

# Master of Arts in **Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities**

## *Student Handbook From Application to Graduation*

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## ***What to Do When***

### **BEFORE APPLYING:**

Visit SRSC web page [here](#):

A GRE score is **not** required for this program

### **WHEN YOU APPLY:**

In order to be admitted to this program, students must [submit an online application](#) on the home page to “Apply Now,” then mail electronically the following required documents to the WKU Graduate Studies Office:

- Official copies of all transcripts from every post-secondary school attended
- Resume
- Statement of Purpose. Discuss your personal, professional, and/or academic preparation for graduate study and the reasons for why you believe the program in Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities is right for you.
- Two letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation should address your potential for graduate study, specifically this program of study.

**Send to:** The Graduate School  
Western Kentucky University  
1906 College Heights Blvd. #11010  
Bowling Green, Ky. 42101-1010

**For questions regarding the admissions process and for academic questions, contact:**

Dr. Jane Olmsted      [Jane.Olmsted@wku.edu](mailto:Jane.Olmsted@wku.edu)      (270) 745-5787

### **AFTER YOU'RE ACCEPTED:**

Before or during the first semester call Dr. Jane Olmsted to set up an advising appointment at 270-745-5787. During this time you will design and submit your Plan of Study.

Register as soon as possible in order to get the classes you want. We will register you for all core (required) courses. You may register for elective courses through TopNet.

Six hours is the recommended course load each semester. You are not expected to take more than six hours a semester, as it can be a struggle, especially since most graduate students are already working full time. Six hours qualifies you for financial aid. Any more than nine hours a semester should be approved by your SRSC advisor.

## **YOUR FIRST SEMESTER OR BEFORE YOU REGISTER BEYOND THE NINTH HOUR:**

Fill out a program of study, a form C, in consultation with the SRSC Advisor, Dr. Jane Olmsted. This form should be filed during the first 12 hours of course work. If the Graduate Studies and Research office does not have this form on file by the completion of 12 hours, a registration hold will be placed on the student's record. This hold will not be lifted until the Form C, with all appropriate signatures, is on file in Graduate Studies.

## **AFTER-YOUR-SECOND-SEMESTER (after 12 or so hours):**

If you are writing a thesis, make an appointment with the SRSC Advisor to discuss your thesis committee and obtain a set of guidelines.

Apply for graduation:

The application for graduation is \$55 and must be completed at least one semester prior to the semester in which the degree is to be conferred. The fee must be paid at the time of application, which should be completed and submitted via TopNet.

To submit your application for graduation, follow these steps:

1. Sign on to [Topnet](#) with your WKU ID and PIN.
2. Follow the "Student Services" link.
3. Follow the "Student Records" link.
4. Follow the "Application for Graduation" link and fill out the form provided.

**Incomplete Course Work**—if any course work remains incomplete at the time of expected degree completion, you will not be permitted to graduate until the grade changes are available from the Registrar's Office. Students are responsible for keeping up with incomplete grades and contacting individual professors for directions in completing the course requirements. The Graduate Studies and Research office is not responsible for notifying students of incomplete grades, or changing these grades.

## **LAST SEMESTER:**

**Non-Thesis Students**—rather than defending a thesis, you are expected to propose a reading list for your comprehensive exam, which will entail two parts: 1) a synthesis paper examining your professional and academic interests as they relate to SRSC themes while drawing from the reading list; and 2) a public presentation at the SRSC 590 closing symposium. You should contact the SRSC advisor for Comps Reading List Guidelines.

**Thesis Students**—Depending on whether you are taking three thesis hours for two semesters or six thesis hours in your final semester, you will need to follow a careful schedule to ensure that all deadlines are met. See Thesis Guidelines beginning on p. 14.

Bear in mind that you should submit copies of your thesis to your committee two weeks before the defense. Prior to that you must receive the go-ahead from your director to submit your thesis to the committee. At least one month before your defense you should set up the date of your defense.

### **Curriculum**

The MA in Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities has two options: non-thesis and thesis. Both options require six Core Courses (totaling 18 hours) plus electives for a total of 33 hours of coursework. The non-thesis option requires five elective courses (15 hours) and attendance during the campus-based SRSC 590 Sustainability Symposium. The thesis option requires three elective courses (9 hours), 2 thesis courses (6 hours), and attendance during the campus-based SRSC 590 Sustainability Symposium.

