



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Graduate Handbook

Master of Arts in Women's, Gender &
Sexuality Studies

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies (WGSS) at the University of South Florida is feminist undergraduate and graduate education, research, and practice for social justice by engaging students in the discovery and production of knowledge that emerges from feminist perspectives on culture and society.

- We seek to expose limitations in traditional higher education (in literature and the arts; history, law, and public policy; sociology, anthropology, and the social sciences; in area and ethnic studies; and in health, science, and technology) resulting from the exclusion of women and other marginalized groups to create knowledge that is transformative and inclusive.
- We seek to provide students with the analytic competency that results from engagement with a curriculum focused on the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, and nation and that promotes responsible citizenship in a diverse global environment.
- We seek to connect our work as academics with the social and political world outside the university; to educate our students about social inequalities that result from sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, able-ism, and ethnocentrism; and to link knowledge, research, teaching, and activism.
- We seek to empower students through a feminist critique of social, cultural, and institutional structures to enable them to think more critically about their own lives and that inspires them to work as active citizens for social justice.

3 WGSS MA Options

The WGSS MA has three options. Each requires successfully completing 36 graduate credit hours:

1. **36 hours + portfolio:** Students for whom the WGSS MA will be a terminal degree may wish to complete the program based on 36 hours of approved coursework and turning in a portfolio.
2. **30 hours + 6 internship hours.** The

internship option is recommended for those interested in professions, such as in not-for-profit and/or social justice organizations.

3. **30 hours + 6 thesis hours:** The thesis option is recommended for students who want to do independent research and/or intend to pursue a doctoral degree.

MA Course Requirements

The WGSS MA requires the successful completion of 36 credit hours with at least 15 hours at the 6000 level. The 36 hours are divided as follows:

1. Three required core WST courses (9 credit hours):
 - a. WST 6001 Feminist Issues and Research Methods
 - b. WST 6003 Scholarship and Pedagogy in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies
 - c. WST 6560 Advanced Feminist Theory
2. Seven elective courses (21 credit hours approved by the graduate director or the student's major professor) to be selected from among:
 - a. Graduate-level courses offered by the Department of Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies
 - b. Approved graduate-level courses (1-2 courses) covering women and/or gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, dis/ability that are offered by other departments
 - c. Up to one graduate-level course (3 credit hours) in the student's focused area of interest offered by another department
 - d. Up to 6 credit hours of WST 6900 Directed Readings or WST 6910 Directed Research, if the student can secure sponsoring WGSS graduate faculty members
3. MA "Option" hours (6 credit hours under the guidance of the student's major professor):
 - a. Electives/Portfolio Option: 6 credit hours of additional approved elective graduate coursework in a Women's, Gender, & Sexuality studies-related area offered in WGSS or another approved unit plus successful completion of a portfolio
 - b. Internship Option: a minimum of 6 credit

hours of WST 5940 Internship, an approved internship experience, typically completed over two semesters

- c. Thesis Option: a minimum of 6 credit hours of WST 6971 Thesis research and writing, typically completed over two semesters

Non-degree-seeking credit hours

Students accepted into the WGSS MA program may be able to transfer up to 12 credit hours taken as non-degree seeking toward the WGSS MA, provided the credit is appropriate to the program.

Grades, Academic Eligibility, Academic Probation

Students are responsible for becoming acquainted with all the rules, regulations, and requirements for completing the degree.

Grade Point Average

Graduate students must maintain an overall average of 3.0 ("B") in all courses. (Note that a B- is equivalent to a 2.67.) If a student's GPA drops below 3.0, the student automatically will be placed on academic probation. No grade below "C" will be accepted toward a graduate degree (including C- and C+ grades), but all grades will be counted in computing the overall average. Students also must earn at least a B (3.0) in each of their four core WST courses. If a student earns less than a B on a core course, that course must be repeated.

The first semester of probation does not necessarily result in automatically canceling an assistantship, though it does require that the student and the graduate director work out a plan for resolving the probation.

If your GPA is still below 3.0 after one semester on probation, you will not be eligible for an assistantship.

S/U

Graduate students may not take courses in their major (Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies) on an S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) basis unless courses are specifically designated S/U in the university catalog. WST 6910 Directed Research is designated as variable credit and is graded on an S/U basis only. (In most cases, however, WST 6900

Directed Readings will be preferable because they are graded credit hours.)

