CULMINATING UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE: THESIS

The Culminating Undergraduate Experience: Thesis represents a Kettering student's crowning achievement – the tangible proof of growth, knowledge, understanding, and mastery of applicable, real-world skills necessary to transition to professional status upon graduation. All Kettering University baccalaureate programs require completing the Culminating Undergraduate Experience, also known as the Senior Thesis. The Senior Thesis is a professional document describing a comprehensive project managed and performed by the student. The project is generally performed for the student's co-op employer (Co-op Thesis); however, with employer permission, the student is eligible to pursue another option for their thesis: Research Thesis project (with degree program faculty) or Entrepreneurship Thesis project (a comprehensive business plan based on a student idea for a new business, new product, etc.). Students become eligible to conduct work on the thesis when they have earned a minimum of 88 credit hours (senior I standing). The thesis is an academic requirement, taking approximately 240 hours to complete the objectives of the project work and additional time to write the thesis manuscript. The focus of this project may be a product, system, creation of a comprehensive business plan, investigation and experimentation of a new idea, etc. Students are introduced to the thesis through an online introductory assignment accessible during their junior II co-op term upon earning 72 credit hours. Four (4) credit hours are awarded upon completion of the thesis, and the student will earn a grade of pass with distinction or pass upon faculty approval of a Kettering standardized written thesis manuscript.

Please Note: Students facing challenges in completing their thesis requirement, including students who have completed all other graduation requirements, are to contact the Academic Success Center - Thesis Office (ASC - Thesis Office) for immediate advisement at thesis@kettering.edu.

Thesis Options and Finding a Thesis Topic

For all thesis options, the student is responsible for finding a topic for their thesis project. If the student cannot secure a thesis project through their co-op employer, with employer approval provided by the company to the ASC - Thesis Office, the student can pursue one of the non-co-op thesis options.

Co-op Thesis

A topic idea for the Co-op Thesis project is determined by the employer and student; a project the company needs to be performed; and a topic that is of value to the employer. The student manages the project from start to finish and performs the majority of the work. The student is required to complete and submit a thesis topic proposal (Student Thesis Module 2 of 4) in Kettering Connect to obtain topic approval before starting the work on the thesis. Upon submission, the thesis topic proposal is electronically forwarded to the student's co-op Employer contact and degree department for evaluation. Upon approval, the student is notified via e-mail of their assigned Faculty Thesis Advisor and acceptance to begin work on the project.

Research Thesis

The Research Thesis focuses on conducting research (most often) on campus with a Kettering faculty member. It is an opportunity for the senior student to apply their academic and co-op experience to investigate and experiment with new ideas. Usually, the topic is provided by a Kettering faculty member in the student's degree department. The student is required to complete and submit the Research Thesis Proposal (Student Thesis Module 2 of 4), which is available in the Kettering Connect software tool. The projects are limited and students are selected based on their expertise matching the project scope. For more information contact your degree Department Head or appointed Thesis Administrator within your degree department.

Entrepreneurship Thesis

The Entrepreneurship Thesis focuses on a student-generated idea. An applicant for an Entrepreneurship (E-ship) Thesis project will formalize a comprehensive business plan that can be used in an effort to secure funding for the establishment and/or expansion of a new or existing operating venture. The student must complete and submit the E-ship Thesis Proposal (Student Module 2 of 4) form available in Blackboard by requesting access to thesis@kettering.edu. Upon submission, the proposal is evaluated by the School of Management. Upon approval, the student is notified via e-mail of their assigned SBDC advisor in the Small Business Development Center - SBDC (located on campus and funded through the State of Michigan) and their Faculty Thesis Advisor and acceptance to begin work on the project.

Please note: Students who have exhausted all efforts to identify a thesis topic are encouraged to contact the ASC - Thesis Office.

Culminating Reflection Project (Alternative Thesis)

The Culminating Reflection Project was developed in response to disrupted thesis projects due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This project will remain available case-by-case until the Office of the Provost determines it is no longer needed.

The Culminating Reflection Project is comprised of three distinct and diverse experiences from the student's college career. The project asks the student to reflect upon how these experiences contributed to their growth and development.

Student Process

Students will be acclimated to the thesis on their junior II co-op term through an online introductory assignment. Upon topic approval through completion, students will have two advisors who will serve as mentors. The manuscript will be assessed by the student's Faculty Thesis Advisor; additionally, for Research Thesis or Entrepreneurship Thesis students, the Committee Member will review the manuscript. If the co-op employer deems the thesis confidential, Kettering has a standardized Confidential Thesis Agreement available in Blackboard. Students must complete four University thesis modules through their thesis experience, including Thesis Introductory Assignment in Blackboard - Module 1, Thesis Topic Proposal - Module 2, Thesis Progress Report - Module 3, and Thesis Manuscript Submission - Module 4.

Registration

Students who achieve junior II standing (72 credit hours) and are registered in a co-op term will be automatically registered for the Thesis Introductory Assignment (Student Thesis Module 1 of 4), CILE 400. Additionally, upon completion of the thesis, the ASC - Thesis Office submits a final passing grade to the Office of the Registrar, and the 2nd thesis registration (CILE 401) is posted to the student's record to reflect the four credits earned.

Additional University Policies to Encourage Completion of Thesis Requirement:

- **Active/Not Enrolled Registration (Thesis Extension Terms)** - Students who do not complete their thesis requirement by the end of their last required academic term are automatically enrolled in their first active/not enrolled term (thesis extension term). Students will be required to demonstrate progress on their thesis with a required plan and advisement session through the ASC – Thesis Office within this term (required due date set by the ASC – Thesis Office). If the ASC – Thesis Office determines student progress is made, the student will be registered into an additional active/not enrolled term with a maximum of four active/not enrolled terms.

- **Academic Completion of Overdue Co-op Thesis -** Students may complete an overdue Co-op Thesis to meet their thesis requirement. The Faculty Thesis Advisor will review the student's written thesis manuscript for academic completion. It is due to one of the following reasons: The sponsoring Co-op Employer no longer supports the thesis and makes a determination not to sign off on the thesis (official co-op employer required to the ASC – Thesis Office) or twelve (12) months have passed since the last day of the student's last academic term.

- **All But Thesis: 10 Year Out -** Students who have completed all degree requirements except the thesis and whose last academic term was more than 10 years ago are eligible to write a narrative of two significant projects through their professional experiences applicable to their Kettering degree program. The narrative will be reviewed by a faculty member in the student's degree department.

For more information about the Kettering University Thesis Program, please contact thesis@kettering.edu.