SPPH Thesis Screening Panel Process

Purpose

The purpose of the Thesis Screening Panel (TSP) is to review thesis proposals and provide recommendations. The TSP evaluates the scope and content of the proposed research in light of the general expectations of the university and SPPH for doctoral theses (or master's theses), and provides feedback to the student and the supervisory committee on all aspects of the proposal.

All PhD students are required to prepare a thesis proposal and present it to the TSP prior to embarking on major components of the doctoral research.

Timing, Format, & Process

The TSP meets three times each Academic Year. Generally, meetings are held in Fall (usually November), Winter (usually March), and Summer (usually June). PhD students who wish to present to the TSP will be given priority over Masters students. PhD students are encouraged to complete the Comprehensive Examination prior to presenting to the TSP.

A call for proposals is distributed to all students prior to the meetings (usually three to four weeks in advance). Any student wishing to present must submit a proposal and supporting documents by the deadline. A complete submission includes: (1) a signed coversheet; (2) the proposal; and (3) a completed checklist.

Submitted proposals and supporting documentation are reviewed by the program manager. Presentation dates are scheduled after the submission is confirmed to be complete. The TSP requires a minimum of two weeks to review submitted proposals. Presentations will not be scheduled before the two-week review period. Submitted thesis proposals are thoroughly reviewed by a minimum of two TSP members.

At the meeting, the student gives a brief (10-12 minute, or 15-17 minutes for proposals involving mixed methods research) oral presentation and then responds to questions from the TSP. The student's supervisor is expected to attend the meeting and other supervisory committee members are also encouraged to attend. The role of the supervisor and other committee members at the TSP meeting is to observe only[1].

Proposal Format & Content

Proposals should be a maximum of 10 pages (or 12 pages for proposals involving mixed methods research), excluding the title page, references, or appendices. They should conform to the following formatting:

- Pages should be 8 ½" x 11" (216mm x 279mm);
- Margins should be set at a minimum of ¾" (1.87 cm)

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[1] The rationale behind this structure of the TSP is for students' to be the ones defending their own work, thus the TSP can reflect this in the recommendations.

- Text should be in 12pt Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman, or similar font (condensed fonts are not acceptable)
- Pages should be 1.5 spacing

Students are encouraged to use the following structure:
- Title Page (including email addresses of student and supervisor)
- Problem Statement
- Background and Rationale (including a brief literature review of 2 pages or less)
- Research Plan, including:
  - study objectives,
  - study design and methods (study sample, data collection, and analysis),
  - ethical considerations,
  - feasibility (previous/pilot work done, data availability if not proposing primary data collection, likely response rates for surveys/interviews, and subject availability if primary data being collected),
  - strengths and limitations
- Implications of the Study
- Knowledge Transfer and Translation
- References
- Appendices describing following (maximum 1 page each):
  - timeline
  - budget outlining anticipated expenses and source(s) of funds
  - composition and contribution of supervisory committee members

Please do not include surveys, or letters of reference/collaboration; these may be commented upon in the presentation and discussion with the TSP.

Outcome

The TSP will provide the student and supervisor with written feedback detailing the TSP's main comments. After presenting to the TSP and passing the Comprehensive Exam, students are eligible to apply for Advancement to Candidacy. Advancement to Candidacy must be approved by the PhD program. Confirmation is required from the supervisor that the comments and recommendations from the TSP have been discussed and that the supervisor is satisfied with the final proposal.