

DEPARTMENT of HOSPITALITY & SPORT MANAGEMENT

M.S. Sport Management Thesis Guide

Program Purpose

The Master of Science in Sport Management degree is designed to prepare competent and effective leaders with a biblical worldview who will model high standards and assume a leadership role in the sport industry. Leaders in the field of sport management are seen as those who assume a facilitating role in accomplishing the goals and objectives of a business based administrative position in sport.

Graduation Requirements: Thesis Track

- Complete 36 hours
- A maximum of 50% of the program hours may be transferred if approved and allowable, including credit from an earned degree from Liberty University on the same academic level
- 3.0 GPA
- No more than two grades of C may be applied to the degree (includes grades of C+ & C-)
- No grade of D or below may be applied to the degree (includes grades of D+ & D-)
- Successful completion of the Comprehensive Exam
- Thesis required
- Degree must be completed within 5 years
- Submission of Degree Completion Application must be completed within the last semester of a student's anticipated graduation date

What is a thesis?

The thesis is intended to demonstrate the student's ability to successfully complete an original research project. Thus, a thesis is a more significant undertaking than a "research paper" that has been submitted in other courses. The thesis is often designed to solve practical problems and to answer practical research questions; it may also generally deal with underlying theoretical, philosophical and/or ethical issues of interest to scholars and professionals in the discipline.

The thesis is expected to be of sufficient depth and breadth that (in edited form) it could be presented for publication in a professional journal. The master's thesis should offer evidence of sound research and an adequate treatment of a well-defined subject. A mere essay or compilation of facts will not be accepted.

The thesis must be written on a subject under the cognate area in which the student is enrolled. Thesis topics must clearly reflect the content of the program and not outside fields like sports medicine, strength and conditioning, or exercise science/physiology. Finally, those who complete

thesis projects are often considering doctoral education and the thesis serves as the start of the student's research agenda.

The thesis is a significant academic undertaking, and the thesis option should not be considered a less time-consuming alternative to the internship (SMGT 699).

Following the successful completion of the seven core courses (SMGT 501, SMGT 502, SMGT 503, SMGT 504, SMGT 505, SMGT 506, and SMGT 520) students are eligible to begin the thesis process. The thesis process includes the following sequence of courses:

SMGT 688 Thesis Proposal, 3 credit hours, J-term, Fall/Spring 16 weeks, Summer 13 weeks SMGT 689 Thesis Research, 3 credit hours, J-term, Fall/Spring 16 weeks, Summer 13 weeks SMGT 690 Thesis Defense, 0 credit hours, 8 weeks, J-Term, 8 weeks, 2nd half of semester

These three courses must be taken over sequential semesters.

Suggested Course Sequence

First Semester (Year 1)	Second Semester (Year 1)
SMGT 501 (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT 502 (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT 503 (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT 520 (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours)	SMGT 504 (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT 505 (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT 506 (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours)
Third Semester (Year 2)	Fourth Semester (Year 2)
SMGT/TOUR 6XX (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT/TOUR 6XX (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT 688 ¹ (16 weeks, 3 credit hours)	SMGT/TOUR 6XX (B/D term, 8 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT 689 ² (16 weeks, 3 credit hours) SMGT 690 ^{3,4} (8 weeks, 0 credit hours)

Notes

¹SMGT 688: Fall & Spring, 16 weeks; Summer 13 weeks (J-term)

²SMGT 689: Fall & Spring, 16 weeks; Summer 13 weeks (J-term)

³SMGT 690: Fall, Spring, Summer 8 weeks, (J-term)

⁴Students can be enrolled in SMGT 690 at any point during the SMGT 689 J-term course once completed and a final grade of P is posted.

Overview

The Research Chair

As you begin SMGT 688, you will be paired with a thesis chair. This is an expert educator with a terminal degree who will be your primary point of contact and will serve as your mentor during the entire research project. Your chair will be your first stop for any questions you have regarding your thesis project and will be responsible for approving the content of all submissions.

Formatting

The thesis will be written in compliance with the most recent edition of the APA Manual.

