

# **MAIR Thesis Guide**

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## **GUIDE TO PREPARING A THESIS: FROM IDEA TO COMPLETION**

The following document is designed to help MAIR students design and complete a thesis for their master's degree program. The initial emphasis is on planning and producing the proposal, which is critical to the success of the entire thesis since proposals provide the foundation on which everything else is constructed. The Guide ends with important sections on doing the thesis

This guide is designed to walk you through much of the experience of doing your proposal and your thesis. It is not structured around your registrations for your thesis. In general, there are typical registration patterns for the thesis, but variations are always possible for practical, financial, or other personal reasons. The following describes the primary registration patterns and the basic tasks that are connected to each registration. Do remember that we are flexible and tasks and corresponding registrations will vary.

### **Thesis Registration:**

MAIR 297 Graduate Research (4 credits)

This registration can be broken down into 1 to 4 credits over time, but all students must finally complete a total of four credits of MAIR 297. During Graduate Research registration, you would typically complete your thesis proposal and obtain approval from the IRB if you are using human subjects.

MAIR 299 Thesis (4 credits)

You may have done some of your research for your thesis as part of your Graduate Research, but now is the time to complete your research, write your thesis, and get it approved.

If you don't finish your thesis during your Thesis registration, you would register for Grad 200 until you are finished and have graduated.

## Introduction to the Thesis

The process of doing a thesis often causes students to think:

- How am I going to organize all this information?
- It's got to be perfect! How do I make it perfect?
- How much is too much research for a thesis?
- What are all the things I must do in carrying out a thesis?
- What should my writing style look like?
- How will I know when I am done?

The best of students sometimes may go into a state of near panic in which they forget all that they have learned and much of the common sense that they have developed over their years of life and schooling. But if you remain calm and relaxed, this task will be much easier and more manageable; it might even be fun and exciting.

To ease your way into the thesis, there are several steps that will help you to establish a sound approach and allow you to move through this process with comparatively few anxieties. Welcome and have a good time!

### What is a Thesis?

In examining the MAIR program as you started, you undoubtedly saw that MAIR was built on the concept that theory informs practice and practice must inform theory as well. Given this emphasis on theory and practice, we have established two ways of completing our degree program that reflect these differing emphases: a thesis or capstone project.

You are now looking at doing a **thesis**, which in general stresses the theoretical side of the program. The thesis involves the development of a research question(s) that guides you from design through analysis and discussion. You will examine the literature to provide the context in which your research question is being asked. You will decide on methods (such as interviews or focus groups) that will allow you to collect data that address your questions most clearly and fully. Once you have collected your data, you will examine those findings and determine the best way to present that information to the reader. Ultimately, you will use theories, models, and frameworks from the literature, as well as the findings themselves to examine and analyze what you have learned. Throughout, the emphasis will be on the collection of valid and reliable data and the

analysis of that data within the context of the research and the context discovered within the literature. Students may select to do an entirely theory-based thesis as well.

The **capstone project**, on the other hand, places emphasis on the practice side of the program. The capstone project involves the development of a product that can be seen as a logical extension of the theoretical core to the program. If you selected a capstone project, you would design and implement a project that demonstrates your ability to use fundamental concepts, models, theories, etc. in practical ways. The foundation of a capstone project will be a set of goals and objectives that will guide you from idea formation to implementation. The core of the project is the development and presentation of some practical application derived from the theoretical, conceptual base of the intercultural relations program. The presentation may take many forms such as designing and teaching a class or conducting a training program, writing a book relevant to the field, producing a video, or developing and testing an assessment tool.

Both the thesis and capstone project are positive and effective ways of completing the MAIR program. In this document, we will review the elements of doing a thesis.

### **Before Starting a Thesis**

As you approach your thesis, it is helpful to remember that the program assignments **are** designed to move you into an understanding of the standards and expectations of scholars and practitioners in the field of intercultural relations. Step by step, the assignments will prepare you to write, to think, to plan, to organize, to apply, and to analyze in ways that will facilitate your thesis work.

