issues and to prevent delays

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Master's students on thesis and non-thesis track are required to register and pass a 0-credit comprehensive examination course. A student is not allowed to defend her/his thesis unless s/he has passed the comprehensive examination. In general, a comprehensive examination is a test that covers a broad base of material. The purpose of the examination is to assess the student's knowledge and capacities to earn a given graduate degree in the field of specialization. Depending on the degree program, it may test course knowledge, knowledge of the student's proposed research area, and/or general knowledge in the field.

Comprehensive examinations are usually taken after completing most of the required course requirements for the degree and after meeting with the academic adviser to determine eligibility. The Pass (P) or Fail (F) is entered online or is reported to the Registrar immediately on the date the comprehensive examination is passed or any time during the term.

A student who does not pass the comprehensive examination may retake it in the following term. Students who are unable to pass a program's comprehensive exam twice are dropped from the graduate program. Students who pass the comprehensive exam after one failure will have their initial failure reported as "PR" for progress in the first term the course was registered in, and the grade of "P" for passing the comprehensive exam will show on their transcript in the second term the course was registered in.

Comprehensive examinations are written or oral exams and sometimes both written and oral.

For MS students majoring in epidemiology, students undergo a written comprehensive exam. The duration of the exam is 4 hours, covers basic concepts and methods of epidemiology, biostatistics and research design and is administered by the department. The exam is given twice in the Fall and Spring term each year and the time of the exam is set by the EPHD.

MS students majoring in Environmental Sciences (Major: Environmental Health) undergo an oral comprehensive exam. The thesis/project adviser appoints a committee comprised of at least three members (for the thesis) and 2 members (for the project) of professorial rank chaired by the thesis/project adviser to examine the student.

REGISTRATION POLICY

1. Students have a maximum of four years to complete their MS degree
2. Once a student registers for the thesis, s/he pays a thesis fee that allows her/him to register up to three additional terms without paying, however the student must register for the thesis course on AUBsis each time. In addition, the student is expected to register consecutively without skipping any regular term. In case the student plans to skip a regular term, he/she must apply for a leave of absence and secure the approval of the chair of the department, Faculty/School Graduate Studies Committee, and Graduate Council
3. Non-thesis Master's students are expected to register and finish the project work within two consecutive regular terms at most. Registering for a project course beyond a second term requires approval of the faculty/school Graduate Studies Committee; this approval must be sought on a per-term basis prior to registration
4. Not registering for the thesis without an approved Leave of Absence (referred to as an "unexcused absence") throughout subsequent terms will cause the student to forfeit the registration due her/him for each term of unexcused absence. For further information, please refer to the university catalogue
5. Regulations and deadline are available in the graduate university catalogue. Please refer to the catalogue for important information
6. As per the university catalogue "Students are responsible for reading the information in the university catalogue. Failure to read and comply with faculty and university regulations will not exempt students from whatever penalties that may incur"

THESIS/PROJECT WRITING

A. Choosing a Thesis/Project Topic

At the beginning of the second term of enrollment, full-time students are recommended to start thinking about their research interests and discuss with departmental members/academic advisers/MS coordinators possible thesis/project topics. Usually students select their thesis advisers based on matched research interests (refer to the section on the advisory process above). It is recommended that students start working on their research proposal by the end of their second regular term.

After consulting with the thesis/project adviser, a student is expected to lead the research process, come up with a research question, and prepare a proposal that clearly states the problem addressed and the proposed new study contributions. It would be helpful to review the research papers (thesis and projects) that were completed by previous students in FHS and which are posted on AUB's Jafet Library website. Click [here](#) to access the webpage.

Criteria to assist students in identifying a thesis/project topic:

- a. Student's interest based on past personal or work experiences
- b. Student's ability to demonstrate the importance, significance and relevance of a topic
- c. Novelty of the research topic: does the study add new and important knowledge? Is it reasonable and convincing to professionals in the field of the topic?
- d. Alignment of the proposed topic with the learning outcomes of the program
- e. Availability of secondary data to allow for the investigation of the proposed thesis topic or ability to collect primary data within reasonable time

B. Types of Data:

A thesis is a scholarly production that could be based on the following:

A. Primary Data is the data that is collected from original sources using different methodologies. Data collection can be qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. Study designs can be categorized as observational studies and experimental studies. Observational studies include case control, cross-sectional and cohort studies, whereas experimental studies include randomized controlled trials (RCT), quasi-experiment design, field trial, laboratory work, etc. (National Institute of Health, 2018.)

