

Beijing Forestry University

Regulations of Academic Graduate Thesis Proposal

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Thesis proposal of academic graduate is a significant session that is initiated under the direction of supervisor for the graduate to decide a research topic in an explicit research field, therefore it plays an irreplaceable role in starting the degree thesis work and in monitoring and ensuring the quality of the degree thesis. To further regulate and reinforce the work of academic thesis proposal, to intensify the process management and to ensure the quality of degree thesis, the *Regulations of Academic Graduate Thesis Proposal* is revised based on the original one.

I. Object of thesis proposal

Thesis proposal is a compulsory session during graduate cultivation. All the academic graduates who are studying for master or doctor degree in Beijing Forestry University must finish the thesis proposal.

II. Prerequisites of thesis proposal presentation

The basic prerequisites for an academic graduate to present his/her thesis proposal include having finished course study, having conducted certain preliminary research work and having written a report of thesis proposal.

III. Schedule of thesis proposal

The thesis proposal of academic master graduate should be generally finished by the end of the third semester from his/her admission, and that of the academic doctoral candidate should be implemented by the end of the second semester since admission. The specific completion schedule should conform to the relevant regulations of thesis proposal reports stipulated in the cultivation programs of individual discipline in which the academic master or doctor is studying. The time duration between passing thesis proposal and application for thesis oral defense should be one year. Specific time arrangement for other situations is as follows:

1. Graduates who need to postpone thesis proposal because of special reasons should submit a personally written application for the supervisor's signed agreement. After the person in charge of thesis proposal and the major school leader examine and authorize the application, the thesis proposal can be postponed. However, the time span of postponement should not exceed one month.

2. A joint-supervision graduate, who is doing the thesis research by joint training for more than half a year in a foreign country or off campus and cannot manage to return to conduct thesis proposal on time, should produce a written application with supervisor's signature for the person in charge of thesis proposal and the major school leader to examine and approve before he/she can carry out thesis proposal on schedule outside Beijing Forestry University. For those graduates or

doctoral candidates off campus, at least two or three experts in the same or relevant field should evaluate the thesis proposal by communication.

3. International students who cannot manage to return to school for thesis proposal because of visa or endorsement or other reasons should submit a written application with supervisor's opinion and signature for the examination and approval by both the person in charge and the major school leader before they can conduct thesis proposal on schedule in foreign countries. For those graduates or doctoral candidates, at least two or three experts in the same or relevant field should evaluate the thesis proposal by communication.

4. Anyone who did not conduct thesis proposal on schedule without supervisor's agreement and discipline principal's and school leader's approval according to the regulations, is not allowed to attend the thesis oral defense on time.

IV. These topic selection

1. Creativity: The thesis should study issues which have not been probed into or have not produced satisfactory results so that further research or study is needed, or which are controversial in the academic circle and necessary lubricating is needed.

2. Advancement: New understanding should be presented in master thesis and creative achievements should be presented in doctoral dissertation.

3. Necessity: The topic should have demanding background and meet practical and scientific needs, namely it should have practical efficiency and academic values.

4. Feasibility: The content of the topic should show scientific meaning, proper difficulty level and workload. Its implementation plan should be operable in terms of technological route, funding and experimental conditions. The feasibility to obtain achievements in a certain span of time should be sufficiently considered.

V. Content of thesis proposal

Graduate thesis proposal should be conducted by the graduate him/herself under the guidance of his/her supervisor. Before writing the thesis proposal, the graduate should discuss and determine the topic with his/her supervisor according to the cultivating objectives, referring to supervisor's research projects and his/her own research advantages. The thesis proposal should also be conducted on the basis of thorough investigation and extensive reading of literature. The thesis proposal should involve theoretical and practical meaning of the topic; literature review which includes international and domestic research background, developing tendency, existing problems of the field, to which all necessary references should be attached; research content, expected aim and crucial problems intended to be solved; research methodology, technology route, and experiment scheme that are intended to adopt and their feasibility analyses; research characteristics and innovations; research schedule and expected research achievement; related research work which has been conducted and progress that has been achieved; available and absent experimental conditions and intended solving approaches; budgets of research funding and implementation. The academic doctoral candidates should make their detailed thesis research scheme in the form of scientific research fund application under the guidance of supervisor(s).

VI. Requirements of thesis proposal

1. Thesis proposal length: No less than 10,000 words are required for a master thesis

proposal, in which no less than 6,000 words should be literature review; while doctoral dissertation should contain no less than 15,000 words, of which no less than 8,000 words should be literature review.

2. Entries of references: No less than 30 entries of references related to the topic (no less than 40 entries for humanities and social sciences) should be contained in a master thesis proposal, while no less than 60 entries (no less than 70 entries for humanities and social sciences) should be demonstrated in doctoral dissertation proposal. However, it is allowed to have fewer entries of references in certain newly developed research fields according to the circumstance. Furthermore, newly published research literature within 5 years should constitute no less than one thirds of the total references.

3. The reference quotation format should be in accordance with relevant requirements for the format of graduate thesis of Beijing Forestry University.

