

# PROD 511

## Thesis Prospectus

### Student Syllabus

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# Syllabus: PROD 511: Thesis Prospectus

**CREDITS:** 3 (three)

**PRE-REQUISITE:** Acceptance to the MCU master's degree program

## **COURSE PURPOSE & OVERVIEW:**

In this course you will select your thesis advisory committee and write your thesis prospectus. The prospectus provides an outline and timeline for your thesis work. The completed prospectus serves as the backbone of your thesis. Your thesis will be a written thesis (MDWF 560) or a thesis project (MDWF 584).

## **SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

At the completion of this course, the students will have:

1. Completed Thesis Prospectus
2. Established Thesis Advisory Committee

## **TEXTS:**

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.

MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses (found under the Graduate Student link in your student menu)

## **COURSE ORGANIZATION:**

Thesis Prospectus (Pass/Fail)

Thesis Advisory Committee commitment forms submitted (Pass/Fail)

12 Monthly Updates (Pass/Fail)

APA Quiz (Pass/Fail)

## **GRADING:**

You will be expected to complete the course satisfactorily and receive an A grade. There is no partial credit or "passing grade" for this class. Only the best will do. All members of your Thesis Advisory Committee must agree that you have achieved an 'A' grade on your prospectus before you can receive your final grade for the course.

**HELP SESSIONS:** The Graduate Department will hold at least one online help session during each semester. These will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester and a notice sent to all graduate students. Sessions will be conducted using "Go to Meeting" web conferencing. This will be a good opportunity for you to discuss concerns and challenges with the Graduate Dean and/or the Asst. Graduate Dean.

## **MANA CORE COMPETENCIES:**

*Core competencies reflect the fundamental knowledge, skills and behaviors expected of an entry-level midwife. Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA) has developed a list of midwifery core competencies. The following core competencies are introduced/taught/or tested in this course:*

MANA Core Competencies will be addressed according to the topic selected by the student.

## **NARM VERIFICATION FORM**

The following NARM Skills are introduced/taught/or tested in this course:

None.

### **SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:**

With a few exceptions (MATH 212 and some of the Labs), all classes must be completed online. If you have questions on how to complete your classes online, please contact the Director of Distance Studies through the internal messaging system.

When you complete coursework electronically online, it is NOT necessary to send a cover sheet when submitting assignments. Please note that some assignments call for completion of tasks for which you will need to upload corresponding pictures, files, etc., as proof of completion. Typing legends such as "completed" or "finished" is not enough to fulfill the requirement.

### **TESTS**

There are no tests for this class.

### **TIME LIMITS/COURSE EXTENSIONS:**

Please see the student catalog for a full description of course time limits, as well as Midwives College of Utah course extension policy.

This course should be completed within one year from the time of enrollment. It is possible that the syllabus will be updated during that time period. It is the student's responsibility to make sure they are working from the most recent syllabus. MCU reserves the right to update syllabi on an annual basis.

### **RECORD KEEPING:**

MCU suggests that you keep a file of all final grade notices, transcripts and communications to and from the college.

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

If you have a disability for which you need accommodations for this class, please let your instructor know as soon as possible. You will be required to submit documentation of your disability from an appropriate care provider to the Registrar.

### **MIDWIVES COLLEGE OF UTAH POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

A high sense of personal honor and integrity is imperative in the completion of courses from the Midwives College of Utah. Although students can work in a study group, you must complete your own work. The syllabus should not be copied or given to other people without permission from the Midwives College of Utah. Distance education students must take examinations through a proctor who must certify that the exam was completed without the assistance of books, notes, or any other outside help unless otherwise stated on the exam. The exam itself must not be copied in any way.

It is the expectation of the Midwives College of Utah that all work turned in by a student is the product of her own endeavors. Violations, which include but are not limited to, cheating, providing misleading or false information to staff or instructors and plagiarism, are cause for disciplinary action, including failure of assignment, conferences with MCU President and/or Academic Dean or expulsion from Midwives College of Utah.

### **PLAGIARISM POLICY**

Failing to give credit where credit is due is known as plagiarism. Copying, distributing, modifying or displaying a copyrighted work is known as copyright infringement.