Incompletes

An "Incomplete" grade ("I") is exceptional and granted at the instructor's discretion only when students are unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. This applies to all gradable courses, including pass/fail (S/U). The USF Graduate Catalog policies regarding Incomplete grades must be followed (see section on "Academic Standards and Grades." Students may be eligible for an "I" only when:

- The majority of the student's work for a course has been completed before the end of the semester
- The work that has been completed is qualitatively satisfactory
- The student has requested consideration for an "I" grade as soon as possible but no later than the last day of finals week

The student must request consideration for an Incomplete grade and obtain an "I" Grade Contract from the instructor of record.

Even though the student may meet the eligibility requirements for an Incomplete grade, the course instructor retains the right to make the final decision on granting a student's request for an Incomplete.

The course instructor and student must complete and sign an "I" Grade Contract that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the student would earn factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by student/instructor as long as it does not exceed one semester from the original date grades were due for that course.

The instructor must file a copy of the "I" Grade Contract with the department that offered the course, the Office of Graduate Studies, and the WGSS graduate director by the date grades are due.

The instructor must not require students either to reregister for the course or to audit the course in order to complete the "I" grade. Students may register to audit the course, with the instructor's approval, but cannot retake the course for credit until the "I" grade is cleared.

An "I" grade not cleared within the next

academic semester (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract. “I” grades are not computed in the GPA, but the grade noted on the contract will be computed in the GPA, retroactive to the semester the course was taken, if the contract is not fulfilled by the specified date.

When the final grade is assigned, if applicable, the student will be placed on academic probation or academically dismissed (refer to Automated Academic Probation Procedures for information). Students cannot be certified for graduation with an “I” grade.

Minimum Enrollment & Semester Credit Hours

All degree-seeking master’s students must be enrolled in at least one term (fall, spring, summer) during the previous 12 months. Students who have not enrolled in any of the last three terms will be dropped from the program but may reapply to the University. Applicants will be subject to the admission criteria in effect at that time. Students may complete a Leave of Absence form to avoid being dropped. See USF policies regarding student Leaves of Absence.

During the term in which Electives/Portfolio students compile their portfolios, students must enroll for a minimum of 2 hours of graduate credit. Students in the thesis and internship options, upon successful completion of all degree requirements except for thesis or internship, must enroll in a minimum of 2 credit hours of thesis or internship each semester (except summer) until the completion of the master’s degree.

No student with an “I” grade will be permitted to submit a portfolio or to register for thesis or internship hours.

Academic Progress toward Graduation

Every semester prior to registration for the upcoming semester, students should plan to meet with the graduate director or major professor for assessing progress toward graduation as well as guidance and/or approvals/permits for upcoming courses.

All credits used to satisfy the requirements for the master’s degree must be taken and completed within seven academic years prior to the date of graduation.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistants (GAs) and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are students funded with stipends and partial tuition waivers. The assistantship program is designed to mentor students who show potential in their ability to balance their scholarship with the opportunity for employment in teaching or research.

Assistantships are awarded each semester on a competitive basis depending on the department’s enrollment status and financial means. Assistantships are a privilege and responsibility, not a right. Graduate Assistants and Graduate Teaching Assistants should approach their responsibilities with the same professionalism demanded in any employment situation.

Graduate Assistants typically assist faculty with teaching and/or research and may be first-semester students. Graduate Teaching Assistants are rarely hired and must have completed 18 graduate WGSS credit hours including WST 6003. They are advanced graduate students who may be eligible to serve as instructors of record.

Full-time GA/TAs in good academic standing who also earn good GA/TA evaluations can expect to be funded for up to 2 years *if* WGSS has adequate funds to do so. Funding is never guaranteed. Additionally, in order to encourage graduate students’ timely graduation and to fund as many graduate students as possible, WGSS does not fund beyond 2 years. Funded students should develop their plans of study accordingly.

GA & GTA Enrollment & Eligibility

Graduate Assistants and Graduate Teaching Assistants must be degree-seeking and are required to carry a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester in the fall and spring terms, and may be required to carry 6 credit hours in summer. In the student’s final semester of the degree program, the minimum number of credit hours for assistantship eligibility drops to 2 hours. However, students receiving financial aid (student loads) *must* be registered for 6 hours. Students on academic probation are not eligible for assistantships. Assistantships of .25 FTE or higher come with a partial tuition waiver.

