

Guidelines  
OUTSTANDING THESIS AWARD

1. Purpose. The Outstanding Thesis Award recognizes and promotes outstanding research and creative work by Master's students. It is a testament to the contribution of Master's student research and creative activity to the life of the University, the various disciplines, and society at large. The award is given annually to the thesis or theses deemed to be the most outstanding from those submitted to the Graduate School, authored by students who graduated in the immediately preceding year.

2. Nominations Process. Each Master's program that has a thesis option may nominate one thesis annually. Nominations, prepared by the thesis advisor with the student's approval, are to be submitted by a preannounced deadline to the Graduate School.

A nomination shall consist of the following:

- Nomination Form
- Completed Thesis
- Abstract
- Vita
- A detailed statement of the nature and importance of the thesis research or creative work according to selection criteria above, in a disciplinary and societal context. (300 words maximum)
- Supporting Documents (optional)

3. Selection Process. A faculty committee appointed by and convened by the Graduate Dean shall evaluate all nominations and select the winner(s). The committee shall be broadly representative of the types of Master's programs at SIU. The committee may draw up additional procedures and standards governing the nomination and selection process and criteria. If in any one year the committee feels that there is no thesis project worthy of this award, no award need be given.

Depending upon the nominated theses, the selection committee will review based on the thesis program areas:

- a. Social Sciences and Education – Anthropology, Criminology & Criminal Justice, Economics, Geography, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Communication Studies, Curriculum & Instruction, Higher Education, Workforce Education, Human Sciences, and Business Administration

- b. Arts and Humanities – Art, Music, Creative Writing, Theater, English, Philosophy, Foreign Language, Linguistics, and TESOL
  - c. Sciences – Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Agribusiness Economics, Animal Science, Forestry, Microbiology, Pharmacology, Physiology, Plant Biology, Plant, Soil, & Agriculture Systems, and Zoology
4. Assessment Criteria. Each of the criteria below is worth 0-10 points, for a possible total of 100 points. If a criterion is not applicable to the thesis, score it as Not Applicable (NA). For each thesis, divide the total score by the number of criteria that have been rated, to determine a percentage score. Do not include those labeled as NA.
- a. Quality of Research, Artistic, or Creative Methods
  - b. Significance of the Topic
  - c. Significance of the Findings or Creative Product
  - d. Validity of the Conclusions
  - e. Originality of the Concept
  - f. Has the Work Been Published/Is the Work in the Publication Review Process?
  - g. Quality of Artistic Expression/Clarity of Argument or Goal
  - h. Demonstration for Potential Future Research
  - i. Contribution of the Work to the Field (submitted by Program Faculty)
  - j. Contribution of the Work to the Field (submitted by External Evaluator, not SIU)
5. The Award. An appropriate certificate will be provided to the winner(s). The award winner(s) will be announced at the Student Creative Activities and Research Forum in spring. Monetary awards will be given if funds are available.

Revised August 27, 2024