



M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Overview

2020-2021

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M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Overview

The thesis is the culmination of the M.S. in Cognitive Neuroscience degree. We recommend planning your thesis research as early as possible. 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 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](#) 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 receive an incomplete (INC) for the Thesis Research course, and the INC will remain on your transcript until you contact your mentor to submit a grade change form during 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

Title	The title should be a concise description of the project.
Abstract	The abstract is a brief summary (approximately 250 words) of the project that you are working on—an overview.
Table of Contents and List of tables, illustrations, charts, figures and/or diagrams	Following a “report format,” the table of contents should show the different sections of your proposal and the page numbers on which they begin.

Introduction	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.
Methods	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.
Analysis	What data analysis techniques did you use to analyze your data?
Results	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.
Discussion	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?
Reference List	List references that you have used.
Additional Tips	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.

Library's Thesis Deposit Deadlines

There are three possible deadlines to submit your thesis because three degrees are conferred each academic year. To submit your thesis, you must be enrolled in the semester prior to your degree date:

2019 – 2020 Academic Year

For Degree	Enrollment Required	Deposit Required By
September 30, 2019	Spring 2019	September 16, 2019
February 1, 2020	Fall 2019	January 28, 2020
June 2, 2020	Spring 2020	April 30, 2020 May 15, 2020

2020 – 2021 Academic Year

For Degree	Enrollment Required	Deposit Required By
September 30, 2020	Spring 2020	September 15, 2020
February 1, 2021	Fall 2020	January 29, 2021
June 3, 2021	Spring 2021	April 30, 2021

Your degree date will reflect the semester you were last enrolled in the program. For example, if you submit your thesis in February 2021, then your degree will say Fall 2020.

Students should consult and follow the [Library's instructions for preparing and depositing theses](#).

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>

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*)

Once your advisor has reviewed and approved your thesis, have your advisor sign the [Thesis Approval Form](#).** After your advisor has signed the [Thesis Approval Form](#),** please email the second reader (*evaluator*) and cc cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu, for approval, at least *six* weeks before the library deposit deadline (<https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/dissertations>).

When emailing the second reader, please include the following documentation:

- a. a properly formatted thesis in pdf
- b. a properly formatted thesis in word
- c. the [Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form](#)

The second reader should submit the [Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form](#) to the student with a cc to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu after reviewing the student's thesis.

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*). The evaluators (major revisions) or advisor (minor revisions) must submit the [Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form](#) to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu and cc the student.

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, please 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 2020-2021. The second reader may be subject to change every year.

**** COVID-19 UPDATE: Once your advisor or the second reader has reviewed and approved your thesis, a direct email message to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu from your mentor or the second reader approving your thesis will suffice.**

***** Until further notice: in lieu of the signed [Thesis Approval Form](#), the library will accept an email from the Director confirming that the thesis project has been approved and is ready to deposit. This single**

email will suffice for both signatures on the approval page; no library verification from the advisor is necessary at this time.

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](#). Please note that the deadlines below are 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

Deadline	Deadline Goal(s)
Before Last Semester in the Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan/conduct your thesis research
Last Semester in the Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enroll in CNS 70900: Thesis ResearchSubmit Thesis Prospectus FormHave your mentor review and approve your thesisRevise your thesis, as necessaryReview the library's instructions for preparing and depositing theses

Step 2: Thesis Approval Process | Evaluations

Deadline	Deadline Goal(s)
6 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have your mentor sign the Thesis Approval FormNotify Wanda Mercado, Assistant Program Officer (APO), of your plans for graduation at wmercado@gc.cuny.edu to file for an Application for the Master of Arts/Science DegreeEmail the second reader a properly formatted thesis and Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form (with a cc to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu)
4 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Receive your Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form

Step 3: Thesis Approval Process | Revisions and Approval

If your thesis is *approved*,

Deadline	Deadline Goal(s)
4 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
3 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive an email to pick up the 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*,