1. Students are required to use APA format to cite all specific sources both in-text and in a reference list.
2. Avoid writing papers that "cut and paste" beyond what is appropriate. Generally speaking, no more than 20% of your paper should be direct quotes. Your instructor is looking for papers with your

- thoughts and ideas as well as supporting references.
3. Did you know that if you paraphrase another person's written or spoken words, you are also plagiarizing? "You are guilty of the academic offense known as plagiarism if you half-copy the author's sentences - either by mixing the author's phrases with your own without using quotation marks or by plugging in your synonyms into the author's sentence structure." (Writer's Reference, Diana Hacker, 5th edition). This is not to say that you cannot use another person's ideas or words and put them into your own words. Just remember that when you do so, you acknowledge the source of information using the APA format.
  4. MCU does not tolerate the submission of a paper that is written by another person or is "ghostwritten".
  5. If you own a copyrighted audio or video recording, you must have permission from the copyright holder to copy, distribute, modify, display or perform their work. If you do not have this permission, you are infringing upon the copyright and could be subject to legal prosecution by the owner of the copyright.

**Any time a teacher sees plagiarism, it will be reported to the Academic Dean and/or President and a log of the incident will be placed in the student's file. If offenses are taking place in more than one class, any offense after an initial warning from any or all class instructors will accrue towards a second or third offense.**

- **First offense: Instructor will conference with the student and student will redo the assignment.**
- **Second offense: Automatic failure on the assignment and mandatory conference with MCU President and/or Academic Dean.**
- **Third offense: Failure of the course and possible expulsion from Midwives College of Utah.**

#### **WITHDRAWAL/ REFUNDS:**

An official withdrawal from MCU courses **requires a written request**. Please see the student catalog for a full description of the Refund Policy.

#### **DISCLAIMER:**

MCU does not take responsibility for the outcome of any activities suggested in this course or in any other MCU course. The students remain completely responsible for the consequences of their own behavior in regards to how they choose to implement the information contained herein.



## Required Assignments for PROD511

**12 Update Forms** due monthly. You can find the blank form under class documents. The forms should be filled out and uploaded into the MCU system as an assignment and also e-mailed to your advisors. There are 12 assignments because it is expected you will complete this course in one year. Should you finish the course early, you will receive credit for these updates for months you did not need.

**APA Quiz Assignment** Before submitting your first draft of your prospectus, you must complete the APA quiz. It is expected that you will have read the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses (found under the Graduate Student link in your student menu) and reviewed the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association before taking this quiz. The quiz is open book. If you score less than 90% on the quiz, you will need to have a conference call with your Committee Secretary to review the questions you missed. Your prospectus **MUST** use APA formatting properly. If you take the time to become familiar with APA format and do it right the first time, you will save yourself quite a bit of time and trouble!

**Advisor Commitment Forms** – Blank forms can be found under class documents. After you've spoken with your advisors and have verbally agreed that they will join your Thesis Advisory Committee, have them fill out the form and return it to you. When you have all of your commitment forms, send them to the Committee Secretary.

**Thesis Prospectus** – Details on this can be found below. The prospectus is the main goal of the course. When you have finished a draft, use the MCU Messaging system to send it to your Committee Secretary. When you submit your first draft, the Committee Secretary will schedule a GoToMeeting or conference call for your Thesis Advisory Committee to review the draft as a group. With subsequent drafts, the secretary will distribute the drafts to the rest of your committee and collect their reviews via e-mail. When you receive the reviews, you can make changes and write another draft. **EXPECT TO GO THROUGH SEVERAL DRAFTS** before you and your committee finalize your prospectus.

## Section 1: Thesis

### What is a thesis?

PROD 511 is the prerequisite for your thesis course. There are two possible routes for your final thesis, a written thesis or a thesis project. Below are descriptions of the two classes that can be the completion of your work in PROD 511:

#### MDWF 560 Thesis or MDWF 584, Project

MDWF 560 Thesis, 5 Cr.

The written thesis is developed and completed under the direction of a thesis advisory committee selected by the student. The student will be required to work closely with their committee. The thesis should be geared toward producing a practical, substantial, scholarly work rather than just completing an academic exercise. The thesis must be an original work. Your thesis must be presented in a public venue and defended at its conclusion.

MDWF 584 Project 5 Cr.

The thesis project is developed and completed under the direction of a thesis advisory committee selected by the student. The student will be required to work closely with their committee. Acceptable projects include such things as setting up a clinic; developing midwifery courses, policies, and procedures; developing and administering a service; and developing birth-related programs such as a birth/postpartum doula training or a certified childbirth education program. Each project must be a substantial work. Your thesis project must be presented in a public venue defended at its conclusion.

