



ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW
Graduate Legal Studies Institute

TO: ALS Students
FROM: Prof. Amparita S. Sta Maria
DATE: 02 August 2018
SUBJECT: **2018 REVISED THESIS RULES**

The 2018 Revised Thesis Rules shall apply to students entering their Third Year, Academic Year 2018 – 2019, and subsequent batches.

For your information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amparita S. Sta. Maria', enclosed within a large, loopy circular flourish.

AMPARITA S. STA. MARIA
Director

Noted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jose Maria G. Hofileña', written in a cursive style.

JOSE MARIA G. HOFILEÑA
Dean, Ateneo Law School



ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY
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2018 REVISED THESIS RULES

1. THESIS COMMITTEE

The administration and implementation of rules and regulations, including the monitoring and coordination of all activities relating to the Thesis Program, shall be lodged with the Thesis Committee:

- 1.1. The *Juris Doctor* (J.D.) Thesis Committee shall consist of three (3) members from the Ateneo Law School (ALS) faculty, plus two others as ex-officio members, the Director of the Graduate Legal Studies Institute (GLSI) and another member of the Master of Laws (LL.M.) Thesis Committee designated by the Director.
 - 1.1.1. The LL.M. Thesis Committee shall consist of the GLSI Director and two (2) members from the ALS faculty to be appointed by the Dean.
 - 1.1.2. The GLSI Director shall be the Chairperson of both the J.D. and LL.M Thesis Committees.
- 1.2. The functions of the Thesis Committee shall include the administration, supervision, and coordination of all activities in relation to, and in compliance with, all regulations affecting the Thesis Program, specifically:
 - 1.2.1. Fixing of deadlines for the submission of the thesis and other related matters;
 - 1.2.2. Setting schedules for oral defense, including date, time, and place;
 - 1.2.3. Designating the members of the oral defense panel;
 - 1.2.4. Sending of notices and ensuring the presence of all the members of the oral defense panel at the scheduled defense; and
 - 1.2.5. General administrative work related to the Thesis Program, including the computation of final grades based on grades given by the thesis adviser, the oral defense panel and the Thesis Committee.
- 1.3. The Thesis Committee and the panel composed of the faculty teaching Legal Research & Writing II (Thesis Writing I) shall have the authority to approve or reject a thesis proposal submitted by a student in Thesis Writing I. Thereafter, it is incumbent upon students whose topics have been rejected to consult with their respective professors in Legal Research & Writing III (Thesis Writing II) and submit new topics to be defended during their presentation in the Thesis Writing II course. Once the thesis topic has been approved in Thesis Writing II, no further change of topic shall be allowed except for unforeseen events deemed justified by the Thesis Writing II professor and the thesis adviser.

- 1.4. In the event that a student needs to change his or her thesis topic while enrolled in Thesis Writing II, it shall be the responsibility of the student concerned to consult with both his or her Thesis Writing II professor and thesis adviser for the approval of the new topic. The student shall submit the minimum requirements for the Thesis Writing II course.
- 1.5. In the event that a student needs to change his or her thesis topic after completing Thesis Writing II, he or she shall consult with the Thesis Committee and his or her thesis adviser for the preliminary approval of the new topic. Thereafter, the student must advise the GLSI of the new topic and submit the same minimum requirements under the Thesis Writing II course. The Thesis Committee may require submission of additional requirements.
- 1.6. All thesis proposals shall be reviewed by the Thesis Writing professors and the appropriate Thesis Committee for final approval.

2.A. *JURIS DOCTOR* THESIS

- 2.A.1. J.D. students are required to prepare and defend a thesis on a subject of law, which must deal with a legal issue and requires extensive discussion and analysis of laws, legal principles, and jurisprudence relevant to the thesis proposal. The preparation of the thesis is supervised by a thesis adviser chosen by the student who is a member of the ALS faculty, subject to the rules in Section 3 below.
- 2.A.2. The J.D. thesis must be based on a thesis proposal previously approved and must contain at least 13,000 words excluding footnotes.
- 2.A.3. Once the thesis is completed, the proponent is required to defend his or her thesis before an oral defense panel of three (3) persons knowledgeable in the relevant field of law. The submission of the thesis adviser's grade is required before the proponent is allowed to undergo thesis defense.
- 2.A.4. The Thesis course, which includes preparation and defense, is graded numerically and carries an academic credit of six (6) units, computed as part of the student's general weighted average (GWA) upon graduation.

