HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY

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School of Communication

MASTER OF ARTS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

MASTER'S PROJECT HANDBOOK*

This handbook is a work in progress, so be sure to consult your adviser and the NQSC graduate coordinator about master's project specifics.

*Last updated 4/6/16.

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APPENDIX

MASTER'S PROJECT CHECKLIST – STUDENT

Prior to beginning the first semester of your Master's Project:

❑ Select topic

❑ Select faculty adviser

❑ Complete plan of study form with the NQSC graduate coordinator

❑ Submit appointment of chair form to NQSC graduate coordinator and Norcross Graduate School (due before registering for Master's Project hours)

During the <u>formulation</u> (5900) semester of your Master's Project:

❑ Work with advisor to refine project idea and complete necessary research.

During the <u>proposal</u> (5910) semester of your Master's Project:

❑ Identify committee members (at least two must be faculty members in NQSC) and submit appointment of committee form to NQSC graduate coordinator and Norcross Graduate School (due at least two weeks before proposal defense)

❑ Write proposal

❑ Schedule proposal defense with all committee members. The proposal cannot be defended in the same semester as the final project defense.

The proposal defense will result in one of three decisions:

      (a) The proposed project meets the standards (no changes or minor changes)

      (b) Approval to proceed once specified changes are submitted and approved by the supervisor and other members of the committee

      (c) Proposal rejected

❑ Submit project proposal defense form to the NQSC graduate program coordinator

❑ Submit IRB application

During the <u>implementation</u> (5920) semester of your Master's Project (or after your proposal is approved):

❑ Begin work on the master's project. Students need to work closely with their master's project adviser and submit continuing drafts of the project for approval. The project cannot be defended until the master's project adviser has reviewed all portions and agreed that it meets the project requirements

During the <u>project defense</u> (5930) semester of your master's project:

❑ Schedule master's project defense. Ask the department administrator to schedule the room.

❑ Schedule a room for the defense

❑ Submit master's project materials to committee and NQSC graduate coordinator at least one-week prior to defense

❑ Defend project

❑ Make committee's corrections to project

❑ Format project according to NQSC and Norcross Graduate School standards

❑ Deposit bound and electronic copy of the master's project to Norcross Graduate School for format check and approval (approximate deadlines: Spring--April 15; Summer--July 15; Fall--November 15. Check the official deadlines with the Norcross Graduate School). The review checklist must be included indicating that you have read and adhered to the format guidelines

❑ Submit closure report to IRB. Provide copy of the report to adviser

❑ Make graduate school corrections and resubmit for final approval

❑ Submit at least three paper copies master's project to Norcross Graduate School for binding. These must be on bonded paper (at least 25% cotton). If the project has a technology focus, the technology component must be appropriately archived.

❑ Provide bound copies of the master's project to all committee members. If the project is technology focused, provide committee members a copy of the production.

MASTER'S PROJECT CHECKLIST – ADVISER

Throughout the project process:

The student and faculty adviser should meet frequently to ensure the student stays on track. The adviser is the student's mentor through the project process and professional development.

Prior to the beginning of the student's first semester of master's project work:

❏ The appointment of adviser form needs to be submitted to the graduate school prior to enrolling in hours

❏ The project registration approval form needs to be submitted prior to registration.

During the student's <u>formulation</u> (5900) semester:

❏ If the student makes sufficient progress formulating his/her project idea, then the professor enters a "CR" as the grade at the end of the semester. If not, the professor should enter an "IN" as the grade and the student will have to enroll in 5901 (continuation) the next semester. In this case, the professor would submit a change of grade form for 5900 after successful completion of the 5901 continuation hours.

During the student's <u>proposal</u> (5910) semester:

❏ The appointment of committee form needs to be submitted to graduate school and NQSC graduate coordinator two weeks prior to the proposal defense

❏ Proposal defense form needs to be submitted to graduate coordinator

❏ If the student successfully defends the proposal, then the professor enters a "CR" as the grade at the end of the semester. If the student does not complete the proposal OR if the committee does not approve it, then the professor should enter an "IN" as the grade and the student will have to enroll in 5911 (continuation) the next semester. In this case, the professor would submit a change of grade form for 5910 after successful completion of the 5911 continuation hours (resulting in an approved proposal).

❏ Student should apply for graduation

During the student's <u>implementation</u> (5920) semester:

❏ If the student makes sufficient progress implementing his/her master's project, then the professor enters a "CR" as the grade at the end of the semester. If not, the professor should enter an "IN" as the grade and the student will have to enroll in 5921 (continuation) the next semester. In this case, the professor would submit a change of grade form for 5920 after successful completion of the 5921 continuation hours.

During the student's master's project defense (5930) semester:

❑ The scheduling of the project form needs to be turned into the graduate school two weeks prior to defense

❑ The defense announcement needs to be posted in the department two weeks prior to the defense

❑ The Norcross defense evaluation needs to be turned in within 24 hours of the defense

❑ The NQSC project evaluation needs to be completed and turned in the graduate coordinator

❑ Official signature pages will need to be signed (at least three on at least 25% cotton paper)

IF the committee DOES NOT approve the master's project:

❑ The professor enters a grade of "IN" at the end of the semester and the student will have to enroll in 5931 (continuation) the next semester. In this case, the professor would submit a change of grade form for 5930 after successful completion of the 5931 continuation hours (resulting in a successful project defense). If a student goes into 5931 continuation, he/she must successfully defend his/her project at the end of that semester or he/she will be terminated from the program.

After approval of the master's project by the committee:

❑ The student needs to submit a hard and electronic copy of the project to the graduate school by the deposit deadline

❑ After the graduate student has completed all edits, the student needs to submit three hard copies on bond paper (at least 25%) to the graduate school. If the student wants personal copies, they can submit extra copies and $10 per copy.

❑ After the professor has received final notification from the graduate school, he/she enters a "CR" as the grade at the end of the semester. If the project was evaluated as exceeding expectations in all areas and accepted with no more than minor revisions, the professor should enter a grade of "HP" (high pass) to indicate that the student earned distinction.

❑ The department gets a hardbound copy of the project.

❑ The student should provide an electronic copy of the final project to the committee members. Some committee members would also like a hard copy.

THE MASTER'S PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The master's project is the culminating experience for NQSC graduate students. This project provides students the opportunity to integrate the knowledge and skills acquired through their coursework and apply these principles and ideas to a particular strategic communication problem or a situation similar to that found in the professional workplace. The project must:
- represent high standards of scholarly and theoretical inquiry
- demonstrate technical mastery
- demonstrate research proficiency
- have important implications for the student's specialty track.

Although the topics will be determined by a student's interest, the purpose of the project is to develop and test messages that address a communication problem. Students will need to build on the skills they learned during their coursework to analyze their target audience, design messages aimed at the audience, develop the campaign materials, and analyze if the campaign messages achieved the intended effect. This project will be a valuable addition to a professional portfolio and suitable for submission to academic conferences.

