

Plan A (Thesis)

In consultation with their advisor, students may choose to undertake and present **original research** as a culminating experience via the thesis option.

Overview

The requirement for the MLISc degree under the thesis option is a minimum of **39 credit** hours of approved graduate study. At least **33 credit hours** must be taken in LIS and approved ICS courses, including a minimum of **6 credit hours** in LIS 700: Thesis Research. Up to **4 credit** hours of LIS 699 Directed Reading and/or Research may be applied toward the **6 credit** hour LIS 700 minimum requirement. Students may not take more than total of 6 credits of LIS 699. Students may also not count more than a total of 9 credit hours in LIS 699 and LIS 700 to meet the minimum number of credits required. Students must be enrolled in at least **1 credit** of LIS 700 Thesis Research in the semester they intend to graduate.

Dual degree students may only pursue the thesis option if LIS is their primary degree.

Plan A students may not count more than 6 credits outside of LIS/ICS to meet the minimum number of required credits for the degree. One of these courses might be the research methods course.

Sample Course Layout for the General Track

	Number of Courses	Credits	Notes
Required Courses (General Track)	601 (1) 605 (1) 610 (1) 615 (1) 650 (1) 663 (1) Tech (1)	21	School Media Library students have more required courses. Please consult with your academic advisor.
LIS 700: Thesis	700 (2)	6*	See Note Below* At least 1 credit hour must be taken in the graduation semester. At least 1 credit hour must be taken each fall or spring semester while working on the thesis. If the committee approves a summer defense/graduation, the student also must register for at least 1 credit hour of LIS 700 that summer.

Research Methods**	Research Methods (1)	3	
Electives*	Electives (3)	9	
Total	13	39	

*** Notes Regarding LIS 699 and LIS 700**

Students can take up to 6 credit hours of LIS 699. However:

- a. Only up to **4 credit** hours of LIS 699 may be applied toward the **6 credit** hour LIS 700 minimum requirement.
- b. Students may not count more than a total of 9 credits of LIS 699 and 700 together towards the minimum number of credits required for graduation.

**** Note on Research Methods**

The LIS thesis adviser can waive the research methods course requirement if the student already took a relevant graduate-level course before entry to LIS. In such cases, the student has to take another 3 credits of electives.

Students under Plan A are further governed by the regulations and procedures of the UH Office of Graduate Education, which can be found at: <http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/>.

Considering doing an MLISc thesis? Please watch this orientation video (1 hr, Halawai) <http://breeze.hawaii.edu/p33998876/?session=breezkvv52d9q9q4763hu>, although these written policies are the final authority on Plan A.

Procedures

Students are responsible for complying with all Graduate Education rules and completing forms.

Master's Plan A Forms <http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/forms>

The timeline for completion varies by student, thesis project, and committee, but a completion timeline should be part of your proposal defense, and it is the student's responsibility to keep committee members informed of any changes to the agreed-upon timeline. The steps below assume that the student is planning to graduate within five semesters. See also the Sample Thesis Timeline [Appendix A].

Step 1: Pre-Candidacy [Semesters 1 & 2]

- Attend a thesis orientation
- Complete 15 credits of LIS courses
- Select an LIS thesis chair (must be full time LIS faculty with Full Graduate Status)
- Take/complete a graduate research methods course approved by the student's LIS thesis chair.

- Submit **Graduate Division Form I**

Step 2: Proposal Defense [Semester 3]

- Complete a graduate research methods course approved by the student's LIS thesis chair.
- Select thesis committee members (Minimum: chair + one LIS graduate faculty + the third committee member could be recruited from either inside or outside of the LIS program). See Section below on **Committee Membership**. Members must sign **Graduate Division Form II**.
- **Defend a thesis proposal** in a private meeting and receive approval by the thesis committee. There is no evaluation form at this stage, but the committee will examine the proposal on the basis of the elements set out in the **MLISc Thesis Evaluation Form** [See Appendix B].
- Receive approval by UHM Institutional Review Board (Warning: This might take several months).
- Submit **Graduate Division Form II**.
- Students cannot sign up for LIS 700 before this form has been completed.

Step 3: Conducting Research / Writing the Thesis [Semesters 4 & 5]

- Students take **6 credit** hours in LIS 700 Thesis (over two or more semesters)
- Up to **4 credit** hours of LIS 699 Directed Reading/Research may be applied toward the 6 credit hour LIS 700 requirement.
- Students may sign up for as little as 1 credit of LIS 700 each semester in order to retain student status while writing the thesis. Summer registration is not required unless the student has permission to defend the thesis in the summer.
- Students should work primarily with the thesis chair, but should share drafts with committee members to solicit feedback.

Step 4: Thesis Defense [Semester 5]

- **Students should be approaching the completion of six credits of LIS 700.**
- Register your intent to graduate by the deadline to the Graduate Education Office in the final semester.
- **Students should schedule the final oral thesis presentation** at least **30 days** before the thesis submission deadline on the UHM Academic Calendar.
- This requires submitting the following to the thesis committee chair at least **14 days** in advance of the intended presentation date using **MLISc Thesis Defense Preparation Form** [See Appendix C].
 - The intended time and date of the presentation;
 - The intended room, which the student reserved with the LIS Program Coordinator (it should be reserved for at least 2 hours to allow sufficient time for follow-up discussion);
 - Title and abstract to be used for the announcement; and
 - Signatures of the committee members.
- At this time, students should:
 - Make an oral thesis presentation announcement;
 - Send the final thesis document to committee members at least 14 days before the oral thesis defense;

- Defend the thesis. The student should set up the presentation 30 minutes before the scheduled start time; and
- Submit Graduate Division Form III after the Committee approves of a draft thesis and the oral defense (based on the MLISc Thesis Evaluation Form [Appendix B]).

Step 5: Revising and Submitting the Final Thesis [Semester 5]

- Students should make changes required by the LIS thesis committee:
 - If the thesis committee only wants minor revisions, they might be willing to sign **Graduate Division Form IV** with the LIS thesis chair responsible for approving the changes.
 - However, if many or major revisions are required, the entire committee may have to go through one or more drafts before approving final submission.
- Approval of the content and the form of the finalized manuscript.
- Submit **Graduate Division Form IV**
- Submit this form along with the final digital copy of the manuscript, by the due date indicated in the academic calendar. Do NOT physically attach the form to the manuscript.

Committee Membership

Students should follow UH Office of Graduate Education policies in terms of committee membership. In short, a committee is usually made up of three committee members:

- **LIS Thesis Committee Chair:** Most students also make this person their academic adviser.
- **A second LIS Faculty member** with some subject knowledge.
- **The third committee member** could be recruited from either inside or outside of the LIS program.

Rules for Committee Membership

- All committee members must have full graduate UHM faculty status.
- If a proposed thesis committee member does not have full graduate faculty status, she/he will need to submit a CV and obtain approval. Most UHM librarians do not have such status. In addition to a CV, append a memo explaining why the individual would be a valued committee member.

Online Participation

While it is strongly suggested that the student and all committee members physically attend the thesis proposal defense meeting, remote participation is permitted if all of the conditions below are met.

Video or teleconferencing — Under special circumstances, the candidate and/or a committee member (only one member, which excludes the committee chair) may participate via video or teleconferencing, if certain conditions are met:

- Advance written agreement of the student and all committee members has been obtained and submitted to the LIS Program Chair (Use **MLISc Thesis Defense Preparation Form** [Appendix C]);
- All materials, including any visual aids, have been distributed in advance to the remote member;
- The remote member participates in the entire and complete course of the meeting;

- The committee chair has accepted responsibility for the oversight of any logistical arrangements necessary; and
- Any costs associated with video or teleconferencing have been accounted for in advance. Such costs are not the responsibility of the LIS Program or the Office of Graduate Education.

Evaluating and Passing the Thesis

If upon final evaluation, scores do not average 3 or above across all committee members and all categories on the MLISc Thesis Evaluation Form [Appendix B], the thesis committee must decide whether:

- a) The thesis could be accepted with modifications, or
- b) The thesis is not accepted.

In the case of a), the candidate should revise his/her thesis based on committee members' suggestions and comments, and re-submit it within **20 days** for approval of the committee. If the student does not make necessary revisions within the time indicated, the student must consult with his/her academic adviser and consider pursuing Plan B (Oral Exam). The student might have to take additional LIS courses since the LIS 700 course credits will change to No Credit.

In the case of b), the committee can assign the student additional work (such as revisions, additional courses, or readings etc.) to improve the quality of the thesis to meet the evaluation criteria. This might require the student to enroll in an additional semester or two in order to fully meet committee expectations. A student failing for the second time can only complete the Program using the Plan B (Oral Exam) option.

