



MA Theses and Research Papers at REEEC Information for Advisors and Students

I. Master's Thesis

A thesis is a work of scholarship and/or interpretation involving significant research that makes an original contribution to a disciplinary or interdisciplinary scholarly discussion. There is no minimum or maximum page length for a REEEC MA thesis. In some disciplines that involve significant quantitative analysis, an MA thesis can be as short as 50 pages or less. In other disciplines involving historical and/or documentary interpretation, a thesis may be as long as 150 pages or more. A thesis is long enough when it adequately addresses, using the chosen methodology, the research question it poses. To be certified as complete, fulfilling the thesis requirement for the MA degree, a thesis must be approved by the thesis committee, reviewed for proper formatting by the department (REEEC) and the Graduate College, and deposited with the Graduate College for preservation and dissemination. REEEC requires that the research for the thesis include examination of primary sources in the language used to meet the foreign language requirement for the degree.

Thesis Committee and Choosing an Advisor

The thesis committee consists of the thesis advisor, who is a REEEC-affiliated member of the Graduate College faculty, and the REEEC Director (who is also Director of Graduate Studies for REEEC). Students should consult with the Director regarding their thesis topic and choice of advisor. In many cases students will select a faculty member the student knows from REEEC 550 or other courses taken toward the degree.

Advisor and Student Duties

Advisors assist students in selecting an appropriate research topic, formulating the research question, selecting an appropriate methodology, identifying relevant literature, and managing the tasks of research and the thesis project. The advisor officially serves as instructor for the student's thesis research course credits, reads and reviews draft chapters and sections of the thesis, and reviews and approves the final version of the thesis. Students consult regularly with their advisors, come to meetings prepared to discuss substantive issues, work responsively and show regular progress, and keep track of deadlines to ensure timely completion of the thesis. The advisor and student both should keep the REEEC Director informed of progress on the thesis and students provide the Director completed sections and chapters in a timely manner for review.

Registering for Thesis Research Credits

Up to 8 thesis research credit hours can be applied to the REEEC MA requirements. Students sign up for these credits using REES 599. When the advisor and student agree to thesis research in a particular semester, the student should notify REEEC staff, who will submit a request to the Office of the Registrar to assign a CRN to the advisor's name for REES 599 for that semester. REEEC staff will communicate that CRN to the student, who can then register for the agreed upon number of credit hours. REEEC recommends that advisors and students agree on regular meetings during the semester, with once per week ideal goal.



Project Timeline and Deadlines

The Graduate College [deadline](#) for Master's thesis deposit is generally two weeks before the end of exams for the semester. However, it is strongly recommended that students plan to submit their thesis to The Graduate College for review approximately one week before the submission deadline so there is ample time to make any required modifications before it is accepted for deposit. In addition, the thesis must undergo formatting review at REEEC before submission to the Graduate College. Students intending to deposit and graduate in a particular semester, then, should plan to have their final thesis, approved by their advisor and the REEEC Director and formatted according to [Graduate College guidelines](#), ready to submit to REEEC for review four weeks before the end of the semester. To complete the project in a timely manner, then, students should finalize a topic and methodology with their advisor during the previous semester. Initial portions of the project, such as literature review or data collection, should also be completed that semester. Students should plan to complete a full draft as much as two months before the deposit deadline, so there is time for the committee to read and respond and for revisions before the final thesis is approved and then deposited.

Formatting, Deposit, Dissemination, and Copyright Permissions

REEEC MA students use the Chicago or Turabian style manuals. Whichever style (footnotes, endnotes, or author/date citations) are selected, it must be consistent throughout. The Chicago Manual of Style is available on-line through the University Library's reference portal. In addition, students must follow exactly the [Graduate College requirements for thesis formatting](#), or their thesis will not be accepted for deposit. While the formatting undergoes a multi-stage review, it is important that students follow the guidelines as closely as possible in order that the review process be completed in a timely way. Theses that are deposited as a requirement for the awarding of a degree are considered to be publications. Copyrightable works prepared by students as part of the requirements for a University degree program are deemed to be the property of the student. As a condition of degree award, the University has the royalty-free right to retain, use and distribute a limited number of copies of the thesis, together with the right to require its publication for archival use (see [University of Illinois Board of Trustees' General Rules](#)). In order to best disseminate and archive the significant work of University of Illinois graduates, the Graduate College requires that every thesis or dissertation and abstract be published. The Graduate College will determine the method of publication that most effectively secures the existence of the thesis/dissertation in perpetuity. The thesis will be available to the public through the University Library. Because deposit results in publication, it is important that permission be secured to publish any previously copyrighted material (illustrations, graphs, or chapters of the thesis published as articles). Students should secure written permission from the publisher (or whoever holds the copyright to the published work) for the thesis to be submitted. Students should have two copies of these copyright permissions for their deposit.

II. Research Paper

REEEC MA students may opt not to write a Master's Thesis and instead to complete 8 additional hours of area studies elective coursework and to submit a research paper for the degree. The research paper should contain original research and/or analysis and should be of similar length to a typical article in a scholarly journal. REEEC requires that the research for the thesis include examination of primary sources in the language used to meet the foreign language requirement for the degree.

The student should choose a REEEC-affiliated faculty member as an advisor for the research project. In most cases, the research paper will be a revision of a paper written for a graduate course and the student should ask the professor who taught the course to serve as advisor. If the professor is not affiliated with REEEC, however, the student should consult with the REEEC Director about selecting an appropriate advisor. If the research project is not one initially



completed for a course, the student should similarly consult with the REEEC Director. The completed research paper must be approved by both the faculty advisor and the REEEC Director.

The final, approved version of the research paper should be submitted to REEEC in both paper and electronic form three weeks before the end of the semester, in time for certification of completion of degree requirements for graduation. Research papers that are submitted as a requirement for the awarding of a degree are considered by REEEC to be publications. Copyrightable works prepared by students as part of the requirements for a University degree program are deemed to be the property of the student. As a condition of degree award, REEEC and the University have the royalty-free right to retain, use and distribute a limited number of copies of the non-thesis option research papers, together with the right to require its publication for archival use (see [University of Illinois Board of Trustees' General Rules](#)).