<b>Required Core Courses (18 hours):</b>		
<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>SRSC 510</b> Perspectives on Social Justice	Fall	A consideration of major perspectives concerning social justice issues
<b>SRSC 540</b> Community-Building for Sustainability	Spring	Direct participation and research in a topic related to sustainable community-building.
<b>SUST 512 OR SUST 514</b>	Summer (512) or Fall (514)	<b>SUST 512 Foundations of Sustainability</b> Examination of the social, economic, and environmental principles of sustainability, with a focus on case studies at both local and global levels. <b>-OR-</b> <b>SUST 514 Environmental Justice &amp; Public Spaces</b> An examination of environmental justice and place, including historical movements and case studies of the uses and misuses of public space and resources.
<b>SRSC 530</b> Social Justice & Social Policy	Summer	Survey Course designed to study the moral, social, and economic effects of current and changing government policies regarding the operation of markets.
<b>SRSC 590</b> Sustainability Symposium	Spring Bi-Term	Culminating residency requirement for students seeking the Master's in Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities. Includes group site evaluations and concluding symposium.

## Recommended Sequence:

	<b>Thesis Option</b>	<b>Non Thesis</b>
Fall Year 1	SRSC 510 SRSC 520	SRSC 510 Elective 1 (or SRSC 520)
Spring Year 1	SRSC 540 SRSC 530	SRSC 530 Elective 2 (or SRSC 540)
First Summer	SUST 512* (or SUST 514 in the fall)	SUST 512* (or SUST 514 in the fall)
Fall Year 2	SRSC 599 Elective 1	Elective 3 SRSC 520
Spring Year 2	SRSC 599 [Elective 3] SRSC 590	SRSC 540 (510 & 520 prerequisites) [Elective 5] SRSC 590
Second Summer	[Elective 3]	[Elective 5]

Remember: The SRSC requires that you take either SUST 512 or SUST 514. If you take both, one will count as an elective. SUST 512 is a summer course, so you need to save funds from Financial Aid to cover it, or plan for payment from your own funds. SRSC 590 requires being present in Bowling Green, Kentucky for 6-7 days in mid-May. The course will be offered in the final spring semester, but will extend past the end of the term to accommodate the residency in Kentucky.

## Elective Courses

Students will select 15 elective hours (non-thesis option) or 9 hours for those completing a thesis. The following list is for approved courses that are offered online. Other courses, whether offered online or face-to-face may be eligible as electives, with consent of the advisor, or by checking the SRSC webpage under the Next Semester's Course Offerings. (This listing is gets out of date quickly. ALWAYS, check the upcoming semester link on the SRSC webpage.)

AMS 630 Legal & Ethical Issues in Technology	HIST 530 American Civil Rights Movement
BA 510 Advanced Organizational Behavior	HIST 553 Gender & Women in US History
COMM 528 Communication in Nonprofit	HIST 555 American Radicals
GEOG 474G Environmental Planning	LEAD 525 Leadership Ethics
GEOS 544 Practical Environmental Ethics	PH 548 Community Health Organization
GEOS 587 Environmental Law, Reg. and Policy	PH 584 Principles of Environmental Health
GERO 501 Perspectives in Aging	SRSC 515 Utopias, Dystopias, & Intentional Com
GERO 503 Policy Foundations of Aging Services	SRSC 525 Place and the Problem of Healing
GERO 505 Dev. & Change of Aging Programs	SOCL 470G Environmental Sociology
GERO 510 Current Issues in Aging	SOCL 525 Survey of Criminal Justice Studies
GERO 581 Global Aging	SOCL 534 Neighborhoods and Crime
GWS 535 Roots of Feminism	SOCL 538 Victimology
GWS 545 Feminist Knowledge & Social Change	SOCL 542 Community
GWS555 Global & Multicultural Perspectives	SOCL 546 Gender, Crime and Justice
GWS 565 Black Feminism & the Politics of Com	SOCL 572 Environmental Criminology
GWS 575 Justice, Gender, and Sustainability	SOCL 585 Victimology
GWS 625 Women & Leadership	SWRK510 Human Behavior in Soc. Environs
GWS 630 Feminist Pedagogies	SWRK 530 Foundations of Social Welfare Policy
HIST 505 Cultural Diversity in American History	SWRK 630 Advanced Rural Welfare Policy

## Approved Face-to-Face Offerings

ECON 434G Econ of Poverty & Discrimination	ENVE 560 Investigating Environmental Issues
ENVE 520- Intro to Environmental Education	GEOS 587 Environmental Law, Reg. and Policy

## ***Other Good Things to Know***

### **TUITION INFORMATION**

WKU offers this program at the Distance Learning Graduate Rate. [Visit the Bursar](#) for the current fee schedule. The Distance Learning rate is not subject to Kentucky residency. It remains consistent for all US domestic students.

