

MASTERS THESIS PROPOSAL

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Master's thesis proposal is to examine the student's understanding of their research area, and for the student to demonstrate their competence in formulating, and communicating a proposal for the research that is planned for the thesis. The thesis proposal will typically be examined in the fall of Year 2 in place of the student's second fall BMG review for students who start in September, and will typically be examined within 15 months of starting the program for students who start in January, May, or July.

MSc GCP: The thesis proposal is required to be approved by the advisory committee in the Winter of Year 1. This cannot be combined with the Annual Review Meeting. To ensure timely completion, it is recommended that a thesis proposal meeting be arranged in January-February. A detailed budget is required and must be approved by the GCP.

FORMS/PAPERWORK:

Students are required to provide the following to all SAC Members and GSAC Chair:

7 days prior to the Meeting:

- Research Proposal (see below)

Day of the Review:

- Master's Thesis/Practicum Proposal (one copy with demographics completed)

CONTENT AND FORMAT:

A 3-page written proposal (12-point font, 1" margins, single-spaced) plus relevant appendices is required. The proposal must contain (in the following order): Introduction/Background, Preliminary Data & Rationale, Hypothesis, Research Aims, Significance, Figures & Tables, and Supplementary Information. The appendices should include relevant figures and/or tables. This proposal must be distributed to the committee members at least **7 days prior** to the meeting. It will be discussed during the meeting, with the student expected to answer questions related to the written document. Normally, the examination will not be more than 60 minutes in length. Students will be asked to start the proposal examination with a 5-minute oral summary of their research project (**presentation software is not permitted**).

EVALUATION:

If the committee unanimously agrees that the thesis proposal is acceptable as written, they will indicate their approval (with or without reservations) by signing the [Master's Thesis/Practicum Proposal](#) form. The form and detailed comments will be forwarded to the FGS. If the committee members do not approve the proposal, they will provide the student with feedback regarding improvements. The student will revise the proposal and arrange a second meeting within two months of the first meeting with the committee to discuss and defend the revised document. **If the proposal does not receive unanimous approval at this second meeting, the student will be required to withdraw from the program.**

MSc THESIS EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

In most circumstances, the examining committee will consist of the members of the student's advisory committee. In consultation with the advisor, an examination committee is selected and the [Master's Thesis/Practicum Title and Appointment of Examiners](#) form is completed and submitted to the FGS.

FORMS/PAPERWORK:

Students are required to complete the following:

30 days Prior to Planned Examination:

- Email their thesis to the General Office for distribution to the examining committee
- Complete [Master's Thesis/Practicum Title and Appointment of Examiners](#) (in consultation with advisor)

Day of the Oral Examination:

- Provide Master's Thesis/Practicum Final Report (one copy with demographics completed)

After a Successful Oral Examination:

- Final electronic copy of the thesis submitted to the FGS and the BMG Department. Bound copies are not required.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE MSc THESIS

MSc students must email their thesis to the [General Office](#) for distribution to the examining committee. The examination committee members have one month to read the thesis and classify it into one of the following categories:

1. Category 1 – Acceptable without modification or with minor revisions ;
2. Category 2 – Acceptable subject to modification and/or revision(s); or
3. Category 3 – Not acceptable.

Reports are not required if the thesis is ranked in Category 1 or Category 2. One or fewer Category 3 classifications from the Examining Committee indicates that the candidate will proceed to the oral examination. Two or more Category 3 classifications constitutes a "fail" of the written thesis. In the event that the student fails the written thesis, a second examination of the written thesis will be scheduled within 6 months of the first examination. Should the revised thesis not be approved, then the student must withdraw from the MSc program.

MSc THESIS ORAL EXAMINATION:

Students must pass an oral examination on the subject of the thesis and related material. The Chair of the GSAC, or his/her designate will schedule a public oral defense of the thesis after receiving the thesis examination committee's rankings indicating that that the written thesis falls into one of the two 'acceptable' categories (Category 1 or 2). The oral examination committee will consist of the members of the Thesis Examination committee and the Chair of the GSAC, or his/her designate, who will serve as the Chair.

The first part of the examination will consist of a 20-minute oral presentation by the candidate, which should include an oral summary of the salient points of the research findings (**presentation software is permitted and encouraged**). This presentation will be followed by the examination of the candidate by the Thesis Examination Committee. This part of the examination should not normally exceed an additional 60 minutes. The Chair will be responsible for maintaining the relevance of questioning and ensuring that the time limits are not exceeded. The oral examination is open to all members of the University community and invited guests.

Following the question period, the committee will deliberate in private as to whether the candidate has passed the exam. The Chair does not vote. One or fewer dissenting votes from the Thesis Examination Committee constitutes a "pass". Two or more dissenting votes constitutes a "fail" of the oral examination. Should the student fail the oral examination, a second examination will be scheduled within 6 months. Should the student not successfully pass the second oral examination, the student must withdraw from the program. The Thesis Examination Committee's decision(s) must be documented on the [Master's Thesis/Practicum Final Report](#) form and submitted to the FGS.