Registration:
Students can register for project hours after completing 18 hours of graduate coursework. The master's project requires four hours taken across at least two semesters. Up to three project hours can be taken concurrently.
- COM 5900 (1 credit hour)—Master's project formulation
- COM 5910 (1 credit hour)—Master's proposal writing and defense
- COM 5920 (1 credit hour)—Master's project implementation
- COM 5930 (1 credit hour)—Master's project analysis and defense (must be taken in student's final semester of study)

If a student needs additional time to satisfy the requirements of a project component, he/she will register for the following 0-credit continuation courses:
- COM 5901 (0 credit hours)—Master's project formulation continuation. Required fee when additional time is needed to satisfy the requirements of COM 5900
- COM 5911 (0 credit hours)—Project proposal writing and defense continuation. Required fee when additional time is needed to satisfy the requirements of COM 5910
- COM 5921 (0 credit hours)—Master's project implementation continuation. Required fee when additional time is needed to satisfy the requirements of COM 5920
- COM 5931 (0 credit hours)—Master's project analysis and defense continuation. Required fee when additional time is needed to satisfy the requirements of COM 5930

NOTE – A student may enroll in a maximum of two semesters of continuation over the course of his/her project. If a student goes into 5931 continuation after a failed project defense, he/she must successfully redefend at the end of the semester following the failed defense or he/she will be terminated from the program.

NOTE – To register for project hours, a student must submit the Norcross Graduate School's Independent/Practicum/Thesis/Project Request Form directly to the graduate school (see Appendix).

Components:

All master's projects must include these four components, related to the different areas of study in the Strategic Communication M.A. program:

Research	Production	Implications	Theory
Assessing whether a campaign, tactic, or creative work achieves its intended effect	Developing original campaign materials (such as print, audio, video, and/or web-based media) and demonstrating technological proficiency	Explaining how the campaign or tactics enhance the understanding of and practice of strategic communication	Understanding and explaining why some messages are more effective than others

While projects may emphasize certain components more than others (e.g. a research-heavy project with modest production elements, or a production-heavy project with a more modest research component), all projects must address all four components.

Goals:
a. To identify and apply theories principles of communication and message design for the purpose of solving problems
b. To assess audience needs and design materials to meet those needs
c. To develop professional quality campaign messages
d. To implement a rigorous evaluation plan
e. To demonstrate proficiency in message design and production
f. To produce a professional quality final manuscript or creative project

FINDING A TOPIC

Some students enter the MA in Strategic Communication program with a well-defined topic. Others do not have a project topic or want to use their first year of the program to develop a topic. Whatever your situation, your topic should be something in which you are really interested. The project is a long process. When you pick a topic of great interest, you are more likely to be motivated and complete your project.

If you do not have a topic, meet with a faculty member to discuss various options. You can enroll in an independent study to do background reading or pilot work on a study that you might want to use for your project.

If working with a client, the client must be a non-profit organization (5013c), a low-profit limited liability organization with charitable or educational goals (L3C) or an organization that works for the betterment of the community. In exceptional circumstances, students can work with a for-profit organization, but the organization must provide reasonable compensation to the student. The project committee must approve all clients.

SELECTING AN ADVISER*

* Adapted from Karen Foss' academic relationship guide

Finding the right advisor is an important step in successfully completing your master's project. A good advisor will mentor you through the campaign development process and provide you the assistance you need to succeed in graduate school. This relationship is very important, so give a lot of thought to selecting an adviser.

All faculty in the School of Communication can serve on a master's project committee, but only those faculty members with terminal degrees can be advisers. Additionally, a faculty member must have served on a committee before he/she can advise a student.

Once you identify potential advisors, get to know them. Introduce yourself and describe your academic interests; make sure they share these interests. Don't ask a faculty member to be your advisor too early. Relationships take time to develop, so you should wait until the end of your second semester of graduate school to select an adviser.

The type of relationship that each student needs with an advisor will differ. You may prefer to be given strong direction, to have frequent contact, and to be ``checked up on.'' Others are more independent. Consider what kinds of feedback you prefer and how you like to interact, and make sure that your style and your adviser's style are compatible.

Once you've determined those faculty members with whom you would like to work, check to make sure they are available and interested in working with you on your master's project. Faculty may have commitments that prevent them from working with you.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR ADVISER*

Completing your master's project successfully is much easier if you have an effective interpersonal relationship with your advisor. These are some things you can do in terms of communication that will have a positive impact on the relationship you have with your advisor

1. **Ask Nicely**

   If you have an established relationship with a potential adviser, you should have a sense of how to approach the discussion about working together on your project. This will be a lot of work for your adviser as well, so your request should be polite and thoughtful.

2. **Articulate Needs**

   There are a number of areas where you should articulate your needs to your advisor, and it's perfectly appropriate for you to do so. For example, you should:
   - Hold an extended conversation to work out the plan for your master's project.
   - Discuss your advising relationship— work out together how often you will meet, how quickly your advisor will provide feedback on submissions, how you both will keep track of decisions, and expectations your advisor has for your behavior.
   - Ask you adviser basic questions about the proposal and defense processes (deadlines, expecations, etc.). Ask your advisor to supply you with samples of good proposals and master's projects.

3. **Present yourself in the best light**

   Advisors find very rough drafts frustrating and irritating. Show your respect for your advisor's time by giving him/her polished products whenever possible. Keep appointments and be on time. Respect the ground rules you and your advisor have established for the relationship.

4. **Accept Feedback**

   Be attentive to the suggestions of your advisor. Disconnect your ego or self-esteem from the feedback. Your advisor is trying to help you be successful, and her feedback isn't a commentary on your worth. Ask questions when you don't understand something, and ask for examples if the feedback is vague.

5. **Show Appreciation**

   The advising relationship is a reciprocal one. Just as you want to get needs met and have certain outcomes as a result of that relationship, so does your advisor. Advisors want to feel that they aren't giving and giving with nothing coming to them in return.

   One way to show your appreciation is to do your best to follow your advisor's advice and guidelines. Another way is to express your appreciation explicitly to your advisor periodically. Thank you cards and notes are lasting tokens of appreciation.

SELECTING A COMMITTEE

By the end of the second or third semester of study (including summer), a student will have selected a master's project adviser (committee chair) and a committee. The committee will be comprised of a minimum of three members:
- the committee chair (who must be a NQSC graduate faculty member),
- a second member of the NQSC graduate faculty,
- a third member who may be a member of the NQSC faculty, a HPU faculty member, or an individual who works professionally in the student's area of concentration.

It is the student's responsibility to ask specific committee members if they are willing to service on the committee. Once the committee is selected, the Graduate Master's project Committee Form should be submitted to the Coordinator of the NQSC Master's Program.

Should a student wish to change the members of their graduate committee, they must submit a new Graduate Master's project Committee Form. The committee chair, the outgoing committee member, and the incoming committee member must sign the form.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee Chair
- Is the student's primary advisor in the process of completing the research to fruition.
- Ensures all protocols are followed by the department, graduate school, and IRB.
- Ensures the student has been informed of all project deadlines and milestones.
- Approves the theoretical framework, research plan, production plan
- Reads, evaluates, critiques, and provides guidance for drafts of the project.
- Reviews drafts for honor code violations.
- Works with the committee to provide feedback for drafts and project progress.
- Schedules the defense.
- Chairs the defense.
- Handles all paperwork related to the grading of the defense and any necessary follow-up/corrections.
- Signs off on the formatting checklist the student submits with their initial final draft to the graduate school.
- Ensures the student corrects, changes, or revises any suggestion as a result of the defense before submitting to the graduate office.
- Submits the final grade for the project course once the project has been approved by the graduate school

Committee Members
- Provide ideas and suggestion for research or direction of project.
- Read, evaluate, critique, and provide guidance for drafts of the project as necessary.
- Read and evaluate the final draft.

- Participate in the defense of the project.
- Contribute the knowledge of theoretical, research and/or production procedures as well as ensuring high quality written and production standards
- Review drafts for honor code violations.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL

Your proposal will describe the purposes of the project and the methods for accomplishing them. Writing a proposal is important because it forces you to be explicit about your plans and facilitates feedback from your committee members. Before asking the committee to review and approve your proposal, you must ask the chair of the committee to critique the proposal and then revise the proposal based on the chair's recommendations.

You proposal should provide *sufficient detail and clarity* concerning the rationale, objectives, and methods for your project. As a general guideline, the text of the full proposal should be between 15-25 pages (excluding appendices). The proposal should be in APA style. Length of each section greatly depends on the particular topic and preferences of the adviser. Regardless of length, clarity and conciseness are strongly encouraged. Part of the master's project experience is to improve one's writing skills.

The specifics of the written proposal for different types of master's projects are outlined in subsequent sections.

OBTAIN COMMITTEE APPROVAL

After completing your proposal, you should provide all members a copy and allow them at least one week to review it before your scheduled proposal defense.

The start of the proposal defense includes an approximately 10-minute presentation about the project followed by a Q/A with the committee. Committee members may ask you to improve elements of the plan, and you may have to submit revisions until all committee members approve your proposal.

When the committee approves your proposal, they are essentially declaring that your project and methods for addressing your topic are acceptable, and you now have the "green light" to actually do the study. This "contract" between student and committee ensures that if the student completes the plan as outlined in a satisfactory way, he/she will pass. A student's ability to successfully defend his/her final project is not linked to the outcome of the research analysis but is instead linked to the quality of the process.

With everyone "on the same page," about the planned direction of the project, students are more likely to meet the committee's expectations, and committee members are more likely to

approve the master's project. In addition, students with well-developed proposals often find that many elements of the proposal can be used in the final project with little modification.

Important note: The proposal cannot be defended in the same semester as the final project defense.

OBTAIN HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL

Regardless of the type of campaign project you will develop, if you are dealing with humans, you must submit a request for approval to High Point University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB monitors all research projects that use humans and ensures that all participants are informed of their rights. You must obtain human subject approval before starting on the research or evaluation component of the project. If you are using images or recordings in the production component, you will need to collect media release forms from all participants.

START AND ORGANIZE YOUR MASTER'S PROJECT

Although it may seem obvious, a key step in completing your master's project is to simply start. There are several barriers that can slow or deter a student from starting the master's project:
- lack of time
- inexperience with independent course work
- discomfort with unstructured schedules
- feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of the process
- no clue where to start or how to begin
- stress from personal or family problems
- indecision about a topic
- etc., etc.

The best way to overcome this inertia is to make a commitment and start the process no later than your third semester of graduate work (including summer).

See subsequent sections for specific details about expectations for different types of projects (i.e., research focused, production focused)

Important note: Students need to register for four credit hours for the master's project (COM 5900). These four hours cannot all be completed in the same semester. The hours can be distributed in multiple ways: 2/2; 1/3; 1/1/1/1. If a student has registered for four project hours and not completed the project, he/she registers for continuation hours.

MASTER'S PROJECT DELIVERABLES

PART ONE: PROJECT PROPOSAL

Title page   Include the title of the master's project proposal, your name, degree sought, department, names of the supervisor and committee members, and date.

Abstract   The one page abstract should not exceed 300 words.

Rationale   Contains a statement of the problem issues to be addressed in the study.

Literature   The review of relevant literature should provide an overview of the field and demonstrate that the student knows the area under investigation. This section should also provide supporting evidence concerning the rationale, statement of the problem and/or issues to be addressed by the present study.

Objectives   This section describes the overall purpose, as well as the specific objectives of the present study. In some cases, the objectives may be formulated as research questions. In other cases, such as an evaluation project, the study may address program objectives and/or underlying assumptions. This section of the proposal often includes the researcher's hypotheses.

Methods   Subsections typically include: study design; sample selection criteria, size, and sampling process; data collection procedures and instruments; and a description of data analysis techniques and statistical software programs to be used.

Production   Describe your plan for the message production component of the project. Include specific information and visual examples of colors, typefaces, layouts, visual treatments, etc. For video projects, include scripts, outlines, and/or storyboards. Be as detailed as possible, including the identification of concerns.

Time Line   Develop a reasonable time line for each phase of the project, including: pilot testing of instruments or procedures, design and fabrication, data collection, data analyses and interpretation, and write-up. Specify the anticipated term/year for final defense.

Resources   Itemize all costs anticipated. Although master's project research is not typically funded, the School of Communication may provide some resources. Work this out with your supervisor or committee members in advance.

References   For the proposal, this may include a list of references already obtained and cited in the literature review section, as well as a list of articles to be obtained (listed separately). Use APA format for references and proposal style.

Appendices   Should contain supporting and descriptive materials, instruments, etc.

PART TWO: FINAL MANUSCRIPT

Advisers will differ in their approaches to guiding a research-focused project, but the guide below should provide students a general overview of the written components.

I. COVER PAGE

II. SIGNATURE PAGE – See sample in Appendix

III. TITLE PAGE – See sample in Appendix

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE

[IV-b. Dedication page (optional)]

V. TABLE OF CONTENTS

VI. LIST OF FIGURES

VII. LIST OF TABLES

VIII. ABSTRACT – See sample in Appendix. The abstract should not exceed 300 words.

IX. INTRODUCTION
In 2-3 pages, the introduction briefly summarizes the problem, significance, and purpose of the project. You can organize your intro with:

- **Opening** – Set the stage for the paper and put your topic in perspective.
- **Statement of the Problem** – Briefly explain the context of your problem statement, including a clear and succinct discussion of the conceptual or theoretical framework that undergirds your study.
- **Significance of the Study (Rationale)** – Use a persuasive rationale to justify the reason for your study and explain how this new knowledge will add to the field of knowledge that already exists on this topic.
- **Statement of Purpose** – Write a single sentence that defines the purpose of your study. Support this sentence with several elaborative paragraphs. Present persuasive arguments for why the problem is important enough to study. Explain how the problem relates to business, social or political trends by presenting data that demonstrates the scope and depth of the problem.

X. REVIEW OF LITERATURE & RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES
The literature review elaborates on the ideas from your introduction. This section:

- Demonstrates your knowledge of the research problem and your understanding of the theoretical and research issues related to your research question(s).
- Shows your ability to critically evaluate, integrate, and synthesize relevant literature information.
- Provides new theoretical insights or develops a new model as the conceptual framework for your research.
- Convinces your reader that your proposed project will make a significant and substantial contribution to the literature and discipline.

Organize your review around ideas, not researchers. A review of literature is not simply a bunch of annotations of research papers; it's an argument about ideas leading to your study.

Possible structure for a review of literature:

> I. The interesting context or topic or theoretical framework
>> A. Define/history/importance
>> B. Prevalence
>> C. Challenges or dilemmas
> II. Variable one
>> A. Define/history
>> B. What do we know about this variable in general? Provide details about the most pertinent studies.
>> C. What do we know about this variable in your context? Provide details about the most pertinent studies.
> III. Variable two, etc.
> IV. What do we know about your variables together (if anything)
> V. Summarize the argument. Be sure that the argument leads to your research questions and hypotheses.

Theoretical Framework – The theoretical framework must demonstrate an understanding of existing theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic and that will relate it to the broader implications of your project. Note who the key theorists are in the field who have conducted research on the problem you are investigating and, when necessary, the historical context that underpins the formulation of these theories.

