

Hospice and Palliative Studies Research Procedures (TOC for MU Research Guide)

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Section Four

Hospice and Palliative Studies MSHP Research Procedures: Project/Thesis

MSHP RESEARCH PROCEDURES: PROJECT/THESIS

Students may choose to do one of two options to demonstrate competency in the research process:

1. A capstone project (5 s.h.) with an applied research focus.
2. A thesis (3 s.h.) with a focus on knowledge generation and testing.
Statistics (BR 5170) and Research Design (BR 6430) courses are required for the thesis option.

Please note that students who anticipate pursuing postmaster's education should be aware that the thesis may be required for admission to some doctoral programs.

GUIDELINES FOR CAPSTONE PROJECT OPTION:

Hospice and Palliative Studies Capstone Project:

Credit hours: 5 s.h.

HSP 6930 Course Description:

Integration of all previous course work and additional practice experiences in which students deepen their knowledge and skill in the selected area of service. Students address a current issue or opportunity within hospice/palliative/health care settings by completing a capstone project with supervision by faculty advisor/agency preceptor within the palliative/end of life care practice setting. Students also design and complete their professional portfolio. (Prerequisites: HSP 5005, HSP 5010, HSP 6000, HSP 6010, HSP 6020 and selected cognate completed).

The purpose of the research project is to allow the student to demonstrate proficiency in the evaluation and utilization of research, the identification of appropriate problems and challenges in the field of hospice/palliative care, the identification of measurable outcomes, and the application of research findings to facilitate decision making within organizations.

Research Competency:

MSHP students are expected to adhere to similar guidelines that nursing graduate students do as published by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (2006) Research Position Statement, "Master's programs prepare (nurses) students to evaluate research findings and to develop and implement evidence-based practice guidelines. Their leadership skills enable them to form and lead teams within their agencies and professional groups. They identify practice and systems problems that require study, and they collaborate with scientists to initiate research."

To prepare graduates of the MSHP program at Madonna University, students demonstrate research competency by completing an undergraduate or graduate statistics course, and research methodology instruction within Practicum I: HSP 6020. Also, students will have completed **RESEARCH INTEGRITY TRAINING** while enrolled in HSP 6020, and will retain copies of these certificates of completion to submit with the IRB Application.

By the time a graduate student reaches this phase of degree completion, *it is expected that he/she has demonstrated the necessary skills for professional writing that includes the APA Writing Style*. If you need assistance, please inform your advisor so that campus resources can be made available to you.

A number of resources exist that may be helpful to the student including various bibliographic database classes offered by the library and a number of titles available through Pyczak Press such as *Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, 4th ed.*, by Jose L. Galvan and *Writing Empirical Research Reports: A Basic Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Science, 5th ed.*, by Fred Pyczak and Randall R. Bruce.

The Writing Center has many resources available at <http://www.madonna.edu/resources/writingprograms> to assist with both conceptual elements of writing and APA style.

Invaluable resources to facilitate mastering APA style as reflected in *The Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition, (hereafter referred to as the *APA Manual*) are available through the American Psychological Association website at <http://www.apastyle.org/>

Procedures:

In collaboration with the selected research advisor and key organizational personnel in agencies throughout the community, the student will negotiate involvement in an agency based research project, appropriate to student's specialty area (e.g, hospice and palliative nursing, spiritual care, bereavement, administration). A second reader is optional.

Selection of a Capstone Project Advisor:

The student will select a doctorally-prepared hospice faculty member who teaches in the Hospice and Palliative Studies Department, as the Research Advisor, in consultation with his/her specialty advisor if desired. With the guidance of the Research Advisor the student will develop a project proposal. Once the proposal has been approved by the Research Advisor and the IRB of Madonna University, the student will carry out the project as defined.

FAMILIARIZE yourself with the *Madonna University Research Guide* and the corresponding sections and then SCHEDULE an orientation meeting with your advisor to discuss this process and any questions you may have.

Format for Capstone Project:

All the information you will need is in the *Madonna University Research Guide*. The student is encouraged to consult with the Research Advisor to review appropriate format for preparing the initial proposal and the finished copy of the project manuscript.

For completion of the research capstone project, the student will choose from one of the following options:

1. **Evaluation Research Project:** The student identifies an area of inquiry and a specific role within a hospice agency. The student is required to assess the current state of knowledge related to the problem, and to then be selectively involved in planning the study, identifying data sources, specifying data collection procedures, conducting data analysis, using computer resources when appropriate to analyze data, and present results. Whenever possible, existing agency information systems for data retrieval and/or storage should be used. Emphasis will be placed on implications for organizational decision making, with specific recommendations for changes in practice to improve the quality of patient and family care.
2. **CQI Project:** The student will work collaboratively with appropriate hospice/palliative agency personnel, participating on a hospice/palliative based CQI team. For the CQI project, the student is required to assess the current state of knowledge about the identified problem, and then be selectively involved in the identification of the data source (using existing agency information systems for data retrieval and storage), data collection, and data analysis using appropriate statistical analysis techniques. Statistical quality control models focused on reducing variation in processes will be used to make recommendations for changes in practice.

Analysis of results using either option described above will need to include discussion and implications specific to hospice and palliative care.