GA & GTA Selection Criteria

Criteria for selecting GAs and GTAs include (not necessarily in this order):

- Relevant qualifications
- The needs and means of the department
- Knowledge of and familiarity with USF
- Student preference
- Providing opportunities for as many students as possible
- Compelling financial need
- Student learning experiences

MA Tracks: Portfolio, Internship, and Thesis

Regardless of your Track

It is not your major professor's job (or your committee's job) to write or copyedit your Portfolio/Internship Narrative/Thesis. That is your job and part of proving that you are worthy of earning a master's degree. Never turn in poorly written or un-proofed work to your major professor (or committee). Seek out on or off-campus resources for writing. You also need to know and employ correct APA or MLA style. Your major professor and committee members should be reading for content only, not typos, APA/MLA style, punctuation, or grammar.

The Electives/Portfolio Option

Students for whom the WGSS MA will be a terminal degree, or for whom further graduate education may not be their goal, may wish to complete the program based on 36 hours of coursework only. Completing a WGSS MA degree without an internship or thesis is a good choice for those who wish to graduate in a timely manner in order to pursue or resume a career elsewhere.

To complete this option for graduation, students should meet with their willing major professor to detail a plan of study that includes 36 credit hours of approved coursework and a writing portfolio. The major professor and a second portfolio committee member from among the permanent WGSS faculty must

approve the student's plan of study, which is filed with the graduate coordinator. The final portfolio must also be approved by both of the portfolio committee members following a brief oral presentation by the student.

MA Writing Portfolio Guidelines

The portfolio is for students who have elected to forgo the internship and thesis options. The portfolio's purpose is to demonstrate the student's mastery of the field. Do not underestimate the gravity of the portfolio or the commitment required to prepare one that earns a passing evaluation.

Eligibility for the Writing Portfolio

A student will be granted permission to work on the MA Portfolio:

1. After successfully completing WST 6001 Feminist Issues and Research Methods, WST 6003 Scholarship and Pedagogy in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, and WST 6560 Advanced Feminist Theory
2. After accruing 18 credit hours toward the degree
3. If the student has no outstanding incompletes ("I")
4. If the student is not on academic probation

Format of the Writing Portfolio

The student will work with their major professor to construct the portfolio, which will consist of 2 polished academic papers produced for graduate courses, academic conferences, or scholarly publication during the student's MA program and a 3-page reflective narrative that explains how the two completed papers reflect the student's learning within WGSS.

Passing the Writing Portfolio

Writing portfolios are evaluated on a pass or fail basis. An examination committee of two WGSS permanent faculty members, including the student's major professor, assesses the student's writing portfolio following a brief oral presentation by the student. The committee's recommendation determines whether a student passes or fails. The major advisor must notify the graduate director and graduate program

coordinator about the committee's recommendation.

Failing the Writing Portfolio

If a student fails or only provisionally passes all or part of the writing portfolio, the committee may ask the student to do one or more of the following:

- Rewrite one or more portions of the papers in the portfolio (by a date and time no later than the end of the following semester)
- Register for additional remedial courses
- Appear in an oral examination of the material
- Submit supplementary written material
- Permanently leave the program

Final Steps for Portfolio Completion

First, an electronic copy of the approved final Writing Portfolio must be submitted to the graduate director or the graduate program coordinator before the last day of classes. The electronic copy will be saved in the WGSS electronic archives, and the title will be added to the WGSS website. Second, the student will complete the top portion of the WGSS MA SACS form and return it to the WGSS graduate program coordinator for faculty completion.

The Internship Option

The internship option is recommended for those interested in applied fieldwork or professions in helping, not-for-profit or social justice agencies. The Internship Option requires 6 credit hours of WST 5940 to cover an approved onsite or online internship experience, typically completed over two semesters. The Internship Option is designed to enhance graduate careers in fields where knowledge of women, gender, and/or sexuality is pertinent. Students may not receive internship credit from their long-term, previous, and/or routine employment.