Research Questions and/or Hypotheses – Your review of literature should have made a clear argument that justifies your RQ/Hypothesis and explains why you are examining these variables together in this content. If you have multiple Research Questions and Hypotheses, you will want to present each RQ/Hyp after you have created that argument. Thus, you might need to space out your RQ/Hyp.

Make a clear and careful distinction between the dependent and independent variables and be certain they are clear to the reader (but you don't have to say DV and IV).

XI. DEVELOPMENT OF CAMPAIGN MATERIALS
Provide an overview of the campaign materials you developed and tested in this project. You will likely need to include diagrams, pictures, screen shots, text of audio recordings, and other artifacts so that the reader understands your campaign approach.

You may also need to review key elements of the evaluation you are conducting. If you are assessing how to deliver campaign content (rather than just the effectiveness of various campaign materials), you review the other components as well.

XII. METHOD
The method section describes your basic research plan. It usually begins with a few short introductory paragraphs that restate purpose and research questions. This section should contain sufficient information for the reader to determine whether your methodology was sound.

Population and Sampling – Who are your subjects? How and why did you select them? If available, outline the characteristics of the sample (by gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other relevant group membership). Detail procedures followed to obtain informed consent and ensure anonymity and/or confidentiality. When a sample is drawn out of convenience, rationale and limitations must be clearly provided.

Procedures – Outline the general procedure for collecting the data, including survey administration procedures, interview, or observation procedures. If appropriate, discuss how you obtained access to your group. Provide a well thought-out rationale for your decision to use the design, methodology, and analyses you selected. Indicate the methodological steps you took to answer every question or to test every hypothesis illustrated in the Questions/Hypotheses section.

Confounding variables should be minimized by various kinds of controls or be estimated and taken into account by randomization processes (Guba, 1961). In the design section:

- Indicate the variables you attempted to control and how you attempted to control them, experimentally or statistically, and
- Indicate the variables you attempted to randomize, and the nature of the randomizing unit (students, grades, schools, etc.).

If your methods are complicated, it may be helpful to create a flowchart describing the procedures. You may also need to include images of your campaign and/or manipulations. Stills from videos, examples of posters, and text from PSAs will help the reader understand your manipulations.

Disclose possible sources of error to the reader and explain what efforts were made to overcome them or take them into account in your analysis

Instruments – Outline the instruments (measures) you used to evaluate the effectiveness of your campaign or to test your approach. If instruments have previously been used, identify previous studies and findings related to reliability and validity. If instruments have not previously been used, explain how you tested their reliability and validity. In the latter case, a pilot study is nearly essential.

Include an appendix with a copy of the instruments used or the interview protocol followed. Also include sample items in the description of the instrument.

For a mailed survey, identify steps taken in administering and following up the survey to obtain a high response rate.

XIII. RESULTS
You cannot just write about analysis and numbers and expect readers to understand. Your statistical information should be used to support a reader-friendly narrative.

A. Description of the data categorization and analysis – Present evidence that your study successfully set up the conditions for testing your hypotheses or answering your questions. Describe how you analyzed the data. If the results section is complicated or divided into several parts, you may wish to provide an overview of the section.

B. Presenting the Findings – Review in prose the hypothesis or the question you asked and the direction of the responses you hypothesized.

1. Provide the answer to your research question or hypothesis
2. Provide the statistical information.
3. Elaborate or qualify the overall conclusion, if necessary.

The general rule in reporting your findings is to give the central findings first and then the more peripheral findings.

Figures and Tables – Unless a set of findings can be stated in one or two numbers, a figure or table summarizing the relevant data should accompany results that are sufficiently important to be stressed. Title and label figures/tables clearly and completely. Lead the reader through a table in the text itself – don't expect the reader to ferret out the information. For detailed information on figures and tables, see the *APA Publication Manual*.

On Statistics – Though an indication of the level of statistical significance should accompany every comparison between groups or relationship between variables, inferential statistics are not the heart of your narrative and should be subordinated to the descriptive results. Whenever possible, state a result first and then give its statistical significance. In no case should you ever give the statistical test alone without interpreting it substantively (effect size).

XIV. DISCUSSION

Organize the Discussion from the specific to the general: your findings to the literature, to theory, to practice. Discuss everything, but be concise, brief, and specific.

A possible organization for your discussion section is:

A. Opening paragaphs
B. Address hypotheses/variables
C. Link results back to your literature review and theoretical framework
D. Limitations
E. Future research
F. Conclusions

Indicate how your research will refine, revise, or extend existing knowledge in the area under investigation. Note that such refinements, revisions, or extensions may have substantive, theoretical, or methodological significance.

Most studies have two potential audiences: practitioners and professional peers. Statements relating the research to both groups are in order. When thinking about the significance of your study, ask yourself the following questions:

- What will results mean to the theoretical framework that framed the study?
- What suggestions for subsequent research arise from the findings?
- Will results influence programs, methods, and/or interventions?
- Will results contribute to the solution of educational problems?
- Will results influence policy decisions?
- What will be improved or changed as a result of the proposed research?
- How will results of the study be implemented, and what innovations will come about?

XV. REFERENCES

XVI. APPENDICES

Include evaluation measures. Include copies of all print materials developed. Include screen captures of any video/web/multimedia materials developed. You will also submit electronic copies of all production materials along with your report.

MASTER'S PROJECT DEFENSE OVERVIEW

Part One: Presentation

The master's project defense is a public meeting. An announcement of your defense will be posted in the Norcross Graduate School and in School of Communication. An electronic announcement of your defense will be sent to all graduate students and faculty in the School of Communication. You can invite people to attend the defense.

Prepare a 12-15-minute for a presentation
- 1-2 minute overview
- 2-minute review of key literature
- 2-3 minute overview of the method, including your analysis steps (factor analysis)
- 3-4 minutes on results. What were the key findings?
- 3-4 minutes on discussion. What are the larger implications of this for the literatures you reviewed? What implications do your results have for professionals? Limitations and future directions

Part Two: Discussion

Your committee and the audience will ask questions. This usually takes 45-60 minutes. You don't know what the questions will be, but remember, a defense is an argument. Be prepared to justify your choices as a researcher and communication professional. "I was interested..." is insufficient. Ground your reasons in logic, literature, and research goals.

Part Three: Deliberation

The committee discusses the project and the defense. You will be asked to leave the room while the committee makes a decision and makes recommendations for revisions.

The proposal will be evaluated in four areas:
- Research Plan
- Production Plan
- Strategic Communication Implications
- Theory Application

The committee's evaluation of the proposal must be at least "good" in the focus area (such as research for a research focused project, production for a production focused project, etc.), and "satisfactory" in all other areas. If any area is deemed "unsatisfactory," the proposal will have to be revised.

Part Four: Decision

You come back and learn the decision. After, you and your adviser will talk specifics about what to do and how to do it.

Defense will result in one of five decisions:

(1) ***Project accepted with no more than minor edits and clarifications***– Project requires no change or only minor typographical or editorial changes.

(2) ***Project accepted with minor revisions noted*** – Project requires minor changes in substance and/or major editorial changes or clarifications. Typically, this category implies that no additional analysis or data collection needs to take place. It is more a matter of refinement, clarification or elaboration. The adviser will make notes on the changes requested by the committee, as well as who will take responsibility for examining and approving these changes.

(3) ***Project accepted with substantial revisions—resubmit manuscript to committee*** – Project requires substantial modifications in at least two sections (such as new analyses or new discussion section); acceptability is questionable. The report of the adviser will provide a list of concerns and modifications required, as well as a time line for completion, and consequences should the student fail to comply. In this case, the revised master's project must be submitted to the entire examining committee. Normally, the same committee will serve. A decision to defer is permitted only once for each candidate.