Most students seek some form of financial aid, primarily student loans, to cover the cost of their advanced degree program. For more information on financial aid available to WKU graduate students, [visit here](#).

Minority Students- Minority Student Support Center Phone: 270-745-5066

International Students- [International Programs](#) Phone: 270-745-5334

### **Travel Funds**

Students who will be presenting at professional conferences or conducting university related travel are encouraged to apply for travel funds through many different sources to assist in paying those associated expenses. Contact Dr. Jane Olmsted for more information.

Depending on the purpose, you may also apply for funds through University College, Graduate Studies, DELO, Study Away, and Study Abroad as applicable to your travel. The Student Government Association also offers Academic Scholar grants to assist with conference fees, research materials, etc. Contact your SRSC advisor for more information.

### **GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Although there is only one graduate assistantship available every two years for SRSC specifically, we encourage you to apply for any graduate assistantship on WKU's campus. You may apply for one at the same time you apply for admission. Graduate students who are non-degree seeking students and/or enrolled as part-time students are not eligible for graduate assistantship appointments. Complete details about the program and application forms may be found [here](#).

### **CODE OF ETHICS:**

The MA in Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities is committed to fostering an atmosphere of open and honest communication. For this reason, we adhere to a strict policy of consequences for plagiarism—both intentional copying and sloppy documentation. Examples of plagiarism includes taking material from other sources—the Internet is used for this purpose—or

failing to give credit in your papers or online discussions to the original source. Improper use of citation and documentation can also constitute plagiarism, whether intended or not.

Plagiarism is a very serious violation of academic rules and can lead to a failing grade, probation, suspension, or even expulsion from the University. All students are expected to follow the WKU Student Code of Conduct, which itemizes behaviors that are not tolerated: "Dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, misrepresenting of oneself or an organization, knowingly furnishing false information to the University, or omitting relevant or necessary information to gain a benefit, to injure, or to defraud is prohibited."

Assignments are diligently checked for plagiarism, so all sources of information should be appropriately cited to avoid any gray areas. Anyone turning in plagiarized work or cheating on exams will receive an F for the assignment(s), perhaps for the course, and will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. A second offense will in all likelihood result in dismissal from the SRSC program.

Here is the link for the [Graduate Catalogue for University Code of Conduct](#).

Always read your course syllabi, so you can become familiar with your professors' expectations.

### **SRSC 590- SUSTAINABILITY SYMPOSIUM**

SRSC 590 is a culminating residency requirement for students seeking the SRSC MA. It is the final required course and includes site visits in the area and a concluding symposium. Some of the work preceding the residency will be done online during the spring semester. It is mandatory that you be on-location here for the duration of the period designated below and that you not have competing demands on your time. You will need to make arrangements for child care, work obligations, and prepare for limited access to technology, including your cell phone.

The following is the working schedule for the residency requirement:  
(these dates are scheduled, though they could vary)

**Friday, May 12, 2017:** Orientation and Participation in graduation at WKU and SRSC ceremony  
**May 13- May 17, 2017:** SRSC 590 Residency  
**Thursday, May 18, 2017:** Symposium. All students will present either in the morning, followed by a lunch break, or in the afternoon.

### **GRADES and ACADEMIC PROBATION (from Graduate Studies):**

#### **Required Grade Point Average**

Candidates for graduate degrees and/or certificates are required to maintain a combined average grade of B (3.0 grade point average) in all course work. Grades lower than a C may not be used in meeting degree or non-degree requirements. Graduate students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA in all courses taken at graduate student level designation. Students who fail to meet the 3.0 GPA requirements for the graduate program GPA (courses on approved Form C) and overall cumulative GPA will not be awarded a degree or certificate.

For additional information and the most recent policies please visit the [WKU Graduate College Catalog](#).

### **Graduate Academic Probation and Dismissal (from Graduate Studies webpage)**

According to the WKU Graduate catalog, graduate students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) for all courses taken at WKU and those graduate courses transferred to WKU to fulfill graduate program requirements. Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in both the major and the cumulative (overall) GPA to earn a degree or certificate. If a student's overall GPA falls below 3.0, the student will receive a letter of academic warning informing the student that the GPA is below 3.0. The student will have one additional full-time semester or the equivalent (9 hours) to remove the academic probation by attaining a 3.0 cumulative GPA. If the GPA remains below a 3.0 after completing the one semester of fulltime course work or the equivalent (9 hours), the student may not register for any additional graduate credit at WKU and will be dismissed from the graduate program. Students placed on academic probation are not eligible for graduate assistantship appointments.