Students interested in an internship should take the initiative to begin considering potential placement sites one or two semesters before planning to begin the internship. Suitable internship sites include those that are relevant to the WGSS curriculum in Women's, Gender,

& Sexuality studies. Nonprofit agencies and organizations are generally more suitable than for-profit concerns, but that is not always the case.

Internship Eligibility & Credit Hours

A student may register for internship hours:

1. Following successful completion of 18 credit hours toward the MA in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, including WST 6001 Feminist Issues and Research Methods, WST 6003 Scholarship and Pedagogy in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, and WST 6560 Advanced Feminist Theory
2. Selection of a willing major professor

Internship students must complete 6 credit hours of WST 5940. Internships typically are completed in a little over one semester, with the second semester dedicated to the development of the internship narrative. A student may need to register for more than 6 internship hours if the internship extends beyond two semesters. As long as a student is working with a faculty member on the internship, then the student must register for a minimum of 2 internship credit hours every semester. A student does not necessarily have to register for internship hours during summer if the student is not actively working with a major professor or committee members over the summer. Student interns should discuss summer semester registration with both the graduate director and the major professor well before the end of the spring semester.

A student must be registered for a minimum of 2 internship credit hours in the semester of graduation.

Internship Major Professor & Committee Selection

A student interested in completing the Internship Option should select a major professor (who must be willing to serve in that capacity) to guide the experience. Any graduate faculty member in WGSS may serve as an internship major professor.

Together, the student and the major professor will select one or two more committee members from the Department of Women's,

Gender, & Sexuality Studies, from the list of active WGSS affiliate faculty members, or from some other relevant USF academic unit. If the committee has 3 members, at least 2 need to be WGSS faculty.

When the committee has been finalized, the student will complete a “Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Appointment Form.” The completed form, including signatures, goes to the graduate director for a signature before being filed in the student’s departmental records. For internships, this form does not go to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Internship Site Selection & Proposal

The student will work with the major professor to select, propose, and secure an onsite internship.

A written proposal demonstrating the student’s knowledge of the internship’s subject area (including literature review) as well as the scope and details of the internship will function as the student’s contract with the committee. The student should attach a confirming letter from the internship site’s contact/supervisor. As a contract, the proposal should detail expectations for the performance and commitments of the student, the internship site’s contact/supervisor (including address, phone, email), the major professor, and the student’s committee members.

Additional issues to consider covering in the written proposal are length and parameters of student’s participation in the internship organization, weekly time commitment to onsite interning, types of reports the student will make to the major professor and committee, the frequency of such reports, site visits by the major professor, regularly scheduled meetings with the major professor, additional readings to be tackled and perhaps annotated/discussed, etc. These kinds of issues should be negotiated and agreed upon in writing before beginning the onsite internship.

A reasonable student internship should log no less than 120 student hours and no more than 240 student hours working onsite.

The student will work with the major professor to complete a polished proposal before sharing said approved proposal with the rest of the committee at the major professor’s direction.

The approved internship proposal should be presented to the committee members in an oral proposal defense. Approval of the internship proposal should be communicated to the graduate director electronically after the oral proposal defense.

It is the student’s responsibility to secure both the internship site and the major professor’s formal approval for the proposed site prior to finalizing their internship proposal and beginning an internship.

Internship Narrative

Internship students are required to write and orally defend a narrative. Titles of prior narratives are available at:

<http://WGS.usf.edu/graduate/projects/> An example of a completed narrative can be requested from the graduate director.

The student will work with their major professor to draft and polish the final narrative in preparation for an oral defense. Students should expect to work on several drafts of this document before the major professor approves it to go to committee and before it is ready for scheduling an oral defense.

In the last semester of the internship, the student should meet with the major professor to begin working on the narrative so they may defend the narrative in the same semester. Students should consult the WGSS departmental calendar of deadlines for completing and defending an internship narrative.

Completed internship narratives are filed electronically in the department’s archives and are not dependent on USF Graduate Studies deadlines. This gives internship students more calendar leeway than thesis students. At the beginning of the semester in which the student hopes to graduate, the student should be in communication with both the major professor and the graduate director regarding deadlines.

The completed narrative should be 15-20 pages or so and approved by the major professor and the committee. Do not share the narrative with the committee unless/until the major professor has approved it.