(4) ***Project accepted with major revisions—resubmission & new defense required*** – Project requires major modifications in at least two sections (such as additional data collected and new analyses); acceptability is in doubt. The report of the adviser will provide a list of concerns and modifications required, as well as a time line for completion, and consequences should the student fail to comply. In this case, the revised master's project must be submitted to the entire examining committee and a subsequent defense scheduled. Normally, the same committee will serve. A decision to defer is permitted only once for each candidate.

(5) ***Project not accepted*** – The adviser will provide a written report concerning the reasons for rejection by the examining committee. The NQSC graduate coordinator will subsequently advise the student concerning continuing in the degree program.

DISTINCTION: A master's project can earn distinction if it receives scores of "outstanding" in all evaluation areas and is accepted with no revisions.

TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE DEFENSE:
- ✓ Dress professionally
- ✓ Practice the presentation
- ✓ Anticipate questions and prepare answers
- ✓ Prepare handouts about key information
- ✓ Ensure that any equipment is working before the presentation
- ✓ Arrange the room so that everyone is comfortable

MASTER'S PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Title
   - ❑ Is the title reasonably short, descriptive and correctly worded?

2. Statement of the Problem
   - ❑ Is the need for the campaign adequately established?
   - ❑ Is the discussion of previous related research adequate?
   - ❑ Is continuity with previous research made clear and is there evidence of a satisfactory literature search?
   - ❑ If the project contains a hypothesis or hypotheses, are these clearly stated?
   - ❑ Are the basic assumptions involved in the solution of the problem clear and defensible?

3. Theoretical Framework
   - ❑ Is the theoretical framework appropriate for the project?
   - ❑ Is the theory fully explained and sufficiently linked to the project?
   - ❑ Is the relevant research on the theory cited and integrated?

4. Production Components
   - ❑ Are the campaign materials developed appropriate for the project and problem?
   - ❑ Are the materials developed professional?
   - ❑ Do the campaign materials reflect the student's authorial voice?
   - ❑ Do the materials adhere to legal constraints on use of others' materials?

5. Research Method
   - ❑ Is the evaluation plan and method logically sound and of publishable quality?
   - ❑ Are the data collected adequate for the solution of the problem?
   - ❑ Is any peculiar sampling appropriately accounted for?
   - ❑ Are the assumptions involved in the procedure made clear?
   - ❑ Are the necessary assumptions defensible?

6. Analyses and Results
   - ❑ Are the analyses appropriate for the question and data?
   - ❑ Is the data appropriately analyzed and presented?

7. Conclusions
   - ❑ Are the conclusions logical and justified?
   - ❑ Do the conclusions answer the questions or issues raised in the problem statement?
   - ❑ Are the implications to strategic communication identified and explained?
   - ❑ Do the conclusions indicate practical recommendations?
   - ❑ Do the conclusions provide useful information?

8. Form and Style
   - ❑ Is the writing accurate, and precise, and clear?
   - ❑ Are the references adequately and correctly documented with APA style?
   - ❑ Does the structure of the manuscript follow APA style?
   - ❑ Does the final document follow the Graduate Committee style requirements?
   - ❑ Are the technology components suitable for archiving?

NORCROSS GRADUATE SCHOOL
FORMAT REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER'S PROJECT

Your need to submit three single-sided copies of your final project to the Norcross Graduate School. These copies must meet all the format requirements and be printed on bond paper. These copies will be bound and kept in the library, the graduate school, and the School of Communication. In addition, you need to provide each committee member a bound copy of your project. If you would like to submit extra copies to the graduate school, these copies can be bound these $10 each. (**Please consult The Norcross Graduate School master's project guide. Below is a summary of key format issues but the Graduate School may have additional guidelines**).

Organization of Master's project
- ❑ Title page.
- ❑ Signature page.
- ❑ Copyright page (optional)
- ❑ Abstract. (300-350 words)
- ❑ Distinction Award Page (optional)
- ❑ Dedication page (optional).
- ❑ Acknowledgements (optional).
- ❑ Table of contents.
- ❑ List of Tables (if applicable)
- ❑ List of Figures (if applicable)
- ❑ List of Abbreviations (if applicable)
- ❑ List of Symbols (if applicable)
- ❑ Text, divided into chapters
- ❑ References.
- ❑ Appendix (includes materials too bulky or distracting for the text).

Title Page
- ☐ The title page consists of:
  - o Full title of thesis, project, or dissertation.
  - o The full name of the student.
  - o The type of project being submitted (thesis, project, dissertation).
  - o The degree being earned (e.g., Master of Arts, Doctor of Education, etc.).
  - o The program from which the degree is being earned.
  - o The school and department (if applicable) from which the degree is being earned.
  - o The month and year on which the student graduated.
- ☐ The title of the thesis, project, or dissertation is set two-inches from the top of the page.
- ☐ The title is centered on the page.
- ☐ The title is written in all capital letters.
- ☐ Long titles are double-spaced between lines.

☐ The full name of the degree and the program issuing the degree is used.
☐ The full legal name of the student is used.

Signature Page
☐ The title of the thesis/dissertation is consistent with the title page.
☐ The correct name of the department or school is used.
☐ The name of the student is consistent with the title page.
☐ The name of the degree program is consistent with the title page.
☐ The signature lines for all committee members are aligned flush right.
☐ The names of the committee members and their position on the committee (e.g., Chair, Member) are written beneath each signature line.
☐ The signature line of the head of the Graduate School is positioned beneath the signature lines of the committee and aligned flush left.
☐ All signatures are original and written in black or blue ink.

Copyright Page (optional)
☐ The copyright symbol (©) and the year of graduation are listed first.
☐ The student's name is listed second and is consistent with the title page.
☐ The phrase, "ALL RIGHTS RESERVED" is listed third.
☐ All three lines are centered both horizontally and vertically on the page.

Abstract
☐ The heading, "ABSTRACT" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first line of text.
☐ Full title of the thesis/project/dissertation is written in all capital letters, is centered at the top of the page, and is consistent with the title page.
☐ Name of the student is consistent with the title page.
☐ The month and year on which the student graduated is consistent with the title page.
☐ The degree being earned (e.g., Master of Arts, Doctor of Education, etc.) and the program from which the degree is being earned are consistent with the title page.
☐ The full name of the committee chair is used.
☐ The abstract is no longer than two pages.
☐ The abstract includes succinct statements of the problem, methodology or procedure, and conclusion or major finding(s) in the thesis/project/dissertation.
☐ The first line of each paragraph is indented ½ inch.

Distinction Award Page
☐ The heading, "[THESIS/MASTERS PROJECT/DISSERTATION] DISTINCTION AWARD" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first line of text.
☐ Title of the thesis/dissertation is consistent with the title page.
☐ The correct name of the department or school is used.
☐ Name of the student is consistent with the title page.
☐ Name of the degree program is consistent with the title page.

- ☐ The signature line of the dean or program director is aligned flush left.
- ☐ The name and title of the dean or program director are written beneath the signature line.
- ☐ All signatures are original and written in black or blue ink.

Dedication Page (optional).
- ☐ The heading, "DEDICATION" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- ☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first line of text.
- ☐ The first line of each paragraph is indented ½ inch.

Acknowledgments (optional)
- ☐ The heading, "ACKNOWLEDGMENTS" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- ☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first line of text.
- ☐ The first line of each paragraph is indented ½ inch.