For either option above, the focus is on research utilization versus theory testing or generation of research. The student will submit a manuscript suitable for publication using the APA writing style that describes the project experience. This may take the form of a theoretical, review, or research article.

ACTON STEPS FOR CAPSTONE PROJECT OPTIONS:

The steps below illustrate an approximate timeline for students to follow when completing the requirements for a capstone project (HSP 6930). At the initial meeting with a selected advisor, the student will review and discuss this timeline. It is essential that you follow the steps in the order listed below.

- Step 1 ~ Begin thinking about a project area/topic at the end of second semester, catalog ideas, journal articles, and books; pay attention to “implications for future research” in professional journal articles
- Step 2 ~ Completion of Hospice and Palliative core courses (16 s.h.) and cognate courses (9-11 s.h.)
- Step 3 ~ Select Research Advisor
- Step 4 ~ Enroll in HSP 6930 (5 s.h.): **Practicum II and Project** (Palliative/EOL Capstone)
You only enroll once, and then this course is good for three academic terms to allow for ongoing work in progress. Extensions are sometimes needed and can be granted upon request (if you need an extension, contact the Center for Research)
- Step 5 ~ Begin Literature Review to explore relevant literature, develop conceptual and theoretical foundation for project topic/area of interest
- Step 6 ~ Draft a capstone project research proposal (based on course text for 6930).
Note process is done *completely online* with electronic submission.
- Step 7 ~ Write letters/email to obtain written approval from administrative person(s) responsible for access to potential subjects/participants in settings where project will be collected and findings implemented (these must be included in your IRB application as appendices)
- Step 8 ~ Confirm that the Center for Research has your Research Integrity Training Certificates on file as completed in HSP 6020 (if not then complete and forward to them).
- Step 9 ~ Schedule time with Research Advisor to discuss parameters of project; Review the IRB application requirements and submit application to IRB for exempt, expedited, or full review approval
- Step 10 ~ Meet IRB committee requirements of other institutions as needed (e.g., hospital, IRB – discuss w/ Research Advisor as there is a form and established process for this)

PLEASE NOTE: Research with human subjects (i.e., data collection) may NOT BE INITIATED without prior IRB Approval. The Chair of the Madonna University IRB sends a notice in writing to you (by email and hard copy) once the IRB Committee has approved requested status (e.g., exempt, expedited or full committee review). Most MSHP students request and are granted Exempt Status. Once you receive this, you may proceed with data collection.

Step 11 ~ The Chair of the IRB notifies student and advisor of the outcome of application; this request is maintained on file for a period of one year in the Center for Research.

Step 12 ~ May need to meet with statistical consultant to review project design and analysis; Investigate Madonna University Computer Lab for statistical packages and available assistance (e.g., SPSS; Excel)

Step 13 ~ Begin collection of data; organize/develop a process; analyze data and write manuscript); meet with advisor as necessary

Step 14 ~ Submit final “draft” copy of manuscript to advisor (usually as an email attachment)

Step 15 ~ Complete edits/changes for final version of manuscript.

Step 16 ~ Submit perfect copy of manuscript to advisor and Chair of Hospice and Palliative Studies for written approval of content and format

Step 17 ~ Receive grade for HSP 6930 Research Project (5 s.h.). Grading Criterion are listed in Appendix A.

Recommended Outline for a Capstone Project Proposal:

- I. Introduction
 - Identify the topic
 - Establish the importance of the topic
- II. Significance of practice initiative in a particular setting, e.g., drivers for change, improvement, innovation
 - Statement of problem/issue to be addressed in project
 - Situate initiative in particulars of organization, e.g., organizational context, likely # of people to be impacted, baseline rates of phenomenon if appropriate
- III. Literature Review - to summarize relevant existing theory, evidence-based practice knowledge, and opportunities for innovation/change
 - Introductory paragraph regarding the organization/presentation of the literature review
 - Review of relevant theory/knowledge related to conceptualization of the topic

- Review of state of current practices
 - Review of evidence-based/empirical literature to assure desired outcomes of project
- IV. Identification of selected framework facilitating design of capstone project
(e.g., from theory relevant to topic/phenomenon or QI model to facilitate project)
- May include diagram if desired
- V. Purpose of the study usually an expansion of the significance statement, logically derived from the review of the literature and current evidence-based practice and particularized to your setting answering the “why here in this setting” and “why now in this setting” type of general questions.
- VI. Conceptual definitions of concepts/variables
- VII. Operational definitions/empirical indicators specifically linked to how data will be collected and analyzed (include specific measures of the variables)
- VIII. Specific questions to be answered by the project
- Likely to use quality or change language for wording of questions vs. hypothesis as most projects will not have the control implied in experimental studies
- IX. Method
- Project design
 - Setting and sample, inclusion and exclusion criteria
 - Human subjects considerations (IRB)
 - Data collection procedures
 - Description of intervention/practice change/innovation
 - Measurement – i.e., data sources
 - must discuss relevant specificity or reliability and validity
 - Data analysis plan
 - Statistics to describe sampling unit
 - Statistical analyses to be done linked to each specific project question (i.e., t-test, ANOVA, control chart, run chart).
- X. References
- XI. Appendixes:
- Letters of Permission
 - Instruments
 - Actual data collection forms

IRB Specifications:

NOTE: Before you can begin the project, completed IRB Application must be signed by the Research Advisor, and then approved by the IRB with written consent on file at the Center for Research. Web pages for specific forms to be completed and submission procedures can be found at:

<https://www.madonna.edu/resources/center-for-research/institutional-review->

Students will have completed **RESEARCH INTEGRITY TRAINING** while enrolled in HSP 6020, and will retain copies of these certificates of completion to submit with the IRB Application.