The narrative should include:

- I. Cover Page
 - a. Title
 - b. Student Name
 - c. Department

- d. Date
- e. Major Professor and Committee Member Names
- f. Signature lines for Approvals
- II. Abstract Page
- III. Table of Contents
- IV. Introduction
- V. Background of Internship Site/Project
- VI. Literature Review
- VII. Overview of the Student's Internship
- VIII. Details/Explanation of Internship Project(s)/Work completed
- IX. Reflexive Analysis of the Internship Experience
- X. Conclusion and Takeaways
- XI. Bibliography/References
- XII. Appendices (if any)

Oral Defense of Final Internship Narrative

After distributing an approved draft of the final internship narrative to all committee members, the student will make an oral presentation about and defend the internship experience and narrative to the full committee.

The major professor, in consultation with the other committee members, will authorize scheduling of the oral defense. Committee members typically will require at least two weeks between receiving a final internship narrative document and attending the oral defense. After the student receives authorization to proceed to defense from the major professor, it is the student's responsibility to coordinate a time with all committee members and to reserve a space for the oral defense.

When you've settled on a final defense date, notify the WGSS graduate program coordinator and graduate director of the date, time, and location along with your full name, title of the internship narrative, and committee member names. The graduate program coordinator will post the public flyer for your defense.

The oral defense should take one to two hours. Typically, the defense begins with the student making a 10- to 15-minute oral presentation. (The major professor will advise the content and preparation of the presentation.) The remainder of the time is devoted to questions by the committee, and—depending on time—other interested persons in

the room. The major advisor should notify the graduate director and graduate program coordinator if the student successfully passes their oral defense.

Final Steps for Internship Completion

First, an electronic copy of the approved final draft of the internship narrative must be submitted to the graduate director or the graduate program coordinator before the last day of classes. The electronic copy will be saved in the WGSS electronic archives, and the title will be added to the WGSS website. Second, the student will complete the top portion of the WGSS MA SACS form and return it to the WGSS graduate program coordinator for faculty completion.

The Thesis Option

The thesis option is recommended for students who intend to pursue doctoral degrees or who want experience with independent research. The Thesis Option requires a minimum of 6 credit hours of WST 6971 Thesis, ideally completed over two semesters.

USF Graduate Studies has very specific rules and regulations for completing thesis work. Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to these policies.

Thesis Eligibility & Credit Hours

A student may register for thesis hours:

1. Following successful completion of 18 credit hours toward the MA in WGSS, including WST 6001 Feminist Issues and Research Methods, WST 6003 Scholarship and Pedagogy in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, and WST 6560 Advanced Feminist Theory

2. Selection of a willing major professor

Thesis students must complete 6 credit hours of WST 6971. A student may need to register for more than 6 thesis hours if the thesis process extends beyond two semesters. As long as a student is working with a faculty member on the thesis, then the student must register for a minimum of 2 thesis credit hours every semester. A student does not necessarily have to register for thesis hours during summer if the student is not actively working with a

major professor or committee members over summer. Thesis students should discuss summer registration with both the graduate director and the major professor well before the end of the spring semester.

Students must be registered for a minimum of 2 thesis credit hours in the semester of graduation.

Selection of Thesis Major Professor & Committee

A student interested in completing the Thesis Option should select a major professor (who agrees to serve in that capacity) to guide the experience. Any graduate faculty member in WGSS may serve as a thesis major professor. Under rare circumstances, an affiliate faculty member may serve as the major professor with the approval of the WGSS graduate director.

Together, the student and the major professor will select two more committee members from the Department of Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, from the list of active WGSS affiliate faculty members, or from some other related USF academic unit.

Steps to Completing a Thesis

1. Choose a Topic.

Then learn everything you can about the topic. Become an expert on the literature. Begin thinking about what your study might look like in terms of method. Ask yourself what you're hoping to add to the literature.

If you believe you'll be doing human subject research, get yourself IRB-certified ASAP. As research IRB proposals can take up to 2 months to be approved by IRB, you will need to be prepared to work with your Major Professor and Committee to submit as soon as you can. Visit: <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/research/responsible-conduct-of-research.aspx>

Read some theses that study your topic or use your method, such as the ones on the WGSS website. Get an idea of what a good thesis looks like.

