M.S. Student Guide to Graduation

General Order of Events

Department of ALEC - Masters of Science in Leadership Education

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Note: This checklist is not a substitute for meetings/conferences with your advisor and committee, or for using the Graduate Studies webpages. It is intended as a set of benchmarks along the way as you complete your doctoral program.

a. ___ After acceptance into the program, meet with advisor before you begin coursework. Follow the instructions in your letter of acceptance to help you register for your courses for the first semester. (Congratulations!)

b. ___ Review Graduate Bulletin, Graduate Studies Website, and ALEC Policy Guide and Website to orient you to policies and resources (see Links at the end of this document). Begin to develop a timeline for your program. This information is beneficial to you in communicating your goals with your advisor.

c. ___ Begin your coursework. During your first semester, work with advisor to discuss your Option (Option 1 - Thesis, or Option 2 or 3 - Project or Course-based). Note that ALEC has a set of courses that clearly outline the 3 options including research/statistics courses that all students must take. You received a copy of these with your acceptance letter. If you are unable to locate them, check the ALEC website, or ask your advisor for these requirements

d. ___ Work with your advisor to develop your proposed course of study appropriate for the Option you chose. Complete the Memorandum of Courses form and obtain your advisor’s signature. The form can then be given to Jennifer Greenlee or left with your advisor for the ALEC Graduate Chair’s signature. It will then be forwarded to Graduate Studies. You should receive a fully signed copy of this form. It is a good idea to double check in a couple of weeks if you do not receive this form.

FORM - Memorandum of Courses

e. ___ Continue with your coursework. When appropriate, work with your advisor to discuss tentative ideas for your Thesis or Project. It is helpful to begin this discussion early so that you can focus papers or projects from your coursework around the topic. See your advisor for his/her specific requirements around this.

f. ___ Near the end of your coursework, work with advisor to plan, clarify, and set date for completing your Comprehensive Examination. It is important to discuss expectations around this requirement as our department has different options for completing the exams. Your advisor makes the final decision about how you will complete this requirement.

g. ___ Work with Advisor to identify a Committee and set a date to Propose your Thesis or Project. Make sure you understand all of the Thesis/Project requirements of the Department. Work with your advisor closely in the development of the proposal. Your advisor cannot help you in the “defense” of your proposal if she/he is not fully informed and supportive of the research/project you are proposing.

NOTE: This step is quite complex and requires you to plan well so that you and
your advisor can approve the proposal draft as well as any presentation document you might use (PPT or Prezi, for example). The proposal draft should be distributed to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled proposal.

h. ___ While waiting for your committee to review your proposal, you may want to consider completing IRB training (if not done previously).

i. ___ **Propose your Thesis/Project** - if approved, move to next step. If not, work with your committee and advisor to address their concerns. You must receive approval before moving to the next step.

j. ___ Complete your **IRB Research Protocol** and gain institutional approval for your research. **NOTE** - it is not acceptable to collect any data until you have gained this approval and received your committee’s approval on your Proposal.

k. ___ Conduct research or complete your project **in cooperation with your Advisor**. Stay in touch! Some students take a while to complete this stage. **It is your responsibility to keep in touch with your Advisor.**

l. ___ Develop your written manuscript and receive **feedback from advisor** and other committee members as appropriate. This is an important part of the process and keeps the stress of the last few weeks to a minimum if done consistently. Be prepared to have your work edited (perhaps professionally) before the Final Examination if this is something your advisor and/or committee deem necessary.

m. ___ After you and your advisor agree that you are on track for graduation within a certain semester, **Apply for Graduation**. Be sure to follow all deadlines per the ALEC and Graduate studies guidelines.

FORM: **Application for Degree**

n. ___ **Work with your Advisor** (first) and committee members (after your advisor’s consent) to gain approval of your proposal so you can formally file the paperwork to set an oral defense. Your Advisor will need to fill out a Final Examination Report to alert Graduate Studies of your examination date. The instructions on this vary slightly depending on which Option you are pursuing so be sure to play close attention and work with your advisor to complete the form appropriately.

FORM: **Final Examination Report for Master’s Degree.**

o. ___ Arrange logistics (location, technology needs, room set up, etc.) for your oral defense through the appropriate facility (Ag Hall – Jennifer Greenlee/Nebraska East Union - Reservations Secretary). You will not have to pay for a room or presentation equipment, but you will be responsible for any refreshments you might want to provide during the Oral Examination/Defense.

p. ___ **Option 1 (Thesis) Only** -- Provide a “Preliminary copy of your Thesis to Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the Oral Defense. This may be submitted electronically. Work closely with Graduate Studies and your Advisor to make sure you meet the deadline for this step. Failure to complete this step could delay your graduation.
q. ___ Present and Defend your Thesis/Project. Receive feedback and complete all revisions required by your Advisor and Committee. Be sure to remind your advisor to bring the Final Examination Report for the committee’s signatures. This form will be returned to ALEC approximately one week before your Oral Defense date.

r. ___ Work closely with your advisor to make any changes/edits your committee requests. It is highly recommended that you take detailed notes during the discussion phase of your Defense so you can fully address any concerns or requests from your committee. Follow your advisor and committee’s instructions regarding final edits, changes, and their wishes on whether they require additional changes before they sign your “Final Examination Report” form. Once your committee has approved and signed, move to the next step.

s. ___ Depending on your Option -- Deposit Thesis (Option 1) or work with your advisor to provide a final copy of your project. Follow all other deadline instructions on the Graduate Studies web page for “Final Materials Check, Depositing, Fee Payment.”

t. ___ Option 1 (Thesis) - Take copies to be bound and printed (it is considered customary to provide both the Department and your Advisor with a bound copy of your Thesis). Option 2 and 3 - provide a final copy of your project and all committee members as requested.

u. ___ Graduate and Celebrate!

v. ___ Stay in touch with ALEC and let us know what you are doing!

Useful Links and Resources:

ALEC Webpage: http://alec.unl.edu
Graduate Studies Deadlines: http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees#masters
Graduate Bulletin: http://bulletin.unl.edu/
Research Responsibility and IRB Training: http://research.unl.edu/orr/qa.shtml
QQPM Course Listing and Course Descriptions (a PDF Link can be found on this page): http://cehs.unl.edu/edpsych/graduate/qqpmprogram.shtml

Important Contact Information:

Advisor’s Name, Phone Number, and E-mail Address

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