General Pointers Regarding Capstone Project Manuscript Preparation:

Statement of the Problem (Written in the present tense)

Formulating a problem statement is one of the major steps in the research process. The problem is refined by beginning with a general problem of interest and moving to more specific issues. This section of the research is the development of your argument regarding the need and value of your study. This argument can best be supported by carefully selected references, including statistics, that help the reader (and you) become convinced of the importance of the study; that is, the importance of solving the problem identified via scientific inquiry. It is important to make clear, direct statements.

The statement of the problem section of the manuscript should also include a general statement of the significance of this study to EOL care practice. Additionally, the purpose of the study should state what it is that you intend to solve or answer through your research question or study aims.

Literature Review (Written in past tense)

The literature review sets the foundation for the study's research questions/quality improvement aims. A careful review and critique of published (and some unpublished) materials helps you to mentally clarify and delineate your problem. This section should focus on research and other important works that are relevant to your problem. The review effort helps you to become familiar with other works that demonstrate gaps and shortcomings in the area of concern. For instance, what work has been done to date? What more work needs to be done? Would a replication of a specific study with a similar sample of subjects add to the body of knowledge?

An exhaustive review of literature documents the source of your idea and substantiates the rationale behind your questions/project aims. Cite only those references that are relevant to your research questions. Use primary sources. Few, if any, secondary sources are to be cited.

Be certain to include research studies pertinent to your study. As each literature source is reviewed, critically check out the problem, methods and procedures, analysis, findings/ conclusions drawn - its strengths and limitations. Look for gaps and shortcomings in previous work! Presenting work done to date and indicating why more work needs to be done equals justification for your study. Remember that a literature review analyzes previous works and is not merely a summary.

Note that a written review of the literature should flow; that is, pull together several studies (Jones, 2003; Smith, 2001; White & Brown, 2004) to emphasize a point. Detail only those reports that are especially pertinent to your research - sample, instrument, data collection procedures, findings, conclusions. The majority of citations should be recent (less than 10 years).

A review of literature pertaining to conceptual or theoretical framework is a part of the overall literature review, rather than a separate entity (Brink & Wood, 1988). Diagram theoretical/conceptual model, if applicable.

Keep track of all references during the literature review. It is very difficult and time consuming to later "hunt" for specific, but necessary, citations. Use APA style for listing.

A conceptual definition provides a variable or concept with theoretical meaning and is derived from a theorist's definition of the concept or is developed through concept analysis. The conceptual definition provides a basis for formulating an operational definition. These are developed through the synthesis of the conceptual literature review within the framework of the proposed study. A conceptual definition often requires a paragraph or more of text for clarity in the proposal stage. In final manuscript preparation, adhering to guidelines of page length for the targeted journal will require significant editing of this section of the manuscript.

Operational definitions must be consistent with the conceptual definitions. These definitions need to be clear and concise, and specify how each variable of your research questions/ hypotheses/aims will be measured.

One usually states hypotheses/research questions/specific aims at the conclusion of Literature Review section.

Methods and Procedures (Written in past tense)*

Identify the type of research design (e.g., descriptive correlational, QI process improvement) to be used to answer research question/specific aims/or test hypotheses and give a brief explanation about the design. Use research texts to put together a clear description of the selected research design. Cite the reference you use to support the chosen design. The description will help you validate that the chosen design is the correct one! Show a diagram of your design if useful for understanding.

Clearly describe setting and sample. Setting means the site(s) where subjects are to be accessed. Indicate sampling methodology, size, and description. State the criteria for sample selection or omission. If the design is a records review, the sample consists of the records, not the person whose records they are. Diagram of sampling plan may be appropriate (may be used in conjunction with overall research design model).

Identify human subjects considerations and how refusal/attrition of subjects will be documented. Describe specific measures to protect rights of human subjects. A sample of the consent form is to be included in the Appendix, as well as the approval of the Madonna University IRB.

Present the instrumentation or method of measuring variables under study. Clearly describe the instrument including its sources, number of items, scoring, reliability/validity considerations, and pretest information if appropriate. The complete instrument plus letter of permission, if applicable, appear in the Appendix. If you plan an intervention with subjects, describe in detail. Identify all important aspects of protocols to be followed with both treatment and control groups.

Describe procedures for data collection - how to access subjects; how data will be collected over what time period; by whom it will be collected; i.e., any criteria for selection and training of data collectors.

Identify analyses to be done to examine each hypothesis/research question/specific aim. Use statistical references to refresh your memory on assumptions/requirements for various tests. Identify levels of significance. Consult a statistician as necessary.

* Please Note: Proposal will be written in future tense. Once study is completed, then change to past tense.