Table of Contents
- ☐ The heading, "TABLE OF CONTENTS" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- ☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first entry.
- ☐ Typing is double-spaced, except when entries run to two or more lines in length. In these situations, single-space between the continued lines.
- ☐ All sections of the manuscript that occur after the table of contents are included.
  - o List of Tables (if applicable)
  - o List of Figures (if applicable)
  - o List of Maps (if applicable)
  - o List of Abbreviations (if applicable)
  - o List of Symbols (if applicable)
  - o Each chapter in the main body of the document
    - ▪ Each subsection of each chapter
  - o Appendices (if applicable). Each appendix is listed separately.
  - o End notes (if applicable)
  - o References
- ☐ All main headings of the manuscript are aligned flush left.
- ☐ All first-order headings are indented ½ inch. Second- and third-order headings (if applicable) are indented an additional ½ inch each.
- ☐ Leader lines connect each entry in the table of contents with its associated page number.

List of Tables (if applicable)
- ☐ The heading, "LIST OF TABLES" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- ☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first entry.
- ☐ All entries are aligned flush left.

- ☐ Typing is double-spaced, except when entries run to two or more lines in length. In these situations, single-space between the continued lines.
- ☐ List by table number and title. The title must match the table title in the text.
- ☐ Indicate the page number that corresponds to table in the text.
- ☐ Leader lines connect each entry with its associated page number.

List of Figures (if applicable)
- ☐ The heading, "LIST OF FIGURES" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- ☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first entry.
- ☐ All entries are aligned flush left.
- ☐ Typing is double-spaced, except when entries run to two or more lines in length. In these situations, single-space between the continued lines.
- ☐ List by figure number and title. The title must match the figure title in the text.
- ☐ Indicate the page number that corresponds to figure in the text.
- ☐ Leader lines connect each entry with its associated page number.

List of Abbreviations (if applicable)
- ☐ The heading, "LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- ☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first entry.
- ☐ All entries are aligned flush left and listed in alphabetical order.
- ☐ The abbreviation is separated from its full text description by 1 inch.

List of Symbols (if applicable)
- ☐ The heading, "LIST OF SYMBOLS" is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- ☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first entry.
- ☐ All entries are aligned flush left.
- ☐ The symbol is separated from its full text description by 1 inch.

Tables and Figures
- ☐ Format all tables and figures according to the style guide mandated by the student's program.

Appendices
- ☐ The heading, "APPENDIX A", "APPENDIX B" (etc.) is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- ☐ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the material in the appendix.
- ☐ Material in the Appendix matches the font in the body of the document;
- ☐ Each new appendix is presented on a separate page.

References

- □ The heading, "REFERENCES", "BIBLIOGRAPHY", or "WORKS CITED" (depending on the conventions of the style mandated by the student's program) is written in all capital letters and centered at the top of the page.
- □ Two double-spaced lines separate the heading from the first entry.
- □ All references are aligned flush left and conform to the style guide mandated by the student's program.
- □ All references are single spaced and separated from each other by a double space.
- □ All citations included in the body of the document appear in the reference list.
- □ Reference list entries are arranged in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author.
- □ Two or more references by the same author(s) lists the earlier study before the later study.
- □ References with identical authors and dates are arranged in alphabetical order by the first letter in the title of the work.
- □ Long website addresses are broken with a hyphen (as appropriate).

Typing
- □ Typeface is a standard font (e.g., Times New Roman) and 11- or 12- points in size.
- □ Selected font is used consistently throughout the document.
- □ Print is laser quality.
- □ Document is typed in black ink only.
- □ Printing is single sided.
- □ No page begins or ends with a single line of a paragraph.

Spacing
- □ Double spacing is used consistently throughout the document.
- □ Single spacing is used only for long quotes, tables, and figures.

Margins and Justification
- □ Left margins are 1.5 inches.
- □ Top margins are one inch.
- □ Right margins are one inch.
- □ Left margins are justified.
- □ Right margins are not justified.
- □ No page is short because of a table or figure.
- □ Figures, pictures, graphs and other such materials must fit within the established margins.

Division of Words and Abbreviations
- □ All words fit in their entirety on a line. No word is divided by a hyphen.
- □ Abbreviations are not used.

Pagination
- □ Each page of the manuscript, except the title page, is assigned a typed number.

- ☐ Lowercase Roman numerals (ii, iii, iv, etc.) are used on all pages preceding Chapter 1. The title page counts as page i, but the number does not appear.
- ☐ Typed Roman numerals begin with the signature page.
- ☐ Roman numerals are centered ½ inch from the bottom edge of the page.
- ☐ Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) start with Chapter 1 or the introduction (if applicable) and are used for the remainder of the thesis/project/dissertation.
- ☐ The first page of the text begins with "1".
- ☐ Arabic numerals are centered ½ inch from the bottom edge of the page.

Tables and Figures
- ☐ Each table or figure is incorporated at the appropriate place in the text.
- ☐ Short tables or figures are placed on a page with some text.
- ☐ All tables and figures are referred to by number.
- ☐ When more than one table or figure is introduced on a page of text, each follows in the order they are mentioned in the text.
- ☐ Table or figure schemes are consistent throughout the document.

Citations
- ☐ Works by the same author(s) with the same year of publication are consistently differentiated by a suffix after the year (e.g., 2005a for the first publication, 2005b for the second publication, etc.).
- ☐ Both authors' names are included in every citation when referring to a work by two authors.
- ☐ Write authors' names without any titles (e.g., Dr., Mr., Mrs., or Ms.).

General format
- ❑ Adhere to American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines for formatting, including headings, tables, figures, citations, and references.
- ❑ A running head should be utilized. On right side, five spaces from the page number.
- ❑ Statistical symbols should be italicized.

THE NIDO R. QUBEIN SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
MASTER'S DEGREE IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN OF STUDY
(To be completed during the 1st year of study)

Candidate Name: _____

Primary Focus: _____

Committee Adviser: _____

Committee Member: _____

Committee Member: _____

COURSE	SEMESTER	PROFESSOR	GRADE	CREDITS
CORE				
5000-Contemp Strat Com				
5001-Persuasion				
METHOD				
5100—Research Methods				
TECHNOLOGY				
EMPHASIS AREA				
ELECTIVES				
PRACTICUM				
FINAL PROJECT DEFENSE				

Required courses in italics

Committee Adviser: _____ Date: _____

Graduate Director: _____ Date: _____

HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY
Norcross Graduate School

Independent/Practicum/Thesis/Project Request Form

Student ID#: _____ Term: _____ Year: _____

Full Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

Email: _____

Course to be Added:

Prefix	Course #	Instructor	Credit Hours

_____ _____
Student Signature   Date

_____ _____
Instructor   Date

_____ _____
Program Director   Date

_____ _____
Graduate School Processed   Date

Thesis/Project course registrations will not be processed without prior receipt of the Appointment of Chair/Committee Form.

**Thesis/Project or Continuation course registrations are required continuously until completion of the course credit is received.

HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY
Norcross Graduate School

APPOINTMENT OF THE MASTER'S PROJECT ADVISER

It is the students' responsibility to return this completed form to the Norcross Graduate School **prior to registering for the first project course**. All requested information must be provided.