Deadline	Deadline Goal(s)
4 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make necessary revisions to thesis, as per the Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form
3 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send the revised thesis and the Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form to the evaluator (major revisions) or advisor (minor revisions)
2 Weeks Before the Deposit Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
1 Week Before the Deposit Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive an email to pick up the Thesis Approval Form from the Assistant Program Officer (once the Director has signed the 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

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

Step 1: Preparing for the Thesis Approval Process

Deadline	Deadline Goal(s)
Before Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan/conduct your thesis research
Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enroll in CNS 70900: Thesis ResearchSubmit Thesis Prospectus FormHave your mentor review and approve your thesisRevise your thesis, as necessaryReview the library's instructions for preparing and depositing theses

Step 2: Thesis Approval Process | Evaluations

Deadline	Deadline Goal(s)
By December 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have your mentor sign the Thesis Approval FormNotify Wanda Mercado, Assistant Program Officer (APO), of your plans for graduation at wmercado@gc.cuny.edu to file for an Application for the Master of Arts/Science DegreeEmail the second reader a properly formatted thesis and Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form (with a cc to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu)
By December 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Receive your Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form

Step 3: Thesis Approval Process | Revisions and Approval

If your thesis is *approved*,

Deadline	Deadline Goal(s)
December 31 – January 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Secure the second reader's signature on the Thesis Approval FormDeliver the Thesis Approval Form to the Assistant Program Officer for the Director's signature

January 7 – January 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive an email to pick up the Thesis Approval Form from the Assistant Program Officer (once the Director has signed the 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
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If your thesis needs revisions,

Deadline	Deadline Goal(s)
December 31 – January 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make necessary revisions to thesis, as per the Cognitive Neuroscience Thesis Evaluation Form
By January 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the revised thesis and the Cognitive Neuroscience Approval of Revised Thesis Form to the evaluator (major revisions) or advisor (minor revisions)
January 14 – January 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive an email to pick up the Thesis Approval Form from the Assistant Program Officer (once the Director has signed the 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

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 status for thesis 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 a student’s 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. 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.

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>.

T HESIS - FAQs

CNS 70900: Thesis Research

Do I have to enroll in CNS 70900: Thesis Research?

Yes, students are required to enroll in Thesis Research (CNS 70900) as part of the program's core requirements. It fulfills 3 credit hours. Students complete the M.S. in Cognitive Neuroscience by completing a master's thesis, which requires empirical data. The thesis research and manuscript enable students to integrate and synthesize the knowledge and data that they have acquired during their coursework and research. For this course, students will work closely with their mentor to formulate a research question that will culminate into the master's thesis.

When should I enroll for CNS 70900: Thesis Research?

Students should enroll in Thesis Research in their last semester.

Does the thesis course count toward the thirty-two degree credits required for graduation?

Yes, the thesis research course CNS 70900 counts toward the 32 credits required for graduation.

Who assigns my grade for CNS 70900: Thesis Research?

Your mentor assigns a grade at the end of the semester.

How do I ensure that my mentor is on the list of instructors under CNS 70900: Thesis Research on CUNYfirst?

You should inform the program of your intention of enrolling in CNS 70900: Thesis Research a semester prior to enrolling in the course.

Do I have to complete my thesis during the semester I Enroll in CNS 70900 Thesis Research?

Ideally, you should complete your thesis during the semester that you enroll in Thesis Research (CNS 70900). If you do not complete your thesis during the semester, you will receive an INC for the course until you complete your thesis and your mentor submits a Change of Grade form, which is to be emailed to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu. The Change of Grade form requires approval from the Director before the Registrar's Office posts the grade.

Mentors

Who is eligible to be a thesis mentor?

A thesis mentor must be a CUNY faculty member that has been approved to be on the [M.S. Program in Cognitive Neuroscience faculty](#).

We draw [exceptional professors](#) from throughout The City University of New York. Prolific scholars and passionate researchers and teachers, their expertise spans neuroscience and psychology as well as mathematics, computer science, engineering, speech-language-hearing sciences, and the life sciences. Our professors are accomplished, experienced, and accessible to students.

