

MASTER'S THESIS PROPOSAL AND ITS HEARING

September 2016

One of the main components of the Research Methods course is to help students formulate a draft research proposal. However, students should always work closely with their supervisor and advisor when preparing the final draft of their Thesis Proposal.

Master's Thesis Proposal

The Thesis Proposal is a short document (1,500-2,500 words; plus references, tables, figures, and appendices, as appropriate) that normally includes a statement of the research problem (*what* you plan to do), information on the methodology (*how* you intend to do it), and a clear indication of *why* this issue is anthropologically significant. The proposal also usually involves a discussion of existing literature as a way of explaining the contribution the research will make. A short statement about research ethics should also be included, if relevant. We encourage students to include a timeline to help readers assess the feasibility of the research project.

Proposal Hearing

At the end of Term 2 of the program (normally late April or early May), the proposal will be circulated to faculty members from the student's sub-discipline and to other people with relevant expertise, as appropriate. The student will then be convened to a Proposal Hearing session. The hearing is meant to provide the student with an opportunity to explain the aims, methods, and prospective contributions of their research and represents an opportunity to receive feedback from a range of perspectives before they set out to do field or lab work.

The hearing begins with some brief comments by the student and then involves a discussion among those present of the proposed research. At the end of the hearing, the Graduate Chair or delegate will complete the Master's Thesis Proposal Form.

Students are required to make any necessary revisions and submit a clean copy of their Master's Thesis Proposal to the Graduate Program Office, to be placed in their file.

Please remember that students who are undertaking research involving living human subjects must also obtain approval from the Non-Medical Research Ethics Board 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.