

# The Principles and Requirements on Thesis Topic Selection and Proposal for Graduate Students of Southeast University

Graduate thesis writing is an important stage for graduate students throughout their studies. It not only further integrates and applies theoretical knowledge that graduate students acquired, but also helps them hone the abilities to do practical work and scientific research. Thesis topic selection is the key, and the thesis proposal is an important prerequisite for ensuring the progress and the quality of the thesis. To ensure the quality of graduate thesis, principles and requirements on topic selection and proposal for master's theses and doctoral dissertations are now proposed.

## I. Topic Selection and Thesis Proposal for Master Students

### (1) Topic Selection

1. The topic should take into account the development of the discipline and practical applications.
2. The topic should be in line with key issues to be addressed in scientific research projects approved by the State.
3. The topic should meet a certain degree of perspective and complexity. Both theoretical analysis and experimental verifications should be included in the thesis (hardware-related works shall be assessed by units concerned).
4. The topic should be closely related to the discipline, major and experiment fields. Basic necessities and conditions including funding, equipment, experimental materials, etc., should be provided to ensure the completion of the topic on time.
5. The supervisor should fully understand the proficiencies and deficiencies of the master's student, and the guidance should incorporate the student's strengths and interests.
6. Supervisors should encourage students to independently prepare the topic, discuss with them when necessary. The topic should be fully surveyed and investigated based on the research orientation in disciplines and majors.

### (2) Thesis Proposal

1. Master's thesis proposal should generally be completed in the third semester. The application for thesis proposal should be submitted online at least one week in advance, and be reviewed by the academic secretary of the school (department, institute).
2. Master's thesis proposal should be formulated on the basis of topic selection and relevant research. The thesis proposal should be presented and discussed within the scope of the discipline (field). Three to five experts (doctors, associate professors and those who hold higher titles) in relevant disciplines (fields) should be invited to the thesis proposal defense. At least five experts (including at least one subject-matter expert) should be invited to the thesis proposal defense for full-time professional master's students. It is required that the thesis proposal defense should be organized within or above the scope of second-level disciplines (fields).
3. The thesis proposal should include the followings:
  - ① The source of the thesis topic (from the State, Ministry of Education, the provincial, municipal and corporate level, or self-selection); topic basis (research trends of the topic at home and abroad should be addressed); the methodologies, methods and the objectives.
  - ② Theoretical and practical value of the thesis topic, and the possible achievements.
  - ③ Methodologies and methods to be applied in the research; the experimental materials and conditions for the completion of the thesis.
  - ④ Difficulties or obstacles to be expected during the research; and the possible solutions and measures.
  - ⑤ Thesis workload.
4. The thesis proposal should be carefully discussed by experts to produce a resolution on thesis quality. The resolution should be carried out by voting and the thesis proposal passes only when approved by more than two-thirds of all members. Master's students should fill out the "Schedule for Thesis Proposal and Writing" in duplicate and submit the resolution within one

week after the conclusion of the thesis proposal defense. Thesis proposals in written forms should be reviewed and signed by the supervisor, with one copy documented in the school (department, institute) for the record and the other kept by the student per se.

5. Master's students can proceed with thesis writing once their thesis proposals are approved and can apply for thesis defense at least half a year after the thesis proposal is reviewed online by the academic secretary of the school (department, institute).

6. The research orientation, in principle, should not be changed once the thesis proposal is approved. Should students need change the research orientation in special cases, a written application must be filed by the student, reviewed and signed by the supervisor, approved by the head of the discipline and the head of the school (department, institute), and submitted to the Graduate School for the record. A new thesis proposal should be submitted alongside the resolution on the thesis proposal defense within 2 months.

7. To ensure the quality of thesis proposals, the pass rate of the master's students' thesis proposals in the same grade is generally controlled at around 90%. Master's students who fail to pass the thesis proposal defense must redo the thesis proposal within 2 months. Students who fail to pass again are subject to "Interim Evaluation and Screening Methods for Master's Students of Southeast University".

8. The Graduate School conducts random inspections and evaluations on Master's thesis proposals of each school (department, institute).

## II. Topic Selection and Dissertation Proposal for Doctoral Students

### (1) Topic Selection

1. The topic should take into account its theoretical significance and practical value, and be closely related to the urgent issues or key scientific research projects at national level.

2. The theoretical basis of the topic should be at the forefront of the discipline, which helps make innovative achievements with scientific value in specific domains.

3. The topic should be in line with the strengths and capacity of the supervisors and their teams.

4. Doctoral students should be interested in and enthusiastic about the selected topic.

### (2) Novelty Check on Dissertation Proposal

To improve the scientific and cutting-edge quality of the dissertation proposal, doctoral students are required to authorize the Library to do novelty check before attending the dissertation proposal defense.

### (3) Dissertation Proposal

1. Dissertation proposal defense should be completed before the end of the fourth semester (or before the end of the sixth semester for students in combined Masters and PhD programs). The application for dissertation proposal should be submitted online at least one week in advance, and reviewed by the academic secretary of the school (department, institute).

2. Dissertation proposals should be formulated based on the newest trends and developments in the topic and relevant disciplines through research, survey and online information retrieval. The dissertation proposal should be presented and discussed within the scope of the discipline (field). Five to seven experts (doctors, associate professors and those who hold higher titles) in relevant disciplines (fields) should be invited to the thesis proposal defense presided over by the supervisor. At least one subject-matter expert must be present at the dissertation proposal defense of doctoral candidates in engineering.

3. The dissertation proposal should include the followings:

① The source of the dissertation topic (from the State, Ministry of Education, the provincial, municipal and corporate level, or self-selection); topic basis (research trends of the topic at home and abroad should be addressed); the methodologies, methods and the objectives.

② New discoveries, patterns, perspectives, hypotheses worth exploring during the research; plans for the next stage of research.

③ Methodologies and methods to be applied in the research; the experimental materials and conditions for the completion of the dissertation.

④ The difficulties or obstacles to be expected during the research; and the possible solutions and measures.

⑤ Dissertation workload.

4. The dissertation proposal should be carefully discussed by experts to produce a resolution on dissertation quality. The resolution should be carried out by voting and the dissertation proposal passes only when approved by more than two-thirds of all members. Doctoral students should fill out the "Schedule for Thesis Proposal and Writing" in duplicate and submit the resolution within one week after the conclusion of the dissertation proposal defense. Dissertation proposals in written forms should be reviewed and signed by the supervisor, with one copy documented in the school (department, institute) for the record and the other kept by the student per se.

5. Doctoral students can proceed with dissertation writing once their dissertation proposals

are approved and can apply for dissertation defense at least one year after the dissertation proposal is reviewed online by the academic secretary of the school(department, institute).

6. The research orientation, in principle, should not be changed once the dissertation proposal is approved. Should students need change the research orientation in special cases, a written application must be filed by the student, reviewed and signed by the supervisor, and submitted to the Graduate School for the record. A new dissertation proposal should be submitted alongside the resolution on the dissertation proposal defense within 3 months.

7. To ensure the quality of dissertation proposals, the pass rate of doctoral students' dissertation proposals in the same grade is generally controlled at around 90%. Doctoral students who fail to pass the dissertation proposal defense must redo the dissertation proposal within 3 months. Students who fail to pass again are subject to "Interim Evaluation and Screening Methods for Doctoral Students of Southeast University".

8. The Graduate School conducts random inspections and evaluations on doctoral dissertation proposals of each school (department, institute).

III. The above regulations shall be interpreted by the Graduate School. Where other relevant provisions are inconsistent with these regulations, the regulations shall prevail.