Be realistic about the timetable for completing the thesis and graduating. First, it always takes longer than you think it will, and you need to be prepared to work on your major professor's and your committee's schedules and calendars, rather than they on yours. And,

second, you have to jump through USF Graduate Studies' hoops on Graduate Studies' deadline schedule in terms of paperwork and format checks.

Don't forget that once you start registering for thesis hours, you have to register for at least 2 thesis hours every semester.

2. Write a Defensible Thesis Proposal.

First, listen to what your major professor tells you to do. Generally, you should think about your thesis proposal as the first several chapters in your final thesis:

- I. Introduction
- II. Background
- III. Literature Review
- IV. Theoretical Framework
- V. Method
- VI. Conclusion
- VII. References

You obviously will have to revise some things after you've completed the study and written your results, discussion/analysis, final conclusion, and abstract. The point, however, is that you have already set up and mostly written the first half of the final thesis in your proposal. That makes your job down the road a lot easier.

Work smart by following the USF Graduate Studies' formatting guidelines. Failure to follow formatting guidelines or Graduate Studies procedure may delay graduation until the next semester. See:

<http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>

3. Send your Major Professor an electronic copy of your Thesis Proposal then Sit Back and Wait for Feedback.

Be patient. You should plan on a minimum two-week turnaround on anything you give to your major professor or committee. It might take much longer. Note: Your major professor or committee members may prefer a hard copy. If they do, it is your job to print it and give it to them.

4. Make the changes your Major Professor suggests.

When you turn in the revised proposal, make sure it's perfect. Be prepared to wait a few weeks to hear back and be prepared for further

revisions. If your major professor believes your proposal is ready to defend...

5. Send electronic copies of your Proposal to your Thesis Committee.
Email your committee members to alert them that your proposal is ready for them to read. Coordinate a defense date with the committee after getting your major professor's blessing on dates/times. Your major professor may wish to be the one to communicate with your committee, but you should be prepared to do the communicating (only) after the major professor has signed off that you may proceed.

Caution: Scheduling a Proposal Defense

You must give your committee at least two weeks with the thesis proposal before a proposal defense. You should plan for the defense to take two hours.

6. Defend Your Proposal.

At your proposal defense, be ready to talk through your study plans for 10-15 minutes. (Skip the PowerPoint unless you have relevant visuals to show the committee.) Defend all your choices. Justify your decisions. Then be ready to answer pointed questions. Your committee may ask for revisions. Make the revisions under your major professor's direction and supervision. The committee almost never needs to see these revisions until the final thesis is complete.

If you pass your thesis proposal defense, then complete the "Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Appointment Form:"

<https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/documents/graduate-students/new-committee-form.pdf>. Turn the completed form in to the WGSS graduate program coordinator and email the graduate director that you have passed your thesis proposal defense.

7. Get Necessary IRB Approvals.

If your study involves human subjects, you should have submitted a draft IRB protocol with your thesis proposal. Following your successful proposal defense, you should now work with your major professor to complete the IRB application process. The wait for the IRB Committee's approval to proceed can be up to 2 months, so do this immediately after your successful proposal defense.

If you're not doing a human subject study, skip this step.

8. Complete your research.
Check in on a regular basis to keep your major professor updated. Don't be afraid to ask questions or seek guidance.

9. Complete the ETD training from USF Graduate Studies:

<http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>

Caution: ETD, Format Check, and Format Boot Camp
USF Graduate Studies has specific guidelines and requirements regarding your thesis. The deadlines are set well in advance and recycle every semester. Familiarize yourself.

10. Finish Writing the Thesis Document Under Your Major Professor's Direction. Make the changes they or your other committee members suggest you make. Finishing means writing up your remaining chapters:

VI. Results

VII. Discussion or Analysis

VIII. Conclusions

You also will need to go back to tweak chapters I-V to make sure they go with the now-completed study (as well as reflect your committee's changes from the proposal defense). This includes changing proposal future-tense language ("will") to past tense thesis language. Remember to use first-person language throughout your thesis.

Now write the abstract, too, and double-check your bibliography/references and any appendices.

Put the whole completed document together following USF Graduate Studies' Guidelines:

<http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>.

Failure to submit the manuscript for a format check will result in delaying graduation.

Don't forget proofing/editing. Remember, it's your job to give your major professor a clean document for them to read for content only.