Graduate students may be dismissed from the program for having failed twice the final comprehensive examination for the graduate degree. A graduate student may also be dismissed from the graduate program if the overall GPA, as a graduate student falls below 3.0 as described in the academic probation section above. Students may also be dismissed from programs for reasons other than failure to maintain a satisfactory grade point average. Expectations regarding student conduct are described in the Western Kentucky University Student Handbook and apply to students in all programs. Additional program-specific policies regarding student conduct and dismissal from a program for non-academic reasons may also apply. Students should contact their advisors for more information regarding expectations for appropriate student conduct.

### **POLICIES FOR RESOLUTION OF STUDENT CONCERNS:**

According to the WKU Graduate catalog, student concerns are addressed using a 4-step process.

#### **1. Student Complaint Procedure**

A four-step procedure is in place to assist students who have a complaint with a faculty member. This policy may be found in the WKU student handbook. Click here for the most recent version of the [Student Complaint Procedure](#).

#### **2. Student Grievance Procedure**

Western Kentucky University is firmly committed to providing a working and learning environment that is free from all forms of harassment, intimidation and exploitation and that is respectful of free inquiry and academic freedom. The Grievance Procedure outlines the course of action afforded students who have reason to believe their working and learning environment is not free from one or more of the aforementioned acts.

A student grievance is a University-related problem or condition that a student believes to be unfair, inequitable, discriminatory, or a hindrance to the educational process. A grievance also includes discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or status.

On occasion students may have a personal grievance regarding an alleged violation, misinterpretation or improper application of University policies and procedures, or alleged improper treatment. A student may present a formal disagreement/complaint without fear of retaliation or reprisal. For the specific procedures and steps please refer to the [Student Handbook](#).

### **3. Procedure for Appeal of Disciplinary Decision**

Procedures for appeal of a disciplinary decision may be found in the [Student Handbook](#).

### **4. Procedure for Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment**

The steps for filing a formal complaint of sexual harassment are found in the Student Handbook.

# ***Guidelines for Thesis and Non-Thesis Options***

## **Non-thesis Guidelines for Comprehensive Exam**

### **Definition of Comprehensive Exams**

Comprehensive exams, commonly referred to as “Comps,” are one of the biggest milestones you will achieve as you earn your Master’s in Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities. Your comprehensive exam is your opportunity to synthesize your general knowledge, gained over the course of your graduate work, as well as more specific knowledge related to your primary area of interest.

The format of the SRSC comprehensive exam is as follows. See the semester-by-semester discussion for deadlines.

At the start of the spring semester in SRSC 590, you will turn in a reading list. First, you will be provided with a list of 10 readings selected by the SRSC core faculty. You should choose 6 out of 10 that you would like to use in your completed reading list. You may choose only a section of a larger work, such as a chapter, rather than the entire text. In addition to these 6 readings, add 4 works from any SRSC course that address your particular interests in social justice, community, and/or sustainability.

In addition, you will submit an essay that synthesizes your learning, drawing from some of the readings on your Reading List. When you present at the Symposium at the end of SRSC 590, you will have 15-20 minutes to showcase your learning in a professionally prepared presentation, followed by 10 minutes of question and answer.

### **Oral Defense of Comprehensive Exam (Orals)**

The public presentation of your comprehensive exam is what constitutes your “orals”; it is the final step in your journey toward a master’s degree. Although you may “walk” before you are completely finished, a comprehensive exam is the last “performance piece,” and you will want it to reflect your best effort as you synthesize your learning by addressing a specific topic you care about.

While the written essay and public presentation, with follow-up questions, are an important affirmation of your credentials, they are also a wonderful way to share your journey with your fellow students and professors.

See the following page for an example of the Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Sheet. Please take this sheet into consideration as you approach the construction of your final synthesis essay and design your presentation. Power Points for visual component are encouraged, but not required.

**M.A. Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities**  
**Comprehensive Exam**  
**Sample Evaluation Sheet**

Note: Those students working on a thesis will present their work as well; however, completion of the SRSC master's for thesis students will occur upon thesis defense.

