



THE GRADUATE CENTER THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

THE PIPELINE THESIS

One of the requirements of the CUNY Pipeline Program is the Pipeline thesis. This is an independent research project that affords students the opportunity to explore a particular interest in depth under the guidance of a faculty mentor doing research in the same or a related area. You will begin by writing a Pipeline thesis proposal during the spring of your junior year. The thesis should be completed and approved during your senior year at your HOME campus.

PLANNING YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT

Here are some suggestions to follow during the planning stages:

- 1) **Get an idea of what you want to do.** You will develop and refine your ideas while working with your faculty mentor during the spring semester of your junior year. You must gain your mentor's approval before you begin to write the proposal.
- 2) **Discuss your ideas with another student.** In addition to discussing your plans with your faculty mentor, it is a good idea to talk with one or two fellow students before proceeding. Discussing your topic with a trusted peer helps you to rethink and improve ideas. Writers and researchers always seek constructive criticism of their ideas before "going public."

WRITING THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This statement should be written after consultation with your faculty mentor in the spring of your junior year as you refine plans for your research project. The proposal must be completed and signed by your mentor by the beginning of the Pipeline summer research institute and is a requirement for participation in the institute. In September of your senior year, you should meet with your mentor to discuss the latest version of your proposal and to establish a working arrangement compatible with both of your schedules. Based on this discussion, you should make any necessary revisions and aim to complete a draft of the thesis by February.

The research proposal will be your guide as you work on your project. It should contain the following components:

- 1) **A clearly stated theme, theory, or problem to be explored.** Identify and describe a central issue you plan to research. In this statement, you should also mention what other research has been done on your subject.
- 2) **A brief discussion of why you think this subject is important and an explanation of the contribution you hope to make to the existing scholarship on this subject.** What is the specific contribution you hope to make to the subject in question? How will your work differ from other work in this area? How will your work "continue the scholarly conversation"?
- 3) **A list of sources.** Specify sources you can provide for yourself and those that will be provided by the mentor. Do not hesitate to ask for help and advice in locating appropriate sources.

- 4) **A working outline.** One of the last steps in writing your proposal is to draft an outline. How do you plan to organize your thesis? Remember that this outline will change and evolve as your research and writing continue.
- 5) **A proposed work schedule.** See the advice below on how to develop a realistic schedule for completing the thesis on time.
- 6) **A title page.** As you complete your proposal, you need to give your project a title reflecting the theme or central issue of your thesis. The proposal's title page should contain the title of the thesis; date of submission of the proposal; your name and college; your major; and a space for the signature of your mentor indicating approval.
- 7) **Three printed copies of the completed proposal.** Once you have completed the proposal, be sure to proofread it carefully, correcting any errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. It's a good idea to ask a trusted peer to do an additional proofreading. Print out three copies of the proposal. Give one to your faculty mentor, send a hard copy signed by your faculty mentor to the Pipeline Program office, and keep a copy for yourself.

MAKING A PROPOSED WORK SCHEDULE

Developing a realistic work schedule is of the greatest importance when planning your project. We recommend that you include this schedule as part of your research proposal. Bear in mind that you will be working on your Pipeline thesis as well as your regular coursework during your senior year – to say nothing of the other responsibilities you may have. Think realistically about how much time you will have to complete the project within the next year. The topic you wish to explore must be manageable relative to your other commitments. Think about this now. When will you work on your thesis? Will you work on it four to five hours a week? On Saturdays or Sundays? When will you schedule time each week to work on the thesis and how long will it take to complete? How often should you consult with your mentor as you proceed with your work?

The more conscientious you are now in constructing a plan of action and discovering what works and doesn't work for you, the more successful you will be in conducting research projects in graduate school. A valuable personal resource is your diary or work calendar. Here you can make notes on what you want to accomplish, what you do accomplish, and how long it takes. You can also note problems that arise and how you deal with them. This will give you a realistic sense of how you work and what your strengths and weaknesses are. You should be able to build on your strengths and correct your weaknesses in the supportive and constructive environment that the Pipeline Program provides. You will also learn how to set—and meet—realistic deadlines.

As you begin your research, consider organizing your work as follows:

- 1) **Decide what you want to accomplish in the first month.** Note this in your diary or work calendar, specifying what you will do in this period, how much time you will devote to the work, and what you hope to accomplish. (For example, "Within the next two weeks I will find six articles to photocopy, read, and summarize. I will read three articles each week and complete the task by Friday afternoon.")
- 2) **Make a checklist** and keep track of how much of your planned activity has been accomplished.
- 3) **Revise your work schedule** to conform to the realities of your life and abilities.

- 4) **Keep the focus of your thesis manageable.** You may find that it is necessary to narrow the focus of your thesis if you discover that your original project cannot realistically be completed in the time you have available. If your thesis seems to be too broad or too general, meet with your faculty mentor and discuss possible ways of re-focusing your project.
- 5) **Keep a record of how long it takes to accomplish each task.** Remember, most things take longer than you think they will. Remember, too, that one purpose of the Pipeline thesis is to prepare you for writing research papers and your doctoral dissertation in graduate school. It is important to develop a realistic sense of how much time various projects will take.

DEVELOPING A TIMETABLE FOR THE PIPELINE THESIS

After completing your research proposal, you will have about a year in which to complete your Pipeline thesis. During this time you will consult with your faculty mentor, do library research, think, write, revise, and prepare the final draft. Your final copy should be printed in 12-point font, double spaced, and should run at least 25 pages in length. The Pipeline thesis is due by May 15th of your senior year. As you plan your work schedule, all these stages in the project must be taken into consideration. Included below is a suggested timetable for the project.

June Preceding the Senior Year

- Written proposal approved by department mentor; copy delivered to OEODP / CUNY Pipeline Program Office (Office of Educational Opportunity and Diversity Programs, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave, Room 8306, New York, NY 10016).

September of the Senior Year

- Meet with faculty mentor to discuss your proposal and current draft of the thesis and to set up subsequent advisory sessions. Explore the possibility of doing the Pipeline thesis for credit as an independent study project.

February

- Complete the first draft of your thesis and submit it to your faculty mentor.

March

- Revise the thesis based on discussions with faculty mentor.

Second week of May

- Final draft (with title page as shown below) must be approved by the mentor. A hard copy (not bound) should be delivered to the Pipeline Program office (OEODP).

NOTE: *If you are required to write a senior thesis as a graduation requirement, you may **NOT** use the senior thesis as your Pipeline thesis. Your Pipeline thesis is in addition to a senior thesis that may be required for graduation. If you have any questions regarding this requirement, please discuss the situation with the Pipeline Program Director.*

TITLE PAGE OF PIPELINE THESIS

[Title of Thesis]

A senior thesis in the Department of **[program name]** submitted to the CUNY Pipeline Program in partial fulfillment of the Program requirements.

By **[your name]**

Mentor: **[name, title, college]**

Approved by: **[mentor signature]**

[month / day/year]