The thesis is the culmination of the M.S. in Cognitive Neuroscience degree. We recommend planning your thesis research as early as possible, but at least a semester or two prior to enrolling in the Thesis Research course (CNS 70900). For example, if you expect to graduate at the end of the fall 2019 semester, you should start consulting with your advisor about your thesis sometime in late fall 2018 or early spring 2019. Meeting dates and times are arranged between the student and advisor/faculty mentor.

Who is Eligible to Advise?

The advisor/faculty mentor you have been doing your research should advise you on your thesis. Ideally, students will approach their advisors well before any relevant deadlines and with a clear idea of the thesis.

Thesis advisors must be members of the MS Program in Cognitive Neuroscience faculty at the Graduate Center. For entering students, you can use this list of Cognitive Neuroscience faculty research areas as a resource in your search for an advisor.

The Thesis | Prospectus

Ideally, the thesis should focus on the interests you have explored and the empirical research that you have conducted during your time in the program. Students are required to turn in a short (3-4 page) prospectus to the advisor (with a copy to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu). Deadlines are set between you and your advisor/faculty mentor.

Download and complete a Prospectus Form: Prospectus Form
You should enroll in the M.S. in Cognitive Neuroscience 70900 | Thesis Research course in the last semester.

Course Description
The thesis research and manuscript enables students to integrate and synthesize the knowledge and data that they have acquired during their coursework and laboratory-based research. Students will work with an advisor to formulate a research question that will culminate into the master’s thesis.

Thesis Abstract
All completed theses should include a 250-word abstract. This abstract should summarize your research’s main claims.

IRB Approval
If your research involves human subjects, please discuss your project with your advisor and with the CUNY Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) to determine whether your project requires IRB approval from The Graduate Center or your advisor’s home campus. For more information, please visit www.gc.cuny.edu/hrpp and consult the following guidelines: Research Involving Human Subjects. If you are part of the advisor/faculty mentor’s IRB, you do not need to fill out a form.

Thesis Research Format
The thesis should be approximately 50-60 pages long—in other words; it should be as long as two or three term papers. It is sometimes useful to think in terms of two or three chapters. Please consult the Library’s instructions for preparing and depositing theses, which will explain the formatting expectations for the document.

General Thesis Research Format
The formal proposal will have the format of Title Page, Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, References, and Appendices (if appropriate). As for setting a tone in the thesis proposal, you should assume you have an audience of people interested in cognitive neuroscience who do not necessarily have a background in your research area. Assume, for
example, the reader is another neuroscience major in a completely different specialty.

The neuroscience research paper should be in journal article format and should include each of the sections below. There is no page limit. Your paper should be grammatically correct, concise, and properly referenced. If you do not see it yourself, say it yourself, think it yourself, or do it yourself, reference it!

**Paper Sections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>The title should be a concise description of the project.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>The abstract is a brief summary (approximately 250 words) of the project that you are working on—an overview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents and List of tables, illustrations, charts, figures and/or diagrams</td>
<td>Following “report format,” the table of contents should show the different sections of your proposal and the page numbers on which they begin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>This section includes the questions that the project(s) addresses—the hypothesis. It should also include a well-referenced background that informs the reader about why the hypothetical questions are being asked. It should identify a gap in the current literature and discuss how the current study will address this gap. Furthermore, it should briefly describe the current study’s methodology and should pertain to relevant literature. You should critically assess studies and indicate your clear understanding the project that you are working on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>The goal of this section is to allow other researchers to replicate your study. You should include detailed descriptions of your participants, materials, and procedures. Furthermore, you should include justifications. What techniques are being used to answer your research questions? Why are these techniques being used? What protocols are being used? How were subjects recruited? What are your study’s experimental and control groups? What is your inclusion and exclusion criteria? What materials were used? Why were these materials used (e.g., assessments, screen sizes)? You may include graphs and figures to help illustrate your methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>What data analysis techniques did you use to analyze your data?</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>What data have you collected? You may include graphs and figures to help illustrate your findings. You should only present facts in this section; do not offer explanations for why you found certain results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Start this section by briefly summarizing your study, including hypothesis, methods, and results. What do the results mean to the questions that you set out to answer? How will this advance the field? What were your study’s limitations? What further questions should be answered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference List</td>
<td>List references that you have used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Tips</td>
<td>Think of your paper as a work in progress. Talk to people in your lab about your research. When you are just starting out in a lab, the most you may be able to complete is the introduction. However, you should be able to speculate on what the expected results are and then write how these results turn out and how they address the main questions of the research. Each semester that you work on the research, you should be able to add to the paper you are writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Approval Process for the Thesis**

The Thesis requires the approval of your advisor, the Associate Director/Second Reader, and the Director. After your advisor has reviewed and approved the thesis, please email a properly formatted thesis to the Director and Associate Director/Second Reader at cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu for approval at least 3 weeks before the library deposit deadline ([https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/dissertations](https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/dissertations)). You will receive the Associate Director/Second Reader’s contact information at this time to hand-deliver the Approval Form to him or her. The student is required to deliver the Thesis Research Approval Form with the advisor’s handwritten signature and thesis to the program’s Assistant Program Officer (room 6304.15) for final approval by the Director. Once your Approval Page has been signed by the Director, you will receive an email to pick up the form and deliver the original page to the Library.

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**Who assigns the Thesis Grade?**

Three readers (the advisor/faculty mentor, the Associate Director or Second Reader, and the Director) review the thesis. The advisor assigns the grade.
Exit Survey (voluntary)

Students will be asked to fill in a short exit survey and submit it to the department when they submit their thesis to the Director. Completion of the survey is voluntary. If you choose to participate, email the survey form to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu.

The form can be downloaded here.

Submission and Deposit Deadlines

Students should consult and follow the Library's instructions for preparing and depositing theses. For more information on depositing your thesis, see the Dissertations & Theses deposit guide.

Maintenance of Matriculation and/or Additional Elective

Students who have completed the 32 credits for the degree, but need an additional semester to complete the thesis, may register for “Maintenance of Matriculation” for a fee of $250. This will allow students to maintain their enrollment for submission and Library deposit.

Additionally, students who have completed the 32 credits for the degree, but need an additional semester to complete the thesis, may want to consider registering for an elective (outside the 3 required program electives).

It is highly recommended students contact the Office of Financial Aid, as an additional semester may influence a student’s financial aid.

Writing Resources

Citation Managers: The library provides instruction in the use of two citation managers, RefWorks and Zotero. Zotero, an open-source tool, which is accessible after students leave the Graduate Center.

Style Guides: Although the M.S. in Cognitive Neuroscience does not require a specific citation style, you may consider using the APA style. However, we urge you consult the Library's
instructions for preparing and depositing theses to ensure the proper citation style. Generally, theses should be consistent in the usage of whatever citation style is chosen.

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Plagiarism | CUNY

CUNY regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism,) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The University is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity. We will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to University Academic Integrity Procedures. For more information, refer to http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf.

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Library Contact

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https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/CogNeuro

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Further Questions

If you have further questions about the thesis or about this guide, send an email to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu.