

## **MSES Thesis Concentration**

(18-24 credits)

Students who wish to pursue their own research may do so under the MSES thesis concentration. Note that a master's thesis is generally not required for admission to doctoral programs, although research experience (for example, through graduate assistantships or research internships) is strongly recommended. Students interested in research experience and considering a future doctoral degree should talk with the MSES faculty advisors to determine what kinds of research experience will be most useful to them. It may also be useful to explore webpages of possible doctoral-program websites to determine the desired research experience for applicants in your chosen field.

Students pursue the MSES thesis concentration under the guidance of a major professor and thesis committee comprising at least 3 O'Neill faculty (including the major advisor). Students must find a faculty member willing to work with them as a major professor, and must do so early in their degree, preferably in their first semester. Because of the need for close faculty guidance, O'Neill can only support a few MSES thesis projects at any one time. Many more students obtain research experience (sometimes including co-authorship on journal articles) as GAs and research interns.

After the student has found a major advisor, the two work together to determine whom to ask to join the MSES thesis committee. Once the committee has been established, the student files a Nomination of Advisory Committee for the MSES Thesis form (available in the Forms section of the Current Student Portal) with the O'Neill Records Office ([oneillrc@indiana.edu](mailto:oneillrc@indiana.edu)).

MSES thesis concentrations must have a minimum of 18 credits, comprising environmental science coursework and research credit (E625), and may have as much as 24 credits. The mix of research and courses is designed and agreed upon among the student, major advisor, and other committee members, and is recorded on an MSES Thesis Coursework form (available in the Forms section of the Current Student Portal) submitted to the O'Neill Records Office ([oneillrc@indiana.edu](mailto:oneillrc@indiana.edu)) for approval by the MSES program director.

Students taking the MSES thesis concentration must still meet the requirements for at least 6 credits of Economics/Management/Policy coursework, which will typically fall outside the thesis concentration. The capstone requirement and experiential requirement are met by the thesis concentration: students do not need to take a specific capstone course nor are they required to complete an internship. This does not prevent MSES thesis students from taking a capstone course or undertaking an internship if they wish to do so. However, MSES thesis students who choose to take an internship would not register it with the Career Hub.

Once the thesis research is completed, the student writes up the results as a master's thesis. MSES thesis formatting instructions are in the document MSES Thesis Components, Formatting, and Submission (available in the Forms section of the Current Student Portal). Students and major professors may also choose to publish the MSES thesis research as a journal article. The process of preparing a journal article is separate from the MSES thesis submission process, but the MSES thesis and the article may be quite similar in their content and formatting.

When the full MSES thesis is drafted, the student must successfully defend the thesis, providing a public presentation (typically 30-45 min) about the research and then making a closed-door defense to the thesis committee (typically 1-2 hr). If the thesis is accepted, the committee signs the MSES Thesis Acceptance form (available in the Forms section of the Current Student Portal). If revisions to the thesis are required, the committee may sign the acceptance form at the defense or may request to see the finalized revisions before signing.

After the MSES thesis is accepted and the acceptance form has been signed by the entire committee, the student sends a copy of the final version of the MSES thesis (which includes the signed acceptance form) as a Word document, to the major advisor. The advisor, in turn, transmits electronic copies of the final thesis to the MSES program director, the O'Neill Records Office, and to the librarian who is the head of the Business/O'Neill Information Commons using the appropriate form (available in the Forms section of the Current Student Portal).

This accomplishes two aims. First, it confirms to the Master's Programs Office and to the O'Neill Graduate Records Office that the thesis research (and, usually, the concentration) is completed, and assigns final grades to any E625 research courses that were part of the thesis work. Second, it provides a copy of the MSES thesis to be added to the IU Library System and to be made available to the ProQuest, LLC Dissertation and Thesis portfolio. Researchers and other members of the public can search both the IU Library System and the ProQuest database to find the MSES thesis.

### **The role of the MSES thesis for MPA-MSES students**

The MSES thesis fulfills the concentration requirement for the MSES degree. MPA-MSES students must also complete 9 concentration credits (usually 3 courses) from the MPA curriculum, as outlined in the requirements for the MPA-MSES degree (Option 2 of Dual MPA-MSES Concentrations page). Alternatively, students may choose to complete an entire MPA concentration (Option 3 of Dual MPA-MSES Concentrations page), although the thesis process is demanding, and completing two concentrations may be difficult.

Whereas MSES-only thesis students must meet the 6-credit Economics/Management/Policy MSES requirement, MPA-MSES thesis students do not have such a requirement due to the economics/management/policy content of their MPA-side core.

Completion of the MSES thesis fulfills the capstone and experiential requirements for the MPA-MSES dual degree. This does not prevent MSES thesis students from taking a capstone course or undertaking an internship if they wish to do so. However, MSES thesis students who choose to take an internship would not register it with the Career Hub.