2.B. *MASTER OF LAWS* THESIS

- 2.B.1. LL.M. students are required to prepare and defend a post-graduate thesis on a subject of law, which is considered novel, and requires extensive discussion and analysis of laws, legal principles, and jurisprudence. The LL.M. thesis must demonstrate the candidate's original research and scholarship in his or her chosen LL.M. track. The preparation of the thesis is supervised by a thesis adviser chosen by the student who is a member of the ALS faculty, subject to the rules in Section 3 below.
- 2.B.2. The LL.M. thesis must be based on a previously approved thesis proposal and must contain at least 25,000 words, excluding footnotes.
- 2.B.3. Once the thesis is completed, the student is required to defend his or her thesis before an oral defense panel of three (3) experts in the relevant field of law. The submission of the thesis adviser's grade is required before the proponent is allowed to undergo thesis defense.
- 2.B.4. The Thesis course, which includes preparation and defense, is graded numerically and carries an academic credit of six (6) units, computed as part of the general weighted average (GWA) upon graduation.

3. THESIS ADVISERS

- 3.1. A thesis proponent must choose a thesis adviser who is a faculty member of the ALS. The deadline for choosing the adviser shall be fixed by the Thesis Committee. All ALS faculty members may act as thesis advisers. However, a former faculty member may be chosen as a thesis adviser if he or she has taught in the last three (3) academic years.
- 3.2. The appointment of a thesis adviser shall be effective from the moment of written acceptance by the faculty member, subject to the following:
 - 3.2.1. To allow the thesis adviser to spend more time with students under their supervision, a faculty member shall not act as adviser to more than five (5) thesis proponents, unless said the adviser assures the Thesis Committee in writing that he or she can still accommodate additional proponents without sacrificing the quality of mentorship due to each advisee. The assurance, notwithstanding, the GLSI Director shall have the discretion to assign another faculty member willing to supervise the thesis proponent if a thesis adviser has reached the limit of five (5) proponents. In no case shall a faculty member act as thesis adviser to more than ten (10) students.
 - 3.2.2. The members of the J.D. and LL.M. Thesis Committees may act as thesis advisers, except for the GLSI Director.
 - 3.2.3. Faculty members with recognized expertise and experience in the subject matter covered by the thesis proposal shall be preferred in the appointment as thesis adviser. Faculty members knowledgeable in the field are strongly urged to accept the nomination by the thesis proponent or the designation by the academic department Chairs or the GLSI Director, as the case may be.
- 3.3. Thesis advisers shall work closely with the students under their supervision. They shall have the authority to require amendment or revision of the thesis before they certify the thesis as ready for defense. They may fix their own deadlines for submission of drafts prior to the deadline set by the Thesis Committee for submission of the Final Draft.
- 3.4. It is the responsibility of thesis proponents to ensure that their advisers have enough time to review the draft before the deadline for submission of thesis. Proponents may not use as excuse, in case they fail to meet the deadline, the fact that their advisers have required further revisions and/or amendments to their drafts.
- 3.5. The thesis adviser shall submit the student's grade in a sealed envelope on or before the deadline set by the Thesis Committee. The certification to be issued by the thesis adviser shall be accompanied by a duly accomplished grading sheet. The grade to be given by the Thesis Adviser shall be broken down as follows:

Substance & content	50%
Form & presentation (including language used, logical flow, footnoting, order of presentation of legal issues and clarity of expression)	25%

Novelty of issue (including difficulty of issues presented, strength of conclusion and recommendations)	15%
Compliance with thesis adviser's requirements	10%
TOTAL	100%

- 3.6. The thesis adviser's grade and the grades given by the oral defense panel and the Thesis Committee shall constitute the final grade for the Thesis course.

4. THESIS SUBMISSION AND ORAL DEFENSE

- 4.1. A thesis proponent must submit his or her thesis in four clean printed copies and in electronic form, the Certification of Non-Plagiarism, and the Thesis Adviser's Grading Sheet on the first day of the 1st semester, or on a date specified by the Thesis Committee. After the deadline for submission, no thesis shall be accepted for defense and the proponent shall receive a grade of 60% in the Thesis course. The student shall only be allowed to defend his or her thesis in the next school year, subject to further rules that the Thesis Committee may issue with regard to such failure to submit the thesis on time.
- 4.2. The schedule for oral defense shall be given a week after the deadline for submission of the final draft. The schedule for the oral defense of the J.D. students shall be set not earlier than the first month of the first semester of each school year and shall end not later than last month of the first semester. The defense of the LL.M. students may be set in the second semester of the school year.
- 4.3. The oral defense panel shall be composed of three (3) members, designated by the Thesis Committee. At least two (2) members of the oral defense panel must be members of the ALS faculty.
- 4.4. The presence of at least two (2) members of the oral defense panel shall be sufficient for the purpose of proceeding with the oral defense. Should only one (1) member appear, the Thesis Committee shall have the option to re-schedule the defense to a later date, or designate another ALS faculty member or a member of the Thesis Committee to act as a member of the oral defense panel. In the latter case, the oral defense shall be at a later hour, to give the new member sufficient time to prepare.
- 4.5. Each member of the oral defense panel shall grade the work of the proponent at the end of the oral defense. Grading sheets shall be provided by the Thesis Committee where each member of the panel shall put in their respective grades, broken down as follows:

Oral argumentation (including defense of positions taken, accuracy and relevance of cited authorities and application of doctrines cited)	60%
Form & written presentation	30%
Oral articulation of thesis summary and recommendations	10%
TOTAL	100%

- 4.6. In case of re-defense or revisions, the deadline for submission shall be determined by the Thesis Committee.