B. Secondary Data* involves the use of data that has been collected for the purpose of an initial study in order to investigate several research questions, which is distinct from that of the original work; this may be a new research question or an alternative perspective on the original question (Johnston MP, 2014.) A thesis could also be a systematic review that is a review of carefully designed healthcare studies, which provides a high level of evidence on the effectiveness of healthcare interventions. These reviews are based on the quality of the available clinical trials and the measured health outcomes. Meta-analysis can be conducted by pooling numerical data from multiple studies in order to assess the evidence for any benefits or harms from a particular treatment. In this way, systematic reviews are able to summarize the existing clinical research on a topic (Cochrane Consumer Network.)

C. Other Methodologies agreed on by the committee

*Although it is not mandatory, it is recommended that MS Epidemiology students use secondary data for their thesis work

C. Thesis/Project proposal template

GSC provides guidance for the MS thesis proposal or project proposals for review. The GSC guidance (Appendix I) provide important notes that the student needs to consider while writing the proposal.

N.B: The GSC requires that the student present the proposal in front of the GSC committee in the presence of the adviser. The student answers questions raised by the committee and then leaves the meeting. The GSC members evaluates the student’s proposal and an email is sent a few days later to the student and the adviser informing them about the approval or disapproval of the committee on the proposal. In the email, there are details on what recommendations, changes and/or edits need to be made to the proposal.

D. IRB issues

Any research project by students or faculty involving human subjects requires review and approval by the Institutional Review Board at AUB. According to the IRB principles and procedures, researchers are responsible to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects participating in the research project. IRB has defined the terms “research” and “human subjects” in order to clarify the difference between research activities that require IRB approval and other activities that are classified as “non-research” activities and therefore don’t require IRB approval or “non-human subject research” and therefore are exempted from IRB approval. “Research” has been defined as “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, which is designed (in whole or in part) to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge”. “Human subject” is defined as “a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information”.

Students, principal investigators and co-investigators, in addition to any individual who plan to participate in any research project including those who will be consenting participants, are required to complete research ethical training course to which AUB has subscribed. This course is a web-based course offered and administered by the [Collaborative Institutions Training Initiatives \(CITI\)](#) Program and is a requirement by the IRB. Please refer to the section on: “Certification on Research Ethical Training” in the IRB manual for detailed information about the certificate.

Any amendment or modification to approved protocols need to be submitted to the IRB for approval prior to initiating the modification and continuing the research project. In addition, students should be aware that projects, which have been subject to an expedited or full board review, are provided one-year approval after which a renewal of approval needs to be granted by the IRB. In addition, annual reporting is required by the IRB until the research project is closed.

IRB recommends that Master’s students start planning their thesis as early as possible and plan for the time of completion of their thesis in line with their plan for the time of their graduation in order to prevent delays. Students who are collaborating with institutions outside AUB are recommended to stay in close contact with the MS coordinator and update him/her about their progress. In case any problem emerges, the MS coordinator and the thesis adviser need to discuss the best ways to overcome the issue.

E. Expectation of the final output (Thesis and Project)

The main criterion for evaluating a Master’s thesis is that it demonstrates a potential for publication. For further details, please refer to the University [Thesis Manual](#) attached in appendix III. There are no restrictions concerning the particular material or method chosen for the thesis/project except in meeting current standards in the discipline of epidemiology or environmental health sciences. Extensive literature review on the thesis topic, while important, needs to be restricted in the write-up of the thesis. Students need to follow the formatting requirements in the Thesis Manual.

F. Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the practice of passing-off someone else’s work as your own, or using someone else’s work without any acknowledgement. Whilst it is an accepted part of academic study to research the ideas of others to develop your own understanding and arguments, it is essential to acknowledge your sources in presenting work for assessment.

More information can be found on the following [link](#).

Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:

Education is demanding and time management is essential. Do not hesitate to use the resources around you but do not cut corners. Cheating and plagiarism will not be

tolerated. Please review the Student Code of Conduct and familiarize yourself with definitions and penalties. If you are in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, ask your instructor because it is your responsibility to know. The American University of Beirut has a strict anti-cheating and anti-plagiarism policy. Students will be penalized for cheating and plagiarism, as they are not tolerated. Penalties include failing marks on the assignment in question, suspension or expulsion from university and a permanent mention of the disciplinary action in the student's records. Because of the seriousness of plagiarism, all students in the American University of Beirut are required to complete a tutorial and pass a test on the subject of plagiarism. This exam can be accessed on the following [link](#).

Self-plagiarism or the use of one's own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously is also unacceptable.

Getting assistance/help on assignments including essays is also unacceptable and unethical under [AUB's Student Code of Conduct](#).