Findings (Written in past tense)

Present demographic findings - statistical description of subjects. Use Appendix as needed to present data fully but concisely.

Only the results of the analysis are presented in narrative form without interpretation! Restate each hypothesis /research question or specific aim and its results in sequential order, including the actual statistic, degree of freedom, and probability level for each test such as . . . analysis of variance ($F_{2,38} = 5.4; p = .001$) as appropriate.

Refer appropriately to each summary table or figure as you explain the results. You should generally present findings in both narrative and tabular form for each question or hypothesis. The narrative should summarize the table, not repeat it.

Present any unhypothesized findings that relate to your study. Any qualitative findings may also be addressed (such as unsolicited written responses) from subjects.

Conclusion (Written in past to present tense)

To begin, briefly summarize the premise of the study, review of literature, and findings. Continue by interpreting the findings in the order that the research questions/hypotheses/aims were stated.

Address the overall meaning of the data in response to the research question/aims/problem statement originally presented. Do your data provide a clear answer or solution? If not, do they provide a partial answer or do they lead to further questions? Are there any unexpected conclusions?

Discuss how your findings compare to those conclusions of studies identified in your literature review.

Discuss the major limitations of your study with respect to credibility, generalizability, or usefulness of findings.

Discuss suggestions for further research. Be specific in questions or problems for further study - make clear their importance and feasibility of studying them. Comparison of your findings with those of other investigators can add strength for need for further study or indicate a different direction for study.

Discuss implications of your study for EOL care practice in your major area. What changes in practice are suggested by the results? You can propose changes, but be careful not to overstate the data.

Presentation Requirement:

MSHP students who completed a capstone project are asked to further promote awareness of hospice and palliative practice, thus it is strongly recommended that the student offer an in-service to share the outcome and applicability/implications of the project in the hospice/palliative care or hospital setting where the project was completed. In addition, the student is invited to participate in the annual Research Symposium event hosted by the Madonna University Center for Research, and display study parameters and findings with implications, via poster board or related presentation medium, insuring interdepartmental dissemination of knowledge with faculty, students, and professionals in the field.

Grading Criteria: The student's grade for the capstone project will be determined by the advisor. Criteria to evaluate the completed research effort can be found in Appendix A. Note that students will receive the grade of Y until the final manuscript is submitted following completion of the project.

Application for Degree

Students must file an Application for Degree Form at the beginning of the semester prior to the expected semester of graduation (i.e., students planning to graduate in May would file their Application for Degree Form in September). Specific dates for each semester are available in the

class schedule calendar or can be determined by contacting The Graduate School. Students also may pick up the Application for Degree in the Graduate School, or at the Billing Office and pay the graduation fee at this time, or download it from www.madonna.edu, Graduate School home page. The Application must be signed by the Chair of the Hospice and Palliative Studies Department. Students must file an Application for Degree regardless of whether or not they will attend the graduation ceremony. Please note that the graduate student's Application for Degree Form is different from the undergraduate form and must be obtained directly from The Graduate School or the web site.

GUIDELINES FOR THESIS OPTION

Hospice and Palliative Studies Research Thesis:

Credit hours: 3 s.h.

HSP 6840 Course Description

Preparation, composition, and completion of a thesis or project related to hospice and palliative studies/end-of-life care. Discussion of legal and ethical issues related to research within a hospice setting. Research procedures and requirements specific to Madonna University discussed. Students work with a thesis advisor to assure agreement as to goals. Prerequisite: all core courses, cognates, and electives must have been completed and a thesis advisor selected.

The thesis is an independent investigation of a hospice/palliative care problem using a selected conceptual framework and research methodology. The thesis focuses on the generation or testing of knowledge. All hospice and palliative studies core courses, cognates and electives must be completed and thesis advisor selected prior to enrolling in HSP 6840.

Research Ideas and Focus of Study:

Students are urged to begin identification of a research topic early in their course of study even though this may mean rejecting many preliminary ideas. Work on a Master's degree means one is specializing in or focusing on a specific area within hospice and palliative care disciplines. Support courses might cite interesting studies that could relate to a long held interest or be suitable for replication in an EOL care setting. For the most expeditious use of study time, students should begin early to collect, organize, and file interesting citations for future research.

Research Competency

MSHP Students are expected to develop their research skills throughout the program and demonstrate this skill in the final research competency course, HSP 6840. The student should plan to meet with his/her academic advisor to develop a plan toward this end. Each plan will be somewhat individualized based on the strengths and abilities the student brings to the thesis option.

By the time a graduate student reaches this phase of degree completion, *it is expected that he/she has demonstrated the necessary skills for professional writing that includes the APA Writing Style*. If you need assistance, please inform your advisor so that campus resources can be made available to you.

A number of resources exist that may be helpful to the student including various bibliographic database classes offered by the library and a number of titles available through Pyczak Press such as *Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, 4th ed.*, by Jose L. Galvan and *Writing Empirical Research Reports: A Basic Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Science, 5th ed.*, by Fred Pyczak and Randall R. Bruce.

The Writing Center has many resources available at <http://www.madonna.edu/resources/writingprograms> to assist with both conceptual elements of writing and APA style.