References

The thesis student is expected to:

- Provide multiple primary sources to substantiate each section of the thesis. Limit the use of secondary sources;
- Provide a citation for each factual assertion in the thesis:
- Use the most current references outside of seminal works:
- Ensure every in-text citation is linked to a reference; every reference is used as an in-text citation:
- Remove the permalinks in the reference section for ease of reading; and
- Include the latest research, as such: 75% of the references used for the literature review must be from peer-reviewed sources within the last 5 years, unless otherwise approved by the research chair

Future vs. Past Tense

When writing Chapters 1-3 prior to data collection, all writing will be in the future tense. You will use phrases like "the researcher will", "I will", and "the study will include". You will not use past tense prior to data collection because action has not been taken yet and therefore might change. Chapters 1-3 up to that point are your Research Proposal. Once you have completed your data collection in SMGT 689, you will change the document to the past tense.

Suggested Research Resources

While there are no required textbooks for the thesis courses, the following are recommended resources to support your progress through the thesis process:

APA Manual – most recent edition

Babbie, E.R. (2020) The Practice of Social Research (15th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Creswell, J.W., & Creswell, D.J. (2022). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (6th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. & Poth, C. (2018). Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among 5

Approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Dillman, D.A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode* surveys: The tailored design method (4th ed.). Wiley.

Jones, I. (2022). Research Methods for Sports Studies (4th ed.). Routledge.

Patton, M.Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods (4th ed.)* SAGE Publications, Inc.

Research Design & Methods, including basic stats introduction: https://methods.sagepub.com/

Online Resource: https://methods.sagepub.com/which-stats-test

Assignment Structure & Submissions

The thesis process is divided into assignments to support you in moving through the process efficiently and effectively. While the process is presented in a linear format, there may be times when revisions to one section necessitate changes in another section. The narrative below provides guidance on each assignment regarding what must be included and how to submit the document for review. Please review each assignment carefully before submitting it to avoid additional submit/review/revision cycles. Keep in mind that you might need more than one semester to complete a section of the thesis. This is a reflection of the challenge posed by the rigors of the thesis process and academic research. Once you have decided on a qualitative or quantitative research design, you will use the appropriate research template as you are developing the narrative for assignment submissions.

Qualitative Research Template: SMGT Qualitative Research Template Chap 1-5.pdf

Quantitative Research Template: <u>SMGT Quantitative Research Template Chap 1-5.pdf</u>

In order to receive a passing grade and advance to the next course, you must successfully complete course assignments:

SMGT 688: Thesis Proposal, Assignments 1-8

SMGT 689: Thesis Research, Assignments 9-16

SMGT 690: Thesis Defense, Assignments 17-18

Assignment Deadlines

Submission deadlines are set for each assignment to support continued progress in the course and on the project. Each assignment must be approved before moving to the next one. While you can work ahead, you should do so with the understanding that any required edits on an assignment might require you to update a later assignment. If you do decide to work ahead, do not post future assignments until the current assignment is approved.

Grading

Specific grading information is available in the syllabus for each course.

SMGT 688: Pass, Progress, No Pass

SMGT 689: Pass, Progress, No Pass

SMGT 690: Pass, No Pass

Repeating a Course

If you are repeating a course, you will post your most recently approved assignment from the previous semester and notify your chair. You can then proceed to the next assignment.

Assignment 1: CITI Training Certificate

Assignment 2: Thesis Background

Assignment 3: Chapter 1 – Introduction Part 1

Oualitative:

- Overview
- Background
- Situation to Self
- Problem Statement

Ouantitative:

- Overview
- Background
- Problem Statement
- Purpose Statement

Assignment 4: Chapter 1 – Introduction Part 2

Qualitative:

- Significance of the Study
- Research Question(s)
- Definitions
- Summary

Quantitative:

- Significance of the Study
- Research Question(s)
- Definitions
- Summary

Assignment 5: Chapter 2 – Literature Review Part 1

Overview

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

Assignment 6: Chapter 2 – Literature Review Part 2

Related Literature

Summary

Assignment 7: Chapter 3 – Methods Part 1

Qualitative Design:

- Overview
- Design
- Research Question(s)
- Settings
- Participants
- Procedures
- The Researcher's Role
- Data Collection Description

Quantitative Design:

- Overview
- Design
- Research Question(s)
- Hypothesis(es)
- Participants and Setting
- Instrumentation
- Procedures

Assignment 8: IRB Submission - Data cannot be collected until IRB approval is received.