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The work you do on your thesis will be the culmination of your degree at MCU. All graduate students are required to complete a thesis or final project, and the MCU faculty is ready to help you with your goals. Some students find the process overwhelming, and so the rest of this syllabus will be dedicated to helping you plan and begin work on your thesis.

### Steps to a Creating a Thesis

1. Idea generation and narrowing
2. Background research
3. Thesis Advisory Committee selected and commitment forms submitted
4. Submit idea(s) to Committee Secretary for suggestions and approval to proceed. Discuss ideas with Thesis Advisory Committee.
5. Write prospectus
6. Submit prospectus to Committee Secretary.
7. Prospectus approved by Thesis Advisory Committee
8. Begin thesis research, consulting with Thesis Advisory Committee regularly
9. Finish research and evaluate findings
10. Discuss findings with Primary Advisor, may need to revise plans for thesis and mode of thesis
11. Begin writing thesis
12. Review draft(s) with Thesis Advisory Committee and revise
13. Submit thesis for defense
14. Oral defense of the thesis
15. Revise thesis based on defense
16. Final submission of thesis

You will complete steps 1-7 during PROD 511. The remaining steps will be completed in MDWF 560 or MDWF 584. The suggested time for the entire thesis process (steps 1-16) is three years. If you plan to take longer than three years the timeline that you develop as part of this course should reflect that.

Each step will be discussed in more detail below.

## **Step 1: Idea Generation and Narrowing**

As you begin your thesis, the first task is finding a topic. You might already have an idea, or you might use brainstorming techniques such as free writing, mapping, or verbal brainstorming to help you think about possible topics. Reading the literature of your field is an excellent way to stimulate the creative process and discover areas where further research is suggested. As you begin classes or your apprenticeship, you will undoubtedly have new ideas. Find a system that works for you to keep track of these ideas—a notebook you carry with you, a file folder for items of interest, a designated location on your hard drive where you save “thesis ideas”, etc.

Eventually you will need to choose a specific topic and make sure it is of the proper scope. Thesis topics should be centered on midwifery and follow the midwifery model of care. Your thesis will be a sizeable work, but needs to be narrow enough to work with effectively over the next three years.

One of the requirements of a written thesis is that it be “an original contribution to knowledge.” It’s not always easy to know if something qualifies as original. Madsen (1992, p. 38) helps define an original topic; “...a topic must have the potential to do at least one of the following: uncover new facts or principles, suggest relationships that were previously unrecognized, challenge existing truths or assumptions, afford new insights into little-understood phenomena, or suggest new interpretations of known facts that can alter people’s perceptions of the world around them.”

Many of your ideas for either a written thesis or a project will require the use of one or more research techniques. There are many different accepted research techniques—a few examples are: survey research; statistical analysis; interview research; observational field research; sampling; experimental study; and policy analysis. If your research requires one or more techniques, it will be your responsibility to ensure that you are familiar with the accepted procedures of the technique; otherwise, your research will not be valid. The MCU Graduate Library has resources you can use to learn more about various methodologies. Information is available on different research techniques so do not let your unfamiliarity with a method deter you from an otherwise excellent idea.

You also need to choose between a written thesis and a project. If you are doing a traditional written thesis (MDWF 560) the body of your thesis manuscript must be at least 40 pages. (The body begins with the introduction and ends with the references). If you do a project, there are many possibilities for your work. A project may be a facilitator’s manual, a course syllabus, an educational campaign, or a video. Expectations for a project will be set during this course so that you and your Thesis Advisory Committee are all in agreement on the requirements for your final submission. All projects must also be accompanied by a background paper of at least 25 pages.

Table 1 gives some examples of problematic topics and shows how the topic can be changed to a workable idea.

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>BETTER TOPIC</b>
“Midwifery Care and C-sections”	Too broad	“Educating Clients for Vaginal Birth: A How-to Guide for Midwives” (project) Or “How Women Choose Birth Place for VBAC” (Interview research presented in a traditional written thesis.)
“The Centering Model of Pregnancy”	Too broad	“Implementation of a Centering Model in an Established Midwifery Clinic” (project) Or “Perceived Barriers to Implementing the Centering Model in Calgary area Midwifery Clinics” (survey research presented in a traditional written thesis)
“Safety and Benefits of Homebirth”	Not original	“Educational Campaign to Inform Grandparents of the Safety of Home Birth” (project) or “A Comparative Analysis of Postpartum Depression rates in Homebirth vs. Hospital Birth in the State of Hawaii” (traditional written thesis)
Thesis Project Idea: Brochure: “The Risks of Group B Strep in the Newborn for Homebirth Families”	Not substantive	Brochure AND a background research paper AND a poster presentation
“The Efficacy of Maternal Education in 3 <sup>rd</sup> World Countries”	Not substantive	“The Efficacy of Risk/Benefit/Alternative Education Regarding Common Birth Practices in Bali”

The advice in this section is not intended to stifle your creativity but rather to give you a framework to start thinking about a thesis topic that will allow you to demonstrate your mastery of a subject and make a valuable contribution to the midwifery profession.

## Step 2: Background Research

As you formulate ideas, you will need to do some background research on the topic. Your background research will become the literature review section of your prospectus and your thesis. You may not need to do any background research until after you complete step 4 (Submit ideas). This will depend on your familiarity with the topics you are interested in.

The literature review is a critical part of your research. It helps you put your research into the proper context. It helps you acquire an understanding of your topic. Unless you do a thorough literature review, you will not know what is already known about your topic, how the existing research supports or contradicts your ideas, and what is assumed but not proven. The literature review will help you to identify gaps in the literature, which in turn can lead to an innovative thesis proposal (Remember the idea of “originality” discussed in step 1). The literature review section that you will include in both your prospectus and thesis is also critical to the reader of your work as it provides a framework to both understand the background of your topic and why your topic is important.

As you read the literature you should be looking not only for knowledge of subjects but also for how data is collected and analyzed in a certain field, what research methodologies are used, and how results are presented. The standard method of communicating scholarly research is through the scholarly journal (peer-reviewed). Your bibliography should contain a preponderance of citations from scholarly journals. There are exceptions to this (i.e., certain topics may have been discussed primarily in books). However, if you have not done a thorough review of the scholarly journal literature in your subject area, you have not done an acceptable literature review.

Compiling a literature review can be difficult if the process is new to you. The best way to become familiar with a literature review is to read a lot of them. Most scholarly work (found in scholarly journals and books) will have a literature review section. If at all possible, you should look at a variety of theses. This will help you not only with the literature review but all aspects of your own thesis.

Finding the literature for your background reading can be challenging and time consuming. Look at the list of research resources available through the graduate link in your student menu for ideas. Your advisors may also be able to help you find good resources.

Any resource you use as part of your literature review (and anywhere else in your prospectus and thesis) must be cited in your bibliography. Your bibliography must be in APA format. The APA assignment and required texts will give you lots of information on how to do APA formatting. You can also ask your Writing Advisor on your Thesis Advisory Committee for help.

Most students find it useful to create an annotated bibliography for their own use during the thesis process. Though not required, it is strongly recommended. An annotated bibliography is simply a bibliography with notes—things like what pages applicable sections are on, what this source has to say about your topic, etc. If you start your annotated bibliography as soon as you begin your research, you will save yourself invaluable time throughout the lengthy thesis process. The background research often takes place throughout much of your thesis process, not just at the beginning. Make sure that when you use a source you copy down all the information that will be needed to do a complete citation in APA format. You will be amazed at how much time you can spend looking for an article you read a year ago so you can get the correct page numbers, rereading an article because you can't remember why it might be useful, etc. Come up with a system of keeping track of all your background research and stick with it.

You might use something as traditional as 3x5 note cards or you might invest in reference tracker software such as Procite™, Endnote™, or Reference Works™.

### Step 3: Advisory Committee Committed

The Thesis Advisory Committee is a group of individuals chosen by the student and approved by the Graduate Dean to help and advise the student during the process of writing the thesis. Advisory Committee members will review and provide feedback on the prospectus, drafts of the thesis as needed, and the finished thesis during the oral defense. They also make themselves available to discuss questions, problems, and ideas that come up during the process. A Thesis Advisory Committee must include at least 4 members. The following chart shows the requirements and roles of the various advisors:

Type of advisor	Must be MCU Staff?	Requirements
<b>Primary Advisor</b>	Yes	Must meet MCU's preceptor requirements. See advisor directory for list of qualified primary advisors.
<b>Writing Advisor</b>	Yes	See advisor directory for list of qualified writing advisors.
<b>Committee Secretary</b>	Yes	Either Graduate Dean or Assistant Graduate Dean will fill this role. This person is listed as your PROD511 instructor. You do not need a commitment form for this person.
<b>Expert advisor in your field of study</b>	No – can be anyone you choose. If the person is not from MCU make sure they understand the tasks they will be asked to perform.	Should be an expert in his or her field, as well as experienced and willing to work with the student on her thesis. This person can also be a second midwifery advisor.
<b>OPTIONAL: You may have more than the required 4 committee members if you wish.</b>	No	Should be an expert in his or her field, as well as experienced and willing to work with the student on her thesis.

See the *Thesis Advisory Directory* (available under the *Graduate Students* link in your student menu). This is a listing maintained by the MCU Graduate Office that gives names, contact information, and areas of specialization for potential advisors.

You must have a commitment form on file for each of your advisors except your Committee Secretary. The *Advisor Commitment Form* is available in your class documents. You should keep a copy of the form in your files. A copy **MUST** be sent to your Committee Secretary. When you are selecting your advisors, you should give them an indication of their responsibilities, preferably by phone or in person, as e-mail contact is too easily misunderstood. If this is clearly communicated up front, it will help avoid problems during the thesis process. Some items you may want to discuss with your prospective advisor are:

- Preferred method of communication (i.e. email, telephone)
- Planned absences in the next few years when they will be unavailable to help you
- Your approximate planned date of completion
- What you feel the primary focus for this particular advisor will be. For example, if you see their

role primarily as assisting with the writing process you will want to make this clear at the beginning. Other types of roles an advisor might play are to assist with the research methodology, assist you in understanding the background literature, assist you with interpreting your findings, etc.

Each advisor will have a somewhat different role. Your Primary Advisor is the one you will probably consult with the most often. On the other hand, a Writing Advisor or research techniques advisor may only be consulted with questions specific to writing or a research technique. All the advisors on your Thesis Advisory Committee will be expected to provide feedback in a timely manner on your prospectus, your draft(s), your finished thesis, and your oral defense.

Your Committee Secretary will monitor your progress through your monthly updates, schedule the first draft conferencing, receive and distribute subsequent drafts and comments with your entire Thesis Advisory Committee, and help you understand the requirements of the graduate program. You will be assigned a Committee Secretary through the school and she will appear as your instructor in the MCU system.

If an advisor is unable to maintain service throughout your project, it is your responsibility to find a replacement for that advisor and provide the new member with sufficient background information to perform his/her responsibilities.

The time to bring your Thesis Advisory Committee on board is now. It is highly recommended that you select your committee as soon as you have an idea for your thesis or project. You want the committee to be involved with your thesis work from the beginning. You do not want to complete your first draft of your prospectus only to have an advisor say your idea is “not original”, “not substantive”, “the study methodology is not valid”, etc.

It is **STRONGLY** recommended that you contact potential advisors by phone to discuss your ideas before asking for a commitment to be on your Thesis Advisory Committee. The more personal relationship and immediate feedback you establish in a phone conversation can go a long way toward building a good collaborative relationship with your advisors.

#### **Step 4: Submit Ideas**

The purpose of this step is to get some feedback before you invest a lot of time writing your prospectus. Submit (by email) a brief description of an idea(s) you are interested in pursuing to the Committee Secretary. Hopefully, you have already communicated with at least one potential member of your committee regarding your idea (see Step 3). Even though the descriptions are brief, they should be clearly written, with correct grammar and spelling. Your description should give an indication of how the research and/or project will be presented. If you have specific questions or concerns about your idea you should include those.

## Step 5: Write Prospectus

A prospectus is a proposal for your paper or project. It gives you a chance to articulate your idea and “sell” it to an audience. It is a critical step in the process of completing a successful thesis or project. It formalizes your ideas and forces you to place them in a research or project methodology. If you skipped this step, you might find yourself spending months on a thesis only to find it is undoable for a variety of reasons—the data can’t be found, it isn’t original, the scope is too broad, and so on.

Your prospectus should be 10-15 pages long, including the bibliography and a cover page. If you have a long literature review section your prospectus may be longer. It can be more efficient to add to the literature review as you read the material than to go back when you are in your thesis course and expand this section. Understand that this prospectus will be reviewed by your Thesis Advisory Committee and may be sent back to you for rewriting and/or reassessment of your goals.

The Grading Rubric included in this section clarifies expectations, but either your prospectus will be excellent in every way or it will need to be redone. It is expected that every student will receive an A in this class.

