

CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS SATISFYING CCP PROGRAM MILESTONES

The following criteria are intended to guide students and faculty mentors in conducting and reviewing projects that satisfy the program milestones of the CCP Program. These milestones include the Demonstration of Research Readiness and the Doctoral Dissertation. Projects that can serve as the Demonstration of Research Readiness include (1) Master's Thesis projects completed with faculty mentors at the University of South Alabama, (2) Master's Thesis projects completed at other institutions in satisfaction of the requirements of a master's degree in psychology or a related field, and (3) First Year Projects completed under the mentorship of a University of South Alabama faculty mentor by CCP students who entered the program with a master's degree that did not include a thesis requirement. The CCP Program and its associated departments support the general principle, established by SACS standards and the Council of Graduate Schools, and required by A.C.H.E., that a Thesis and Dissertation projects should use scholarly methods to achieve original results. In applying these standards to the discipline of psychology, the CCP Program at the University of South Alabama has established the following specific criteria.

1. **Quality:** The thesis project should represent a sufficiently rigorous and developmentally appropriate independent project meeting the following standards of quality:
 - A. **Originality:** Thesis projects should be original in at least one of the following:
 1. Topic selection.
 2. Approach/Methodology.
 3. Analysis and Interpretation.
 4. Subject Population.

Note: Normally, literal replications will not be accepted, however replication of research may be acceptable if clear justification can be offered.
 - B. **Methodological Soundness:** Thesis projects should be methodologically sound, using a research design, original data collection methodology or selection of appropriate archival data, and statistical analyses appropriate to the problem.
 - C. **Logical Soundness:** Thesis projects should be logically sound. This is especially important in establishing the theoretical and empirical rationale for the research problem, hypothesis(es), and discussions of results, but should be apparent throughout the document.
 - D. **Literature Survey:** Thesis projects should include an adequate survey of the relevant literature and a critical examination of that literature.
 - E. **Discussion of Results:** Thesis projects should include an adequate discussion of the results of the research to include, where appropriate, possible applications of the results, theoretical inferences that can be drawn from the results, limitations of the study, and further appropriate research.

2. **Range/Scope of Acceptable Topics.** Any topic will be considered appropriate if it relates to the fields of Clinical and Counseling Psychology. Topics must also be related to the subject matter expertise of the CCP faculty mentor and the thesis committee. The subject matter of thesis projects completed elsewhere might not directly relate to the CCP faculty mentor's. During such instances in which a project completed at another institution is submitted for review, the Comprehensive Examinations Committee is tasked with the review and determination of appropriateness of the submitted project. The Comprehensive Examinations Committee may request additional internal (i.e., other CCP Faculty) and/or external review of the submission if necessary.
3. **Nature of the Research.** A thesis project must include appropriate empirical research methods (either quantitative or qualitative) and data analysis. Projects that include only a narrative synthesis of the literature are not appropriate to the purpose of the thesis as these projects are intended to demonstrate readiness for independent research and the dissertation project.
4. **Ethics:** All thesis research should be conducted according to ethical principles as established by the American Psychological Association.