Thesis Quickstart

Glen Koué
Research Librarian
Dudley Knox Library
(831) 656-7736
gkoue@nps.edu
Thesis Process

• A thesis is a process as well as a product
• Know your required steps
• Create a plan with a schedule
• Do not underestimate the time required
• Time management is key
• Take charge of the process
Thesis Steps

• Select a topic
• Select an advisor
• Thesis proposal
• Research Methodology
• Research
• Analysis
• Draft the thesis
• Advisor review
• Department Chair review
• Thesis Processor review
• Ongoing throughout thesis process
• Synthesize and evaluate existing research
• Identify what is and is not known in literature
• Look for questions, tensions, and unresolved issues
• Develop and refine your topic
• Develop and refine your research methodology
A good topic has clear focus and defined limits

The topic should be
  • of interest to you
  • Researchable
  • Achievable in the time frame

Ways to select a topic
  • Your Classes
  • Literature review
  • Your advisor
  • Department’s and Professors’ lists of thesis topics
  • NPS Theses “Topics for Further Research” sections
• Start considering potential advisors early
• Talk with students ahead of you
• Choose an advisor who is supportive of you
• An ally may be more important than a subject matter expert
• Communicate and meet regularly
• Have questions prepared for meetings
• Overview
  • Background information, scope, significance
• What is known about the issue?
  • Literature review
• What is your research question(s)?
  • Be clear and explicit
• How are you going to answer it?
  • Research methodology
• What are the milestones?
• Research with human subjects
• Research Assistance
• Journal articles & books
  • Not just those at NPS
• NPS Theses
  • Bibliographies as starting points
• Need to be comprehensive
• Keep thorough notes on:
  • Research ideas/strategies
  • Citation information
• Take turn-around time into consideration
• Advisor’s review is an iterative process
• Institutional Review Board review
• Limited Distribution review
• Sponsor Review
• Department Chair review
• Thesis Processor review
• Thesis Processing Website
• Thesis Brief
  • Required in last quarter (Go earlier)
• Submission Guides
• Thesis Templates, Forms
• Resources
• Help