There are approaches that can get in your way and we encourage you to avoid these pitfalls.

- **Proposing to do too much**

While your thesis may make a contribution to an area of intercultural relations, the whole point of a thesis is to demonstrate your abilities to develop research questions, connect them to the literature, develop appropriate research methods, and examine findings. A thesis focuses on the skills involved conducting research, finding theory to support your efforts, conducting your research with your selected method (s), and assessing of findings. So you will need to select a topic that is manageable and not unrealistically ambitious. Your advisor will help you here.

- **Thinking you should know, but not knowing and feeling lost**

One of the purposes of the nine core courses in the program as well as the electives is to involve you in various aspects of intercultural relations, so you can

begin to sense which aspects of the field attract you most. Many of the assignments throughout the program will help you think about your learning in ways appropriate for the thesis. And, finally, you will have a variety of faculty and advisors, as well as many intercultural issues to help limit your possibilities.

- **It won't be, and shouldn't be, perfect**

You will often hear that there are two kinds of theses: a perfect one and a finished one. What this means is that there are realistically speaking, no “perfect” theses. The thesis is grounded in theory and past research; it shows your ability to design, and carry out a research project to address your research questions. High standards and ethics are very important in your master's work, but that does not translate as a demand for perfection.

### Selecting a Thesis Topic

Any time during the program, however, you may discover an interesting thesis or capstone project topic. It is a good idea to have a special notebook or folder in which you write down ideas that come to you, e.g., subjects or people you would like to learn more about, kinds of research that appeal to you, and skills or practices you would like to teach others in order to improve intercultural relations. (One faculty member calls her folder “Half-Baked Ideas.”) As you let these ideas take shape in the back of your mind, you can begin to sort through them by asking yourself questions like these:

- *What areas draw my attention?* As you take courses or read for other purposes, what ideas, subjects, types of research attract your interest? What concerns you most in your reading, at work, or in your community that might be a subject for social science research?
- *What do I hope to do in the future?* In particular, consider what professional directions seem most useful and most likely for you. What areas of specialization would you like to develop? What knowledge will prepare you for the next step in your place of work or help you move into new work? What research might benefit you in the future?
- *What authors, studies, research, or projects really excite me?* This question can be the most useful and the most dangerous in helping you decide on a thesis or project topic. A truly exciting topic can carry you through the many hours of reading, thinking, designing, implementing, and writing that may be necessary to create a finished thesis or capstone project. On the other hand, caring too much about the subject can tempt you to take on too much.

As you slowly explore possibilities for your thesis, you will eventually begin to narrow your options and, ultimately, to settle on a single topic. There are many rather pragmatic considerations that help people determine which thesis topic they will choose. Some of

the considerations that can help focus your interests include the following sections on doing a thesis or undertaking a capstone project.

## **Preparing To Do A Thesis**

If you are thinking about doing a thesis, the following section should help you as you travel from thesis topic to a completed thesis proposal and ultimately to a finished thesis. Let us begin now with questions regarding doing a thesis:

- What type of research do I want to do? Interviews, focus groups, written surveys, a psychometric measure? A document study or a field study? A traditional research study or a theoretical analysis or a project that combines research with practice?
- Do I have the resources to carry out the study I envision?
- Are people available as potential research participants, and are they available when I need them?
- How long will the study take, realistically, and can I clear that amount of time when I need it? See the timeline in [www.mairstudents.info](http://www.mairstudents.info) (9 to 12 months is about the minimum).
- Does my possible research topic fit with my professional/educational/personal goals? In this program, students often use the Research II course as a place to practice the skill of focusing on a research topic, including the crucial step of converting an idea for thesis research into what social scientists call the research question or research problem.

