THESIS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Thesis?

   The Thesis is a formal, culminating activity in the MSHE planned program of study. As an alternative, you may decide to pursue the Applied Project.

2. What is the main difference between the Thesis and the Applied Project?

   The Thesis requires all elements of research design and implementation and the ability to draw conclusions in a thesis format. The Applied Project requires you to address an issue in the “real world” and does not require a research design and implementation in a thesis format. The project and its implementation will depend on the nature of the project.

   Another important difference is that for the Thesis option, the final product is the Thesis. For the Applied Project, there are two products: the final paper and a final product representing the application to a real world issue or problem.

3. Is an Applied Project less demanding than a Thesis?

   No. Although the term “Thesis” might seem ominous, it is actually no more or less demanding than the Applied Project. Both culminating experiences involve substantial research and the ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills to a public health problem. Although both experiences require the development of a written document, selection of the Applied Project also requires you to create a distinct end product that attests to your ability to problem-solve and develop health education solutions.

4. How is the Thesis conceptualized or approached by the Department?

   As a culminating activity the Thesis provides an assessment of your competency, to apply your knowledge and skills in conducting a research and development project. The Thesis must demonstrate that you have a capacity for research; an ability to draw conclusions; skill in organizing materials; and facility in the use of language.

5. Does the Department have to approve my Thesis Proposal?

   Yes. During the first session of HED 594, you will be provided with a Thesis Approval Form. It requires you to provide information about your proposed Thesis topic, health problem or gap to be addressed, and its impact on the quality of life of the study population. Also, you must complete a concept paper about your Thesis providing information about the purpose of the Thesis, methodologies and procedures for conducting an analysis of the problem, theoretical framework, resource support and your knowledge and skills for successful completion of your Thesis. The concept
paper must also have departmental approval. Your Thesis approval form and approved concept paper are required to complete HED 594.

6. When is the Thesis initiated?

All students enroll for 1 semester hour of Thesis Preparation (HED 594 – Thesis Preparation Seminar) after completing program core requirements (18 credit hours). In 594, you will develop a concept paper and obtain department approval before going to the next step. Once the concept paper is approved, work begins on developing the proposal with your 1st and 2nd Reader. Upon receiving department approval for the proposal, you may begin to implement the Thesis. Please note, however, it is never too early to begin thinking about a topic or area of interest for your Thesis.

7. Do I develop the topic for the Thesis on my own?

No.

8. Does the Thesis have to be related to health education?

Yes.

9. When am I required to have a final topic?

Your topic must be approved PRIOR to enrolling in HED 595. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE AN APPROVED TOPIC YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO REGISTER FOR HED 595 --THESIS RESEARCH IN THAT FOLLOWING SEMESTER.

10. Does my academic advisor serve as my 1st Reader?

Not necessarily. That decision is up to you. You select your 1st and 2nd Readers. Your Thesis 1st Reader must be a member of the MSHE core faculty. The 2nd Reader should be selected for their specific expertise in the content area of your thesis topic and requires the approval of your 1st Reader. If you choose a non PHHS faculty member, you will need to demonstrate that your choice for a 2nd Reader brings expertise not currently available within the PHHS Department. Knowledge of research design is desirable, but not essential. You should talk with faculty members that you would like to serve as your readers. Once you have chosen your Readers, please indicate your choices 1st Reader/Supervisor and 2nd Reader with the submission of the “Thesis Approval Form.”
11. What role do my 1st Reader and 2nd Reader play?

The role of the 1st and 2nd Readers is discussed in the Department’s *Thesis Guidelines and Requirements* on page 7.

You can conceive of your 1st and 2nd reader as the “gate-keepers” who are responsible to ensure that your Thesis conforms to the Department’s *Thesis Guidelines and Requirements* and whether it is acceptable and ready for submission to the Department. Since it is your research, you will be expected to comply with the standards for scholarly writing, including spelling, punctuation and grammar. Your 1st Reader is not your personal editor, nor is he or she responsible for correcting deficiencies in structure, format, and style or content that are part of your responsibility as author.

12. Can I expect my 1st and 2nd Readers to tutor me in content, concepts or methodology that I did not master in my other courses?

Remember, that this is a test of your abilities. Your 1st and 2nd Readers will expect you to review or learn the knowledge or skills required to successfully complete your Thesis. New learning involved in completing the Thesis is key to the process. You can expect your Readers to offer you guidance, consultation, and support as you demonstrate your ability to complete this culminating activity.

13. Can I change to an Applied Project after I have initiated my Thesis?

This depends on when you wish to make such a change. If your Thesis proposal (your first three sections), has not been approved you may change to an Applied Project. Once the plan is approved, you must complete the Thesis. If you do decide to change to an Applied Project, be aware that the process for completing the culminating activity will probably be lengthened. You will have to start the process over, developing a concept paper and receiving departmental approval. With careful pre-planning, changing culminating experiences is not likely.

14. Is it advisable to follow the format of a previously completed Thesis?

No, since requirements may change. The only approved format is contained in the most recent edition of the *Department’s Thesis Guidelines and Requirements* document.

15. What if I cannot finish my plan or final Thesis within the prescribed time period?

If you are unable to meet the end-of-semester deadline, your Thesis 1st Reader will assign a “Y” grade in HED 595. Although this grade will not impact on your grade-point average, you will be required to register again for HED 597 - Thesis Continuation (for 1 credit), during each successive semester until the Thesis is complete.
16. Can I fail the Thesis?

Yes, as is the case for any test or course. You will be permitted a maximum of three drafts of your completed Thesis. A minimum of two drafts is to be expected. If you are unable to complete the final product within three drafts, that indicates you were not able to demonstrate the proficiency required to complete the Thesis. Failure to successfully complete the Thesis will result in dismissal from the Program.

17. When can I expect drafts of my work submitted to my Readers to be returned to me?

Response time will vary according to the Readers. Therefore, you should consult with your Readers at the beginning of your relationship to determine his or her policy.

18. How often is it recommended that I consult with my Readers?

In addition to the schedule prescribed in the course outline for HED 594, you should establish a schedule of consultations with your Readers.

19. Can I register for HED 595 if I have not completed HED 594 Thesis Preparation?

Maybe. To be eligible for HED 595, you have to complete the Thesis Approval Form; have an approved Thesis Concept Paper and an approved Thesis Proposal. If you are able to complete those on your own before taking the HED 594 class, you are eligible to register for HED 595. The key is to have all of the requirements for the Thesis completed and approved by the department in order to begin your Thesis work.

20. Should I retain the services of an experienced editor to review my Thesis?

If you are not confident that you can meet the grammatical and style requirements for the Thesis, you should consider outside editorial assistance. In most cases, students who spend the time, including online tutorials and written guides, usually can meet the expected standards.

21. Is there a requirement that my Thesis be microfilmed?

No. This is not a requirement for the Thesis.

22. Is there a requirement that my Thesis be copyrighted?

No.
23. How many bound copies of my Thesis am I required to prepare?

Two copies of the completed, final manuscript must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester to the PHHS Department. You may want to present your Thesis Readers with a copy of the final paper and product (discuss with your Readers).

24. When can I expect to receive a grade for HED 594 - Thesis Preparation?

A grade will be assigned after your Thesis Approval Form has been completed and Concept Paper has been approved by your Readers and Department Chairperson.

25. When can I expect to receive a grade for HED 595 - Thesis Research?

A final grade will be assigned only after you have submitted a bound copy of your approved Thesis to the Department of Public Health & Health Sciences.

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