Thesis FAQ

What is a thesis? A thesis is a piece of original research that addresses a question in a formal way. It demonstrates your ability to articulate a problem of interest to the LIS community, apply and critically analyze relevant literature, design and execute a research plan, analyze the data you found, and discuss its implications.

Why should I consider doing a thesis? You might benefit from the thesis experience if you are considering a Ph.D. or another advanced degree with a research component. Also, if you plan to work in an academic library you may be required to conduct and publish research. On the other hand, if you are interested in a particular topic and wish to explore it in depth, you should probably start with an independent study project via LIS 699, which is much more flexible. If it turns into a thesis project, up to 4 LIS 699 units can be applied toward the LIS 700 Thesis Research requirement. If you decide not to pursue writing a thesis, you can present your research through a poster session, a conference presentation, or write an article for publication.

How long does it have to be? Most theses range between 60-150 pages. A thesis is much more in-depth than a class paper or research article, and length expectations are very much project-dependent and set by the thesis committee.

Who do I work with? A thesis is developed and undertaken under the supervision of a committee consisting of three or more faculty members. A majority, including the chair, must be LIS faculty. Graduate Division maintains a searchable list of faculty who are eligible to chair and serve on thesis committees at: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/select-committee-member>

How do I get faculty members to work with me? Faculty members participate on thesis committees at their discretion. Just like students, they have different interests, philosophies and time demands that may preclude them from working with you. The best thing you can do is to articulate your interest in considering a thesis as early as possible during your time in the LIS Program. See *Sample Thesis Timeline* [Appendix A]. Your adviser can steer you toward courses that will demonstrate your ability to conduct research, and faculty members who may be receptive to working with you.

What theses have previous LIS students completed?

Recent theses include:

- Valancy Rasmussen (2014). *The Manuscripts of Timbuktu: Armed Conflict and Preservation of Memory*.
- Matthew C. da Silva (2014). *Censorship Glossarchive Project: Phase One: Developing Metadata Scheme for Cryptic Circumlocutions in Chinese Social Media*.
- Nicolita Garces (2013). *Meeting the Information Needs of Students in the Ilokano Language and Literature Program: Assessing Hamilton Library's Philippine Collection at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa*.
- Sarah Vornholt (2013). *Visualizing the Article: An Exploratory Study of Undergraduates' Educational Reactions to Images in Scholarly Articles*.
- Michael-Brian Ogawa (2012). *The Role of School Librarians in Establishing and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities*.
- Joshua Mika (2012). *Discriminating Tastes: Editing Siam's Patrimony and the Birth of the 'National Library,' 1905-1925*.
- Matthew Yim (2007). *A Discourse on Shadows: Archive Ideals and Ideal Archives. How Access and Preservation Shape the Performance of Archival Discourse*.

We encourage all thesis students to post their work in the *ScholarSpace* institutional repository at: <http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/20323>

Approved by the LIS Program Faculty on April 17, 2015.

[Appendix B]

MLISc Thesis Evaluation Form
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa – Library and Information Science Program

Date:

Candidate name:

Title of thesis:

Criterion	Expected Performance	4: Exceeds 3: Meets 2: Approaches 1: Does not meet
Problem statement	States the research problem clearly; articulates importance of the study within the field of LIS.	
Literature review	Demonstrates sound knowledge of literature and of prior work on the specific research problem.	
Method	Employs appropriate and rigorous methods aligned with theory and research questions.	
Results	Addresses research questions appropriately; analyzes and interprets research findings effectively; considers significance of results within the context of LIS research and practice.	
Quality of written thesis	Communicates research results clearly and professionally in the written product.	
Quality of oral defense	Communicates results clearly and professionally in a well-organized and concise presentation. Responds effectively to questions.	

Comments noted here:

Overall assessment: The candidate

___ meets the thesis requirements described above (≥3 in all areas).

___ does not meet the thesis requirements described above.

Name of committee member (print) _____

Signature of committee member (signature) _____

[Appendix C]

**MLISc Thesis Defense Preparation Form
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa – Library and Information Science Program**

Submission Date:

Candidate Name:

Oral Presentation Date/Time :
Place :
Title of Thesis :
Abstract of Thesis :
Name, Title, Signatures of the Thesis Committee, and the Form of Attendance to the Oral Presentation
Chair: Name Signature Physically Present or Remote Participation
Member: Name Signature Physically Present or Remote Participation
Member: Name Signature Physically Present or Remote Participation

Note: The Committee Chair should submit the form to the LIS Program Chair.

The candidate should make his/her oral thesis presentation announcement this time.