Assignment 9: IRB Approval Letter – Data cannot be collected until IRB approval is received.

Assignment 10: Chapter 3 - Methods Part 2 Data Analysis

Assignment 11: Chapter 3 – Methods Part 3
Trustworthiness (qualitative design)
Ethical Considerations

Assignment 12: Chapter 4 – Findings

Qualitative:

- Overview
- Participants
- Results
- Summary

Quantitative:

- Overview
- Research Question(s)
- Hypothesis(es)
- Descriptive Statistics
- Results

Assignment 13: Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Qualitative:

- Overview
- Summary of Findings
- Discussion
- Implications
- Delimitations and Limitations
- Recommendations for Future Research
- Summary

Quantitative:

- Overview
- Discussion
- Implications
- Limitations
- Recommendations for Future Research
- Summary

Assignment 14: References

Assignment 15: Appendix or Appendices

Assignment 16: Final Review

Assignment 17: Final Thesis Project

Assignment 18: Final Thesis Defense (Presentation)

Assignment 19: Signature Page

Assignment 20: Scholars Crossing Submission

Assignment 1: CITI Training Certificate

The IRB requires researchers, co-researchers, and faculty sponsors to complete research ethics training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) prior to receiving IRB approval. The IRB requires the completion of either the Social & Behavioral Researchers or Biomedical & Health Science Researchers courses, whichever is most applicable to the research being conducted.

IRB CITI Training Certificate: https://www.liberty.edu/graduate/institutional-review-board/wp-content/uploads/sites/77/2022/03/CITI-Completion-Guidelines.pdf)

Liberty University IRB website: https://www.liberty.edu/graduate/institutional-review-board/collaborative-institutional-training-initiative/

Your submission will include a file upload of the completed CITI Training Certificate for Social & Behavioral Science Researchers.

Assignment 2: Thesis Background

The goal of this assignment is to focus your research. The Research Chair should have a solid understanding of what you intend to study and how you intend to study it.

Your submission will include the following:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

Students should address the following questions in their submission:

This section should educate the reader regarding the topic. Start this section by catching the reader's attention. Use recent evidence from 2-3 scholarly journal articles published within the last five years. This section contains a summary of the most relevant literature on the topic and provides the historical (i.e., how the problem has evolved over time), social (i.e., contexts), and theoretical (e.g., important variables, the theoretical concepts, and the principles underpinning the research) contexts for the research problem. Each of the three contexts must be specifically examined using APA Level 2 headings for each.

You should be sure to link and relate the background of the study to the proposed research. This is just an overview. You will go into more depth later. Questions to address may include but are not limited to the following:

- What is the problem and why is it an interest?
- Who else is affected by the problem?
- What research has been done to investigate or address the problem?
- How will the proposed research extend or refine the existing knowledge in the area under study?
- Who will benefit or use the proposed research?
- What new information does the current research add to the body of existing literature regarding the topic?

References

- All factual assertions should be supported with an APA formatted, in-text citation.
- All in-text citations should be included on an APA formatted reference page.

The content of this assignment is built on the thesis-track assignments completed in SMGT 520:

• Annotated Bibliography Assignment

- Literature Review Assignment
- Research Proposal Assignment

Assignment 3: Chapter 1 – Introduction Part 1

Your submission will include the following:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the **quantitative** research template for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include:

- Abstract place holder page, the abstract will be written here when the study is completed
- Table of Contents place holder page, content will be included with completed manuscript

Qualitative:

- Overview
- Background: Assignment 2 (approved)
- Situation to Self
- Problem Statement
- Purpose Statement

Quantitative:

- Overview
- Background: Assignment 2 (approved)
- Problem Statement
- Purpose Statement

Assignment 4: Chapter 1 – Introduction Part 2

Your submission will include the following:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the **quantitative** research template in Canvas for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include:

Qualitative:

- Significance of the Study
- Research Question(s)
- Definitions
- Summary

Quantitative:

- Significance of the Study
- Research Question(s)
- Definitions
- Summary

Your document will be submitted as an MS-word .docx with the following title format:

Assignment 5: Chapter 2 – Literature Review Part 1

Your submission will include the following:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the **quantitative** research template in Canvas for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include:

- Overview of the Literature Review
- Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

Assignment 6: Chapter 2 – Literature Review Part 2

Your submission will include the following:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the quantitative research template in Canvas for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include:

- Review of the related literature
- Summary of the literature review

CHANGE MATRIX FORM: COMPLETE FORM AVAILABLE IN CANVAS

Document Being Submitted: Document To Chair: Research Chair's Name		udent's Name of Submission
Reviewer's comments/recommendation & page #	How the comments/recommendations were addressed by the student	Page # where changes appear

Assignment 7: Chapter 3 – Methods Part 1

Your submission will include the following:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the **quantitative** research template in Canvas for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include:

Qualitative Design:

- Overview
- Design
- Research Question(s)
- Settings
- Participants
- Procedures
- The Researcher's Role
- Data Collection Description

Quantitative Design:

- Overview
- Design
- Research Question(s)
- Hypothesis(es)
- Participants and Setting
- Instrumentation
- Procedures

Assignment 8: IRB Submission

Before collecting data, students must have their project approved through the IRB. IRB approval ensures that the study aligns with applicable federal regulations and university policy.

IRB Information: https://www.liberty.edu/graduate/institutional-review-board/

Human subjects research is regulated by the federal government through the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Human Research Protections. The IRB committee consists of faculty members from various Liberty departments and one non-university member.

The IRB is required to review all research involving human participants to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and safety of participants. The IRB is part of Liberty University's <u>Research Ethics</u> <u>Office</u>, which is responsible for ensuring that all research conducted by Liberty University faculty, staff, and students are done in accordance with federal regulations and university policy.

Students are encouraged to carefully review the IRB website, including the **IRB Application** Checklist.

Your submission will include a file upload verifying that the IRB Application submission has been "certified" and is ready for IRB review.

Data cannot be collected until the IRB approval letter is received.

Assignment 9: IRB Approval Letter – Data cannot be collected until IRB approval is received. This will be added to the manuscript as an appendix in Assignment 15.

Before collecting data, students must have their project approved through the IRB. IRB approval ensures that the study aligns with applicable federal regulations and university policy.

IRB Information: https://www.liberty.edu/graduate/institutional-review-board/

Human subjects research is regulated by the federal government through the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Human Research Protections. The IRB committee consists of faculty members from various Liberty departments and one non-university member.

The IRB is required to review all research involving human participants to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and safety of participants. The IRB is part of Liberty University's <u>Research Ethics</u> <u>Office</u>, which is responsible for ensuring that all research conducted by Liberty University faculty, staff, and students are done in accordance with federal regulations and university policy.

Assignment 10: Chapter 3 - Methods Part 2

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the **quantitative** research template in Canvas for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include the following based on design, qualitative OR quantitative:

Qualitative:

Quantitative:

• Data Analysis

• Data Analysis

Assignment 11: Chapter 3 – Methods Part 3

Your submission will include:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the quantitative research template in Canvas for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include the following:

Oualitative:

Ouantitative:

- Trustworthiness
- Ethical Considerations
- Ethical Considerations

Assignment 12: Chapter 4 – Findings

Your submission will include:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the quantitative research template in Canvas for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include the following based on design, qualitative OR quantitative:

Oualitative:

- Overview
- Participants
- Results
- Summary

Quantitative:

- Overview
- Research Question(s)
- Hypothesis(es)
- Descriptive Statistics
- Results

Assignment 13: Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Your submission will include:

APA formatted title page – see research templates for example(s):

- Running head shortened version of paper title, page number in the upper right corner
- Scholarly Title
- Student's Full Legal Name
- Department of Hospitality & Sport Management, Liberty University
- Author Note

This is a narrative assignment using the proper template and headings. See the **qualitative** research template or the quantitative research template in Canvas for additional guidance.