Invaluable resources to facilitate mastering APA style as reflected in *The Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition, (hereafter referred to as the *APA Manual*) are available through the American Psychological Association website at <http://www.apastyle.org/>

All students will receive preparation for thesis proposal and Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application processes in BR 5170 and BR 6430, taken prior to enrollment in HSP 6840 (your final class in the plan of study).

Students will have completed **RESEARCH INTEGRITY TRAINING** while enrolled in BR 5170 and will retain copies of these certificates of completion to submit with the IRB Application.

Upon completion of the study, the student will finalize the thesis manuscript according to the criteria set forth in the *Madonna University Research Guide*. When the manuscript has been approved and signed by the thesis advisor and the Reader, two unbound copies of the approved thesis will be submitted by the student to The Graduate School for binding (see “Action Steps” on the following page).

Procedures:

Selection of a Research Advisor:

The student will select a doctorally-prepared hospice faculty member who teaches in the Hospice and Palliative Studies Department, as the Research Advisor, in consultation with his/her specialty advisor if desired. A second faculty member, called the Reader, who has expertise related to the focus of the thesis or research methods may also be selected (optional). With the guidance of the Research Advisor and Reader, the student will develop a research proposal. Once

the proposal has been approved by the thesis/Research Advisor, Reader, and the IRB of Madonna University, the student will carry out the research study. The focus of the thesis is theory-generating or theory-testing research in one's specialty area. As such, there should be a strong integration of the conceptual or theoretical framework.

FAMILIARIZE yourself with the *Madonna University Research Guide* and the corresponding sections and then SCHEDULE an orientation meeting with your advisor to discuss this process and any questions you may have.

Format for Research Thesis:

All the information you will need is in the *Madonna University Research Guide*. The student is encouraged to read all pertinent information prior to proposing/designing one's thesis. The student is encouraged to consult with selected advisor to review appropriate format for preparing the initial proposal and the finished copy of the manuscript. Research requirements specific to Madonna University are presented as well.

ACTION STEPS FOR THESIS OPTION

The steps below illustrate an approximate timeline for students to follow when completing the requirements for a thesis (BR 5170; BR 6430; HSP 6840). At the initial meeting with a selected advisor, the student will review and discuss this timeline. It is essential that you follow the steps in the order listed below.

Step 1 ~ Begin thinking about a project/thesis topic at the end of second semester; catalog ideas, articles, and books; pay attention to "implications for future research" in professional journal articles

Step 2 ~ Completion of Hospice and Palliative Studies core courses (16 s.h.) and Cognate specialty (9-11 s.h.)

Step 3 ~ Enroll in BR 5170 Quantitative Methods for Leadership Roles (3 s.h.). Pay close attention to the sequencing of research courses (BR 5170 and BR 6430). **Follow your established plan of study.**

Step 4 ~ Select research advisor

Step 5 ~ Begin Literature Review at end of term in BR 5170

Step 6 ~ Develop ideas for a topic and draft of research proposal (development of a research proposal is the focus of BR 6430 – see Step 8).

Step 7 ~ Select second reader with advisor's assistance (this step is optional)

Step 8 ~ Enroll in BR 6430 Managerial Research Design (**offered Fall Semester only**) (3 s.h.). Focus of class is completing the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application and your Research Proposal (i.e., Statement of the Problem, Literature Review, Methodology,

Instrument Development); Submit to research advisor and BR 6430 instructor for review.

Step 9 ~ Schedule time with your advisor to discuss research topic and design; revise and Complete IRB application and research proposal as necessary

Step 10 ~ Write letter(s) to obtain written approval from administrative person responsible for access to potential subjects/participants in settings where study may be conducted. (These must be included in your IRB application as appendices)

Step 11 ~ Meet with advisor as needed

Step 12 ~ While enrolled in BR 6430 students submit the IRB application and proposal to the Center for Research for exempt, expedited or full review approval. NOTE: This process is done *completely online*, i.e., ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION.

Step 13 ~ Meet IRB committee requirements of other institutions as needed. (e.g., Hospital IRB – discuss with advisor as there is a form and established process for this).

PLEASE NOTE: Research with human subjects (i.e., data collection) may NOT BE INITIATED without prior IRB Approval. The Chair of the Madonna University IRB sends a notice in writing to you (by email and hard copy) once IRB Committee members have approved the requested status (e.g., exempt, expedited or full committee review). Most MSHP students request and are granted Exempt Status. Once you receive this, you may proceed with data collection.

Step 14 ~ The Chair of the IRB notifies student and advisor of the outcome of application; this request is maintained on file for a period of one year in the Center for Research.

Step 15 ~ May need to meet with statistical consultant to review research design and analysis; Investigate Madonna University Computer Lab for statistical packages and available assistance (e.g., SPSS; Excel)

Step 16 ~ Enroll in HSP 6840 Research Project/Thesis (3 s.h.) NOTE: All core courses, cognates and electives must be completed and thesis advisor selected. You only enroll once, and then this course is good for three academic terms to allow for ongoing work in progress. Extensions are sometimes needed and can be granted upon request (if you need an extension, contact the Center for Research)

Step 17 ~ Complete research (analyze data and write manuscript); meet with advisor as necessary

Step 18 ~ Submit final “draft” copy of manuscript to advisor (usually as an email attachment) and if applicable to second reader for approval by established deadline

Step 19 ~ Complete edits/changes for final version of manuscript.