THESIS/PROJECT DEFENSE

A. The Thesis Committee

A thesis committee is formed by the thesis adviser and the student and in coordination with the chairperson/director of the department according to the following conditions. The following applies to the thesis committee:

- a. The thesis committee should normally consist of at least three members of professorial rank chaired by the thesis adviser.
- b. In case a co-adviser is also a member of the thesis committee, then the thesis committee should consist of at least four members of professorial rank chaired by the thesis adviser.
- c. In departments/programs, normally at least two members of professorial rank of the thesis committee must be members of the student's department. The remaining member(s) can be from other departments at AUB or from an institution other than AUB.
- d. In case the thesis adviser is from another department at AUB, the chairperson of the student's department will consult with the chairperson of the faculty members' department to which the thesis adviser belongs.
- e. In interdisciplinary programs, the members of the thesis committee are drawn from fulltime faculty members at AUB.
- f. The chairperson/director of the student's department/program must approve the thesis committee. The student must submit the thesis proposal to the committee and secure its approval. The committee members will evaluate the proposal in consultation with the thesis adviser.
- g. It is the student's responsibility, in coordination with the thesis adviser, to keep members of the thesis committee informed on the progress of her/his work and seek their input.

B. The Project Committee

- a. Each student is assigned an adviser who serves as the project adviser.
- b. The master's project committee should be composed of at least two members recommended by the department/program.
- c. The faculty/school Graduate Studies Committee should approve the project topic proposal, selection of the adviser, and selection of project committee members at least four months before the project defense.
- d. If the project work involves human subject research or animal related research, the project committee must forward to the department chair a copy of the approval/confirmation or exemption letter of the Institutional Review Board and/or Animal Care Committee.

C. Thesis/Project Defense requirements

The thesis/project defense is usually held in a meeting room or any available room in the faculty; contact the department administrative assistant for help in finding a room and for advertising the defense ahead of the planned date of defense.

There are two essential requirements for a student to complete the thesis defense:

- Passing the comprehensive exam
- Registering for the thesis/project in the expected term of graduation

Thesis/project deadlines

For Master's candidates graduating in:	Summer 2020–21	Fall 2021–22	Spring 2021–22
Deadline for approval of thesis topic and committee	May 5, 2021	September 20, 2021	December 13, 2021
Deadline for thesis defense	September 6, 2021	January 27, 2022	May 2, 2022
Deadline for thesis deposit at library	September 17, 2021	February 7, 2022	May 12, 2022

- Students should circulate their final thesis/project paper to all committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the defense and only after the adviser approves the final version of the final paper.
- During the thesis/project defense students are expected to present their work in 20-30 minutes time after which attendees and the committee members ask questions and exchange answers. Then the students and other attendees leave the committee members to evaluate the thesis. A letter grade is reported either Pass (P) or Fail (F). The thesis adviser is the one responsible for submitting the grade.

Post thesis/project defense

1. Students should meet the adviser shortly after the defense to discuss all necessary modifications recommended during the thesis/project defense.
2. Adviser should check that all comments raised by committee members were addressed by the students and changes have been addressed in the revised version of the final thesis/ paper.
3. Students should consult with their registration adviser in order to ensure filling the forms to be submitted after the defense and obtain necessary guidance to complete the clearance process.

Failure to defend the thesis/project:

1. It is essential to know that the rules of “Dismissal” (mentioned in the “General University Academic Information”) in regards to the thesis/project state: “The Faculty Graduate Studies Committee may dismiss a master’s student, in consultation with the department/program, from graduate study if the student fails the defense twice”.
2. Pass (P) or Fail (F) is reported for project defense. If Fail (F) is reported, the student may resubmit the project and defend it after a period of at least three months. Failure on the second attempt results in discontinuation of the graduate work.

AUTHORSHIP GUIDELINES AT FHS

A detailed copy of FHS’s Authorship Guidelines can be found in Appendix V.

FACILITIES, LIBRARY & OTHER RESOURCES

A. Computer Facilities

The computer laboratory located on the first floor of Van Dyck building is equipped with 53 computer stations. The computer laboratory is mainly used by students for their academic assignments and research, and can also be reserved for teaching.

B. Library Resources

Library/information resources are accessible to all AUB faculty and students through four university libraries:

- Jafet Memorial Library (central library of AUB campus)
- Saab Memorial Medical Library
- Engineering and Architecture Library
- Science and Agriculture Library with its annex AREC (Farm) Library

Jafet and Saab Medical Libraries provide most academic and research support to faculty and students at FHS. The library staff conduct regular seminars and presentations on how to use library facilities and resources, how to perform online literature searches, and how to order articles not available in the library. These two libraries open 109 hours per week throughout the year.