The body of the submission will include the following based on design, qualitative OR quantitative:

Qualitative:

- Overview
- Summary of Findings
- Discussion
- Implications
- Delimitations and Limitations
- Recommendations for Future Research
- Summary

Quantitative:

- Overview
- Discussion
- Implications
- Limitations
- Recommendations for Future Research
- Summary

Assignment 14: References

References

- All factual assertions should be supported with an APA formatted, in-text citation.
- All in-text citations should be included on an APA formatted reference page.

All the references cited within the text should be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of APA*.

Your submission will include two documents:

Document 1: Thesis Draft (assignments below as a single document)

- APA formatted title page
- Abstract place holder page
- Table of Contents place holder page
- Assignments 1-13/Chapters 1-5
- References in APA format

Document 2: Reference List Review Form (available in Canvas)

• Student will complete and submit this form providing a review of the in-text citations and the reference page.

REFERENCE LIST REVIEW FORM: COMPLETE FORM AVAILABLE IN CANVAS

Student: Student's Name		
Thesis Title: Scholarly title from APA formatted title page		
Chair: Research Chair's Name		
Date: Date of Submission		
Include one reference per box in the	Include page number(s) where the	Reviewer
order the references appear on the	reference is used as an in-text	Comments
reference list	citation	

Assignment 15: Appendix or Appendices

Your submission will include the following as a single document:

- Updated thesis draft based on feedback from Assignment 14 References
- Appendices will be added as appropriate, as determined by the Research Chair
 - o IRB Approval Letter is required.

Assignment 16: Final Review – Admin Review

Your submission will include the following as a single document:

- APA formatted title page
- Abstract (completed)
- Table of Contents (updated to reflect actual page numbers in manuscript)
- Assignments 1-15/Chapters 1-5
- References in APA format
- Appendix or Appendices
 - o IRB approval letter is required.
 - Other appendices will be recommended and approved by chair.

Assignment 17: Final Thesis Project – Admin Review

Your submission will include the following approved assignments:

Thesis: Written manuscript

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Chapter 1
- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5
- References
- Appendix

Assignment 18: Final Thesis Defense (Presentation)

Thesis Defense - PPT of the research project

- The general and specific problems that were studied
- Research Questions (hypotheses as appropriate)
- Overview of the Research Framework
- The design and method of the study
- Population and Sampling
- The data collection and data analysis techniques that were employed
- The findings of the study and how they relate to the problem and research questions
- Recommendations for future study
- Concluding comments
- References
- 20 minute presentation via MS Teams
- Present to Chair and Reader(s)

Assignment 19: Signature Page

Signature Page: Once your research presentation has been successfully completed, print out the signature page, sign it, and forward it to your research chair for signature.

Assignment 20: Scholars Crossing Submission

As a graduation requirement, students are required to submit an electronic copy of the final version of their successfully defended thesis to the Jerry Falwell Library. These works will be published in Scholars Crossing, Liberty University's institutional repository.

Here is the link to the Scholars Crossing submission process: https://www.liberty.edu/library/ETD/

The student will upload into Canvas a copy of the email notifying him/her that the work has been accepted and forward a copy of the email to the committee chair.

CHANGE MATRIX FORM

Document Being Submitted: Document Ti Chair: Research Chair's Name	tle Studen Date:	nt: Student's Name Date of Submission
Reviewer's commendation & page #	How the comments/recommendati were addressed by the student	ons Page # where changes appear

REFERENCE LIST REVIEW FORM

Student: Student's Name Thesis Title: Scholarly title from APA formatted title page Chair: Research Chair's Name Date: Date of Submission		
Include one reference per box in the order the references appear on the reference list	Include page number(s) where the reference is used as an in-text citation	Reviewer Comments

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SIGNATURE PAGE: THE TITLE SHOULD GO HERE (ALL CAPS) by Student's Full Legal Name

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
Year

APPROVED BY:
Name and degree, Committee Chair
Trume and degree, Committee Chair
Name and degree, Committee Member
Name and degree Committee Member