Student's Name: _____

Student's Email: _____

Strategic communication concentration:
☐ Public Relations   ☐ Health Communication
☐ Political Communication

Proposed year and term of registration for the first project course:
Year: _____   Term: ☐ Fall   ☐ Spring   ☐ Summer

Proposed title of master's project:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Student: _____   Date: _____

Project Adviser: _____   Date: _____

NQSC Graduate Program Director _____   Date: _____

High Point University • Norcross Graduate School • High Point, North Carolina • 27262-3598
graduate@highpoint.edu
(336) 841-9198

HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY
Norcross Graduate School

APPOINTMENT OF THE MASTER'S PROJECT COMMITTEE

It is the students' responsibility to return this completed form to the Norcross Graduate School prior scheduling the master's project proposal defense. All requested information must be provided.

Student's Name: _____

Student's Email: _____

Strategic communication   □ Public Relations   □ Health Communication
concentration: □ Political Communication

Year and term of project
proposal defense: Year: _____   Term: □ Fall   □ Spring   □ Summer

Proposed title of
master's project:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Student: _____   Date: _____

Project Adviser: _____   Date: _____

Committee Member: _____   Date: _____

Committee Member: _____   Date: _____

NQSC Graduate
Program Director   _____   Date: _____

HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY'S MASTER'S DEGREE IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
MASTER'S PROJECT PROPOSAL DEFENSE FORM

STUDENT NAME:

PROJECT TITLE:

PRIMARY PROJECT FOCUS: ❑ Research Project   ❑ Production Report

COMMITTEE EVALUATION OF EXTENT TO WHICH PROJECT PROPOSAL MEETS EXPECTATIONS:

Topic	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Theory	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Method	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Technique	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Writing	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Process	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Presentation	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑

COMMITTEE DECISION:

The project meets the standards for a master's project.   ❑

This project idea needs development. If these changes are addressed, this project will meet the   ❑
standards for a master's project. (Notes are attached)

This project does not meet the standards for a master's project   ❑

The committee has reviewed the master's project proposal and agrees that the student has presented and defended an acceptable project for the master's degree. We approve the master's project proposal.

Committee Adviser
Name & Signature: _____   _____
Committee Member
Name & Signature: _____   _____
Committee Member
Name & Signature: _____   _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____   Date: _____

	EXPECTATIONS
TOPIC	Interesting and fresh research topic with implications for the field, well reasoned limiting of the topic, accurate definition of the problem and appropriate point of view
THEORY	Credible theoretical skills, viable starting point of the work, skillful use of concepts, well argued discussion, appropriate use of sources
METHOD	Viable choice of method, good methodological skills, extensive and appropriate material, discussion accurate, connection to the theory clear.
PRODUCTION (TECHNIQUE)	Project demonstrates a plan that requires technical skill and makes creative use of software and equipment.
WRITING	Writing is purposeful and focused. Clear progression of thought within each section and between sections. Appropriate and engaging word choice. Writes with a distinct voice. Few errors in mechanics and APA format.
PRESENTATION	Well-planned and practiced presentation with slides that illustrate key points and emphasize conclusions. Provided accurate, clear, and mostly complete responses to questions related to the study and broader topic area. Seemed comfortable during the QA
PROCESS	Process was smooth, student was motivated, agreements were kept, adequate responsibility of the process taken.

MASTER'S PROJECT DEFENSE SCHEDULE FORM
MASTER OF ARTS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
THE NIDO R. QUBEIN SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

It is the responsibility of the student to complete and deliver this form to the graduate school two weeks prior to the defense of the master's project.

Student Name:	
Degree Program:	
Title of master's project:	

Defense Date		Time:		Location:	

HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY'S MASTER'S DEGREE IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
MASTER'S PROJECT DEFENSE FORM

STUDENT NAME:

PROJECT TITLE:

COMMITTEE EVALUATION OF FINAL PROJECT*:

Topic	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Review	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Theory	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Method	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Analysis	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Results	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Implications	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Technique	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Aesthetics	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Writing	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Process	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑
Presentation	Exceeds ❑	Meets ❑	Partially meets ❑	Does not meet ❑

*For the final determination of "pass/fail," projects must at least meet expectations in method and results area. Only one "partially meets" is allowed. No "does not meet" is allowed. Components that do not meet expectations must be revised, reviewed, and approved as meets expectations prior to submitting the final evaluation form to the Norcross Graduate School.

COMMITTEE DECISION:

Project accepted with no more than minor clarifications and edits   ❑

Project accepted with some revisions—manuscript does not need to be resubmitted   ❑

Project accepted with substantial revisions—resubmit manuscript to committee   ❑

Project accepted with major revisions—resubmission & new defense required   ❑

Project not accepted   ❑

Projects that are evaluated as exceeds expectations in all areas and accepted with no more than minor revisions will earn distinction

The committee has reviewed the master's project and agrees that the student has presented and defended an acceptable project for the master's degree. We approve the master's project.

Committee Adviser
Name & Signature: _____   _____

Committee Member
Name & Signature: _____   _____

Committee Member
Name & Signature: _____   _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____   Date: _____

APPROVAL:
NQSC Graduate Coordinator Signature:_____**Date**:_____

	4	3	2	1	Should not be presented to committee
TOPIC	Genuinely challenging and innovative topic with significant implications for the field, accurately defined and well researched problem, adequate limiting of subject, fresh point of view.	Interesting and fresh research topic with implications for the field, well reasoned limiting of the topic, accurate definition of the problem and appropriate point of view	Topic is relatively fresh and interesting with some implications for the field. Definition viable. Appropriate limiting of the topic.	Topic fairly conventional with limited implications for the field, definition relatively clear, point of view customary	Topic is conventional with little implications for the field, insufficient limiting leaves the topic unclear, considerable inconsistency in the definition of the problem.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE/ BACKGROUND	Reviews and accurately summarizes the relevant literature and problem, demonstrates how the project fills a gap, and presents a compelling argument for the broader significance or value of the project. Clearly and explicitly articulates a research question or the goals.	Reviews and summarizes most of the relevant literature, overviews the problem, demonstrates how the project fills a gap, and presents a strong argument for the broader significance or value of the project. Identifies a logical research question or goals.	Presents a literature review but does not sufficiently or effectively place the project within the context of current/past research or client efforts. Argument for the broader significance and/or value of the project needs development. Articulates a research question or the goals of the project, but the argument may need more clarity.	Presents a limited literature review and identifies a problem but does not sufficiently or effectively place the project within the context of current/past research or client efforts. The argument for the significance and/or value of the project is limited The research question or the goals of the project are not clearly linked to the review and may be unclear.	Either does not present an adequate review of the literature and/or problem, or does not make sufficient connections between the literature and the project to explain its significance. Does not explicitly articulate a research question or explain the goals of the project.

	4	3	2	1	Should not be presented to committee
THEORY	Deep knowledge of theories, well reasoned theoretical starting point, clear comprehension of concept, clear and in-depth analytical approach, appropriate use of sources, extensive discussion.	Credible theoretical skills, viable starting point of the work, skillful use of concepts, well argued discussion, appropriate use of sources.	Good knowledge of theories, essential concepts comprehended, assumptions and hypotheses in line with the definition of the research problem, source material relatively extensive, sources are used appropriately.	Theoretical framework somewhat unclear and narrow. Concepts and assumptions need clarity. Amount of relevant literature comparatively low. Genuinely critical touch is missing	Theoretical framework narrow. Insufficient definition of concepts and assumptions.. Problems with critical approach to sources.
METHOD	Justified choice of method, excellent command of methods, extensive and relevant material, deep, thorough and systematic handling of the material. Clear and creative connection to the project's goals.	Viable choice of method, good methodological skills, extensive and appropriate material, discussion accurate, connection to the project's goals clear.	Method is appropriate but the overall design only provides superficial insight into the issue. Measurement goes a fair job assessing the project's goals. Connection between the analysis and the project's goal is sufficient.	Methodological choice fairly justifiable, method applied mechanically, problems with the compatibility of method, material and research problem. Handling of the material partly unbalanced	Method impossible to justify and/or apply. Problems with methodological skills make the handling of material difficult. Unprocessed material impedes the analysis. Problems coordinating the analysis and project's goals.

