

Department of Plant Science

Master's Thesis Proposal Guidelines

Master students in the Department of Plant Science must submit a thesis proposal by the first advisory committee meeting or no later than one year from commencement of their program. The proposal must be submitted to the advisory committee one week prior to discussions by the committee. The student presents the proposal to the committee at the first meeting (approx. 15 minutes). Committee members may make suggestions to improve the proposal. The student amends the proposal based upon any corrections or additions as suggested and the committee must approve the corrected proposal within 2 weeks of the first meeting.

The proposal consists of a document of normally 6-10 pages (12pt font and 1.5 line spacing, including figures and/or tables, but not including references) and is typically composed of the following sections:

1. A title of the study project;
2. An introduction explaining the rationale for the project, hypotheses, and the resulting objectives of the study;
3. A background literature review that is relevant to the project;
4. The methods proposed (and potential alternatives) to run the project;
5. Anticipated significance of the work;
6. A timeline table indicating the main milestones in conducting the project;
7. A table to indicate the proposed course work;
8. For certain projects, a backup plan might be presented in the event of unexpected difficulties;
9. References.