5. GRADING

The Thesis Committee may require revisions of the thesis as to substance in two instances: the first is when the oral defense panel requires it in accordance with the rules below; and the second is when the oral defense panel deems it necessary as a condition precedent for the release of the grade they have given the proponent after the latter's defense following the rules below. In addition, the Thesis Committee may require revisions as to form, especially when there is failure to follow the format in citing sources under the Uniform System of Citation or the "Bluebook."

- 5.1. The Thesis Committee shall also grade the proponent based on form, substance, and content.
- 5.2. The average grade given by the members of the oral defense panel shall constitute 60% of the final grade, the grade given by the Thesis Adviser shall constitute 20%, and the grade given by the Thesis Committee shall constitute 20%.
- 5.3. In grading the oral defense, the following rules shall apply:
 - 5.3.1. No Revision – If the oral defense panel considers the thesis well-written and well-defended, it shall be given a final grade at the end of the oral defense.
 - 5.3.2. Optional Revision – If the oral defense panel gives the proponent an average grade of at least 75% for J.D. and 80% for LL.M., and the revisions, if any, are only "minor" in category or only in the form of "suggestions," the panel shall then give a final grade at the end of the oral defense and the revision shall be optional on the part of proponent.
 - 5.3.3. Grade Withheld – If the oral defense panel gives the proponent an average grade of at least 75% to 80% for J.D. and 80% to 83% for LL.M., and determines that there is a significant gap in the thesis that should be addressed, the student shall be given time to revise the thesis accordingly. If the proponent fails to submit the revised thesis within the deadline, he or she shall receive an automatic grade of 75% in the defense component.
 - 5.3.4. Mandatory Revision – In case majority of the oral defense panel could not give a grade of at least 75% for the J.D. students, and 80% for LL.M. students, the proponent would not be given a grade and would be asked to revise the thesis. The proponent shall consult with his or her thesis adviser in preparing the required revisions. After complying with the revisions, the proponent will receive an automatic 75% (J.D.) or 80% (LL.M.) for the defense component of the grade for the Thesis course.
 - 5.3.5. Mandatory Revision with Re-defense – In case majority of the oral defense panel could not give a grade of at least 75% for the J.D. students, and 80% for LL.M. students and the panel deems it necessary for the proponent to undergo a re-defense, the highest grade that said proponent may receive as final grade for the Thesis course is a 75% (J.D.) or 80% (LL.M.).

The Thesis Committee shall schedule the re-defense for proponents who were required the same within a period not later than one week before the fourth year students' final examinations in the 2nd semester. No re-defense shall be scheduled after the last day of the 2nd semester.

Where practicable, the re-defense panel shall be composed of the same members comprising the original oral defense panel. A proponent who has been required a thesis re-defense cannot receive a grade higher than 75% for J.D. students and 80% for LL.M. students in the final grade for the Thesis Course.

If the proponent refuses or fails to satisfactorily revise the thesis as required, or still receives a failing mark after re-defense, or refuses or fails to submit to re-defense, or fails to comply with any other thesis requirements necessary for passing the Thesis course, he or she will be given a failing grade of 60%. The student shall re-enroll in the Thesis course in the following academic year, and write a thesis covering a new topic and defend the same.


A proponent is only allowed to re-defend his or her thesis once.

6. AWARDS FOR THESES

- 6.1. The Thesis Committee shall ask the advisers and the members of the oral defense panel to assess the thesis whether the same can be nominated for best thesis.
- 6.2. Copies of the theses that received the highest grades shall be forwarded to the Thesis Awards Committee, which shall decide on the awards for the best theses. In proper cases, the nominations of the advisers and members of the oral defense panel shall be taken into account.

7. THESIS WRITING COURSES

- 7.1. The Thesis Writing I and Thesis Writing II courses shall be offered in the third year. The course outline or syllabus shall include, in addition to instructional guides for the preparation and writing of a thesis, actual training in the preparation of the thesis proponent's chosen topic. As a minimum requirement for passing Thesis Writing II, students enrolled in this course must have an approved thesis title, proposal, and acceptance by the thesis adviser by the end of the 2nd semester. The approval of the thesis proposal by the Thesis Adviser must also be completed as a condition for passing the Thesis Writing II course.
- 7.2. Thesis Writing I is a pre-requisite to Thesis Writing II. Both Thesis Writing courses are pre-requisites to the Thesis course.
- 7.3. Third year students are strongly encouraged to conduct research and commence writing of their theses while enrolled in the Thesis Writing I and Thesis Writing II courses.
- 7.4. Grades for these courses are also expressed in numerical form.


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