



**Policy Title: Quality of Graduate Research Work
Products**

Parent Policy	None
Policy Administrator	Associate Provost, Research and Graduate Studies
Approving Body	Senate
Approval History	2026-02-03; Senate Motion #2025/26 – 027

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- Prior to the final evaluation of a graduate student research project work product (for example: master’s thesis, doctoral or PhD dissertation defence, or final evaluation of a capstone work product), the graduate student supervisor working with the student ensures that the graduate student research project work product meets the quality requirements for the PhD, doctoral , or master’s level; and
- Any issues such as potential intellectual property that may require protection, scholarly integrity, human research ethics, animal care, biosafety, and thesis formatting requirements are resolved prior to the final evaluation of the graduate student research project work product (for example: thesis/dissertation defence).

Scope of this Policy:

All graduate students in programs with a research component (PhD/doctoral dissertations, master’s theses, or capstone projects) that require a graduate student to work on a research project (as defined below) that culminates in a final evaluated work product (e.g., thesis or dissertation defence) as a requirement for program completion.

Policy Statement:

Before the final evaluation of a graduate student’s research project (thesis or dissertation), the following minimum requirements must be met:

1. Quality Standards

PhD or Doctoral: The dissertation must:

- Be of high quality and meet disciplinary standards;
- Make an original contribution to knowledge;
- Demonstrate critical understanding of relevant literature;
- Use appropriate research methodology;
- Communicate scholarly work and analysis effectively; and
- Provide a complete account of the research.

Masters: The thesis or Capstone project must:

- Show familiarity with current published literature in the subject area;
- Use appropriate research methods; and
- Apply an appropriate level of critical analysis.

2. Research Integrity

All thesis work is subject to TWU's R 1-05 Integrity in Research and Scholarship policy (linked below). Plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification of research data constitutes academic misconduct and will be addressed under A 2-18 Policy on Academic Misconduct and Fraud (linked below).

3. Ethical Approvals

Research involving human participants, animals, or biohazards (related policies all linked below) must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate certification committee before research begins. Failure to obtain approvals prior to conducting research may result in a "fail" on the final evaluation of the graduate student research project work product.

4. Intellectual Property

While students hold copyright on their thesis/dissertation, ownership of intellectual property included in the work is governed by R 1-06 Intellectual Property (linked below).

5. Formatting and Structure

The general form and style of theses and dissertations may vary from program to program, but each must:

- Be a cohesive document;
- Meet the formatting requirements in the PhD/Doctoral Dissertation Guidebook or Master's Thesis Guidebook.

With supervisory committee approval, the work may include such elements as:

- Original creative works;
- Digital components;
- Entrepreneurial/innovation elements;
- Policy or implementation components.

Definitions:

Capstone Project: An autonomous research project guided by a supervisor that is focused on practical application with the goal of demonstrating a graduate student's mastery of knowledge and skills acquired in their program of study for degree completion.

Capstone Project Work Product: The primary research-based output of a capstone project, such as a paper, scholarly publication, performance, recital, or exhibit that is subject to final evaluation as a requirement for program completion.

Graduate Student Research Work Product: In graduate programs with a major research requirement, this refers to the primary research-based output, such as a dissertation, thesis or capstone project work product that is subject to final evaluation as part of program completion.

Procedures: None

Child Policies: None

Other Related Policies:

A 2-18 Policy on Academic Misconduct and Fraud;

A 2-25 Thesis Administration (Master's);

A 2-31 PhD/Doctoral Defence;

R 1-02 Animal Care;

R 1-03 Biosafety and Biosecurity;

R 1-05 Integrity in Scholarship and Research;

R1-06 Intellectual Property