June 1, 2015

The Masters Research Process

Master’s Thesis Defense Exams (KRN and ARP)

The thesis defense affords faculty an opportunity to focus on the students’ in-depth understanding of the theories and pedagogies that inform teaching. The oral presentation provides a forum for extending the examination of the student’s understanding, as well as an assessment of her/his ability to articulate that understanding to peers.

- **Knowledge Research Narrative Defense** (Tentatively August 22nd)
  - Candidates must attend workshops (June-July) organized by the Writing Center staff
  - Candidates must attend any additional meetings called by the Faculty Leaders.
  - Final version of the 12-15 page KRN written using APA conventions is submitted via Canvas by 5 pm August 7, which are then distributed randomly to Education Faculty for evaluation.
  - Oral Presentation of KRN (~10 minutes plus additional minutes for questions). Details will be forthcoming.
  - Holistic grading of paper and oral presentation – faculty convene at a later date in the week to award grades.
  - Students must pass with B- or better. If not, they are no longer eligible for the MAT, but may continue toward licensure. Students are informed of their grade during the first week of block 1. Decisions are FINAL.

- **Action Research Defense** in June of second summer (Saturday, June 11, 2016)
  - Students must attend workshops (October-May) organized by the Quantitative Reasoning Center
  - 12-15 page paper in APA style, but presented toward a targeted journal (e.g., Science and Children).
  - Final Paper Due June 10, 2016.
  - Oral Presentation on June 11 – LAS and education faculty present
  - Must get B- or better in order to be eligible for MAT degree and graduation on July 9 (date to be confirmed)

Both the KRN and Action Research components will be bound as the official thesis document. A cover page will include two signatures of KRN faculty (lead faculty plus reader) and two signatures of Action Research faculty (Lead faculty plus LAS reader). This body of faculty serves as the thesis committee.

Additional information

- Students register for ED553 Masters Research (0.5 units) in the first summer and register for ED599 Masters Research Defense in the second summer.
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- The KRN is a student’s theoretical answer to a researchable question of a classroom-based learning issue or problem in the context of her/his discipline and/or grade level. The goal of the KRN thesis is to provide a theoretical framework, which answers the student’s question in such a way to inform instructional strategies directly applicable to the student’s discipline and/or grade level.
- The rationale for the thesis must be clear, as evidenced by the body of research presented in the paper.
- The KRN is an analysis of literature (past and current) that informs the reader of important theoretical ideas that informs instructional strategies.
- The KRN finishes with instructional considerations and recommendations in the broad context of the MAT candidate’s placement (e.g. high school English in a suburban context).
- The KRN follows APA guidelines.

**Proposed Clarifications/Changes to the Action Research Paper (ARP)**

- The ARP is a student’s answer to a researchable question in the context of a student learning issue or problem in his/her classroom that needs attention.
- The rationale must be clear, supported by both qualitative (observational) and quantitative (test data).
- The context for the research must be clear.
- Methods of data collection must be both qualitative and quantitative (simple methods, as outlined in Mertler’s book).
- The ARP follows APA guidelines.
- Basic analysis is done using descriptive statistics in the context of standardized data (e.g., MAPs).