

ART EDUCATION

ARTE 887 Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal (ARTE 887) establishes the scope, theoretical grounding, and methodological design of the dissertation and serves as the working agreement between the student and the Thesis Supervisory Committee. Students must have completed ARTE 886 Comprehensive Examination before ARTE 887. Approval of the proposal, together with successful completion of the comprehensive examination, admits the student to candidacy.

The proposal typically draws from the knowledge presented in the comprehensive examination, though it is not a compilation of those documents. It is a distinct piece of scholarly writing that articulates and supports the dissertation research.

Thesis Supervisory Committee

The proposal defense requires all members of the Thesis Supervisory Committee, of which there are a minimum of three. Every member must receive the proposal in advance, attend the defense, and sign the Thesis Proposal Form. A defense cannot proceed with a member absent. The proposal defense may be held in person, in hybrid format, or remotely.

The Proposal

The written proposal is normally 30 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, not including references and appendices. Length varies, and students should follow their supervisor's recommendations regarding the scope and length appropriate to their research. Citations follow APA 7th edition. Regardless of length, the document usually includes most if not all of the following.

- Research question, objectives, and the significance of the study for art education
- Theoretical framework
- Review of the relevant scholarly literature
- Methodology, including research design, site and participant selection, data generation, and analysis, with justification of its alignment with the research question
- Ethical considerations
- Timeline for the data collection, analysis, and completion of the research and writing
- Bibliography

Scheduling and Conduct of the Defense

The supervisor reads and approves the draft before it goes to the rest of the committee. A proposal that has not been approved by the supervisor should not be circulated, and students should build the time required for supervisory feedback and revision into their planning.

Once the supervisor has approved the proposal, the student circulates it to all committee members and allows a 3- to 4-week reading window before the scheduled meeting. Defenses generally run between 90 minutes and 2 hours. The committee first deliberates in the student's absence and then communicates its decision before the question-and-answer period.

Outcomes and Grade Submission

ARTE 887 is a 6-credit course graded on a pass or fail basis. The committee records one of four decisions on the Thesis Proposal Form at the end of the meeting. The first two constitute approval of the proposal and a pass. The second two do not.

- Approved as submitted. The supervisor submits the pass grade following the meeting using the Graduate Activity Grade Report (GAGR). A copy of the proposal is attached to the Thesis Proposal Form.
- Approved with minor modifications, to be reviewed and approved by the supervisor. The supervisor submits the pass grade once the modifications have been received and confirmed. A copy of the proposal and a summary of the recommendations are attached.
- The student is to summarize the recommendations and make modifications for approval by the full committee. The revised proposal is circulated to all committee members, and no grade is submitted until the committee confirms its approval in writing. The proposal, the recommendations, and the modifications are attached.
- Major modifications required for approval. The student revises the proposal, and the committee reconvenes to review it. No grade is submitted unless and until that meeting results in approval.

Where the decision falls into the third or fourth category, the proposal is not approved, and no grade is submitted. The student, in consultation with the supervisor, sets a date for the revised proposal at the time of the decision. Modifications under the third outcome are normally completed within 30 days of the meeting, and a reconvened meeting under the fourth outcome is normally held 60 to 90 days after the proposal defense.

Once the proposal has been approved, the supervisor completes the Thesis Proposal Form, submits the grade of pass using the GAGR, and forwards the completed form together with the approved proposal and any accompanying documentation to the Graduate Program Assistant for the student's file.

A grade of fail is recorded only when the student does not bring the proposal to approval within the timeline set by the committee, or when a reconvened committee determines that the proposal cannot be brought to approval. The supervisor consults with the Graduate Program Director before submitting a failing grade. A failing grade carries the consequence set out in the Art Education Graduate Grading Scale, under which a student who receives a failing grade is withdrawn from the program unless continuation is requested by the program and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Research Ethics

Research involving human participants requires approval from Research Ethics in the Office of Research (OOR) before recruitment, data collection, or access to data begins. Under Article 6.11 of the TCPS-2 CORE 2022, review is not required for the exploratory phase, which involves activities such as establishing the research partnership or informing the proposal's design.

Students whose research involves human participants submit a completed Summary Protocol Form (SPF) together with the Thesis Proposal Form. Upon approval of the proposal, the student forwards a completed SPF to OOR. All students working with human participants must hold TCPS 2 CORE certification, and a copy of the certification must be provided before a protocol can be finalized.

All PhD students working with human participants are required to take the TCPS 2 CORE module and discuss with their Supervisor whether an SPF Protocol/REB review is required.

Advancement to Candidacy

When the student has passed the comprehensive examination (ARTE 886), and the committee has approved the thesis proposal (ARTE 887), the student advances from doctoral student to PhD Candidate.