Am I assigned a thesis mentor?

No, you are not assigned a mentor. When you began the program, you were asked to secure a faculty member as your mentor from a list of highly regarded, qualified instructors in our program. The program recommends matches between students and advisors based on their research interests and preferences, as well as by how many students each faculty member is able to accommodate into their labs. However, it is ultimately the students' responsibility to reach out to a faculty member and develop a student-to-mentor relationship with the instructor.

Thesis Guidelines and Deposit Procedures

You should start planning your thesis as early as possible as research is most often very time consuming and may take unexpected turns (experiments do not go as planned, there is difficulty acquiring data, etc.)

Is there a document with thesis guidelines?

Yes, the [Thesis Overview](#) document provides detailed information on the process and timeline.

What is the Thesis Prospectus and when should the document be submitted?

The thesis prospectus allows for a thesis abstract and informs the program that you and your mentor are on track and will be submitting your thesis. The [Thesis Prospectus](#) must be completed before you submit your thesis and emailed to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu.

Are there other thesis-related forms to complete?

Yes. Depending on the status of your thesis, you and/or your mentor are required to complete the following forms: [Thesis Evaluation Form](#), [Thesis Approval Form](#) (due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and until further notice, you do not need to acquire written signatures for this form, but you should include it when

depositing your thesis to fulfill the [library's thesis deposit format requirements](#)) and [Approval of Revised Thesis Form](#). Carefully read each form.

[I completed my thesis, do I send it directly to the Director of the program?](#)

No. You must have your mentor email cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu with the approved thesis. We will send the thesis to the second reader for review. You will be notified via email of the revisions to the thesis that are necessary. Upon completion of the revised thesis, you must email the final thesis along with the [Approval of Revised Thesis Form](#) to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu.

[Once the thesis is approved by the mentor, second reader and Director, now what?](#)

The Director will email the Dissertation Librarian, Roxanne Shirazi, notifying the manuscript is approved and ready to deposit.

[What is the process for depositing the thesis?](#)

If you plan to deposit your thesis, the library has modified the procedure for verifying departmental approval of a student's deposit. Until further notice: in lieu of the signed the Thesis Approval Form, the library will accept an email from the Director confirming that the thesis project has been approved and is ready to deposit. This single email will suffice for both signatures on the approval page; no library verification from the advisor is necessary at this time. An email message to cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu from your mentor approving your thesis will suffice.

[I deposited my thesis, do I receive a confirmation?](#)

You will receive an email from the Dissertation Librarian, Roxanne Shirazi confirming receipt of the manuscript.

Graduation

[How do I apply for graduation?](#)

Until we receive further information, to apply for graduation, consult the library Dissertation and Theses: Deposit Procedure webpage <https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/dissertations/deposit-procedure> for instructions. Contact us (cogneuro@gc.cuny.edu) once you have applied as we must ensure you have fulfilled the degree requirements by submitting an Application for the Master of Arts/Science Degree form to the Office of the Registrar.

The Office of the Registrar will email students with diploma information.

[When do I apply for graduation?](#)

For information on when to apply for graduation, please consult the library's deadlines: <https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/dissertations/deadlines>

[Is it necessary to file for an Application for the Master of Arts/Science Degree?](#)

Yes, the application is certifying that a student has satisfied all the requirements for the degree including the thesis or will be satisfying all the requirements for the degree upon completion of the current semester including the thesis.

The form is sent to the Office of the Registrar as both a means to inform the student has completed or nearing the completion of the program's requirements and expected date of graduation.

[When do I file for an Application for the Master of Arts/Science Degree?](#)

You should file for an Application for the Master of Arts/Science Degree no later than four weeks prior to applying for graduation.

[How do I file for an Application for the Master of Arts/Science Degree?](#)

When you intend to file for an Application for the Master of Arts/Science Degree, you must email the program's Assistant Program Officer.