

Anthropology MA Program Requirements Explained

Last update: June 10, 2022

There are several steps involved in successful progression toward your MA in Anthropology at Western. These steps, in loose chronological order include:

1. The selection of a supervisory committee
2. Completion of your coursework (5 or 6 credit courses, 4 terms in Research Seminar)
3. Thesis proposal and proposal hearing
4. Research and analysis
5. Presentation of your research results to the Research Seminar
6. Writing the thesis
7. Thesis examination

1. The selection of a supervisory committee: All students are assigned an interim faculty supervisor when they are admitted to our program, but after a term in the program, students should come to a more formal agreement with a faculty member to supervise their thesis. The MA supervisory committee generally includes two faculty members: a supervisor and one additional advisor. Once the supervisory committee is agreed upon, the student and supervisor should complete, sign and submit the **Supervisory Committee form** – this is usually done by the end of January in the first year.

2. Completion of coursework: MA students are required to complete 6 one-term graduate courses for credit, except for students in the Applied Archaeology stream who must complete 5 one-term courses plus a practicum. Full-time students normally complete their coursework during the first two terms in the program; part-time students should aim to complete coursework around the end of their second year or early in their third year. Full-time MA students must also enroll in and attend the non-credit (audit) Research Seminar for 4 terms (usually fall and winter in each of their years in the program); part-time students must enroll in it and attend a minimum of 2 terms.

Practicum for applied archaeology students: please ensure that the **Applied Archaeology Practicum form** is submitted before you begin (approving your practicum plans). At the end of your practicum period, your host organization will be asked to submit a letter to the Graduate Program Assistant or your supervisor confirming your successful completion of the practicum.

3. Thesis proposal and proposal hearing: The proposal is generally drafted during the second term in the program and is discussed at a proposal hearing in April or early May of the first year, to leave the summer free for thesis research. The proposal hearing is a meeting with the student, the supervisory committee, graduate chair, and other faculty members as appropriate. The proposal hearing is a milestone that will be displayed on your transcript.

The MA proposal is a short document, usually 5-7 pages of text with several distinct sections. These sections normally include a statement of the research problem (what you plan to do), placing it in context, your methodology (how you intend to do it), and why this issue is anthropologically significant (the contribution your research will make). A short statement about research ethics should also be included, and a sufficient bibliography to show that you are aware of relevant work that has already been conducted. You should always work closely with your supervisor to develop your research question and research design, as well as consulting on how to best organize your proposal.

The proposal hearing begins with some brief comments (5-10 minutes) from the student about their project, and then involves a discussion among those present of the proposed research.

At the proposal hearing, your supervisor should have the participants complete and sign the **Masters Thesis Proposal Defense form** which must be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant after the hearing.

You should also submit your final proposal (after making any revisions suggested by committee members at your proposal hearing) to the Graduate Program Assistant for your file.

Research Ethics: Remember that students who are undertaking research involving human subjects must obtain **Research Ethics Board** approval before beginning their research. A copy of the approval, or an expectation of when the approval will be granted, must be included with the proposal. Note that there can be a delay of two months or more between submitting your research ethics protocol and receiving Research Ethics Board (REB) approval. Once you receive your REB approval it is essential that you provide a copy to the Graduate Program Assistant for your file.

4. Research and Analysis: MA research is generally undertaken by full-time students over the summer between the first and second years, and in some cases data collection and analysis may continue into the fall term for MA students. Appropriate timing of research for part-time students should be discussed with your thesis supervisor.

5. Research Seminar presentation: All graduate students are expected to present their research results to their peers at the Research Seminar. For MA students, this will occur in the second year for full-time students or the fourth year for part-time students.

6. Writing the thesis: The thesis is generally written over the course of the final year in the program, under the guidance of the thesis supervisor. The maximum allowable length of the MA thesis is 125 pages, although the actual page length is often longer due to the addition of figures and tables in appendices. The bibliography and appendices are not included in the 125-page limit.

SGPS Thesis Regulation guide: <https://grad.uwo.ca/resources/regulations/8.html>

Note: Since March 2020, for reasons of health and safety to the campus community, SGPS has requested that all MA and PhD Thesis Examinations be held remotely until further notice.

SGPS Remote Thesis Examination Guide:

https://grad.uwo.ca/academics/thesis/examination_guide.html

7. Thesis examination (defense): You should be aiming whenever possible to defend your thesis in or before your final term of study. As you begin to plan for your defense, you and your supervisor will need to sign and submit the **Masters Thesis Examination Request form** to the Graduate Program Assistant who will forward it to SGPS. This form should be submitted at least four weeks before the date of defense.

Examination Committee: The MA examination committee includes two department examiners (only one of whom can be a member of your supervisory committee) and one university examiner (from another department in the university). The Graduate Chair or Graduate Assistant will assign a chair for

the examination (usually another department member). The preliminary thesis must be uploaded at least three weeks prior to the defense date, to allow the examiners time to review the thesis.

Examination Procedure: Three days before the scheduled defense, the examiners must return a preliminary report indicating their approval or disapproval of the form and content of the dissertation. Provided that a majority of the examiners indicate approval, then the defense takes place as scheduled. At the beginning of the defense the student makes a short (5-10 minute) oral presentation and then the examiners have the opportunity to question the candidate. If the defense is successful, the examination committee may request minor revisions. Once complete, the final revised thesis is filed with SGPS for final approval. Your program is officially completed once you receive notification from SGPS that your thesis has been published to the **Scholarship@Western** thesis repository.

Funding & TDO Status: Students who defend after their final term of funding must pay fees for the next term, however SGPS does have a pro-rated refund schedule for completions part-way through a term. You may be eligible for TDO (Thesis Defense Only) status if you have met all the submission deadlines but could not schedule your thesis examination during that term. More information on TDO status can be found on the SGPS website: https://grad.uwo.ca/academics/thesis_defense_only_tdo_status.html

The rules governing the thesis examination can be found on the SGPS website:

<https://grad.uwo.ca/resources/regulations/8.html>

Remember to apply to graduate in Student Center!

Important! Maintain close contact with your supervisor!