Your prospectus should include the following (in the order listed):

✓ **Cover page**

A sample cover page can be found in the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses.

✓ **Table of contents**

This section may not seem necessary at this point as your prospectus is fairly short. However, the Table of Contents will be a necessary and useful component of your finished product. A sample table of contents can be found in the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses.

✓ **Introduction**

This section describes your topic. You should state as succinctly as possible the research question or problem, why it is important, and how your thesis or project will contribute to its solution. Your introduction should grab the reader’s attention and make them care about the rest of your proposal. Although it might be only one to two paragraphs, the wording should be strong. You should spend some time “wordsmithing” this section of your proposal.

✓ **Purpose and Audience**

This section details the purpose for doing your research and/or project. You will have already alluded to the purpose in your introduction but in this section you will state it in a more formal manner (i.e. Purpose/Hypotheses; Purpose/Research Questions; Purpose/Objectives).

**Examples:**

➤ *Purpose of the Study:*

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate thermoregulation in non-equipment aided shallow-water aquatic aerobics during second trimester pregnancy.

*Hypotheses:*

1. H0: There is no significant difference between core temperatures during exercise in control or treatment conditions.

2. H1: There is a significant difference between core temperatures during exercise in control or treatment conditions.
3. H0: There is no significant difference in oxygen consumption during exercise in control or treatment conditions.
4. H1: There is a significant difference in oxygen consumption during exercise in control or treatment conditions.

Above example from: Dunlap, S.R. (2003). *Thermoregulation in shallow water aquatic exercise during second trimester pregnancy* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Idaho.).

➤ *Problem Statement*

The purpose of this study is to examine the efficacy of social support /group exercise program on postpartum weight retention.

*Research Questions*

1. Will a social support / group exercise intervention improve peak VO<sub>2</sub> (aerobic capacity) of women after the twelve-week intervention?
2. Will body composition improve after the twelve-week intervention?

Above example from: Pickering, R. (2006). *The effect of a social support / group exercise intervention on postnatal weight retention and health behaviors* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Idaho).

➤ *Problem statement*

Volunteers comprise the majority of the staffing at the maternity clinic in Bali. There is a high turnover and training procedures are inconsistent.

*Solution*

This project will establish written training procedures and forms that can be effectively implemented with volunteers.

Identifying the audience(s) for your work helps you know what writing style to use. For example, the audience for a traditional written thesis is scholars and researchers and so the writing style and organizational format are scholarly. If you are compiling a pamphlet for medical practitioners, you would use a more formal writing style than if you are compiling a pamphlet for the layperson (i.e. pregnant women). This section should not be difficult to compile as your purpose is the driving force behind your research question or project proposal.

✓ **Literature Review**

This section will vary in length depending on how large a body of literature already exists that pertains to your topic. Although it's not required to have read everything that pertains to your topic at this point, you should have a good grasp of what's out there and you should certainly have read the seminal research. Once your prospectus is approved and you embark on your thesis or project you need to make sure you do a thorough literature review, filling in any gaps that may exist in the literature review of your prospectus.

You may be tempted to include only background material that supports your ideas. However, one mark of unbiased writing is to include ideas that contradict or do not support your own. This shows respect for the reader's intelligence and will ensure that your own conclusions are much more persuasive.

This section should not merely be a listing of the research with some description added but rather an analysis of why the studies and ideas cited are important to the work you are proposing. As you prepare the literature review it might help to assume the reader of your work will be

uninformed. Your literature review serves as an overview to the topic, giving readers enough background knowledge that they can evaluate the remainder of your work.

Literature reviews do not apply only to written theses; they are also expected to be part of the background paper for a thesis project. The scope of the literature review for projects will certainly vary, depending on the project. Oftentimes, doing a literature review for a project will require thinking more broadly. For example, if you are preparing a volunteer guide for a birthing clinic you might need to broaden the literature review to include material on volunteer programs in general as you may find little material on volunteer programs specific to birthing clinics.

The literature review should be well organized. A common method of organizing the review is to use thematic headings to divide the review into sections that cover all the different aspects of your research.

Review the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses for examples of how to correctly present and cite the literature.

