Section Four

Hospice and Palliative Studies
MSHP Research Procedures: Thesis/Project
MSHP RESEARCH PROCEDURES: PROJECT/THESIS

The steps below illustrate an approximate timeline for students to follow when completing the requirements for a project/thesis. 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

Step 2 ~ Completion of Hospice and Palliative Studies core courses (15 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.). Work on Instrument development, Methodology, and complete Literature Review in BR 6340; 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 research proposal as necessary

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

Step 11 ~ Meet with advisor as needed

Step 12 ~ Submit proposal and application for use of Human Subjects to Center for Research for exemption, expedited or full review by HSRC. Be aware of Human Subject Review application criteria and committee schedule

Step 13 ~ Meet HSRC committee requirements of other institutions as needed. (e.g., Hospital I.R.B.)

NOTE: Research with human subjects (i.e., data collection) may NOT BE INITIATED without prior HSRC Approval
Chair of HSRC grants exemption
OR
Chair of HSRC initiates expedited or full committee review

Step 14 ~ Chair of HSRC notifies student and advisor of the outcome of application request. With approval, initiate human subject research

HSRC file maintained in 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 project/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.

Step 17 ~ Complete research, write manuscript and 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 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 three unbound manuscripts of approved thesis to advisor and Chair of the Hospice and Palliative Studies for signatures and then submit to the Office of Graduate School for final processing. (Be aware of deadlines)

Step 22~ Receive grade for HSP 6840 Research Project/Thesis (3 s.h.). Grading criteria are the same as MSN (outlined in Section Three of the Madonna University Research Guide).

GUIDELINES
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 for the information contained in Section Three, MSN Research Procedures. What follows is an adaptation of the existing information as it pertains to the Master of Science in Hospice and Palliative Studies.
Research Competency and Options:

For information about the student’s options for demonstrating research competency, please refer to Section Three in this Research Guide pertaining to the MSN. Students pursuing the MSHP will follow similar guidelines to those in Nursing. A major difference is that the research practicum will not be one of those options. Students may choose to do one of two options to demonstrate competency in the research process:

1. A thesis (3 s.h.) with a focus on knowledge generation and testing
2. A research project (2 s.h.) with an applied research focus

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.

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.

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.

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.

Procedures: The student will select a research advisor. If a second reader is chosen, he/she will have expertise related to the focus of the thesis and will be recommended by the advisor and accepted by the student. Following completion of the required research courses (BR 5170 and BR 6430), and with the guidance of the advisor the student will develop a research proposal. Once the proposal has been approved by the advisor, the second reader, and the HSRC, the student will carry out the research study.
Selection of a Research Advisor: The student selects a Research Advisor from among the full-time and adjunct graduate faculty who are doctorally prepared. Selection is most often based on a faculty member who possesses related interests and skills. The advisor will indicate agreement to serve by signing the Selection of Research Advisor Form (See Graduate School Research Forms Section 10, page 2). This form is available from the Office of Graduate School and procedure for when to submit it is discussed in BR 6430. The Chair of Hospice and Palliative Studies assists all students as necessary with selection of an Advisor, and/or serves in that role as advisor.

Format for Research Thesis: All the information you will need is in the Madonna University Research Guide. 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. MSHP students will follow approximate guidelines already prepared for the MSN students.

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.

Hospice and Palliative Studies Research Project:

Credit hours: 2 s.h.

HSP 6840 Course Description
Preparation, composition, and completion of a project or thesis related to hospice education. 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 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. All hospice and palliative studies core courses, cognates and electives must be completed and project advisor selected prior to enrolling in HSP 6840.

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, administration). A second reader is not required.
For completion of the research 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 agency personnel, participating on a hospice 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.

Specific to students electing the nursing cognate in the MSHP whose focus is on the issues surrounding pain management, it is recommended that communication be facilitated between agency personnel and the project advisor.

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.

**Format for Research Project:** 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. MSHP students will follow approximate guidelines already prepared for the MSN students.

**Presentation Requirement:** No presentation is required for the MSHP research project option.

**Comparison of Research Options:** Please refer to Section Three, MSN Research Procedures to find a detailed comparison of a research project, thesis, and practicum (recalling that the latter is not available as an option for MSHP students).

**Recommended Outline(s) and Content:** For a thesis involving either qualitative or quantitative design, a recommended outline and content organization is provided for the reader in Section Three, MSN Research Procedures. Research requirements specific to Madonna University are
presented as well, and the student is encouraged to read all pertinent information in the *Madonna University Research Guide* prior to proposing/designing one’s research project or thesis.

**Grading Criteria:** The student’s grade for the project/thesis will be determined by the advisor. Criteria to evaluate the completed research effort can be found in Section Three, MSN Research Procedures.