## **MAIR Thesis Committee**

Your thesis committee is composed of three people:

1. Thesis Advisor/Committee Chair
2. Member
3. Member

The thesis committee should be selected when you are beginning to get clear vision about the focus of your thesis so that you can receive advice as you move toward the precise selection of your topic. Together, your advisor/committee chair and committee members should display the expertise needed to guide you through your thesis. Please note that two of the three-committee members must have doctorates, while the third may have a master's degree.

### **Thesis Adviser/Committee Chair**

The thesis adviser/committee chair will work closely with you to make sure that all of the University of the Pacific protocols (*IRB, proposal review, final thesis review, etc.*) are followed. This person may not have expertise in your exact area of research, but will be well grounded in the overall curricula of the MAIR program and research in general.

**The advisor/chair** works with you through the selection of a topic, to the choice of research method, to the form of analysis employed. Working closely with the thesis committee members, the advisor/chair will help to see that the thesis meets the standards and requirements of the field in general and MAIR specifically.

### **Thesis Committee Members**

The thesis committee members are typically the people who clearly have the expertise or special interest appropriate for the area of study of your thesis, and should balance the attributes of the advisor/chair. Under the following section on “Tips for Selecting your Thesis Committee,” there is a list of both necessary and helpful characteristics.

Special Note: While there are general patterns typical of thesis committee membership and roles, those patterns and roles may vary greatly depending on the committee. For example, it is possible that the committee will work very closely together and will decide to review all parts of your thesis at the same time. In other cases, you might work extensively with the advisor/chair, prior to requesting feedback from others. Each committee will establish its own way of operating in order to meet your needs, while recognizing their individual methods of operation.

To serve on the thesis committee, prospective members must offer 3 ‘yeses’ to the students:

1. Yes I will sit on the committee.
2. Yes, I will read the proposal, provide feedback and ultimately approve so that this research will move forward.
3. Yes, I will read the full thesis, provide feedback, and finally approve the thesis for graduation.

### **Tips for Selecting Thesis Committee Members**

At some point in thinking about your thesis, you and your advisor/chair will start to discuss possible committee members. There is no specific time for this to happen, but you want to do it early enough so the committee chair and members both have a chance to have input on your thesis topic and research strategy. While you typically talk with candidates yourself, sometimes your faculty advisor will make the first contact. Everything depends on who you are considering and the relationships that person has with you and with MAIR/ICI/Pacific.

When you are trying to select your thesis committee chair and member, remember there are several factors to take into consideration. The following attributes all need to be represented on your thesis committee:

- academic expertise in your main area of focus
- professional experience in your main area of focus
- experience in thesis advising

- connections into professional networks
- time to spend working with you
- an interest in your topic
- an enthusiasm for facilitating your professional development
- familiarity with current literature in your area of focus
- an M.A., Ph.D. or other terminal degree. Of the three members of the committee, two must have a doctoral degree.

BALANCE is the key to a successful committee experience. Use the above list to check carefully that the essentials are present in one or both members.

Other attributes that might prove helpful include:

- willingness to allow you to assist them in some aspect of their work
- willingness to share articles or books with you that could prove helpful
- willingness to mentor you

These attributes are certainly not essential, but are often happy accidents of your involvement with the program. These “happy accidents” occur because you have skills, talents, or time to offer, or because you are working on a topic that is particularly salient to the committee member. It is often best not to request such support in your initial contact but to allow some time for the working relationship to develop.

### **Questions to Ask Your Thesis Committee Members**

Once you have identified your committee members, have them send in a CV to your advisor for approval, if they are new to working with MAIR. After approval, you will want to establish a pattern of communication with each of person on your committee to keep them informed of your progress. When your thesis committee members are appointed, they will receive this guide. This will help them to work with you as you begin to develop ideas for your thesis. As soon as they have agreed to work with you, however, there are some important questions for you to ask them:

1. What is the best way for you to maintain contact with them:
  - Phone appointments
  - Email
  - Face-to-face meetings
  - SKYPE
2. Would they like to see copies of your other work before working with you on your thesis?
3. In what form do they want to see your work:
  - Email
  - Dropbox
  - Google docs
4. Would they like to receive your thesis chapter by chapter or in larger sections?