Step 20 ~ Submit perfect copy of manuscript to advisor and Chair of Hospice and Palliative Studies for written approval of content and format. Then submit this approved copy to the Dean of the Graduate School for final written approval.

Step 21~ Refer to the *Madonna University Research Guide* for specific paper weight for final printing and payment of thesis processing fees. Submit two (one for student; one for Library) unbound manuscripts of approved thesis to advisor and Chair of Hospice and Palliative Studies for signatures and to the Graduate School for final processing. Additional bound copies are requested at the discretion of the student for a fee.

Step 22~ Receive grade for HSP 6840 Research Project/Thesis (3 s.h.). Criteria to evaluate the completed research effort can be found in Appendix B.

Recommended Outline(s) and Content for Thesis:

For a thesis involving either qualitative or quantitative design, a recommended outline and content organization is provided below.

Quantitative Thesis

Chapter I Statement of the Problem
 . Statement of the problem
 . General background
 . Specific background
 . Significance of study to nursing
 . Purpose of the study

Chapter II Literature Review
 . Introductory statement re: how you propose to conduct literature review (areas of focus)
 . Review of relevant theoretical literature
 . Review of relevant research literature
 . Conceptual framework (if applicable)

- . Summary of existing knowledge and gaps in knowledge base
- . Conceptual definitions of research variables
- . Operational Definitions (of variables)
- . Research hypotheses and/or questions
(identify dependent and independent variables, as appropriate)

Chapter III Methods

- . Research design
- . Setting and sample
- . Human subjects considerations
- . Instrumentation (include reliability and validity discussion)
- . Intervention (if applicable)
- . Data collection procedures
- . Data analysis procedures

Chapter IV Results

- . Demographic findings
- . Results of analysis (restate each research hypothesis/question)
- . Hypothesized findings - quantitative or qualitative

Chapter V Discussion

- . Summary of Chapters 1-4
- . Interpretations of findings in sequential order. (Start with first research)
- . Overall meaning of data (conclusions)
- . Comparison of your findings to others
- . Major limitations
- . Suggestion for future research
- . Implications for nursing practice in your major

References

- Appendixes
- . Letters of Permission
 - . Instruments
 - . Human Subjects Approval

Qualitative Thesis

Chapter I Statement of the Problem

- . Identify phenomenon of interest
- . Identify type of qualitative study to be conducted

- . Describe theoretical perspective
- . Relate significance of study to nursing
- . State purpose of study
- . Identify research questions

Chapter II Literature Review

- . The purpose and timing of the literature review will vary, based on the type of study to be conducted

Chapter III Methods

- . Introduction
- . Describe researcher's and advisor's credentials for qualitative research
- . Describe setting and sample
- . Describe researcher's role
- . Describe collection procedures
- . Describe plans for communicating finding

Chapter IV Results

- . Describe sample
- . Describe data analysis procedures
- . Present results (restate each research question)

Chapter V Discussion

- . Present conclusions
- . Discuss implications for nursing
- . Identify recommendations for further research

References

- Appendixes
- . Letters of permission
 - . Instruments
 - . Human Subjects Approval

Adapted from Burns and Grove (1997)

I. Statement of the Problem (present tense)

1. Formulating a problem statement is one of the major steps in the research process. The problem is refined by beginning with a general problem of interest and moving to specific issues. This section of the research is the development of your argument for the need and value of your study. This argument can best be supported by carefully selected references, including statistics, that help the reader (and you) become convinced of the importance of the study; that is, the importance of solving the problem identified via scientific inquiry. It is important to make clear, direct statements.
2. The first chapter should also include a general statement of the significance of this study to nursing practice specifically your major.
3. Purpose of the study (a distinct part of Chapter One) states a way that you intend to solve or answer your research question.

<p>The purpose of this study is to investigate (explore, examine, etc) More specifically, the following research questions are raised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3. <p>(sample)</p>

II. Literature Review (past tense)

4. The literature review sets the foundation for the study's research questions (Balian, 1988). A careful review and critique of published (and some unpublished) materials helps you to mentally clarify and delineate your problem. This section should focus on research and other important works that are relevant to your problem. The review effort helps you to become familiar with other works that demonstrate gaps and shortcomings in the area of concern. For instance, what work has been done to date? What more work needs to be done? Would a replication of a specific study with a similar sample of subjects add to the body of knowledge?
5. Exhaustive review of literature documents the source of your idea and substantiates the rationale behind your questions (Brink & Wood, 1988). Cite only those references that are relevant to your research questions. Use primary sources. Few, if any, secondary sources are to be cited. Consult Polit and Hungler (1995) to clarify primary works.

