

THESIS PETITION

A student may pursue the Thesis option only by petitioning and being granted approval to do so by the MSAG director.

Preliminary Process:

The following steps should be completed prior to submitting a thesis petition to the MSAG director via MSAG academic coordinator:

1. The student must discuss the thesis option with their advisor within the first semester of entering the program to determine if it is a viable alternative. Students should be aware that faculty advisors are not obligated to advise thesis projects by distance; the decision to do so is at the discretion of individual faculty advisors.
2. The student must identify an on-site mentor with a Ph.D. degree in a relevant scientific field who will be present at the research location to supervise the thesis research. The on-site mentor may serve as an additional member of the student's supervisory committee (with approval from the Graduate School; see WSU Graduate School Policies and Procedures manual).
3. The student must arrange an opportunity for the advisor and on-site mentor to discuss the proposed thesis research (i.e., via teleconference or other appropriate means). The advisor and on-site mentor must agree to the breadth and depth of the research project. The research project and thesis must meet the same requirements and expectations as that completed by a campus-based student. A plan to address any potential intellectual property issues should be discussed and developed at this time. Refer to the [CAHNRS Intellectual Property web page](#) as necessary and consult with your advisor:
4. The student or sponsoring employer must pay for an on-site visit by the advisor to travel to the research facility to meet with the on-site mentor and view the research capabilities, unless waived by the advisor.
5. Based on the steps above, the advisor will make an initial determination as to the probability of the student being able to successfully complete the thesis option. If deemed appropriate by the advisor, the student may proceed with the petition process below.

Thesis Petition Process:

1. The thesis petition should be submitted to the MSAG director (or FSM program director) via the MSAG academic coordinator as early in the student's program as possible, preferably by the end of the student's second semester in the program.

2. The thesis petition should include the following elements:
 - a) A letter of commitment from the advisor providing support and justification for the thesis petition as well as a brief summary of the completion of the preliminary process outlined above.
 - b) A research proposal authored by the student, with review and approval by the advisor and on-site mentor. The proposal should include a brief justification or literature review, a clear statement of research objectives, a general description of the materials and methods to be employed, a description of the research facilities to be used, and an explanation of how any intellectual property or confidentiality issues will be addressed.
 - c) A letter of commitment and support from the on-site mentor.
 - d) A brief CV (2-5 pgs) for the on-site mentor (if not MSAG graduate faculty).
3. The advisor should submit the complete petition package to the MSAG academic coordinator who will present it to the MSAG director.
4. The MSAG director will review the petition within one month of submission and make the final determination; the MSAG academic coordinator will notify the advisor and student as to the approval status.

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