We suggest that you avoid having committee members wait to read the entire thesis. Experience has shown that most students need feedback earlier in the process. Finally, however, whatever strategy is chosen, it should be one that works for you and your committee members.

5. Are there any other things that it would be helpful for you to know about the committee members' ways of helping a student undertake a thesis?

## **Moving from a Thesis Topic to a Research Question**

The first and most important task in moving from a thesis topic to a research question, or research problem statement, is to narrow your subject. You may, as many students have, approach the thesis with a very large and unwieldy topic and you must learn to limit the scope, pare away unneeded elements, and hone a clear, manageable research question.

The research question will then guide your reading for the literature review, point you to the most appropriate research methods for answering the question for your thesis, and shape your analysis of the data that surface as you explore the question. But the process of turning a general thesis topic into a question that can guide the rest of your thesis process is an art, not a science. Some tactics that might help you move from thinking about your general topic to framing a specific question for your thesis include:

- **Searching the literature.** This task involves scanning the literature to gain an overall sense of the types of research being done related to the ideas that you have. You will also do some in-depth reading as find research that interests you most. During this examination of the literature, you are looking for articles and books that will provide you with examples of other research questions, so you will have a sense of what has already been done in the area. When reading articles, especially, look at conclusions about what research still needs to be done in the topic area you are examining.

The literature you search will also generate a preliminary list of books, articles, and other resources you will need when you begin your literature review for the thesis. The research studies you read may:

- help you define and clarify your research question(s)
- help you understand how to carry out the kind of research you hope to do
- serve as a model for style and format later as you write your thesis

Remember to make clear citations of everything you read. You will probably want that information again!

- **Reviewing other theses.** It is important to take the time to review a thesis completed by a graduate of the program. As you go through the program, you need

to review other samples, especially when you get ready to select your topic and create a research question. By reviewing other theses you will begin to get a sense of the process of moving from an overall issue or problem to a more specific research question.

- **Talking with advisors.** Talking extensively with your faculty/thesis advisor will be critical as you define your general topic and then your narrowed research question. This will be important also in the selection of people to serve on your committee. You can discuss your thesis research with your faculty advisor throughout the program and with your thesis committee as it takes shape. During the third residency you need to have in-depth conversations about what research problems are appropriate and doable to assure you are on the right track.

Your research question may be developed before you begin your thesis proposal, but it often will become more clearly defined during the process of preparing your thesis proposal. Regardless of the timing, the next step after selecting a topic and defining your research question is to develop a thesis proposal.

## **Developing Your Thesis Proposal**

Your thesis proposal is a critical step in producing your thesis. Here you have the opportunity to explain your research question and the rationale for your study, what literature you intend to review, what research methods you propose using, who the subjects might be, how you will select them, and how you plan to analyze your findings.

### **Preparing the Literature Review**

Although you may have searched through some of the literature in your areas of interest before, this time as you examine the literature, you will be creating a comprehensive description of the type of books, articles, etc. that you plan on reading in greater depth for the thesis. Your goal will be to present some of the literature and identify other specific authors and their works you plan on reviewing in the thesis. You will present the focus of the literature you intend to read and explain why you have made those selections. At this point your goal may be to survey *all* the most relevant articles, books, and other material connected to your research subject; this is called an exhaustive review. In some cases you will be focusing on the identification of the best and most relevant literature, not all of the literature; this is called an exemplary review. It is very likely that you will have sections that are exhaustive and sections that are exemplary by the time you finish.

### **Selecting Your Research Methods**

After clarifying your research question(s) and beginning a literature review, you are well underway on the first two important steps in developing your thesis

proposal. Now your next task is to select research methods. Your research question and your review of some important works will provide you with critical direction in identifying possible research methods. A review of former studies will give you ideas as to what methods have been useful and appropriate in the past for addressing similar questions. Remember that your goal is to choose methods that are appropriate for your research question, your time restrictions, and your target population. You should not pick a method just because you like it, but because it works well in addressing your research question. You will often need to support your choice of methods by a brief literature review that explains and argues for the validity of your proposed methods.

