

Guidelines for Advisees Revising their Proposal and Thesis Drafts

When revising your proposal or thesis chapter drafts in response to my earlier comments, there are three steps you can take to help things proceed in a timely and efficient way.

First, please *send me your revisions cumulatively rather than in pieces*. That is, if I've asked for revisions to Chapter 3 of your thesis, don't just send me revised Chapter 3 - instead, send me the earlier unchanged chapters as well, plus the title page, table of contents, reference list, and so forth. Seeing the document whole each round helps me "get back into" reviewing your research project and, I hope, helps me make more useful comments.

Second, please *provide me a summary cover note telling me what's new in the revised material*. I like getting a bulleted list of the substantive things you've done since receiving my comments on the last version. These bullets can include responses to my specific suggestions and questions as well as other things you've done that make this version different from the last. Please include page numbers in your bullets as appropriate. It's important to be reasonably detailed in your bullets, but you don't need to include bullets about minor edits for typos, spacing, and so forth.

Here are some examples of effective bullets from a recent thesis-revision process:

Page 126: Paragraph beginning with "The role of SOI administrators is important." Revised this paragraph to clarify role of different actors (SOI admins, faculty, campus leaders) in SOIs/org change.

Page 128: Added footnote 35 about how business model of charging membership fees originates with MIT in the 1920s or so.

Page 128: Added info about nanoSTAR to clarify its areas of research, seed-funded centers and institutes, and industry partnership and innovation program

Page 132: Bottom of the page. Rephrased sentence about indirect cost recovery – now I say that success in fed r&d doesn't necessarily increase overall financial capacity at UVa.

Page 133: Subtle changes in first two full paragraphs on page, aiming to get at different "levels" of analysis. I highlight that UVa campus leaders have a vision as part of the Cornerstone Plan. Then, to develop the point about strategic planning, I mention how SOI administrators and also affiliate faculty each tend to perceive this development.

Third, please *reread and edit your new text carefully for each round of revisions*. For us to move along most smoothly in this process, we both need to make sure we are communicating effectively. Use active rather than passive voice when possible and appropriate. Break up overly long sentences into more digestible pieces. Qualify your wording when necessary to ensure it's academically defensible, but don't send readers into a confusing, paragraph-length maze of clauses and commas.