C. Research Centers at FHS

1. Center for Research on Population and Health (CRPH)

The Center for Research on Population and Health, established in 2002, strengthens and enriches population and health research, and supports a program of interdisciplinary research on issues at the intersection of population and health. Research working groups of the CRPH plan, organize, and implement research activities to build capacity in the field of population and health. The majority of these groups are led by GPHP faculty members. CRPH also hosts the following regional research networks: Reproductive Health Working Group (RHWG), Changing Choices in Childbirth (CCC), Tobacco Control Research Group (TCRG), and Agriculture, Environment, and Health Network (AEHN). The Dean appoints the director of CRPH who is a GPHP faculty member. The CRPH is linked to the Research Committee through its director's membership on the Research Committee.

2. Center for Public Health Practice (CPHP)

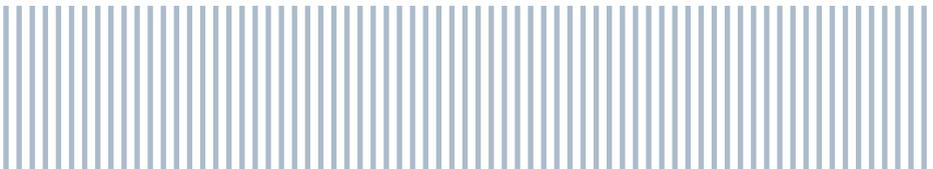
The Center for Public Health Practice, established in 2009, aims at advancing evidence-based public health practice in Lebanon and the region while enhancing the academic experience of students and faculty. It builds solid community partnerships and develops human capabilities to impact the health of populations. The center nurtures the culture of collective responsibility, diversity, and social justice. The director of the CPHP is appointed by the dean and is a GPHP faculty member. Outreach and training projects that come to the CPHP are shared with departments. Departments deliberate on the relevance of the project to their goals and appoint interested faculty members to engage with the CPHP on the project. Faculty members may also choose to engage in outreach and training projects outside of the CPHP. Their requests are processed and approved through department chairperson and by the dean.

3. Knowledge to Policy Center (K2P)

The Knowledge to Policy Center, established in 2014, draws on an unparalleled breadth of synthesized evidence and context-specific knowledge by producing briefs and conducting policy dialogues to impact policy agendas and action. The dean appoints the director of K2P who is a GPHP faculty member. The directors of all centers submit to the dean an annual report on activities of the center and these are discussed annually in the Administrative Committee, jointly with the annual departmental reports.

4. The Center for Systematic Reviews on Health Policy and Systems Research (SPARK)

The Center for Systematic Reviews on Health Policy and Systems Research (SPARK) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) provides expertise and training in the conduct of systematic reviews. It was established in 2013 funded by the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research at the World Health Organization (WHO). The center is a joint collaboration between the Faculty of Medicine (FM) and FHS.



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APPENDIX I

Guidance by FHS GSC for MS Theses or Project Proposals for review by GSC

Please find attached a proposal template. Below are some guidance notes to bear in mind in preparing the proposal.

1. AUB requires that Graduate Studies Committees approve all thesis titles and committees. The purpose of the FHS GSC review is also to ensure the scientific rigor of the proposed thesis or project. Students will receive (copied to advisers) feedback if any from the GSC review that is useful for revision and quality improvement.
2. The thesis or project proposal must be approved by the adviser(s) and all committee members, and the version (with date indicated) must include a statement that this approval has been obtained.
3. Thesis/project proposals need to be reviewed and approved by the GSC before they are submitted for IRB approval.
4. Timing of proposal submission to GSC: it is recommended to submit the thesis proposal to the GSC early on in the term before the student expects to graduate. Please note that Student Services needs to receive the final proposal version that has been approved by all committee members a week before the date of the GSC meeting at which it will be reviewed.
5. Please note that the background section of the proposal should be very focused on the proposed study and only provide enough detail needed to facilitate assessment of the proposed methods of the study. It is NOT a detailed literature review. For quantitative analysis, some limited literature review on key variables should be included.
6. The methods section of the proposal should provide relevant information about all phases of the study, details about the data source if secondary analysis, and about data collection if involved.
7. If more than one person is involved in the study a section on the role of the student whose proposal it is needs to be clearly delineated.
8. As noted below, the maximum length of the proposal is 1000 words (or 4 single-spaced pages.)