MAIR teaches you qualitative research methods and encourages you to select a qualitative research method. In rare cases, a student will propose a method involving statistical analysis. If you were to select such a method, you would be responsible for learning statistics through another means. We do not teach statistical analysis, not do we hold our students responsible for such analysis.

### **Making Your Project Intercultural**

The term intercultural refers to interaction between people from different cultures. It can, however, also be viewed in such a way as to include the interaction of elements of one culture with people from another culture. For example, one student examined how a Western evaluation method was being used and reacted to within Japanese culture. However, no matter what the final subject, make sure it involves some sense of interaction or the results of interactions between two or more cultures.

It also helps if you remember the distinction between cross-cultural and intercultural research. Both types of research can be very informative to the interculturalist, but we want you to do intercultural research. If you find that you are comparing a certain behavior or attitude in one culture with another one, you are probably moving into the cross-cultural arena, which is not what you want to do. If, however, you then use that knowledge to create a training program, a class, book, etc., that helps cultures to improve intercultural relations, then you are doing appropriate intercultural work. Or, if you are comparing the long-term effects of international assignments on employees from two different cultures, you are still in the intercultural realm. You are combining a cross-cultural and an intercultural lens in your research. You will want to consult with your advisor to make sure you have selected an intercultural focus for your research.

## **Presenting Your Thesis Proposal**

This document will form the foundation for your final thesis; it also provides the core material that will be needed if and when you are submitting your proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Between the initial design of your thesis and the final

implementation, many things may change, but the original proposal should guide you through your thesis.

To help you develop your proposal, you may want to follow the basic format for a research prospectus **described in Rubin et al., pp. 239-242 of the 5th edition**. You don't need to answer all the questions presented in the prospectus, but you should address all that are relevant to your thesis. Typically the proposal will cover a shortened version of the first three chapters and will be between 15 to 25 pages long including references. The content described below follows the guidelines in Research II and Pacific's Thesis and Dissertation Format Guide:

## **The Content of the Thesis Proposal**

### **Cover Page**

(see University of the Pacific *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*, which is available in the following URL: <http://www.pacific.edu/Academics/Schools-and-Colleges/Office-of-Research-and-Graduate-Studies/Graduate-Programs/Forms-Resources-and-Services/Forms.html>)

### **Abstract**

Summarize your proposal in one to two paragraphs. Write this when you have finished the rest of the thesis proposal.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction (3 to 6 pages long)**

In this important chapter, you explain the background of your interest in the subject. You need to let readers understand how the research question or questions have developed. You will likely present some former research to set the context of your research question. Next you present the research questions in a clear and concise way. If there are terms that need clarification, this is also often where you provide those definitions. (Note that definitions may also go into an appendix or simply be presented in the context of the paper, so you should discuss options with your advisors.) At the end of this section, provide a very brief introduction to each of the subsequent chapters in the thesis.

### **Chapter 2: Review of Literature (5 to 8 pages long)**

The goal in this section in a proposal is to indicate what you plan to include in the literature review in your thesis. Provide details of a few specific works you have found that you know will be useful and say why they are relevant to your topic. Then list any additional pieces of literature you plan to explore, provide the specific authors and their works, and identify why their work seems useful to you. In summary, for the proposal, you will give an **overview** of your **initial** survey of the literature; you will identify in some detail a few of the pieces you will be reading; and you will indicate the other authors and works you intend to read and again explain why you are reading them. In this process, you will identify the

relevant research and/or theoretical frameworks you intend to use and mention any complementary or competing frameworks for your thesis.

