Request to Extend Thesis Research

Graduate Program on the Environment

The Evergreen State College

Graduate students who require additional time to complete their thesis work may request an extension for the Summer or Fall quarter immediately following the Spring Thesis Workshop. The extension must be requested by the student and approved by the reader and the MES Director. Starting in 2017, students who are approved to continue work on their thesis will be signed up for a one-quarter extension and pay an extension fee of $500.

If the student does not complete the thesis by the end of the requested quarter, it may result in the student receiving No Credit for their thesis and the student being withdrawn from the program. Reader: Please attach any further stipulations for thesis completion.

I, \_\_\_Lester Tobias\_\_\_\_, request an extension to complete my thesis in (choose only one quarter):

\_X\_ Fall Quarter 2020

I also understand that I must pay the $500 fee to extend my thesis work for one quarter. (For those who are completing their thesis in Summer or Fall of 2020, we will waive this fee for students who were not able to complete their thesis as the result of COVID-19 and the governor’s stay-at-home. Please answer question #4 below if you are requesting a fee waiver.)

I have read the information outlined in the MES Student Handbook about the services I can use at Evergreen while I am a thesis extension student.

I have attached my answers to the questions below to this form.

1. Describe your progress on your thesis thus far.
2. Describe the reason(s) for not completing your thesis by this quarter’s deadline.
3. Provide a detailed plan for completing your thesis during the next quarter.
4. If you were not able to complete your thesis as a result of COVID-19 and the governor’s stay-at-home, please briefly describe these circumstances.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Thesis Reader / Date)

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Director / Date)

**1. Describe your progress on your thesis thus far.**

I have completed my Abstract and Introduction, updated my draft Literature Review, and completed my Methods section. Human Subjects Review documentation and associated materials are located in my complete Appendix A. To-date, I have conducted six interviews for my data collection and have an additional two scheduled for late August and early September. Signed consent agreements for these interviews are located in my draft Appendix B. Completed interviews have been fully transcribed and are located in my draft Appendix C. I have drafted my Results section based on qualitative data gathered to-date. I have a draft “Pre-Analysis” section recommended by my spring term thesis advisor to inform the second part of my data collection process which will take the form of a focus group work session.

**2. Describe the reason(s) for not completing your thesis by this quarter’s deadline.**

I shifted the focus of my thesis research late in winter term 2020 and did not receive final authorization on my HSR until mid-spring term 2020. This delayed my data collection process because I could not recruit, schedule, or conduct qualitative interviews without all materials being reviewed and approved. Due to complications from COVID-19, communication and coordination for my initial data collection process (interviews) was delayed. A lack of in-person communication and networking has reduced my pool of potential interview subjects and eliminated other candidates. I planned to conduct 12 individual interviews, but only six subjects have made themselves available to-date (two additional subjects have agreed to participate, but have not confirmed meetings). Data collection for the second part of my research (focus group) has also been delayed due to lack of progress in initial data collection and postponed Technical Advisory Group meetings (focus group subjects) in my research area (WRIA-13 Lead Entity).

**3. Provide a detailed plan for completing your thesis during the next quarter.**

When I began my research, I targeted 12 participants for my initial data collection. Due to a longer-than-expected process to schedule and complete qualitative interviews, I will reduce this to the eight participants who have committed to-date. This will allow me to schedule my focus group meeting sooner (beginning of September or October) and fast-track the second phase of data collection. Given the extended timeline for the data collection process of my research, I will draft as much content for my Analysis, Discussion, and Recommendation sections as possible to reduce the amount of work that will take place following data collection. This will reduce the amount of work I will need to complete during the approximate six weeks following my focus group and preceding research presentations scheduled for late fall term 2020. I will work with my thesis advisor closely to plan for contingencies in the event my data collection process experiences more delays or complications. This includes drafting parallel Analysis, Discussion, and Recommendation sections that do not include results from a planned focus group work session. Despite slowed progress, I continue to steadily add content to my thesis work and believe I’m very close to completing the more difficult portions of my research.

**4. If you were not able to complete your thesis as a result of COVID-19 and the governor’s stay-at-home, please briefly describe these circumstances.**

I am requesting an extension fee waiver because COVID-19 has made communication and coordination for my research more time-consuming and difficult than anticipated. The Governor's stay at home order has been adopted by many agencies and organizations and lasted much longer than previously thought and greatly delayed my completion and delivery of key thesis materials. In many cases, these circumstances will extend through 2021 (my office included). This has greatly reduced my ability to network and collaborate with important contributors involved in watershed management. Many regularly scheduled committee meetings (specifically WRIA-13 Technical Advisory Group) have been postponed or suffer reduced participation. Due to the heavy overlap and dependence of my research with my professional work, the challenges posed by COVID-19 have greatly impacted my progress and speed.