American University of Beirut

Faculty of Health Sciences

Department of _____

Thesis/Project Topic: _____

Presented by: _____

Program name: _____

Student ID: _____

Expected date of graduation: _____

Date of proposal version: _____

Thesis Committee:

Dr. [Name] (Adviser), [Title, affiliation, department]

Dr. [Name] (Co-Adviser), [Title, affiliation, department]

Dr. [Name] (Committee member), [Title, affiliation, department]

Dr. [Name] (Committee member), [Title, affiliation, department]

Confirmation that this thesis/project proposal version was approved by all committee members

A. Thesis/Project Proposal

Background and Problem Statement: [no more than one page]

Research question and Objective(s):

Hypothesis/es [only if applicable]:

Methods:

Study design/methodological approach

Data sources [if secondary analysis]

Concepts and measures

Study population and sampling

Data collection [if applicable]

Analysis plan

Significance for Policy/Interventions:

Ethical Considerations and Plans for IRB approval [if applicable]:

Key References: [no more than one page]

Proposal needs to have page numbers

Page limit: Maximum length of total proposal is 4 pages or 1000 words. Background section should not be more than one page. Maximum 1 page of references.

Last revised on February 3, 2015

APPENDIX II

Thesis Title and Thesis Committee Form

American University of Beirut

Faculty of Health Sciences

Master of Science Program

Thesis Title

Name of Student: _____

Student ID#: _____

Major: _____

Expected Date of Graduation: _____

Title of Thesis: _____

Thesis Abstract: _____

Thesis Committee Members

1 Adviser _____

2 _____

3 _____

Date Submitted: _____

Signature of Coordinator: _____

Action by the Graduate Committee

Approve

Disapprove

Comments

Date: _____

Dr. Jocelyn DeJong _____

Chairperson, Graduate Studies Committee

APPENDIX III

Thesis Manual

Archives and Special Collections

Jafet Memorial Library

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I. Introduction

The following guidelines are offered to help graduate students meet the library's requirements for depositing a thesis, dissertation or project. Theses, dissertations and/or projects are all thereafter referred to as "Thesis" or "Theses".

II. Deadlines

The deadlines for deposit of all theses at the library, as required by the registrar, are found at the following link:

<http://www.aub.edu.lb/graduatecouncil/Pages/thesisdeadlines.aspx>

III. Deposit Procedures

Depositing a copy of the thesis is a prerequisite for graduation. Upon deposit at the library, an online receipt will be submitted to the Registrar's Office.

During the term in which a student expects to deposit her/his Thesis, the student must visit the Archives and Special Collections Department (ASC), Jafet Library, **in person and as early as possible**: please do not wait for your defense to contact us, especially if you plan to travel abroad, or have committee members who are abroad. Kindly arrange for a visit to ASC as soon as possible, and bring along a printed copy of the following: the preliminary pages, a chapter, and a bibliography of the thesis. A digital copy of these materials on a USB will not be accepted. These materials will be checked by the assigned library staff, to ensure that all are properly formatted, and are ready for deposit.

IV. Number and Format of Required Copies

Jafet Memorial Library requires deposit of **one** unbound copy of the Master's thesis, project or doctoral dissertation for all faculties and schools. In addition, the student should also provide the library with a digital copy of the thesis saved on a CD-ROM in the following formats: one MicrosoftWord file and one Portable Document Format (PDF) file.

V. Thesis Format Requirements

In order to format your thesis properly, please use and download the thesis/dissertation template, or project template as appropriate. The template should be saved as a Microsoft-Word file. If you are using LaTeX style, you may download the following template and its documentation or use any LaTeX version required by your department. Templates for theses/dissertations or projects are available for downloading at the end of this document.

A. Paper

Durable A4 Fabriano 80gr. paper (with a watermark) should be used for printing out the thesis. Please note that in case the thesis includes maps, tables or illustrative material which is an integral part of the thesis and which requires oversized paper, it is OK to include those in the final print out of the thesis. Please print the oversize material on Fabriano 80gr., and use the larger than A4 size, as appropriate.

B. Ink

The ink used must be black, with the exception of any colored illustrations that are an integral part of the thesis. The thesis must be laser-printed.

C. Font

Please use **Times New Roman** typeface for English, and the **Simplified Arabic** typefaces for Arabic.

For the body of the text, **Font size** should be **12** for **English** and **14** for **Arabic**.

For major title headings and for preliminary pages' headings, the **font size for capital letters** should be **16** for **English** and **20** for **Arabic**.

Do not use bold face in preliminary pages and major headings, e.g. chapters, appendices, and bibliography.