### **Chapter 3: Method (3 to 6 pages long)**

If you are using human subjects, you will need to explain who your participants will be and how you plan on selecting them (sampling method). Explain the methods you plan on using for your research and explain why you are using these specific methods (interviewing, surveying, focus groups, document analysis, etc.). Often you will support your use of methods with literature about those methods. When you get to this point, you should begin to draft your Pacific Human Subjects Activity Review Form for approval by the University's IRB (Institutional Review Board). Your proposal will be critical in completing this form. Any research involving human subjects requires that you gain approval from the IRB. For more information, talk with your faculty/thesis advisor.

The Method's chapter concludes by answering the essential question regarding how you will approach the analysis of your findings/results. Explain how you will present the data and then what methods and theoretical frameworks you will use for analysis. This section begins to outline what is typically in Chapter 4: Results or Findings, and Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions.

### **Concluding Information (3 to 5 pages long)**

The final section of the thesis proposal will include:

1. a draft table of contents of the thesis
2. a list of references (from your literature review and methods section)
3. a copy of the research tool if appropriate (e.g., interview questions or survey questionnaire)
4. a timeline for completing the thesis

## **SPECIAL INFORMATION**

**1. Use of Human Subjects:** Most research for theses involves the use of human subjects. If this describes your research, you will need to gain approval of your research from the University of the Pacific's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Therefore, once you have completed the proposal and submitted it to your thesis committee chair, member, and faculty/thesis advisor for approval, you will need to submit your human subjects review form, which is built upon your proposal, to the MAIR Academic Director and to the IRB for final approval. Work with your thesis advisor to complete this task well before starting on your research. Remember the IRB approval process applies only if you are using human subjects. Under no circumstances should you do any research on human subjects for your thesis prior to gaining approval from the IRB.

**2. Use of the University of the Pacific Library online:** If you haven't learned to use the University of the Pacific's library resources available to you at a distance, now is the time to learn. It will be critical for you to know how to use the library as you undertake your thesis proposal and thesis. Again, contact Katrina Jaggears for the most current information on how to use the library and what assistance may be available

**3. Use of APA and Pacific Style:** For the thesis proposal, as well as your thesis, you will be using current APA style, but you will also be using style guidelines presented in the University of the Pacific *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*, which is available at the following URL: <http://www.pacific.edu/Academics/Schools-and-Colleges/Office-of-Research-and-Graduate-Studies/Graduate-Programs/Forms-Resources-and-Services/Forms.html>.

**4. Use of an Editor:** It is advisable to find an editor or knowledgeable friend or colleague to assist you in applying these style directions as you complete your thesis. In addition to help with APA and the University of Pacific style guidelines, you may want assistance with your writing. You should never turn in a draft of your proposal or thesis without it having been edited first. Remember that members of your committee do not serve as your editors. The University of the Pacific's writing resources may help along the way. Please contact Mary-Lou Tyler for information on how to access their resources.

## **DOING YOUR THESIS**

In essence, you have finished the initial and critical first step in doing your thesis: you have a strong foundation in your thesis proposal on which to build. The following guide is not meant to be absolute. You may want to follow these steps, but understand that you can move around amongst the tasks if that works best for you. Often the research itself and the writing may be happening at the same time. Or the research might happen before you do much more of the writing. The list presented here, however, is a good starting point for your efforts regardless of the order you end up following.

**An Important Reminder.** At this point, you should be following the guidelines available in the University of the Pacific's Thesis and Dissertation Guide available at the following URL: <http://www.pacific.edu/Academics/Schools-and-Colleges/Office-of-Research-and-Graduate-Studies/Graduate-Programs/Forms-Resources-and-Services/Forms.html>. This guide and the APA Manual are critical to doing a good job on your thesis. Most of your question about style will be addressed in these two documents.

**Working off the proposal, your next steps are to:**

1. **Develop a draft of your table of contents and your references.** Both documents will change as you go along, but they will provide a beginning sense of structure as you move forward.

