

MLS section

Ashoka University Master's in Liberal Studies (MLS) with a focus in Psychology

Introduction

The MLS program allows students to complete a piece of original scholarly work that contributes substantially to the knowledge and/or application of the discipline. Doing a thesis requires a substantial amount of research skills, commitment, and time management skills.

Composition of your thesis committee

Your thesis committee consists of two faculty members. One of them is your advisor; the other is your reader. The role of your advisor is to guide students regarding developing a clear research question, research design/methodology, analysis, and writing. Students are expected to schedule regular meetings with their advisors for tracking progress of the students. The role of your reader is to provide comments and evaluate your final proposal and the final thesis; they do not serve as advisors.

In case the student wishes to change their advisor they must set up a joint meeting with the current advisor and the prospective advisor to discuss the shift.

In certain exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for the student to work with two advisors. The student needs to present the rationale for a second advisor prior to the start of the MLS year (before the course registration), and the petition needs to be approved by the Psychology Department Faculty. Once approved, the advisor and second advisor are expected to work together on the evaluation and supervision components.

Thesis Format

The thesis can be written in chapter format or manuscript format, after consultation with the advisor. Thesis may be no longer than 15,000 words, excluding references and appendices.

Grading

Advisor's assessment of your peer review = 10%

Advisor's assessment of student's research performance/progress = 30%

Advisor's assessment of student's research proposal (see attached guidelines. Table 1) = 30%

Reader's assessment of student's research proposal (see attached guidelines. Table 1)= 30%

Advisor's assessment of student's research performance = 30%

Advisor's assessment of student's final thesis (see attached guidelines. Table 2) = 35%

Reader's assessment of student's research proposal (see attached guidelines. Table 2) = 35%

**Note: Your grade is not dependent on the statistical significance of your findings.*

The evaluation of research performance by the advisor might include aspects such as the student's work ethic, independence in pursuing the project, perseverance, being proactive, timeliness and adherence to deadlines.

Research Practicum: 2 credits i.e. 60 hours (Monsoon) + 2 credits i.e. 60 hours (Spring)=4 credits (120 hours)

- 1) The aim of the Research practicum is to help students explore research that is being undertaken by the department.
- 2) Students are advised to approach faculty and assist them in their research.
- 3) In every semester, students are required to complete 60 hours of work.

Teaching Practicum Requirements: 2 credits (Monsoon) + 2 credits (Spring)=4 credits

1. Students are required to assist their advisors/ another professor from the department as a teaching assistant during each semester.
2. Teaching Practicum credits can be obtained in multiple ways depending on the educational background of the student.
 - i) Those students who have a psychology background are eligible to assist professors in core and introductory UG courses upon prior approval.
 - ii) Students who do not have a psychology background are required to approach the head of department and their advisor to discuss what UG courses they would be eligible to assist for.
 - iii) Students can also gain teaching practicum credits by applying for Teaching Assistantship in YIF PG courses and get the credits converted on OAA approval.

Other responsibilities

As per department needs, students are required to assist in

- i) Administrative work involving organising department activities, talks, seminars
- ii) Attend research meetings
- iii) Work with PhD/ASP students

MLS Timeline

Time	Task
YIF 8th Semester	Begin planning the MLS thesis. Start thinking about their research projects and ideas now, if not earlier. Discuss ideas with prospective advisors. MLS applications will open by April. Students will be asked for their topic of interest, research question, methodology, as well as to write to OAA and the potential advisor. By May, successful applicants will be notified about their advisor and reader.
Summer between YIF & MLS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start focused reading geared towards developing the bibliography for their research work in collaboration with your advisor. 2. Develop a clear research question with a strong rationale before the Monsoon semester begins.
MLS Monsoon Week 1	<p>Monsoon MLS: Research Methodology</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start working with your advisor towards a feasible thesis proposal document, that you complete within the defined timeline. <p>Monsoon MLS: Research Practicum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the research practicum expectations with a faculty. You may choose to assist any faculty in the department of Psychology. For 2 credits you are required to put in 60 hours of work.
MLS Monsoon Week 2	
MLS Monsoon Week 6 Friday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit a first draft to your advisor with Introduction (background, hypothesis, research questions and rationale), Methods, and any supporting preliminary data. First draft must be written in APA style (7th edition). 2. Start working on the IRB application. 3. If you are doing research with human subjects, file an IRB application online at the earliest after monsoon semester starts. Note that the approval time depends on the complexities of the ethical issues involved. Visit https://www.ashoka.edu.in/page/institution-review-board-39 for more details.
MLS Monsoon Week 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You will also receive one of your peer's thesis proposal this week. Your task is to write a professional review of your peer's proposal. Your review may be shared with the peer whom you are reviewing, and as such you may request to be anonymous to the peer. 2. Submit your IRB application
MLS Monsoon Week 8 Friday	You will submit the review of your peer's work to your advisor.
MLS Monsoon Week 9	Revise thesis proposal based on advisor feedback.

MLS Monsoon Week 12 (i.e., the week when we return from mid-sem break)	Colloquium of presentations of thesis proposals (15 min presentation + 10 min questions). This is open to the entire university and the participation of all intended psych majors is strongly encouraged. Questions may come from the committee members or anyone in the audience. You will receive the committee's feedback on the proposal framework, experimental design, analytic strategy, impact, etc. This colloquium is not graded.
MLS Monsoon Week 13 Friday	Based on the feedback, you will submit a final proposal to your advisor and reader. Your research progress will be evaluated throughout the semester.
<p style="text-align: center;">Winter break: Data collection [You are expected to have completed the bulk of your data collection by the start of Spring semester]. Exceptions may be made by advisors.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***Note that in some fields, multiple studies are expected. Check with your advisor.***</p>	
MLS Spring Week 1-5 Feb	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Register for Research Methodology with OAA, if you haven't already done so. 2. Discuss your analysis plan with your advisor. You should have completed your data collection by this time
MLS Spring March end	Finish data analysis
MLS Spring May end	Submit a first draft of your final thesis. Note that writing a quality draft takes a long time, often with repeated revisions. Plan ahead.
MLS Spring June	<p>Once your advisor provides feedback on this initial draft, you should revise your thesis and submit a final draft to your advisor and reader. This draft will not be graded but will help your committee members give better comments during the defense. Hence aim to submit a quality draft.</p> <p>Thesis Submission: Revise your thesis based on feedback from your committee. Note that a thesis is not merely the proposal you wrote last semester plus whatever work you have done this semester. Often you will need to substantially overhaul what you wrote in your proposal and re-conceptualize many issues. Hence leave enough time to write and edit your work.</p> <p>Submit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One hard-bound thesis meant for the library's archive; • Two soft-bound copies meant for grading by your committee members; • A digital softcopy. <p>You may wish to print additional hard- or soft-bound copies for your keepsake.</p>

MLS Spring June	Grading
MLS Spring June	Final grades to be sent to OAA.
Congratulations on successfully completing a significant piece of scholarly work. Celebrate your achievements!	