D. Margins

Please click [here](#) for samples of a text page with subheadings, bullets and dashes. The margins in text pages should have the following dimensions:

Left side margin: 3.5 cm

Right side margin: 2.5 cm

Top of the page: 3 cm

Bottom of the page: 3 cm

Illustrative materials, tables, charts, graphs, etc., should not be placed closer than 2 cm from the top, right and bottom edges of the paper, and 2.5 cm from the left. The text of the thesis should be left aligned, and not justified.

E. Spacing

Please click [here](#) for a sample of a text page with subheadings, bullets, and dashes. The text in the title page, the acknowledgments and the abstract are all single-spaced; the text throughout the thesis must be double-spaced, except in the footnotes, in any block quotations, or in tables, etc. These are single-spaced within each entry but double-spaced between entries. Line space for Arabic text should be 1.5.

Only one double-space is left between paragraphs. Subheadings are preceded by two double-spaces (i.e. four spaces.) Subheadings are double spaced (i.e. two spaces) only in case there is no text between them. Tables and illustrations should be preceded and followed by two double-spaces (i.e. four spaces.)

F. Indentation

All paragraphs should be indented 1.5 cm from the margin.

Subheadings are not indented.

G. Numbering of Pages, Figures and Tables

The preliminary pages are numbered in lowercase Roman numerals centered at the bottom of the pages, and placed 2 cm from the bottom edges of the paper. The first numbered page will be the “ACKNOWLEDGMENT” page, numbered “v”, or the first page, which appears after the release form. Numbering will continue sequentially, thereafter, and all Arabic numerals must be placed in the center, and at the bottom of the page.

Figure and table numbering must be either continuous throughout the thesis or by chapter that is 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2.

H. Major Headings and Subheadings

Major headings, e.g. the titles in the preliminary pages: “CHAPTER’s title, “NOTES”, “REFERENCES” or “BIBLIOGRAPHY” should all be typed in capital letters, size 16, centered and not bold. If a chapter’s title runs on more than one line it should be **single spaced**. The heading CHAPTER and its TITLE should be double-spaced.

Each subheading is preceded by its number as it appears in the table of contents of the thesis.

Each subheading has a higher attention value than any subsequent ones. These are designated as first-, second-, third- and fourth-level subheadings, and are differentiated as follows:

First-level subheadings are in bold, regular typefaces: eg.,

A. First-Level Subheading

Second-level subheadings are in bold, italics typefaces: eg.,

1. *Second-Level Subheading*

Third-level subheadings are in regular typefaces, underlined: eg.,

a. Third-Level Subheading

Fourth-level subheadings are in regular typefaces, underlined with dashes: eg.

i. Fourth-Level Subheading

In order to list items, major points or ideas, use bullets at the beginning of the line, after an indentation of 1.5 cm for a new paragraph. You can further subdivide the bullets using dashes.

I. Preliminary Pages

The thesis includes the following three parts: preliminary pages, body or text, and end pages, which include appendices, endnotes, if any, and references or bibliography.

Each of these parts may be subdivided into sections and subsections. These should be clearly reflected in the table of contents.

The preliminary pages should be ordered as follows:

A Mandatory Blank page (Not numbered. Considered i). The first and last pages of the thesis are blank.

A Mandatory Title page (Not numbered. Considered ii).

Please click [here](#) for a sample of a Thesis title page.

This page includes the name of the university, the full title of the thesis, the full name of the student, as well as the title of the degree conferred, the name of the department, the name of the faculty or school, the place and the date of submission.

N.B. The student's name should include her/his first name, father's name and family name. For married female students, the name should include the student's first name, her maiden name and her family name.

A Mandatory Thesis Approval page (Not numbered. Considered iii).

Please click [here](#) for a sample of a thesis/dissertation approval page or a sample of a project approval page. The signatures of the committee members should be original and in black. Please scan and include this page in the PDF file submitted to ASC.

A Mandatory Thesis Release form (Not numbered. Considered iv).

Please click [here](#) for a sample of a thesis or dissertation or project release form.

This form must be signed and dated when the thesis project copy is deposited at the library. Please scan and include this page in the PDF file submitted to ASC Department filling in the box of one of the two options below, as appropriate. Once done, sign and date.

- I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the university; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

- I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the university; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes after:
 - One year from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.
 - Two years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.
 - Three years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.

Acknowledgments, if any (Numbered v) **Typing of the page numbers** starts with this page. Please click [here](#) for a sample of Acknowledgments

A Mandatory Abstract:

Please click [here](#) for a sample of a thesis abstract. The abstract summarizes the thesis' main points: No word limit applies.

Preface: Optional.