2. **Write a draft of your first chapter, Introduction.** (12 to 20 pages) Building on the equivalent section in the proposal should make this task a relatively easy one. Look at what you have written and make changes that reflect what is starting to happen as you set up your research. Is the rationale for your research clear? Examine your research questions again to see that they still provide the direction you want for your study; revise them as needed. Notice how things may have changed already even though you may have just finished your proposal.
3. **Write a draft of your literature review.** (15 to 25 pages) As with the first chapter, you are starting to flesh out the details of the material you have already presented in the proposal. Now you are reviewing those articles, chapters, monographs, books, webpages, etc., you suggested in the proposal and determining if they belong in the literature review. You are looking at the logic of the organization of material and making sure it will be clear to your readers. Are there topics that you need to add? Are there topics that should be dropped? Have you discovered new research that is core to what you are studying? Remember that this chapter is written in the past tense or in the present perfect (see APA for more details).
4. **Structure and organize your research.** Many of the tasks connected to this activity may be done at the same time that you are reading in the literature and drafting your first two chapters.
5. **Identify and select your participants.** Make sure that you are using an accepted sampling method and that you have access to the group you wish to learn about.
6. **Pretest your questions.** If you are doing interviews, focus groups, or surveys, you will want to pretest the questions you have developed to make sure that you are getting the type of answers you need for your research.
7. **Gain advice.** Have conversations with your thesis advisor/committee chair and committee to make sure you are moving along well.
8. **Do your research.** Make arrangements to carry out your research and collect your data. Once you are prepared to carry out your research and have received approval from your committee and the IRB, it is time to follow through on your plans. Rarely will things work exactly as you planned, but you need to be prepared for surprises—some challenging and some happy. Your committee can be valuable as a resource to help you if things don't work out as anticipated. Especially keep in touch with your thesis advisor to deal with any problems that may occur.

But this is also a time to enjoy yourself, to learn what you hoped to learn, to discover answers you expected and those you didn't expect. If you find something isn't working, start quickly to see how you might make it work; get advice, be creative. And when all is going smoothly, relax and have fun.

9. **Write a draft of your third chapter called Method. (12 to 20 pages)** As you are collecting your data, it is often time to write your third chapter as well. All of your thoughts about method have been integrated into your thinking and planning. You may have chosen to take notes on your methods section both as you were planning your research and as you were doing it. Those notes would come in handy now that you are writing the third chapter on method.

Remember that you will be writing this chapter in the past tense because you have finished much if not all of the processes involved in the method by the time you are writing this chapter. In the proposal you told us what you planned on doing and now that you are essentially finished collecting data, you will need to tell us what you did; and what you ended up doing may be somewhat different from what you thought you would do originally.

10. **Write your 4<sup>th</sup> chapter on your results/findings. (15 to 25 pages)** In a straightforward manner, you will present the information you learned from your research. There will always be a number of ways to present your results, so you need to experiment to see what way or ways will work best. For example, you could present findings according to the questions you asked or provide individual profiles for each of your participants if a small enough research project. You might present individual profiles, but then follow up with aggregate data in which you report the findings for the group. Or you might do the opposite and present your aggregate data and use individual findings for emphasis.
11. Some of the approaches presented in the Analysis section below could be applied to presenting the findings. Or you might be reporting the results of a specific instrument such as the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale or the Intercultural Development Inventory.
12. **Analyze your findings.** As you begin to analyze your results, you have a number of decisions to carry out. You will have proposed making transcripts of your interviews or focus groups and that will have to be completed. Will you also listen to tapes, if you made them? Once your data are in shape for analysis, you begin to see what you have in front of you and this is likely to take time.

You may feel somewhat blocked at this point, but do not fear, it will come together very soon. Here are some approaches for you to use:

- a. Look for themes and patterns in the data. Start to examine ways in which you might code your findings.
- b. Revisit your research questions and see how well your findings are addressing what you wanted to ask originally.
- c. Using a theory(s) or model(s), examine the data to see the connection between your findings and the constructs of different theories and/or models. For



example how would the comments made by your participants be rated against the DMIS?