6. Be certain to include research studies pertinent to your study. As each literature source is reviewed, critically check out the problem, methods and procedures, analysis, findings/conclusions drawn (Brink & Wood, 1988) - its strengths and limitations. Look for gaps and shortcomings in previous work! Presenting work done to date and indicating why more work needs to be done equals justification for your study. Remember that a literature review analyzes previous works and is not merely a summary.
7. Note that a written review of the literature should flow; that is, pull together several studies (Jones, 2003; Smith, 2001; White & Brown, 2004) to emphasize a point. Detail only those reports which are especially pertinent to your research - sample, instrument, data collection procedures, findings, conclusions. The majority of citations should be recent (less than 10 years).
8. Review of literature pertaining to conceptual or theoretical framework is a part of the overall literature review, rather than a separate entity (Brink & Wood, 1988). Diagram theoretical/conceptual model, if applicable.
9. Keep track of all references during the literature review. It is very difficult and time-consuming to later "hunt" for specific, but necessary, citations. Use APA style for listing.
10. A conceptual definition provides a variable or concept with theoretical meaning (Fawcett & Downs, 1986) and is derived from a theorist's definition of the concept or is developed through concept analysis. The conceptual definition provides a basis for formulating an operational definition (Burns & Grove, 1997). It is developed through the synthesis of the conceptual literature review within the framework of the proposed study. A conceptual definition often requires a paragraph or more of text for clarity.
11. Operational definitions must be consistent with the conceptual definitions. These definitions need to be clear and concise, and specify how each variable of your research questions or hypotheses will be measured.
12. State hypotheses and/or research questions at conclusion of Literature Review. No null hypothesis is necessary unless it is your research hypothesis. $H_{(R)1}$: There is a significant relationship between X and Y.

III. Methods and Procedures (past tense)*

13. Identify the type of research design (e.g., descriptive correlational) to be used to answer research question or test research hypothesis and give a brief explanation about the design. Use your research texts to put together a clear description of the selected research design. Cite the reference you use to support the chosen design. The description will help you validate that the chosen design is the correct one! Show a diagram of your design if useful for understanding. Clearly identify each dependent and independent variable of each hypothesis.

14. Clearly describe setting and sample. Setting means the site(s) where subjects are to be accessed. Indicate sampling methodology, size, and description. State the criteria for sample selection or omission. If the design is a records review, the sample consists of the records, not the person whose records they are. Diagram of sampling plan may be appropriate (may be used in conjunction with overall research design model).
15. Identify human subjects considerations and how refusal/attrition of subjects will be documented. Describe specific measures to protect rights of human subjects. A sample of the consent form is to be included in the Appendix, as well as the approval of the Madonna University Human Subjects Review Committee.
16. Present the instrumentation or method of measuring variables under study. Clearly describe the instrument including its sources, number of items, scoring reliability/validity considerations, and pretest information. The complete instrument plus letter of permission, if applicable, appear in the Appendix.
17. If you plan an intervention with subjects, describe in detail. Identify all important aspects of protocols to be followed with both treatment and control groups.
18. Describe procedures for data collection - how to access subjects; how data will be collected over what time period; by whom it will be collected; i.e., any criteria for selection and training of data collectors.
19. Identify analyses to be done to examine each hypothesis or research question. Use statistical reference to refresh your memory on assumptions/requirements for various tests. Identify levels of significance. Consult a statistician as necessary.

* Please Note:

Proposal will be written in **future tense**. Once study is completed, then change to **past tense**.

IV. Findings (past tense)

20. Present demographic findings - statistical description of subjects. Use Appendix as needed to present data fully but concisely.
21. Only the results of the analysis are presented in narrative form without interpretation! Restate each hypothesis and/or research question and its results in sequential order, including the actual statistic, degree of freedom, and probability level for each test such as . . . analysis of variance ($F_{2,38} = 5.4; p=.001$) (APA, 1994, p. 112-113). Refer appropriately to each summary table or figure as you explain the results. (See APA, 1994, p. 125-126). You should generally present findings in both narrative and tabular form for each question or hypothesis. The narrative should summarize the table, not repeat it.

22. Present any unhypothesized findings which relate to research. Any qualitative findings may also be addressed (such as unsolicited written responses) from subjects.

V. Conclusion (past to present)

23. To begin, briefly summarize the four preceding chapters. Continue by interpreting the findings in the order that the research questions/hypotheses were stated.
24. Address the overall meaning of the data in response to the research question/problem statement presented in Chapter One. Do your data provide a clear answer or solution? If not, do they provide a partial answer or do they lead to further questions? Are there any unexpected conclusions?
25. Discuss how your findings compare to those conclusions of studies identified in your literature review.
26. Discuss the major limitations of your study with respect to credibility, generalizability, or usefulness of findings.
27. Discuss suggestions for further research (e.g., replication of the study in another area of the country, perhaps using a somewhat different population). Be specific in questions or problems for further study - make clear their importance and feasibility of studying them. Comparison of your findings with those of other investigators can add strength for need for further study or indicate a different direction for study (Tornquist 1986, 114-115).
28. Discuss implications of your study for EOL care practice in your major area. What changes in practice are suggested by the results? You can propose changes, but be careful not to overstate the data.

Presentation Requirement:

In May of each year, MSHP students who graduated and completed a thesis are invited to a research brown bag on campus to share their research experiences with each other and other interested faculty or professionals in the field. In addition, to further promote awareness of hospice and palliative studies, it is recommended that the student offer an in-service to share the research experience and implications of the study for hospice/palliative care. This may best be done at one's workplace or setting where the research was conducted.

