

Kent State University College of Arts and Sciences
MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAM
Essay Approval Form

Date: _____

Name _____

Address _____

ID Number _____

E-mail address: _____@kent.edu

Proposed Title of Essay: _____

We acknowledge that we are members of the Graduate faculty at Kent State University, that we have received a copy of this form which explains the roles of the Advisor and Reader of the Liberal Studies Essay, that we have received a copy of the student's proposal for the Essay, and that we find this project worth directing and agree to do so, subject to the student developing the Essay in a manner that we find to be appropriate for graduate-level work.

Advisor's signature: _____

Please print name: _____

Department _____ Email _____@kent.edu

Reader/Co-Advisor's signature: _____
(Indicate one above)

Please print name: _____

Department _____ Email _____@kent.edu

Approved by the Program Coordinator of the Master of Liberal Studies Program

Program Coordinator's signature: _____/_____

Procedures for Approval of Proposed Essay

The student starts by coming up with an interdisciplinary topic for their Essay related to their program of study and writing a preliminary proposal (around 300 words) which they discuss with a potential Faculty Advisor and Faculty Reader (or they may have two Faculty Co-Advisors rather than an Advisor and Reader). If the student needs assistance in identifying a potential Advisor or Reader, they should consider a professor with whom they have studied, or consult with the Program Coordinator of the Master of Liberal Studies program (Program Coordinator of LSM henceforth) for guidance.

Note, to serve as an Advisor, Co-Advisor, or Reader for the Essay the individual needs to be currently employed at Kent State University as a faculty member with graduate faculty status.

Conversation with a potential Advisor about a preliminary proposed topic for the Essay may be fruitful for the further development of the final proposal. Advisors often have useful suggestions, and their input to the proposal usually serves to focus the topic and enrich the academic quality of the proposal. The student should keep in mind that they are prepared to write a Master's Essay by demonstrating their competence with quality work each time they meet with an Advisor or potential Advisor.

Once the proposal is developed and the topic clarified, the student fills out the header to the Essay Approval Form (above), attaches the Form to the Proposal, and circulates the packet for the review and signatures of the Advisor and Reader/Co-Advisor. Once the Faculty signatures are secured, the student submits the original to the Program Coordinator of LSM for review and approval. The Program Coordinator of LSM will then distribute by email to the student, the Advisor and Reader, the completed Essay Approval Form, and will open a section of LSTU 61098, Liberal Studies Essay, and authorize the student to enroll. The Advisor may start by working out a timetable and procedure for working on the Essay with the student. If the student chooses to have Co-Advisors, rather than an Advisor and a Reader, the student should work out the details of a timetable and procedure with both of the Co-Advisors on how they will proceed together. The approval needs to take place in time for course registration, so ideally will be completed the semester prior to the semester in which the Essay is written. See the University Registrar's website for registration deadlines.

Students then work on their Essay with their Advisor (or Co-Advisors), developing and refining the Essay in consultation with the Advisor until the Advisor assesses that the Essay is of sufficient quality to go to Oral Defense. At this point, the student will submit the draft Essay to the Reader with the approval of the Advisor. The faculty Reader only sees the final product and is not involved in the production of the Essay.

In working with the Advisor (and subsequently the Reader), students should be careful not to abuse the generosity of the Faculty member by turning in work that has not been polished to the very best of the student's ability in terms of form as well as content. Remember that the Advisor or Reader, if they find that the student is not doing graduate-level work, may at any time inform the Program Coordinator of LSM that they are withdrawing from their role, in which case the student will be required to find another graduate faculty member willing to advise the Essay.

Style Guidelines for the Production of the Essay

The Liberal Studies Essay is not subject to the rules of a Master's thesis, but rather should conform to the standards of the academic style guidelines selected by the Advisor of the Essay, which will vary according to the style and citation practices of the particular discipline. The Advisor is responsible for assessing the student's application of the standards of the selected academic style guidelines. The approval by the Advisor of the Essay as Satisfactory for Final Submission to the Master of Liberal Studies Program is decided not only by the assessment of the academic quality of the content of the Essay, but also by the assessment that the Essay sufficiently adheres to the selected academic style guide. The Essay generally is around 50 pages in length, more or less (at the discretion of the Advisor).