- d. You will often talk with your thesis committee to help you determine the depth and scope of your analysis. You may also find it helpful to talk with others who have insight into your research.
- e. At some point, it is important to remember to live with the data and ask new questions about what you discovered. Often called mining the data, you need to keep looking at your findings to see what else they might tell you. Even if you weren't asking questions about age or gender, were there differences if you looked at those variables? Are there relationships between the answers to questions you didn't anticipate that might be worth examining? And finally, at some point, you have to decide that you are essentially through with your analysis and write up your results.

Please note that the analysis section is typically in the fifth and final chapter, however, there may be times when some analysis is included in the reporting of the findings. You have options, but it always depends on what works best for the reader.

**13. Write up your fifth chapter, discussion and conclusions. (15 to 25 pages)** This chapter will include:

- a. your general analysis of what you learned from the research,
- b. what was most the important part of what you learned,
- c. the connections between your findings and the literature you reviewed, conclusions you have drawn,
- d. limitations to your study (what would you do differently next time), applications of the results of your study, and
- e. questions for further investigation on your research topic as a result of your study.

One of the major steps will be to look at your results in light of the literature you reviewed. Are they in harmony or do they contradict each other? Do your findings build on prior research? If you discover the need to bring in new literature to help your analysis, that is fine and you may include it. However, you also must return to the literature review and add that new literature there as well.

**Getting ongoing advice.** As has been noted before, you need to maintain consistent contact with your thesis advisor and thesis committee throughout this time. You will work with them to determine when they want to read your work and how much they want to read at a time. You need to recognize that they are also busy people and may not have time to read your thesis as fast as you would desire, but it is always appropriate to ask for an estimate as to when a section of your thesis will be ready to return to you.

**Editing and some new writing.** While you are conducting your research and writing your thesis, there will be days when you don't feel especially creative or stimulated to write much. You can still make progress on those days. You might choose to carefully edit your reference list or you might develop the introductory pages of the thesis, including your table of contents and any other tables you need to develop. You can double-check all of your quotations to make sure they are accurate. Remember that good writing is good editing, so taking time to edit your work will save time in the long run.

**Timing.** Use the Thesis timetable at [www.mairstudents.info](http://www.mairstudents.info) to manage your time to make sure you graduate by a specific date. Remember to give your committee plenty of time to read your writing—typically 3 weeks if you haven't negotiated a faster time.

**Preparing to turn in your thesis.** As you are writing your last chapter or editing your thesis, it will be time to prepare for other aspects of completing your thesis:

**Preliminary pages.** You may want to develop your preliminary pages from the beginning, but if you haven't done so, now is the time to develop those pages. The instructions and examples in the Pacific Thesis and Dissertation Guide are clear and easy to follow.

**Thesis checklist.** When your thesis has been approved by all of your committee members, it will be time to submit your thesis to the University of the Pacific Office of Graduate Studies and Research. In addition to the thesis itself, you also need to turn in the thesis checklist found at the URL below. You will fill it out, check that you have dealt with all of the requirements, and forward it to your advisor for signature. The URL is: <http://www.pacific.edu/Academics/Schools-and-Colleges/Office-of-Research-and-Graduate-Studies/Graduate-Programs/Forms-Resources-and-Services/Forms.html>

**What next?** Certain things are critical at this point:

**Following deadlines.** You must follow all of the deadlines in order to graduate when you want to.

**Pay fees on time.** When you turn in your thesis for its first review, you need to make sure that you have also included your relevant payment.

**Submitting your thesis.** Learn how to submit your thesis electronically by visiting the Pacific website: <http://www.pacific.edu/Academics/Schools-and-Colleges/Graduate-Studies/Forms-Resources-and-Services/Forms.html>

Please contact your faculty advisor if you have any questions about any aspect of this guide or the other materials designed to help you complete your thesis.

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