\_\_\_\_\_ Reading List  $\sqrt{-}$ ,  $\sqrt{}$ ,  $\sqrt{+}$  (10 sources, follows Style Guide, such as MLA or APA)

**Symposium Essay (Comprehensive Exam Essay)**

	1 weak	2 fair	3 good	4 excellent	5 outstanding
Content	1	2	3	4	5
Style Guide (e.g., MLA, APA)	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5

Overall:

**Public Presentation**

	1 weak	2 fair	3 good	4 excellent	5 outstanding
Non-verbals	1	2	3	4	5
Poise	1	2	3	4	5
Visuals (if applicable)	1	2	3	4	5
Answers to Questions	1	2	3	4	5

Overall:

Symposium Essay \_\_\_\_\_ + Public Presentation \_\_\_\_\_  $\div$  \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

## **Thesis Guidelines**<sup>1</sup>

A thesis is an original contribution to the academic body of work relevant to SRSC. This may be empirical or literature-based research, a significant project, or equivalent approved by your proposed chair and the director of SRSC. The focus is broad enough to accommodate chapters, with each chapter forming part of a larger, cohesive work. If your thesis is artistic, the written component will be less than a thesis that is entirely textual; however, all theses will entail a written document. You are expected to conduct a thorough review of the scholarship on all aspects of the topic; thus, you will have many more sources than you may have in a class paper. You can also expect to revise each chapter, often more than once. Since the thesis will be published—each thesis is bound and placed in the library—mechanics and documentation have to be of professional quality.

### **The Proposal, the Prospectus, and the Thesis:**

The thesis process involves three documents. Please follow the guidelines below to complete each one successfully.

1. Write a one-page proposal describing your approach to the topic:

This step must be completed first, before you approach a professor and ask him or her to direct your thesis. The director will usually be someone with whom you've had a class but always an expert in the field. (If you're uncertain who to ask to chair your thesis committee, confer with the SRSC Advisor.) After you have identified a potential chair, contact him or her and set up a meeting to review your proposal. At that meeting, be prepared to discuss your proposal.

If the professor agrees to chair your thesis committee, you should then discuss the selection of the other two members of the committee with the chair and with the SRSC advisor. Once you have gained the approval of the two other faculty members, you should confirm them with the director and the SRSC advisor.

After you have created your three-person committee, you will need to register for thesis hours. To do so, fill out a Permission to Register for Thesis Hours form available from the SRSC Advisor, have it signed by both the thesis director and the SRSC advisor, and return it to the SRSC Advisor, who will then register you for thesis hours.

2. Write a prospectus of four to five pages of text and approximately three pages of an annotated bibliography. Contact Dr. Olmsted for examples if needed.

After you have completed a substantial amount of research into your topic, you should write a prospectus, and present it to your thesis director. You should think of the prospectus as an essay of intent, as in it you will do the following four things:

- discuss what the critical questions the thesis will answer
- relate your ideas to existing scholarship on the topic

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<sup>1</sup> The SRSC faculty acknowledges the English Department for providing the model for these guidelines.

- describe your preliminary argument
- explain the significance of your project to the field

If the director agrees at this point, then you will need to present the prospectus to the committee and schedule a one-half hour meeting with them to discuss it. It is your responsibility to find a time when your committee can meet with you and to schedule a room in the Women's Studies Center for the meeting. Contact the Diversity & Community Studies Office Coordinator, Renee Purdy at [renee.purdy@wku.edu](mailto:renee.purdy@wku.edu) or at 270-745-6477 for assistance in reserving a space. For those of you who live too far away to come to Bowling Green, all meetings must be scheduled using Skype or AdobeConnect or other face-to-face application (Note: you can check your committee members' teaching schedules by searching TopNet, giving you a clear idea of when members are not available, and you will reserve the room by talking to the Office Associate.)

3. Draft, revise, and edit your thesis, in consultation with your director and committee members:

A thesis should be 60-80 pages of text (excluding the beginning pages, the abstract, and the Works Cited pages). Those doing a creative thesis should negotiate length expectations with your thesis director. You will work out a schedule for turning in chapter drafts or in other ways get feedback from your director. Remember that your director is there to help you with the overall concept and ideas in the thesis; thus, even if what you are turning in is a draft (as it most likely will turn out to be), the mechanics and documentation should be on a professional level. Your director should not have to use his/her time marking such errors. You should leave time for and count on revising at every stage of writing.

