M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience
Thesis Overview
2019-2020
# Table of Contents

Who is Eligible to Advise? ................................................................................................................. 2  
CNS 70900: Thesis Research (3 credits) ............................................................................................. 2  
The Thesis | Prospectus ..................................................................................................................... 2  
IRB Approval ........................................................................................................................................ 3  
The Thesis | Prospectus ..................................................................................................................... 3  
General Thesis Research Format ....................................................................................................... 3  
   Paper Sections .................................................................................................................................. 3  
Approval Process for the Thesis | Overview .......................................................................................... 5  
Approval Process for the Thesis | General Timeline ................................................................................. 5  
   Step 1: Preparing for the Thesis Approval Process ......................................................................... 6  
   Step 2: Thesis Approval Process | Evaluations ............................................................................... 6  
   Step 3: Thesis Approval Process | Revisions and Approval .............................................................. 6  
Approval Process for the Thesis | EXAMPLE Timeline: February 1, 2020 Degree ............................ 7  
Submission and Deposit Deadlines ................................................................................................. 9  
Maintenance of Matriculation ......................................................................................................... 9  
Writing Resources ............................................................................................................................ 9  
Plagiarism | CUNY ............................................................................................................................ 10  
Library Contacts ............................................................................................................................. 10  
   Roxanne Shirazi .......................................................................................................................... 10  
   Mason Brown ............................................................................................................................. 10
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. However, the thesis approval process is expected to take approximately six weeks.

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

Who is Eligible to Advise?

The advisor/faculty mentor that you have been conducting your research with 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 M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience faculty at The Graduate Center. Entering students can use this list of Cognitive Neuroscience faculty research areas as a resource to search for an advisor.

CNS 70900: Thesis Research (3 credits)

You should enroll in the CNS 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.

Although three readers (the advisor/faculty mentor, the second reader, and the Director) review the thesis, the advisor assigns the grade for CNS 70900: Thesis Research. In the event that you will not be able to deposit your thesis to the library following the semester during which you registered for Thesis Research, you should contact the M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience at cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu. You will have to receive an incomplete (INC) for the Thesis Research course, and this INC will remain on your transcript until you contact your mentor to submit a grade change form the following semester. If your mentor needs a form, your mentor should contact the M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience at cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu. You do not need to register for the Thesis Research course again.

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: Thesis Prospectus Form

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. All completed theses should include a 250-word abstract. This abstract should summarize your research’s main claims. 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 a “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>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>This section includes the questions that the project addresses and hypotheses. 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>
</tr>
<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>
Approval Process for the Thesis | Overview

The Thesis requires the approval of your advisor, the Second Reader, * and the Director. Throughout the approval process for the thesis, you will need the following documentation:
   a. Thesis Prospectus Form
   b. Thesis Approval Form
   c. Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form
   d. Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form (in case of revisions)

After your advisor has reviewed and approved your thesis, have your advisor sign the Thesis Approval Form. In addition, please email the Director and the second reader (evaluators) with cc to cognereo@gc.cuny.edu, for approval, at least six weeks before the library deposit deadline (https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/dissertations):
   a. a properly formatted thesis in pdf
   b. a properly formatted thesis in word
   c. the Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form

Evaluators are to submit the Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form to the student with a cc to cognereo@gc.cuny.edu four weeks prior to the deposit deadline.

In the event of major or minor revisions, the student is to send the revised thesis and the Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form to the evaluators (major revisions) or advisor (minor revisions) three weeks prior to the library deposit deadline. The evaluators (major revisions) or advisor (minor revisions) must submit the Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form to cognereo@gc.cuny.edu and cc the student two weeks prior to the library deposit deadline.

Once the thesis and/or thesis revisions are approved, you must secure the second reader’s signature on the Thesis Approval Form. After you have secured the second reader’s signature, the student is to hand-deliver the original (no copies or electronic signatures) Thesis Approval Form to the Assistant Program Officer (APO), Wanda Mercado at 6304.15 for the Director’s signature.

Students will receive an email to pick up the form and deliver the Thesis Approval Form to the Library. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure the original Thesis Approval Form is delivered to the dissertation/thesis Librarian, Roxanne Shirazi.

*For 2019-2020. The second reader may be subject to change every year.

---

Approval Process for the Thesis | General Timeline

The following timeline should be considered in relation to thesis library deposit deadlines, as per the library’s instructions for preparing and depositing theses. There are three possible deadlines to submit your thesis, and you must be enrolled in the semester prior to your degree date.
Your degree date will reflect the semester you were last enrolled in the program. For example, if you submit your thesis in February 2020, then your degree will say Fall 2019.

Please note that the deadline below is recommended to allow ample time for students to have their thesis reviewed and submit their thesis by the library’s deposit deadline.