### ✓ **Methods and Procedures**

The methodology section outlines your research design. If you are doing a project it describes the steps that will be necessary to complete the project. Creating a methodology will help you see if your project is doable. As you go through the steps necessary for successful completion of a project, you may discover regulations, financial costs, etc. that you did not think of initially. Spending some time planning at this stage is much wiser than finding out months into your project that there are insurmountable obstacles. Try and find someone who has done something similar (i.e. set up a birth center, started a childbirth education course) and discuss with them the process. Hopefully, when members of your Thesis Advisory Committee review the methodology section of your prospectus they will point out things you may have missed.

If your research involves data on which you hope to base conclusions you will need to describe how the data is to be collected, what techniques will be used to analyze the data, and how it will be presented. You will want to do background research and/or consult with an expert (this could be a Technical Advisor on your Thesis Advisory Committee) to make sure your procedures for gathering, analyzing, and presenting your data are accepted and valid in your area of research. Your literature review should include references to your selected methodology.

The methodology section should also discuss your planned mode of presentation, particularly if it is anything other than a traditional written thesis. For example, if you are doing an educational booklet you might mention the software program that you plan to use to lay out the booklet; anticipated costs and methods of publication and distribution, how it will be distributed and shared with its prospective audience, etc.

### ✓ **Timeline**

One of the purposes of the prospectus is to develop a “plan of attack.” This helps break down the monumental task into smaller pieces, and sets a timeline for you to work with, although it can be flexible. A worksheet is offered below based on the steps necessary for completing both your prospectus and your thesis. You may decide to add or subtract steps from those listed here based on your particular project and style. In this section of your prospectus, you will want to list the order and pertinent “goal dates” for steps such as: beginning your research or study, beginning

writing, meeting with your advisors to go over data, finishing a first draft, your oral defense, and your final due date for the thesis to be turned in. As you create your timeline, allow an appropriate amount of time for communications with the other people involved. For example, a reasonable amount of time to receive your Thesis Advisory Committee forms back might be two weeks.

You will already have completed some of the steps in your timeline when you submit your prospectus. Each time you submit your prospectus (assuming you submit more than one draft) you need to update the timeline to reflect any changes.

	Date to Begin	Date for Completion
Idea generation and narrowing		
Background research		
Thesis Advisory Committee committed		
Submit ideas to PROD 511 Committee Secretary		
Discuss questions and/or concerns such as findings in background research, mode of presentation, research techniques with appropriate member(s) of Thesis Advisory Committee.		
Write prospectus/Revise drafts as needed		
Continue background research		
Evaluate findings		
Discuss findings with advisors, may need to revise plans for thesis and mode of thesis		
Writing		
Thesis Advisory Committee review of drafts		
Submit thesis for defense		
Oral defense of the thesis		
Revise thesis based on defense		
Final submission of thesis		

✓ **Components of Project** (This section applies only to projects)

If you are doing a project rather than a traditional written thesis you will enroll in MDWF 584 upon completion of PROD 511. Along with the Graduate Dean and your committee, you will decide during PROD 511 the basic components of your thesis project. The *MDWF 584 Components* form (available under class documents) must be on file before this course is completed.

Each project must have at least three components as follows:

1. **Background paper:** This is **REQUIRED** for every project. Total length will be at least 25 pages. The paper is basically your expanded prospectus and will be explained more fully in the MDWF 584 syllabus.
2. **Physical components:** These are items that will be turned in with your background paper as part of your project portfolio. Each item should be briefly described in the Methods section of your prospectus. Examples of possible physical components are:
  - Video
  - Facilitator's manual
  - Training guide
  - Presentation of your project (i.e. Poster presentation at a conference)
  - Brochure

- Correspondence with various entities (i.e. government agencies, accreditation bodies, etc.)
3. **Presentation:** All projects must include some means of sharing your project in a public venue such as a workshop, a conference presentation, a poster session, etc.

For the purposes of your prospectus, list the components of your project here. As you work with your Thesis Advisory Committee to develop your prospectus this section may well change. Once it is finalized, use the information in this section to complete the *MDWF 584 Components* form.

✓ **Bibliography**

Your bibliography must be in proper APA format. You should include any source that you have used as background for your prospectus. Your bibliography will change as you work on your thesis and you should not feel that you need to have uncovered every source you will use at this point in time.