### **The Process and Schedule:**

Since this is probably the first time you will have attempted a work of this length, you may not realize what an undertaking it is. Although, for instance, writing six ten-page papers, which you may have done in a semester, adds up to the same length as a thesis, the thesis-writing process is radically different and will almost certainly take more time and effort. You should note also that the thesis must be submitted to Graduate Studies three weeks before the end of the term, and it is due to your entire committee two weeks before your defense. You can expect that your director will also need one-two weeks to review the final thesis before he/she advises you to submit it to the other committee members (if they have not seen it before). Although you will need to consult with your director on your schedule, below are two examples:

### **Recommended Schedule for Students taking three thesis hours per semester**

#### **First Semester:**

- Before registration--talk with the director and get his/her support for registration
- 1 month after registration—give prospectus to chair and meet with committee
- 2 months into the semester—give introduction and first chapter to director (and possibly committee members)

- 3 months into the semester—give second chapter plus any revisions to director (and possibly committee members)

### **Second semester:**

- 1 month into the semester—give third chapter plus any previous revisions to director (and possibly committee members)
- 2 months into the semester—give fourth chapter plus any previous revisions to director (and possibly committee members)
- Six weeks before the date of graduation—present the director with the final, revised, proofread copy for his/her permission to distribute it to the rest of the committee.
- If the director approves, then you will present the thesis to the other two committee members, giving them two weeks to read it before the oral examination. All three committee members must sign the signature page of the thesis at the conclusion of the oral examination before you can take it to Graduate Studies. Note that this schedule is cutting it close, for if the other two members of the committee should ask for revisions, you may not be able to meet Graduate Studies' deadline.
- The thesis in its final form must be delivered to Graduate Studies three weeks before graduation in order for them to process it.

### **Recommended Schedule for Students taking six thesis hours in one semester:**

- Before registration—talk with the director and get his/her support for registration.
- 2 weeks into the semester—give prospectus to chair and meet with committee
- 4 weeks into the semester—give introduction and first chapter to the director (and possibly committee members)
- 6 weeks—give second and third chapters (plus, if needed, the revised introduction and first chapter) to the director (and possibly committee members)
- 8 weeks into the semester—give the final chapters and the conclusion (plus, if needed, any revisions to the previous chapters) to the director (and possibly committee members)
- Six weeks before the date of graduation—present the director with the final, revised, proofread copy for his/her permission to distribute it to the rest of the committee. If he/she approves, then you will give the thesis to the committee, allowing them two weeks to read it before the oral examination. All three committee members must sign the signature page of the thesis at the conclusion of the oral examination before you can take it to the Graduate Studies Office. Note that this schedule is cutting it close, for if the other two members of the committee should ask for revisions, you may not be able to meet Graduate Studies' deadline.
- The thesis in its final form must be delivered to Graduate Studies three weeks before graduation in order for them to process it.

### **The Mechanics of the Thesis:**

The thesis should follow MLA or APA guidelines, as appropriate. Graduate Studies has an additional set of [formatting guidelines](#) that must also be followed.

It is the student's responsibility to ascertain deadlines, follow Graduate Studies' guidelines, and, in general, complete the process.

The thesis must be in its final form at the time of the oral defense, as the committee will not sign a document that needs any revisions. For those intending to defend at the Symposium, be sure you set up the time with your thesis director.

### **Thesis Registration:**

Although you may register for three hours at a time, six hours must be completed for a grade and credit. No credit can be given for only three hours, and you will have to have the hours removed from the transcript or receive an F for those hours. If you are registering for two semesters, the director will give you a grade of IP (In Progress) for the first semester. (This grade does not figure into your GPA.)

### **The Oral Defense:**

You will be asked to provide a 20-minute professional presentation of the thesis either at an agreed-upon time with your committee, as long as that date allows you to get all documents and forms in by Graduate Studies' deadlines.

### **Success:**

You should, first, congratulate yourself on completing this important task! If you plan on pursuing a Ph.D., you have gained valuable experience that will serve you in good stead when you begin a dissertation. If you don't plan on a Ph.D., you have still made a mark in the field and learned an immense amount. It is also quite possible that you may find yourself quoted someday, as your thesis is in the library and available for inter-library loan.

Remember that a thesis often provides conference-worthy excerpts or even publishable articles. If your topic is original and your research solid, you will have a very good chance of success. Be sure to inform your committee if this happens, as they will want to congratulate you and share in your achievements.

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## **CONCLUSION**

Thank you for making a great decision to join the Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities master's program. We look forward to your progress and success. If you need any help, please feel free to contact Dr. Jane Olmsted at [jane.olmsted@wku.edu](mailto:jane.olmsted@wku.edu) or at 270-745-5787.