For planning purposes, you should anticipate several rounds of thesis drafts, which will add weeks to the process at every step.

Caution: Turning Around Thesis Drafts

Remember that your major professor will determine the turnaround time on proofing and revising. If it takes them a few weeks to turn

around your work—whether in stages or all at once—you'll just have to go with it.

11. With Your Major Professor's Approval, Provide Your Committee Members Copies of Your Completed Thesis.

Email your committee members to alert them that your completed thesis is ready for them to read. Coordinate a defense date with the committee after getting your major professor's blessing on dates/times. Don't forget to give the committee at least two weeks to live with your thesis before the defense date.

When you've settled on a defense date, notify the WGSS graduate program coordinator and graduate director of the date, time, and location along with your full name, title of the thesis, and committee member names. The graduate program coordinator will post the public flyer for your defense.

12. Collect the Necessary Paperwork to Graduate.

While you're waiting for your defense date, collect all the forms you need to graduate, including those that require signatures, including the Successful Defense of the Masters' Thesis form (<https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/documents/graduate-students/successful-defense-form-masters.pdf>) and the WGSS MA SACS form (provided by the WGSS graduate program coordinator). Both of these forms will require you to complete the top portions and then return them to the WGSS graduate program coordinator for distribution.

13. Defend your Thesis.

This is an exact repeat of your thesis proposal defense, only now you're defending the completed study. Otherwise, the process is the same (including skipping the PowerPoint-as-teleprompter unless you have relevant visuals to show). Don't forget to schedule the conference room for your two-hour defense.

Your committee may very well require changes/revisions. In fact, you should expect changes and revisions. That's how it goes. Work with your major professor to get them done by the Graduate School's deadline. Don't expect your major professor to drop everything to work with you on those revisions because you're cutting it close to graduation deadlines.

If you pass your defense, congratulations!

Your major advisor should notify the graduate

director and graduate program coordinator of your successful defense. You're nearly ready to graduate...

14. Wrap Up all the Loose Ends Required to Graduate.

Get those forms signed, and don't forget to send your final thesis draft (in doc) to your major professor so they can run it through TurnItIn for a plagiarism check. Your major advisor will download the first page of the TurnItIn report which must be attached to the Certificate of Completion and returned to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Also, students must pay to have their manuscript receive an ETD format check by Graduate Studies. This check must be completed by the posted deadline each semester to meet graduation requirements (typically about 8 weeks before the end of the semester). (USF Graduate Studies does not proof for content, only for format; content issues are the responsibility of the student's committee.) If you completed #9, above, you know what that entails.

Only after the thesis has been approved by USF Graduate Studies for filing in the University Library can the student be certified for the degree.

Also, if you did a human subject study, you'll have IRB loose ends to contend with, too. You'll have to close out your study with IRB. Keep up with the details.

Additionally, send a final copy of your approved thesis to the WGSS graduate director and graduate program coordinator. Once your thesis has been accepted and placed in the USF Library thesis archive, it will be linked to the WGSS website.

MA Graduation Check and Diploma

Application for Graduation Form

A student who plans to complete degree requirements by the end of a term must submit an application form available on this website: [Apply For Graduation \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/apply-for-graduation)

The completed application must be submitted by the deadline noted in the Academic Calendar for the term in which graduation is expected. The deadline is usually within the first two weeks of the semester—typically before

you have defended your final project.

A word of warning: even if all a student's work is completed on time, if this form has not been properly submitted, the student will not graduate.

If the student is a GA and is going to register for less than 9 hours in the final semester, the student's completed "Application for Graduation" must accompany the tuition waiver for the final semester.

Graduation Certification

In order to certify a student's eligibility to graduate, the graduate program coordinator must have received:

- A final clean copy of your portfolio/internship narrative/thesis
- An official notification by the student's major professor about the student's successful completion of their project

- Any required forms as discussed above

Receiving a Diploma or Confirmation of Graduation

It may take up to 6 weeks to get a diploma from the university. If you need verification prior to that time, request a letter of completion from the WGSS graduate program coordinator. The letter will come out of the registrar's office, so it can also take a few weeks.

A diploma will only be sent out if there is no balance on a student's account. Remember, there is a fee for the ETD submission which must also be paid. WGSS will be notified if a diploma will not be sent to the student, and we will notify the student.