Grading Criteria:

The student's grade for the thesis will be determined by the advisor. Criteria to evaluate the completed research effort can be found in Appendix B. Note that students will receive the grade of Y until the final manuscript is submitted following completion of the thesis.

Application for Degree

Students must file an Application for Degree Form at the beginning of the semester prior to the expected semester of graduation (i.e., students planning to graduate in May would file their Application for Degree Form in September). Specific dates for each semester are available in the class schedule calendar or can be determined by contacting The Graduate School. Students also may pick up the Application for Degree in the Graduate School, or at the Billing Office and pay the graduation fee at this time, or download it from www.madonna.edu, Graduate School home page. The Application must be signed by the Chair of the Hospice and Palliative Studies Department. Students must file an Application for Degree regardless of whether or not they will attend the graduation ceremony. Please note that the graduate student's Application for Degree Form is different from the undergraduate form and must be obtained directly from The Graduate School or the web site.

Submitted with special gratitude:

The faculty in Hospice and Palliative Studies gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all persons involved in the creation of the policies and procedures for the *Madonna University Research Guide*. We are especially grateful to the Graduate Faculty Advisors in the College of Nursing and Health who graciously shared their time and previously developed materials in the development of the MSHP Research Procedures.

APPENDIX A. Grading Criteria for Capstone Project

Criteria for A Grade	Criteria for B Grade	Criteria for F Grade
<p>Demonstrates exceptional ability to communicate the practice initiative in the stipulated written format.</p> <p>Demonstrates exceptional comprehension of an evidence-based practice change process.</p> <p>Demonstrates exceptional use of appropriate technology and analytical and empirical methods to implement the practice change to assure the desired outcomes.</p> <p>Demonstrates exceptional levels of accountability, clinical judgment, & systems thinking when implementing an evidence-based project.</p> <p>Maintains ethical standards in the conduct of the practice initiative. Approaches research work in a conscientious and professional manner.</p> <p>Progresses from candidacy to project completion within a reasonable time period (i.e. usually within two semesters or as individually negotiated with chair).</p>	<p>Demonstrates adequate ability to communicate the practice initiative in the stipulated written format.</p> <p>Demonstrates adequate comprehension of an evidence-based practice change process.</p> <p>Demonstrates adequate use of appropriate technology and analytical and empirical methods to implement the practice change to assure the desired outcomes.</p> <p>Demonstrates adequate levels of accountability, clinical judgment, & systems thinking when implementing an evidence-based project.</p> <p>Maintains ethical standards in the conduct of the practice initiative. Approaches research work in a conscientious and professional manner.</p> <p>Does not progress to project completion as individually negotiated with chair.</p> <p>Requires extensive direction and assistance to prepare manuscript in stipulated format.</p>	<p>Demonstrates inadequate ability to communicate the practice initiative in the stipulated written format.</p> <p>Demonstrates inadequate comprehension of an evidence-based practice change process.</p> <p>Demonstrates inadequate use of appropriate technology and analytical and empirical methods to implement the practice change to assure the desired outcomes.</p> <p>Demonstrates inadequate levels of accountability, clinical judgment, & systems thinking when complementing an evidence-based project.</p> <p>Breaches ethical standards in the conduct of the practice initiative.</p> <p>Exceeds published time limitations for graduation with MSHP degree or continuation credits.</p>

APPENDIX B. Grading Criteria for Thesis

Advisors of MSHP students will use the following criteria to evaluate the completed research effort:

<u>Criteria for "A" grade</u>	<u>Criteria for "B" grade</u>	<u>Criteria for "F" grade</u>
Demonstrates exceptional ability to communicate the research process in a written format.	Demonstrates adequate ability to communicate the research process in written format.	Demonstrates inadequate communication of the research process in written format.
Demonstrates above average comprehension of the research process.	Demonstrates adequate comprehension of the research process	Demonstrates inadequate comprehension of the research process.
Maintains ethical standards in the conduct of research	Maintains ethical standards in the conduct of research.	Breaches ethical standards in the conduct of research.
Relates the research process to advanced practice hospice and palliative care roles with minimal guidance from Research Advisor.	Relates the research process to advanced practice hospice and palliative care roles with specific and repeated guidance from the Research Advisor.	Unable to relate the research process to advanced practice hospice and palliative care roles.
Demonstrates an ability to implement the research process with direction from Research Advisor.	Demonstrates an ability to implement the research process with specific and repeated direction from Research Advisor.	Research process is incomplete.
Approaches research work in a conscientious manner.	Approaches research work in a less conscientious manner (i.e. is not attentive to detail; inexactness of sources or of data; failure to meet deadlines).	Research process is incomplete.
Progresses to research completion within a reasonable time period (i.e. usually within three semesters or as individually negotiated with advisor).	Does not progress to completion within a reasonable time period because of unnecessary delays.	Exceeds published time limitations for graduation with degree of MSHP.
Presents "final" manuscript for approval in a scholarly research format (i.e. paper consistent with APA guidelines, a professional appearance).	Requires specific direction and assistance to present "final" manuscript for approval in a scholarly research format.	"Final" manuscript does not adhere to required format and procedure for approval.