University Distinguished Master’s Thesis Award

Purpose: According to plans developed by faculty committees and approved by the Graduate Council, each degree granting program of The University Graduate School may nominate one “truly outstanding” master’s thesis for consideration by a committee of faculty reviewers. The Awards Committee of the Graduate Faculty Council will consider such criteria as originality, documentation, significance, accuracy, organization, and style. The winner in each category will then be nominated for the MAGS (Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools)/ProQuest Distinguished Master’s Thesis Awards.

Since the winner of the University Distinguished Master’s Thesis Award is automatically nominated for the MAGS Distinguished Master’s Thesis Award, the submission guidelines conform to the MAGS Thesis Award Guidelines. To streamline the MAGS nomination process, please address the letter of nomination and letters of support to the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS). If the student does not wish to be considered for the MAGS award, please indicate so on the application and contact the Graduate Fellowships & Awards Coordinator at ugawrd@iu.edu

Award: Four awards of $1,500 each, two for each campus (IUB and IUPUI). An award will be given in each category that matches the fields of competition for this year’s MAGS Distinguished Master’s Thesis Awards: Mathematics/Physical Sciences/Engineering and Social Sciences.

- Mathematics/Physical Sciences/Engineering: mathematics, statistics, computer sciences, data processing, systems analysis, chemistry, earth sciences, physics, geology, meteorology, astronomy, metallurgy, geophysics, pharmaceutical chemistry; aeronautical, architectural, biomedical, ceramic, chemical, civil, and electrical engineering sciences; environmental health engineering; geological, mechanical, mining, nuclear, and petroleum engineering.

- Social Sciences: agricultural economics, geography, anthropology, archaeology, economics, education, sociology, government (political science), demography, and psychology.

Note: The fields of competition for next year’s University Distinguished Master’s Thesis Award will be Biological/Life Sciences and Humanities.

- Biological/Life Sciences: biology; botany; zoology; ecology; embryology; entomology; genetics; nutrition; plant pathology; plant physiology; anatomy; biochemistry; biophysics; microbiology; pathology; pharmacology; physiology; and related fields. Also included are agriculture, forestry, and related fields.

- Humanities: history; philosophy; language; linguistics; literature; archaeology; jurisprudence; the history, theory and criticism of the arts; ethics; comparative religion; and those aspects of the social sciences that employ historical or philosophical approaches.

Eligibility Criteria: Master’s students must have received a master’s degree from The University Graduate School or The Graduate Office at IUPUI during the two previous academic years (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2022). Original works accepted “in lieu of a thesis” (e.g. musical compositions, published books, works of art, computer software, etc.) are not eligible for nomination.

Nomination Process: Nominations may be made by a Director of Graduate Studies or Departmental Chair. Each department may only nominate one master’s thesis. If an academic unit has a “truly outstanding” thesis, the
Director of Graduate Studies or Chair is encouraged to place it in nomination by submitting the following, in the order listed below:

- **Nomination Form with an Affirmation of Approval** signed by the Department Chairperson, or from a Faculty Member designated by the Chairperson, confirming the nominated student is eligible and the Chair approves of the applicants request for funding.

- **Letters of support from two members of the research committee.** One must come from the research adviser. A list of the questions which the committee of reviewers will consider when awarding the master’s thesis award are included below. The members of the research committee are invited to address these issues in their nominating letters.

- **A non-technical 300-word abstract** which can be easily understood by all the members of the committee of reviewers (who come from a wide variety of different disciplines spanning the humanities, social sciences, and sciences). The abstract should include the title of the thesis and the name of the author *(but not list IU as the institution to conform to the MAGS Thesis Award Guidelines)*.

- **An electronic copy of the thesis** (will not be returned)

**Student Deadline:** Students must contact their department for the internal deadline. The nomination must be submitted by the department. We will not accept any self-nominations.

**Department Deadline:**
The nomination needs to be submitted through the “UGS Fellowship & Awards” Course on Canvas (1pdf per student nomination) *(https://iu.instructure.com/courses/1630134)*. Faculty and staff who need access to Canvas to upload nominations should send a request with their user id and department name to ugsawrd@iu.edu. Departments are responsible for contacting the candidates who applied but were not chosen for the nomination.

Questions may be directed to the Graduate Fellowships & Awards Coordinator by email at ugsawrd@iu.edu

**Questions to be considered by the Committee of Reviewers**

- Characteristics of the Research. How important is the subject treated in this study? How extensive and how original is the material collected by the author? Does the study present an original claim or thesis? How effectively does the author demonstrate this?

- Contribution to Team Research. If the thesis is the result of a group effort (i.e., in a research laboratory), to what extent are the data and arguments presented in this study due to the author?

- Application of the Results. To what extent could the theory presented in the study be extended beyond its present applications? How much revision is necessary before the study could be published? What portions of it have already been published or accepted for publication?

- Construction of the Study. How would you evaluate the grammar, spelling, and syntax; the clarity of expression; and the general style of the dissertation?

- Limitations of the Study. In your opinion, how could this study be improved?
University Distinguished Master’s Thesis Award Nomination Form

Note: This is a fillable PDF

Student Name: ________________________________

Preferred Pronouns: ________________________________

Email: ________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

University I.D.: ________________________________

Current Mailing Address: ________________________________

Field of Competition: ________________________________

Department: ________________________________

Major: ________________________________

Graduate GPA: ________________________________

Affirmation of Approval

To be completed by the department Chairperson or a faculty member designated by the Chairperson

☐ I confirm this student is eligible for this year’s University Distinguished Master’s Thesis

☐ I approve this nomination

Signature ________________________________  Title ________________________________  Date ________________________________

To be completed by nominating department:
Please list the names and emails of the faculty and staff whom we should contact regarding award results:

Name: ________________________________  Email: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________  Email: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________  Email: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________  Email: ________________________________