

Thesis guidelines for Nutritional Sciences scholars

This is to remind you of the upcoming thesis deadlines and to provide some guidance regarding what needs to be included in the thesis. See the SHC website for specific due dates and additional guidance regarding the Honors Thesis.

DEADLINES:

1) Mandatory Thesis Format Review. This is just to review formatting; you do not need to have your content completed for this deadline. You just need to have all the proper placeholders in place.

2) Submitting to Honors Thesis Advisor for approval: Please provide a hard copy and an electronic copy of your completed thesis to your Honors Thesis Advisors (either Dr. Corwin or Dr. Patterson) two weeks prior to the submission deadline. The copy you give to your Thesis Advisor needs to already be approved as the final copy by your Thesis Supervisor before giving it to one of us to read. Please provide a hard copy as well as an electronic copy. We need two weekends (10 days) to get the job done. We will get the edited thesis back to you in time to incorporate our edits into the final copy (assuming they are approved by your Thesis Supervisor) prior to final submission to the Honors College. If there are circumstances that will prevent you from making this deadline, please come talk to us so that we can make other arrangements.

3) Final Thesis submission. This is the final copy that has the Thesis Advisor's edits incorporated (subject to approval by your Thesis Supervisor, of course), as well as a signature page signed by your Thesis Advisor and Thesis Supervisor.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

1) See the SHC website for examples and instructions!! The Thesis Project Guide, in particular, should be read <https://www.shc.psu.edu/academic/thesis/project.cfm>. There also is information regarding formatting, submission, etc., as well as an eThesis archive of examples. Note that we only began allowing the thesis to count as part of the 490W waiver in the Spring semester 2013 and have been refining the expectations since that time; therefore, theses that are archived prior to this time (and, indeed, some submitted during the first semester or two since that time) may not meet the requirements provided here.

2) For Nutritional Sciences, you must include an extensive literature review as part of your introductory material. This should cover the literature that is relevant to your research project, bringing out where the gaps in the literature are, and how your research helps to fill in one or more of these gaps. This is particularly important in order to waive NUTR490W. The introduction answers the questions: Why is this research area interesting? What have others already done? What gaps in the literature does your research address? You then will include a methods section (what did you do?), results section (what did you find?), and discussion (how do your results compare to results that others have reported? Offer potential explanations for discrepancies; if your results are consistent with theirs, then offer possible explanations for what is going on. Finally,

strengths/weaknesses or limitations of the research should be mentioned as well as potential areas for future research). Your Thesis Supervisor has extensive experience writing research papers and grants and can provide detailed guidance for all of these sections. Keep in mind that a submitted manuscript will not be accepted as a thesis. Your introduction will be far more detailed than is typical of most published papers. The introductions in recent theses have averaged 13.5 pages in length, with lengths ranging from 7 pages to 22 pages. To waive 490W, your introduction/literature review should be at least 8-10 pages in length, at the very minimum.

3) At the end of the introduction, or the beginning or end of the methods, please include a brief statement of your hypotheses (if there were any) as well as a summary or statement of your role in the project. This should include your contribution to designing the study (if any), collecting the data, and analyzing the data. Some of you will be working with data that were collected previously, but are analyzing them in a new way. That's fine. You just need to clearly indicate what you contributed to the research that you are reporting.

4) Keep in mind that you are telling a scientific story. Scientific papers, and your thesis, answer the following questions: Why is your topic interesting (introduction)? What did you do (methods)? What did you find (results)? What does it mean (discussion)? Scientists typically write in the style of "tell me what you're going to tell me (introduce the topic of your paper, introduce a section within your paper, introduce a paragraph), tell me (explain your topic in detail, provide detail in a section or paragraph), then tell me what you told me (restate or review what you just went over in your paper as a whole, as well as within each section and paragraph).

4) Please feel free to ask Dr. Patterson or Dr. Corwin to take a look at your introduction well before the thesis deadline to be sure that it meets the necessary criteria for waiving 490W.

5) Your thesis will be submitted to Turnitin for evaluation of plagiarism. Below is some information to help you know what is considered to be plagiarism and what is not.

Plagiarism Examples

Information on plagiarism and citing sources: See Joe Schall's [Style for Students](#) site.

Plagiarism: Submitting someone else's work as though it was your own.

Go to <http://tlt.psu.edu/plagiarism/instructor-guide/penn-state-policies/> for the Penn State Policies, examples and more information.

Original Sources: Slavin, J. et al: The Role of Whole Grains in Disease Prevention. J. Amer. Diet. Assoc. 2001:101;780-785.

"The Role of Whole Grains in Preventing Disease

Research has found health benefits of eating whole food, including grains, fruits, and vegetables, but is less definitive about the benefits of consuming individual nutrients or phytochemicals. Among a large group of women, age 55 to 69 years, eating at least 1 serving a day of whole-grain goods significantly reduced the risk of death from all causes compared with women who ate almost no whole-grain products (5). In this particular

study, dark breads and whole-grain breakfast cereals made up the largest portion of whole-grain foods consumed.”

Version A

The Role of Whole Grains in Preventing Disease

Research has reported health benefits of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Research is less definitive about the benefits of consuming individual nutrients or phytochemicals. One study found that women (55 to 69 years) who ate at least 1 serving a day of whole –grain foods significantly reduced the risk of death from all causes compared with women who ate almost no whole-grain products. In this study, dark breads and whole-grain breakfast cereals made up the largest portion of whole-grain foods eaten (Slavin et al., 2001).

Assessment: Clearly plagiarism, even though the original author is cited. Stolen paragraph structure, sentences and phrases. In addition, Slavin, et al.(2001) wrote the review upon which this is based, but did not do the research that is being described. Therefore, the people who did the original research are not being given credit for what they have done. If you are going to talk about some original research, then you MUST read and cite the original paper, not just cite what somebody else said about it.

Version B

The Role of Whole Grains in Preventing Disease

While there is less definitive information about the benefits of consuming individual nutrients or phytochemicals, research has found health benefits of eating whole foods, including grains, fruits, and vegetables. One large study with women, ages 55 to 69 years reported that compared with eating almost no whole grain products eating at least 1 serving a day of whole-grain foods significantly reduced the risk of death from all causes. The largest portion of whole grain foods consumed was made up of dark breads and whole grain breakfast cereals (Slavin et al., 2001).

Assessment: Still plagiarism. Many phrases are similar to the Slavin et al. (2001) review. In addition, there is still the same problem of not citing the original research paper.

Version C

Whole Grains and Disease Prevention

One large epidemiologic study conducted with postmenopausal women (55 to 69 years of age) demonstrated health benefits of whole grain consumption (Jacobs et al., 1999). Compared with women who consumed no whole-grain products, all cause mortality was significantly reduced in women who consumed one serving/day of whole grain foods (i.e., grains, fruits, and vegetables). Studies are needed to clarify our understanding of the bioactive compounds in whole grain that confer health benefits.

Assessment: No plagiarism from Slavin et al. (2001); original research is reviewed and cited.

Please talk to Dr. Patterson or Dr. Corwin if you have any questions.

Last update: September 1, 2015