## **Additional Note on Projects**

If you are doing a project rather than a thesis, your prospectus should still have all of the above sections. Although not everything discussed in the above section will pertain to some projects, much of it is pertinent. Because of the wide variety of possible projects, it is difficult to come up with guidelines for every situation. You should approach it from the perspective that you are trying to give your Thesis Advisory Committee as clear a description as possible of what you want to do so they can offer constructive feedback before you've invested too much time. The introduction section forces you to describe the importance of your project in a way that will sell it. The literature review section ensures that you do some background research and learn from past endeavors. For example, if you were setting up a birth center you might not find anything in the literature that describes the steps that were taken, the obstacles encountered, etc. As part of your background research, you might need to contact people who have set up a birth center. The methodology section gives you an opportunity to think about your plan of attack, step by step. Creating a timeline should give you a sense of if the project is doable in a feasible time period.

## **Grading Criteria for Prospectus**

Remember that this course is a pass/fail course. You will not be finished with the course until all assignments are turned in AND have passed the scrutiny of your Thesis Advisory Committee. The following list contains some of the criteria the committee will consider when deciding if your work is excellent quality and you are ready to move on to your thesis course.

*Rubric for Reviewing Student Progress*

<b>Target</b>
APA Quiz Completed
Prospectus includes required sections and content as described in this syllabus and the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses: Cover Page Table of Contents Introduction Purpose and audience Literature review Methods and Procedures Timeline Components of Project (ONLY FOR PROJECTS) Bibliography
Topic/Project is of proper scope, is original, and demonstrates value to the midwifery profession
Writing: Grammar/Language Body paragraphs Headings
APA format followed, especially citations and reference list.
Thesis Advisory Committee Commitment Forms
Monthly updates submitted

Remember that your committee will require as many drafts as necessary until your prospectus is deemed excellent. Make sure you allow time for several drafts and revisions in your plan for completing this course.

## Step 6: Submit Prospectus to Committee Secretary

Submit your prospectus to the Committee Secretary as an attachment to an email. Use the MCU messaging system. **DO NOT** write your prospectus in the body of an email as it is a formal piece of writing in which formatting, etc. is important. The Committee Secretary will verify that all the required sections are contained in your prospectus and that APA formatting has been used. The Committee Secretary may return the prospectus to you for revisions before it is sent out to the rest of the Thesis Advisory Committee. When the Committee Secretary feels the prospectus is ready she sends it to the other advisors along with instructions for reviewing. The first draft of your prospectus will be reviewed by your committee as a whole in a conference call or GoToMeeting. Subsequent drafts will be reviewed via e-mail.

## Step 7: Prospectus Approved by Thesis Advisory Committee

The Committee Secretary will receive all the reviewed copies from the other members of your Thesis Advisory Committee. You will receive the comments of your advisors and the comments of the Committee Secretary approximately two weeks after you have submitted your prospectus. There could be circumstances (i.e. an advisor is on vacation) where this timeframe is not feasible. The Committee Secretary will keep you informed of any unusual circumstances. Until the all members of your Thesis Advisory Committee agree that the prospectus is 'A' work it will be returned for further revisions. Expect this to take multiple revisions!

## Steps 8-16: Completion of Thesis

Once you have successfully completed step 7, you are finished with **PROD 511: Thesis Prospectus**. The remainder of your thesis work will take place in another course. Your prospectus will be a big part of the remaining work you do. The following information will be good for you to be aware of as you work on your prospectus.

- 1) **Traditional Written Thesis:** If your final product is to be a written thesis your thesis course will be MDWF 560. Your prospectus will form the backbone of your work. The "Timeline" section of your prospectus will be omitted from your final thesis. In addition, your final product should include the following sections:
  - Findings (also referred to as Results or Discussion)
  - Conclusion
  - Definition of Terms (this is an optional section but is helpful if your thesis includes terminology that would be unfamiliar to most people).\
  - Appendices (if applicable)

It would be helpful for you to review the MDWF 560 syllabus (available under the *Graduate Students* link in your student menu) as you prepare your prospectus.

- 2) **Project:** If your final product is to be a project your thesis course will be MDWF 584. Such a wide variety of projects are possible that it is difficult to set guidelines that will fit all of them. As you work through your prospectus with your Thesis Advisory Committee, both you and your

advisors should become very clear about what the expectations for the final product are. Each project will be accompanied by a written paper that is basically your prospectus, expanded. The “Timeline” section of your prospectus will be omitted from your final product. Two sections that you will add to your paper are:

- Discussion (A short discussion of how the project went. What would you do differently? What worked well? Major obstacles?)
- Conclusion (One to two paragraphs)

It would be helpful for you to review the MDWF 584 syllabus (available under the *Graduate Students* link in your student menu) as you prepare your prospectus.