

# Guidelines for the Master of GIS, Non-thesis Project

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*Department of Geography*  
*University of Central Arkansas*

**May 2012**

# The Master's, Non-Thesis Project

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## PURPOSE

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The purpose of the non-thesis option is to provide an additional track in which Master's students can select a focused area of study in place of a research-oriented thesis. The non-thesis option permits an in-depth focus of a particular aspect of geospatial technology in which the student is interested in advancing his or her understanding. The non-thesis option is more appropriate for students who want to be or are employed in a geospatial-oriented work setting rather than conducting research or pursuing a doctoral degree following graduation.

## REQUIREMENTS

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- The student will form, in consultation with an advisor, a Project Committee consisting of three faculty members.
- The student will check with the Project Committee chair to determine if IRB is required.
- The student will present a formal Project Proposal to the Project Committee.
- The student will prepare a written Project Document for the Project Committee.
- The student will give an oral Project Presentation to the Project Committee.

## PROJECT COMMITTEE

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The student will arrange to meet or communicate with his or her advisor sometime during the first semester to discuss potential topics and possible Project Committee members.

- The Project Committee must consist of three (3) members: the committee chair and two (2) members.
- It is the student's responsibility to contact potential committee members and verify with them that they are willing to serve as committee members. Project Committee members must be willing to:
  1. review the written Project Proposal two (2) weeks prior to the proposal presentation date and provide feedback to the student prior to the proposal presentation,
  2. be present at the Project Proposal presentation,
  3. provide suggestions for the preparation and writing of the final Project Document and read the final Project Document,
  4. review the written final Project Document two (2) weeks prior to the final presentation date and provide feedback to the student prior to the presentation, and
  5. be present at the final Project presentation.

**NOTE:** *Because this is an online degree, arrangements can be made for webinar-, or Skype-based presentations.*

## PROPOSAL

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The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that the student has planned a feasible geospatial project. It is the student's responsibility to arrange the date, time and place for the proposal presentation with approval of the Project Committee members. The proposal will consist of work while enrolled in GEOG 6385 or GEOG 6685, GIS Graduate Project.

- The Project Proposal will consist of two forms: a written document and a PowerPoint presentation. The written proposal will be given to the committee chair three (3) weeks prior to the proposal presentation date, and will be given to the rest of the project committee members two (2) weeks prior to the proposal presentation date. The thirty (30) minute proposal presentation will be in PowerPoint form. Allow 1-2 minutes per slide.
- The Project Proposal will be double spaced, in a 12 point font, *and including the following:*
  1. **Title Page** (see sample title page below)
  2. **Chapter 1. Introduction:** *Provide a brief introduction to the project topic.*
  3. **Chapter 2. Problem Statement:** *Describe the problem to be solved in your project and its significance and contribution in a broader context.*
  4. **Chapter 3. Specific Aims/Objectives:** *Describe the questions you intend to answer using the skills you have learned in the program.*

## FINAL PROJECT DOCUMENT AND ORAL PRESENTATION

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The final project will consist of work conducted while enrolled in GEOG 6385 or GEOG 6685, GIS Graduate Project.

*The Final Project Document will use the APA style format. A guide for writing research papers based on the style recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA) is available at <http://apastyle.org/>. Projects should be written in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double spaced, with 1 inch margins. Other guidelines are as follows:*

1. **Title Page** (see sample title page below)
2. **Chapter 1. Introduction:** *Provide a brief introduction to the project.*
3. **Chapter 2. Problem Statement:** *Describe the problem to be solved in your project and its significance and contribution in a broader context.*
4. **Chapter 3. Specific Aims/Objectives:** *Describe the questions you intend to answer using the geospatial, quantitative analysis, and spatial analysis skills you have learned in the program.*
5. **Chapter 4. Methods, Techniques, and Assumptions:** *Describe the specific GIS techniques, quantitative methods, and any other analytical techniques you used to process your data. State the assumptions involved in your methods. You may mention general GIS commands or operative procedures you used, but specific key strokes are not necessary.*
6. **Chapter 5. Results:** *Describe the results of your project. Results should be directly linked to the Problem Statement and Aims/Objectives. In addition to the narrative, maps, tables, graphs, charts, procedures (or algorithms), or a combination of them, should be included when appropriate.*
7. **Chapter 6. Conclusions/Recommendations:** *Provide a brief conclusion to your project and suggest other elements that might have been included or other areas of research that might be related to your project.*
8. **Acknowledgements**

9. **Bibliography:** A bibliography is a list of the citations you used in your project document. Students will give a forty five (45) minute Final Oral Presentation upon completion of their project. The Final Oral Presentation will be an overview of the project. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- In consultation with the Project Committee, students must plan the presentation date and location at least seven (7) days in advance of the Final Oral Presentation date.
- The Final Oral Presentation will consist of two forms: a written document and a PowerPoint presentation. The written document will be given the Project Committee three (3) weeks prior to the final oral presentation date. The forty-five (45) minute final oral presentation will be in PowerPoint form. Allow one to two (1-2) minutes per slide.
- Following the Final Oral Presentation there will be a question and answer session with questions covering any aspect of the project.

**NOTE:** Because this is an online degree, arrangements can be made for webinar-, or Skype-based presentations.

#### ***DISTRIBUTION OF THE FINAL PROJECT DOCUMENT***

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The student will provide a copy of the final project document with Approval Form (see below) to each committee member and to the chair of the Department of Geography. The chair's copy will be the departmental copy and will be kept on file in the department.

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

LOCATING SUITABLE REPLACEMENT PROPERTY FOR THE CACHE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
BY USE OF A GIS MITIGATION SITE LOCATOR

by

Robert Reed

A project presented to the Department of Geography in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Geographic Information Systems

Conway, Arkansas  
December 2011

APPROVAL FORM

TO THE CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY:

The members of the Committee approve the project of [name of student] presented on [date of project defense].

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Committee Chairperson

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Committee Member

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Committee Member