

# CULMINATING UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE: THESIS

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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 for the student's transition to professional status upon graduation. All Kettering University baccalaureate programs require completion of 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. Students are introduced to the thesis through an online introductory assignment that is accessible during their junior II co-op term. There are four (4) credit hours 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. The focus of this project may be a product, system, creation of a comprehensive business plan, investigation and experimentation of a new idea, etc.

**Please Note:** Students facing challenges for 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](mailto:thesis@kettering.edu).

## Thesis Options and Finding a Thesis Topic

For all thesis options, it is the student's responsibility to find a topic for their thesis project. If the student is unable to 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 a majority of the work. The student is required to complete and submit a thesis topic proposal (known as the PTA) in the thesis software tool, KqUest, in order to obtain topic approval prior to starting the work on the thesis. Upon submission, the thesis topic proposal is electronically forwarded to the student's Employer Thesis Advisor 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 the investigation and experimentation of 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 which is available in the thesis software tool, KqUest under "Documents". Once the proposal form is completed, the student and Faculty Thesis Advisor will obtain an approval signature from the Department Head, the proposal is then considered approved. Upon approval, the proposal form is submitted to the ASC - Thesis Office and the student can begin work on the project. 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 is required to complete and submit the E-ship Thesis Proposal form available in Blackboard by sending a request for access to [thesis@kettering.edu](mailto: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) as well as 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 and require Kettering's assistance to find one, are to complete a Directed Thesis Request Form. The form can be provided by sending a request to [thesis@kettering.edu](mailto:thesis@kettering.edu). Upon completion, the form will then be sent to the student's degree Department Head as an alert that the student needs assistance. The degree Department Head will attempt to identify a thesis topic that fits the student's skill set and experience defined in the Directed Thesis Request Form. Please note: The ASC - Thesis Office recommends this request form to be submitted if the student is unable to identify a Thesis topic by the end of the student's senior I co-op term.

### Culminating Reflection Project (Alternative Thesis)

The Culminating Reflection Project was developed as a response to disrupted thesis projects due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This project will continue to be available on a case-by-case basis 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 the ways 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. Students will have two advisors upon topic approval through completion that 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 that the thesis should be confidential, Kettering has a standardized Confidential Thesis Agreement available in Blackboard. Students are required to 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 and are registered in a co-op term will be automatically registered for the Culminating Undergraduate Experience: Thesis (CILE-400). CILE-400 is a one-time registration applicable for the entire process. Upon completion of the thesis, a final passing grade is submitted by the ASC - Thesis Office to the Office of the Registrar, posted to the student's record and the four credits are earned.

## Additional University Thesis Policies to Encourage Completion of Thesis Requirement:

- **Active/Not Enrolled Registration (Thesis Extension Terms)** - Students that 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 and 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 thesis and their 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 Kettering University's Thesis Program, please contact [thesis@kettering.edu](mailto:thesis@kettering.edu).**