	4	3	2	1	Should not be presented to committee
ANALYSIS	All appropriate analysis conducted and reported correctly. Conclusions are clear and justified in a creative way and indicate excellent command of the analysis techniques.	Analysis appropriate to the data and conducted and reported correctly. Conclusions are clear and indicate good command of the analysis techniques.	Analysis is correct but the presentation of the results needs development. The interpretation is correct but lacks full explanation. The objective of the research is fulfilled.	Research questions are partly unanswered. Interpretation is insufficient. Conclusions fairly simple.	Research analysis questionable, too simple or inadequate. Problems with meeting the research objective. Conclusions are missing or do not correspond to the purpose of the study
IMPLICATIONS / CONCLUSION	Provides a compelling discussion of the implications of the findings (positive and negative) or the importance of the project for the client, placing the importance within the context of current knowledge. Demonstrates a full understanding of the results for the theoretical framework. The project includes a thorough consideration of possible future studies.	Discusses of the implications of the findings (positive and negative) or the importance of the project for the client, placing the importance within the context of current knowledge. Demonstrates a good understanding of the results for the theoretical framework. The project includes a thorough consideration of possible future studies.	Overviews the results and makes some attempt to discuss the implications of the findings, but may not explain their significance fully. Demonstrates some understanding of the results for the theoretical framework. The project mentions possible future studies but needs elaboration on how this project contributes significant new knowledge to the field.	Reiterates the findings from the results and makes little attempt to discuss the implications of the findings, with little explanation of their implication for other research or practitioners. Demonstrates little understanding of the results for the theoretical framework. Doesn't explain how results would contribute significant new knowledge to the field.	Reiterates the findings from the results, but makes little or no attempt to discuss the implications of the findings or does not describe future directions for the project. Demonstrates no understanding of the results for the theoretical framework.

	4	3	2	1	Should not be presented to committee
PRODUCTION (TECHNIQUE)	Project demonstrates technical expertise, is ambitious in scope, and makes exceptionally creative use of software and equipment.	Project demonstrates exceptional technical skill and makes creative use of software and equipment.	Project demonstrates basic technical competence and makes acceptable use of software and equipment.	Project is either technically flawed or makes ineffective use of software and equipment.	Project has major technical problems and makes ineffective use of software and equipment.
PRODUCTION (AESTHETIC)	Project demonstrates a willingness to take creative risks in order to create something bold and original. Aesthetic choices greatly enhance the goals of the project.	Project is visually/aurally captivating and demonstrates exceptional creativity. Aesthetic choices enhance the goals of the project.	Project demonstrates a basic understanding of composition, design, editing, etc. Aesthetic choices are appropriate for the goals of the project.	Project demonstrates limited understanding of composition, design, editing, etc., and/or aesthetic choices are inappropriate for the goals of the project.	Project demonstrates little creativity or understanding of visual/audio design. Aesthetic choices detract from the goals of the piece.
WRITING	Writing is confident and focused. Logical and creative progression of thought within each section and between sections. Effective and engaging word choice. Writes with a distinct voice. Very few errors in mechanics and APA format.	Writing is purposeful and focused. Clear progression of thought within each section and between sections. Appropriate and engaging word choice. Writes with a distinct voice. Few errors in mechanics and APA format.	Writing does not clearly communicate knowledge. Writing is loosely organized with some variation in word choice. Writers voice and sense of audience is vague. Some problems with mechanics and APA format.	Writing is limited in communicating knowledge. Writing is brief and underdeveloped. Language choice lacks creatively. Voice shows little sense of audience. Some problems with mechanics and APA format. Numerous problems with APA format.	Significant parts difficult to understand. Careless or inaccurate word choice. Numerous errors. Repetition, poor organization of ideas. Inappropriate use of quotations. Writing hinders understanding. Extensive problems with APA format.

	4	3	2	1	Should not be presented to committee
PRESENTATION	Engaging, polished presentation style with well-crafted slides that illustrate key points and emphasize conclusions. Provided accurate, clear, and complete responses to questions related to the study and broader topic area. Unexpected questions about the topic are answered with concise, coherent answers that draw upon knowledge of the field and one's research methods.	Well-planned and practiced presentation with slides that illustrate key points and emphasize conclusions. Provided accurate, clear, and mostly complete responses to questions related to the study and broader topic area. Seemed comfortable during the QA but some answers needed more development	Solid presentation style with coherent narrative and conclusions. Demonstrated comfort with the topic during the QA but left some questions unanswered or answered insufficiently.	Presentation was uneven and some points were confusing. Presentation style needed to be more engaging. Questions unanswered or answered insufficiently.	Too much or too little detail, goals and directions not clear, order of slides not logical; poor slides; or reads directly from many slides. Difficulty in answering questions and conversing about the topic in ways that show an easy familiarity and mastery of the topic.
PROCESS	Process was smooth, student was motivated, kept the agreements, took responsibility of the process independently, spontaneous researcher's attitude	Process was smooth, student was motivated, agreements were kept, adequate responsibility of the process taken.	Process was fairly smooth, motivation of the student varied, agreements were mostly kept	Difficulties in the process, the student needed a lot of help, motivation and taking responsibility of the process varied	Motivation of the student not very high, needed a lot of help, taking responsibility of the process varied, schedules were not kept

Project Defense Evaluation/Master's project

It is the responsibility of the Master's Project Chair to complete and deliver this form to the Graduate School (graduate@highpoint.edu or Norcross 128) on the day of or the day after the defense of the thesis.

Student's Name _____

Program _____

Title of Project _____

_____

_____

Defense: Date _____ Time _____ Location _____

Committee's Evaluation of the Project Defense

❑ Pass

❑ Fail (Reason)

Project Chair _____ Date _____

Project Committee Member _____ Date _____

Project Committee Member _____ Date _____

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

FULL TITLE OF MASTER'S PROJECT

by

Student Name

A master's project project submitted to the faculty of
High Point University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Strategic Communication

The Nido R. Qubein School of Communication

May, 2015

To Norcross Graduate School:

We, in the Nido R. Qubein School of Communication, are submitting a master's project written by

[Name of student as it appears on the title page] titled ["COMPLETE TITLE OF MASTER'S PROJECT

AS IT APPEARS ON THE TITLE PAGE"]. We have examined the final copy of this manuscript for

format and content, and we recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the Master of Arts in Strategic Communication.

_____
Dr. Adviser Name
Master's Project Chair

_____
Dr. Committee Member Name
Master's Project Committee Member

_____
Ms. Committee Member Name
Master's Project Committee Member

_____
Coordinator of the Strategic Communication MA Program

Accepted for Norcross Graduate School

_____
Vice President for Research and Planning

ABSTRACT

FULL TITLE OF MASTERS PROJECT

Full Name of Student
Month and Year Project Completed

Master of Arts in Strategic Communication

The Nido R. Qubein School of Communication

Master's Project Chair: [Name of Professor]

Abstract begins here (indented and double spaced)