VII. Organization and requirements for thesis proposal presentation

1. Each discipline should arrange the evaluation of thesis proposal uniformly and strictly and an evaluation group should be organized according to research directions and graduate quantity. A group leader, who is an academic leading figure of the discipline or a renowned expert, and a secretary should be set. The group members should be nominated by the group leader. Three or more members, who are deputy professors or above or experts who have acquired the corresponding title in the same field, constitute the graduate thesis proposal evaluation group; while a dissertation proposal evaluation group for doctoral candidates should be no less than five members who are professors or experts with a corresponding title in the same field. The discipline can invite experts of relevant disciplines or graduate supervisor of other universities according to specific cases. Teachers and students of the same discipline can also be invited to attend the thesis proposal report so that the evaluation group can collect opinions from more aspects. For interdisciplinary research topics, supervisors in the relevant specific fields should be invited. The secretary in the evaluation group is responsible for recording and collating the documents of the thesis proposal presentation of the graduate students. To ensure the quality of the thesis proposal, the time span of presentation and question-answer section of each graduate should be no less than 30 minutes, so that all the disciplines should arrange the occasion appropriately.

2. To enhance supervision and administration of the thesis proposal presentation, the report should be held publicly. The person in charge of the discipline or evaluation group leader should timely publicize the relevant arrangements for the thesis proposal report, and submit them to the graduate office of the school in advance. At the same time, the school graduate secretary should inform the relevant members of supervision team to participate in the report. If it is not arranged according to the procedure, the report meeting will be regarded as invalid.

VIII. Procedure and requirements of thesis proposal

1. The thesis proposal should be firstly accepted by the supervisor and then submitted to the evaluation group for reviewing one week in advance before the proposal is officially started.

2. The thesis proposal report should be chaired by the group leader and be conducted in an integrated way of PPT presentation and oral defense by the graduate. Time span for oral presentation should be no less than 15 minutes for graduates and no less than 25 minutes for doctoral candidates. The evaluation group should make comments on and ask questions about the

topic selection, research approach and thesis writing schedule. The time span should be at least 20 minutes for graduates and at least 30 minutes for doctoral candidates.

3. After thesis proposal presentation, the evaluation group should strictly appraise the proposals by discussing together based on the content and with realistic, scholarly precise and responsible manner. They should also express their comments and opinions which should be explicit and definite. The advice and suggestions for revisions should be clear and specific. The appraising process should be recorded and the relevant documents collected by the secretary of the evaluation group.

4. The graduate who passes the evaluation should revise and improve the former proposal according to the comments and suggestions made by the evaluation group within one week. After the supervisor and discipline accept and sign the proposal, it should be filed by school graduate secretary.

5. The school should submit the report of completion status of thesis proposal to Graduate School in one week after the work of thesis proposal is finished.

IX. Results and treatments of thesis proposal

1. Results of evaluation consist of “pass” and “fail”.

(1) Anyone who passes the evaluation should revise and replenish the proposal according to the comments and suggestions made by the evaluation group. After supervisor’s acknowledgement, the graduate can formally start the research work for thesis writing. Academic graduates can won one credit while doctoral candidates are given two credits for this task.

(2) Anyone who fails the evaluation should comprehensively revise the proposal according to the opinions and suggestions made by the evaluation group. He/she can restart the thesis proposal after his/her personal application and supervisor’s approval are processed within a certain period of time. The interval between the two thesis proposals should last no less than 3 months for an academic graduate but no less than 6 months for an academic doctoral candidate. Anyone who fails the second proposal will have the enrollment status prolonged for one year automatically. Anyone who cannot start the third thesis proposal when the postponed period expires or anyone who fails the third proposal should be asked to quit school.

2. Generally, the selected topic cannot be changed once it has been confirmed. Anyone who needs to change the topic out of particular reasons is allowed to restart the thesis proposal once before in-process assessment (mid-term evaluation). Those who intend to change the topic after the in-process assessment should follow the next year procedure and the student’s status should be correspondently changed to the new year. When the research topic is intended to change, the graduate should produce a written report to process supervisor’s agreement with signature and the appraise of both the person in charge of discipline and the main school leader before it is submitted to Graduate School for filing. The thesis proposal reported the second time should strictly follow the prescribed process and at a certain time, ie. the interval between the two reports should be no less than 3 months for academic graduates but no less than 6 months for doctoral candidates. After the topic is changed, the starting time of thesis work should be recorded from the day on which the new thesis proposal is submitted, and the date for oral defense should be postponed for one year from the restarting day. If the graduate cannot carry on the work properly as scheduled after changing the topic, or if the graduate arbitrarily changes the topic without permission, a school report should be submitted to Graduate School to stop his/her education and

treat him/her as quitting the university according to the regulations

X. School implementation rules

On the basis of the above regulations, schools can formulate implementation rules based on the characteristics of the disciplines and the actual situation of the graduate students, and report the rules to Graduate School for record filing before the formal implementation.

XI. Enforcement and interpretation of thesis proposal

The regulations are enforced since the day of publication, and the power of interpretation on the regulations lies in Graduate School.