A Mandatory Table of Contents: Please click [here](#) for a sample of table of contents A or a sample of table of contents B

List of Illustrations, if any. Please click [here](#) for a sample of Illustrations

List of Tables, if any. Please click [here](#) for a sample of tables

List of Abbreviations, if any.

Glossary, if any.

Dedication (Not numbered and not counted in the pagination of the preliminary pages). Optional and placed before chapter 1 and without the word “dedicated”.

J. Multi-Volume Thesis

A multi-volume thesis should contain a title page for each volume. The respective volumes should be identified as Volume I, II, etc. Pagination should be continuous from the first to the second volume. The title page in volume two should be identical to that in volume one, with the added word “Continuation” just below the title of the thesis.

K. Thesis in Arabic

Please click [here](#) for a sample of a title page in Arabic.

A thesis in Arabic follows the same requirements laid above. An additional title page in English and the translation of the abstract into English should be included.

All specifications applied from left to right in English should be considered from right to left in Arabic (especially the margin for binding).

For numbering, please use أ، ب، ج in theses in Arabic instead of the lower case Roman numerals i, ii, iii, iv, ...

i. Translation of Headings for Theses in Arabic:

Acknowledgements = شكر

Abstract = مستخلص

Contents = المحتويات

Preface = التصدير

Dedication = الاهداء

Introduction = مقدمة

Appendix = ملحق

Appendices = ملاحق

Bibliography = ببليوغرافيا

VI. Style and Bibliography

A. Writing and Citation Style

For all matters not discussed in the present Thesis Manual, theses must follow the form and style described in the latest edition of K.L. Turabian: ***A Manual for writers of research papers, theses and dissertations*** (University of Chicago Press) which is available for consultation in the Reference Department of Jafet Library. You may also use any other form specified by your department or program such as:

AAA, APA, MLA, using **Microsoft-Word** or **LaTeX**, and others, provided it conforms to all specifications laid out in this Thesis Manual for preliminary pages.

B. Citation Management

In order to help you organize your bibliography, footnotes, references, and citations; Citation managers, RefWorks and EndNote are available for your convenience on the library homepage. For more information, please contact the Information Services Librarian, extension: 2629.

C. Footnotes and Illustrative Matter

Footnotes are typed at the bottom of the page, and are separated from the text by a separator. They are indented (1.5 cm) and preceded by the appropriate number (size 12) or (size 10 superscript) assigned to each in the text above. They are single-spaced if they run on more than one line and double-spaced between two notes.

For the formatting of figures and tables and their titles, check Turabian's Manual or any other manual specified by your department or program. Separate maps, if any, should be numbered.

D. Bibliography

For your bibliography please follow the Turabian Manual or any other style manual as required by your department, such as **AAA, APA**, etc., or simply use RefWorks or EndNote.

VII. Thesis/Dissertation or project templates (rtf format)

- a. Blank page
- b. Sample of Title Page
- c. Sample of Thesis/Dissertation Approval Page
- d. Sample of Project Approval Page
- e. Sample of Thesis/Dissertation/Project Release Form
- f. Sample of Acknowledgments
- g. Sample of Abstract
- h. Sample of Table of Contents (A)
- i. Sample of Table of Contents (B)
- j. Sample of List of Illustrations
- k. Sample of List of Tables
- l. Sample of Title Page in Arabic
- m. Sample of Text Page with subheadings, bullets and dashes
- n. Thesis/Dissertation template
- o. Project template
- p. LaTeX template

VIII. Brief Checklist

Please double-check that:

1. Your name written on the thesis matches the spelling on your diploma.
2. The title of the thesis is identical throughout the thesis.
3. The rank, name of faculty/ department/ program/ or center listed in the thesis match the information recorded in the AUB graduation catalog for that year.
4. The approval page has been checked at the Archives Department prior to signing by the members of the committee.
5. All chapter headings are capitalized, not bold, and in “16” font.
6. The text in the body of the thesis is aligned to the left.
7. The margins comply with the specifications of the Thesis Manual.
8. The signatures on the Approval Page are in black ink.
9. The Thesis has front and back blank pages.
10. All loose-leave pages are properly numbered, arranged and enclosed in a large envelope.
11. The digital copy of the thesis is saved in both Microsoft-word and PDF file formats.
12. The major, degree and department names are spelled correctly.
13. The signed approval page is included in the PDF file.
14. The authorized release form page is included in the PDF file.
15. The final copy has been revised before submission.

For more information, contact the Archives and Special Collections/ Jafet Memorial Library:

Email: asc@aub.edu.lb

Phone: 01-350000 ext. 2609, 2610.

