

(POLI 697 and 698)

The Thesis Proposal must be approved in writing, first by the Thesis Supervisor ~~before~~ and then by a second reader appointed by the GPD. The Thesis Supervisor must be a full-time faculty member of the Department.

While certification is not required for submission of the proposal, ~~certification~~ ~~must be completed~~ ~~before~~ ~~submission~~. For application details please see <http://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human>

The Thesis itself must be passed by both an Internal Examiner (typically the supervisor) and an External Examiner. The External Examiner is appointed by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

The purpose of an M.A. thesis is to demonstrate that the student can design and execute with competence a major piece of research with some originality to it. The scope of an M.A. thesis should be comparable to a full-length article in a scholarly journal. It should deal with a well-defined problem with sufficient review of previous work. It should attempt to build on existing literature either theoretically or empirically, either by original analysis of existing data sources or by introducing some primary source material.

Students are permitted to expand and adapt a seminar paper into a thesis. Students who plan to revise a seminar paper as a thesis should explicitly outline this in the thesis proposal.

The length might vary with the nature of the topic. A thesis that contains quantitative data analysis might be well developed in 8,000-12,000 words (~30-50 pages), while an institutional or historical study might be longer, up to 15,000 words. Requests to exceed 60 double-spaced pages (excluding bibliography) must be approved by the Graduate Program Director.

The Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office maintains Thesis Guidelines on their website. All students in the M.A. thesis program should familiarize themselves with the procedures for preparing and submitting the thesis. The latest Thesis Guidelines are here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/thesis-guidelines> .

The thesis proposal must outline the problem to be studied and the mode of investigation. The proposal should not be more than 15 double-spaced typed pages, excluding the bibliography. To

- generalizations to be tested or explored.
- b. The status of earlier and current scholarship on the subject; The proposed contribution of the thesis to knowledge.
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- a. Concepts, approaches, and conceptual frameworks
  - b. Methods – e.g., case selection, surveys, interviewing, statistical methods, etc.

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1) Before submission, the thesis supervisor must approve the proposal. The student should give the supervisor a complete draft of the proposal far enough in advance for the supervisor to provide comments and for the student to revise the proposal based on those comments.

2) Once the supervisor approves the proposal, the student submit a PDF version to the Graduate Coordinator by email ([graduate.polisci@mcgill.ca](mailto:graduate.polisci@mcgill.ca)).

3) The Graduate Coordinator will contact the thesis supervisor to confirm approval and to solicit nomination of two potential readers for the proposal. Readers are typically tenure-track faculty or faculty lecturers in the subfield. Supervisors may, however, nominate readers outside the Department, if the subject matter of the thesis warrants it.

4) The Graduate Program Director appoints a two-member Thesis Committee to review the proposal. This Thesis Committee normally consists of the supervisor, plus a second reader.

5) The Graduate Coordinator distributes the proposal to the Committee for comments and the GPD relays to the student and supervisor any suggestions the Committee offers concerning the proposed research. On the Committee's recommendation, the GPD may ask the student to revise the proposal before approval.

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Students submit their thesis on MyThesis, McGill's thesis examination management system. Please note that GPS distinguishes between "Initial Thesis" and "Final Thesis."

The initial thesis is the version that is reviewed and marked by the external examiner. The final thesis

is the revised version that will be deposited in [eScholarship@McGill](https://www.mcgill.ca/eScholarship@McGill), the digital repository, which collects, preserves, and showcases the publications, scholarly works, and theses of McGill University faculty members, researchers, and students.

Students are required to flag their intent to submit at least 6 to 8 weeks prior to the Initial Thesis submission. See the timeline below for details.

MyThesis submission steps: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/thesis-guidelines/initial-submission>  
FAQs: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/thesis-guidelines/initial-submission/mythesis-faq>