Please note, an Essay for the Masters of Liberal Studies, is not submitted to the Office of Graduate Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences, as is true for all non-thesis graduate programs which require an Essay. The style guide, timeline and other requirements for a Master's Thesis are not in force for an Essay. Note that, unlike Master's theses, Liberal Studies Essays are not uploaded to OhioLink after the Oral Defense.

Procedures for Proceeding to Submission of Essay for Oral Defense

When the Essay is assessed by the Advisor as complete, the Advisor will inform the Reader by email (and copy the Program Coordinator of LSM) that the Essay is ready for review. In the event of Co-Advisors, they will make the assessment together and together inform the Program Coordinator of LSM. The student will then copy and distribute the Essay (in paper format) in the edition which has been approved to both the Reader and the Program Coordinator of LSM. Electronic copies can be substituted for fully online students, or at the discretion of the Advisor and Reader. Once the Reader has reviewed the Essay, and has communicated the Reader's observations to the student and the Advisor, the student in consultation with the Advisor is expected to address any issues which require revision. When the student has addressed the concerns raised by the Reader to the satisfaction of the Reader and the Advisor, then the revised edition of the Essay is ready for Oral Defense. The student will submit the revised edition of the Essay in paper format to the Advisor, Reader or Co-Advisor, and the Program Coordinator of LSM. Electronic copies can be substituted for fully online students, or at the discretion of the Advisor and Reader.

The Advisor schedules the Oral Defense with the Reader and the student, and informs the Program Coordinator of LSM of the date, time and location of the Oral Defense by email. The Program Coordinator of LSM may choose to participate in the Oral Defense as an Ad Hoc non-voting member of the Oral Defense. Note, Essays are to be in complete form and submitted to committee members at least ten days in advance of the Oral Defense, or more in advance if the Advisor chooses to establish a different deadline.

The Oral Defense will only proceed when the Essay is deemed Satisfactory by the Advisor and Reader, and the Oral Defense will not determine the grade for the Essay (which is Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U)). The Oral Defense, like the Essay itself, is not subject to the rules of a Master's thesis, and is typically in the form of an hour long, informal discussion.

For fully online students, the Oral Defense will be held online. The Oral Defense for students in the on-campus program will be held in-person on campus, unless otherwise scheduled online at the discretion of the Advisor in consultation with the student and the Reader.

Upon successful completion of the Oral Defense of the Essay, the Advisor reports the grade (S or U) to the Program Coordinator of LSM. The Program Coordinator of LSM is responsible for submitting the student's course grade for the Liberal Studies Essay course, as reported by the Advisor.

Timeliness and In Progress Grades

Students should take note that faculty have many demands on their time, and serve as Advisors and Readers as a service to the College and University as Graduate Faculty. Students should allow sufficient time for the Advisor, Reader, and Program Coordinator of LSM to review the Essay. The submission of the Final Edition of the Essay for the Oral Defense should be delivered ten (10) weekdays prior to the Oral Defense. Failure to provide the Essay in a timely manner for review may delay the Oral Defense and delay the graduation of the student. Keep in mind that the deadline for the submission of the student's grade is set by the University and is non-negotiable. It is not uncommon for students to find it difficult to complete the Essay in one semester. This can potentially delay the Student's graduation.

The Essay does not have to be completed in the semester the student first enrolls in LSTU 61098. Graduate Essays, like Theses and Dissertations, have the option of the course mark IP (In Progress). The course mark IP remains on the student's transcript until the time when the work is completed in a subsequent semester. At that time, the Faculty Advisor informs the Program Coordinator of LSM that the student has submitted an acceptable Essay to the satisfaction of the Advisor/Reader or Co-Advisors, and then informs the Program Coordinator of LSM of the scheduled Oral Defense. Following the Oral Defense of the Essay, the Faculty Advisor reports the final grade of S or U to the Program Coordinator of LSM, whereupon the Program Coordinator of LSM submits the change of grade form. Note that the student is not charged tuition again for the Essay course in the subsequent semester(s).

Submit to: Program Coordinator of the Master of Liberal Studies, School of Multidisciplinary Social Sciences and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences, Kent State University