APPENDIX IV

Report on Thesis (or Project) Defense

Registrar's Office
Master's Students *

To: Registrar

From: Department of _____

Student's ID: _____

Student's Name: _____

Major: _____

Thesis or Project Defense

a. The Thesis Committee and the Thesis proposal were approved on: _____

b. The above student defended his/her thesis/project on and was evaluated as:

Pass

Fail

c. Following is the exact title of the thesis/project:

d. The Examining Committee included the following members:

1. Chairman _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Remarks:

Date: _____

Signature of Chairman of Committee: _____

* This form must be completed in full and in accordance with University regulations on Graduate Study as they appear in the University Catalogue.

APPENDIX V

Authorship Guidelines at FHS

Policies vary across disciplines, countries and across institutions about criteria governing authorship of academic publications. All agree, however, that authors listed on a given material are taking full responsibility of that “intellectual product”. For every produced material, there is a process for deciding on authorship credit and authorship order.¹ This decision should follow a certain set of criteria based on ethical principles and the extent of professional contribution by members of the project/research team. Decisions on authorship should be based on the scholarly importance of the contribution regardless of the time and effort made.²

Below is a proposed set of criteria developed by the Research Committee (RC) at the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) to guide faculty, students, research assistants and other collaborators in making decisions regarding authorship credit and order and to serve as a reference document if disagreements on authorship credit arise.

Definitions of Authorship

The FHS RC has decided to adopt the following criteria for assigning authorship credit:

“Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content. Authorship credit should be based only on substantial contributions to:

Conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data; and

Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and

Final approval of the version to be published.”³

Authors should meet conditions a, b and c, and anyone who does not meet all three of these criteria should be credited for their contribution in the acknowledgements. While the criteria are copied from those specified in the Reproductive Health Matters Journal, almost all other journals and web sites concur with these guidelines. For example, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) in their latest version of recommendations (in 2001) provides similar guidelines. Additionally, the ICMJE states that “Acquisition of funding, the collection of data, or general supervision of the research group, by themselves, do not justify authorship”.⁴

1 <http://www.hms.harvard.edu/integrity/authorship.html>

2 Fine & Kurdek (1993). Reflections on determining authorship credit and authorship order on faculty– student collaboration. *American Psychologist*, 48 (11): 1141–1147.

3 <http://www.rhmjournal.org.uk>

4 <http://www.icmje.org>

Authorship Criteria

All co-authors should meet the criteria set out above in the definition of authorship. The following statements are made to encourage a culture of ethical authorship within FHS with guidelines made aware to all.

Students: Undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students should be credited authorship for publications arising from their theses/projects work, even if the paper is developed/finalized post-graduation.

Advisers: Advisers, co-advisers and members of committees for undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students' theses/projects should be credited authorship for publications arising from their students' work, even if the paper is developed/finalized post-graduation.

A general principle concerning faculty-student research (1 and 2 above) is that it is the responsibility of the person who initiates the publication process – whenever that occurs – to inform all individuals involved in-depth in the research project (student or advisers) about the intent to publish and to determine their interest in co-authorship.

Graduate and Research Assistants/Associates: GAs and RAs may be granted authorship credit depending on the quality of and their extent of contribution. The Principal author(s)⁵ will be the person to judge whether their contribution warrants authorship credit.

Other collaborators (field worker, interviewers, etc.): Upon the discretion of the principal investigator(s) and/or principal author(s), other collaborators or people facilitating the research should be mentioned in the acknowledgements section of the publication, depending on the quality of and their level of contribution.

Authorship Order

The order of potential co-authors should be a joint decision of all co-authors. It is highly recommended that such discussions take place at the beginning of the project/research and that written minutes are kept.

In the case of publications that come out of student theses/projects, both the student and the adviser should be credited as principal authors.

Suggestions for Good Authorship Practice

These are some tips to prevent disputes arising from authorship issues as set in the COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) report, 2003⁶:

Discuss authorship in the planning stage of research: raise the subject at the start, make a list of all possible publications and gather views of all team members.

Decide on authorship credit and order before you start writing an article: decide with your

⁵ Principal author is defined as first or corresponding author

⁶ Alber T & Wager E. (2003) How to handle authorship disputes: a guide for new researchers. The COPE Report.

team on who will do what and credit that with authorship order for each article.

Continue discussion as the project evolves and new members get involved. Keep written records of all discussions and decisions.

Presented to the faculty by the FHS Research Committee on May 30, 2009. Currently under revision.

Tel: +961-1-374374 • Email: [@aub.edu.lb](mailto: @aub.edu.lb) • www.aub.edu.lb/fhs

This booklet does not replace the university graduate catalogue, accessible online on the AUB Registrar website.