**Step 1: Preparing for the Thesis Approval Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Deadline Goal(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Last Semester in the Program</strong></td>
<td>• Plan/conduct your thesis research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Last Semester in the Program** | • Enroll in CNS 70900: Thesis Research  
• Submit [Thesis Prospectus Form](#)  
• Have your mentor review and approve your thesis  
• Revise your thesis, as necessary  
• Review [the library’s instructions for preparing and depositing theses](#) |

**Step 2: Thesis Approval Process | Evaluations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Deadline Goal(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **6 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline** | • Have your mentor sign the [Thesis Approval Form](#)  
• Notify Wanda Mercado, Assistant Program Officer (APO), of your plans for graduation at [wmercado@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:wmercado@gc.cuny.edu)  
• Email the Director and second reader a properly formatted thesis and [Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form](#) |
| **4 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline** | • Receive your [Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form](#) |

**Step 3: Thesis Approval Process | Revisions and Approval**

If your thesis is approved,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Deadline Goal(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Weeks Before the Deposit</strong></td>
<td>• Secure the second reader’s signature on the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>• Deliver the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a> to the Assistant Program Officer for the Director’s signature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Weeks Before the Deposit</strong></td>
<td>• Receive an email to pick up the form from the Assistant Program Officer (once the Director has signed the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>• Deliver the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a> to the dissertation/thesis librarian, Roxanne Shirazi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure that all graduation and thesis requirements have been met, as per the library’s instructions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If your thesis needs revisions,**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Deadline Goal(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Weeks Before the Deposit</strong></td>
<td>• Make necessary revisions to thesis, as per the <a href="#">Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Weeks Before the Deposit</strong></td>
<td>• Send the revised thesis and the <a href="#">Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form</a> to the evaluators (major revisions) or advisor (minor revisions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Weeks Before the Deposit</strong></td>
<td>• Receive the completed <a href="#">Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>• Secure the second reader’s signature on the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Deliver the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a> to the Assistant Program Officer for the Director’s signature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Week Before the Deposit</strong></td>
<td>• Receive an email to pick up the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a> from the Assistant Program Officer (once the Director has signed the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>• Deliver the <a href="#">Thesis Approval Form</a> to the dissertation/thesis librarian, Roxanne Shirazi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure that all graduation and thesis requirements have been met, as per the library’s instructions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Approval Process for the Thesis | EXAMPLE Timeline: February 1, 2020 Degree**

**Step 1: Preparing for the Thesis Approval Process**
### Deadline Goal(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Deadline Goal(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Fall 2019</strong></td>
<td>• Plan/conduct your thesis research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Fall 2019** | • Enroll in CNS 70900: Thesis Research  
• Submit [Thesis Prospectus Form](#)  
• Have your mentor review and approve your thesis  
• Revise your thesis, as necessary  
• Review the library’s instructions for preparing and depositing theses                                                                 |

### Step 2: Thesis Approval Process | Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Deadline Goal(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **By December 17** | • Have your mentor sign the [Thesis Approval Form](#)  
• Notify Wanda Mercado, Assistant Program Officer (APO), of your plans for graduation at [wmercado@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:wmercado@gc.cuny.edu)  
• Email the Director and second reader a properly formatted thesis and [Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form](#)                                                                 |
| **By December 31** | • Receive your [Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form](#)                                                                                                |

### Step 3: Thesis Approval Process | Revisions and Approval

**If your thesis is approved,**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Deadline Goal(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **December 31 – January 7** | • Secure the second reader’s signature on the [Thesis Approval Form](#)  
• Deliver the [Thesis Approval Form](#) to the Assistant Program Officer for the Director’s signature                                                                 |
| **January 7 – January 28** | • Receive an email to pick up the [Thesis Approval Form](#) from the Assistant Program Officer (once the Director has signed the [Thesis Approval Form](#))  
• Deliver the [Thesis Approval Form](#) to the dissertation/thesis librarian, Roxanne Shirazi  
• Ensure that all graduation and thesis requirements have been met, as per the library’s instructions                                                                 |

**If your thesis needs revisions,**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Deadline Goal(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 31 – January 7</td>
<td>• Make necessary revisions to thesis, as per the Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By January 7</td>
<td>• Send the revised thesis and the Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form to the evaluators (major revisions) or advisor (minor revisions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| January 14 – January 21 | • Receive the completed Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form  
• Secure the second reader’s signature on the Thesis Approval Form  
• Deliver the Thesis Approval Form to the Assistant Program Officer for the Director’s signature |
| January 21 – January 28 | • Receive an email to pick up the Thesis Approval Form from the Assistant Program Officer (once the Director has signed the Thesis Approval Form)  
• Deliver the Thesis Approval Form to the dissertation/thesis librarian, Roxanne Shirazi  
• Ensure that all graduation and thesis requirements have been met, as per the library’s instructions |

**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**

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.” This will allow students to maintain their enrollment for submission and Library deposit. For more information, please refer to the M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience’s Student Handbook.

It is highly recommended students contact The Office of Financial Aid, as an additional semester may influence students’ financial aid. In addition, students should consult with the M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience at cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu.

**Writing Resources**

Citation Managers: The library provides instruction in the use of two citation managers, RefWorks and
Zotero, an open-source tool, 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 to consult the [Library’s instructions for preparing and depositing theses](http://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/CogNeuro) to ensure the proper citation style. Generally, theses should be consistent in the usage of whatever citation style is chosen.

---

**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](http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf).

---

**Library Contacts**

**Roxanne Shirazi**  
**Contact:**  
Library - room 2304  
The Graduate Center, CUNY 365 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10016  
rshirazi@gc.cuny.edu | 212.817.7069

**Mason Brown**  
**Contact:**  
Library - room 2317  
The Graduate Center, CUNY 365 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10016  
mbrown3@gc.cuny.edu | 212.817.7066  
[https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/CogNeuro](https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/CogNeuro)