

M.S. in Geology Thesis Track Guidelines

1) General guidelines for the M.S. thesis track

Master's Thesis (MS) research projects are expected to be independent and original research. The student (in concert with the advisor) will develop the project, write a comprehensive and complete proposal, have the proposal approved by the Graduate Committee, carry the project to completion and write a thesis with only limited assistance from faculty members. The thesis project should involve new work and advance the current state of science. The project should be of sufficient size and scope to allow completion of a thorough project within a reasonable amount of time.

The final written proposal and MS thesis track petition form must be signed by the thesis advisor and two additional faculty members (2nd and 3rd readers on the thesis committee) and submitted in PDF format to the Graduate Coordinator. Final approval for the Master's thesis track will be given by the Graduate Committee. It is strongly advised that students obtain all approvals for the Master's thesis track by the end of the first year of coursework. This requires advanced planning. External resources required for the thesis project must also be documented in the thesis proposal. Some projects may require permissions or land access, use of specific equipment or collaboration with other departments.

No faculty member is required to act as your thesis advisor or reader, and each faculty reader may require edits to the thesis proposal.

2) Submitting an M.S. thesis proposal

The Project Proposal should be developed in collaboration with the thesis advisor and produces a comprehensive document that includes the following information:

- **Purpose or project description** - Outline the detailed objectives of the study and explain why these are necessary to address the research question(s). State the nature of the problem or study to be undertaken. Why is the project necessary or important?
- **Background** - Describe the current state of scientific knowledge about this issue. This should include citations of important work in the field.
- **Study area where applicable** - Describe the geologic, hydrologic and/or physiographic setting for the proposed project. Include a location map if appropriate.
- **Equipment and methods** - Describe the techniques or methodologies that will be used to generate and analyze the data necessary to study the problem. What data will be collected and how will these data lead to a better understanding of

the issues? If physical samples are necessary how will they be collected and processed?

- **Timetable for completion of the project** - Outline a schedule of activities (with a timeline) that shows when data will be collected, analyzed and assembled into a thesis. Include realistic estimates of field and lab time and the time it will take to write the final thesis. Propose a budget and possible funding sources.
- **References** – Include a list of references that were used in the proposal. Use a reference formatting style that is appropriate to the discipline.
- **Thesis advisor** - This faculty member will determine (in consultation with the student) how often the student and advisor will meet, deadlines for preliminary reports or phases of the project will be required, and when the project (or phases of the project) will be completed. Agreed-upon deadlines should be written into the thesis proposal.
- **Names of 2 additional faculty readers.**

3) Approval of the thesis proposal

Upon completion of the M.S. thesis proposal (including signatures from the thesis advisor and committee readers), the thesis proposal will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee. If the thesis proposal is accepted by the Graduate Committee the student will be approved for the thesis option in the M.S. program.

Checklist and Signature Page for Geology 500 Petition for Master's Thesis Research Project

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE # _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

STUDENT ID # _____

SEMESTER _____ YEAR _____

Checklist for the final copy of the proposal:

- ✓ The project has the approval of a thesis advisor, and 2nd and 3rd readers.
- ✓ The proposal has a cover page that states the title of the project, student proposing the project, committee members and date submitted.
- ✓ Signature pages are included with the thesis proposal.
- ✓ The proposal clearly states the intent of the project
- ✓ The proposal describes the importance of previous work .The proposal lists the equipment and supplies necessary for the project.
- ✓ Appropriate permissions for equipment, supplies, land access or instrumentation have been obtained.
- ✓ The proposal clearly describes the methods and procedures required for the project.
- ✓ The proposal establishes dates for submission of preliminary work and the final thesis.
- ✓ The proposal is clearly and concisely written, well organized, free of spelling and grammatical errors and double-spaced typed.
- ✓ References are properly cited according to the format specified by the thesis advisor.
- ✓ The proposal and signed form have been converted into PDF format and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.

The above has been fully accomplished to the best of my knowledge and ability:

Student's Signature

Date

**Proposal Signature Page for Geology 500
Petition for Master's Thesis Research Project**

Title of the project:

I have read the proposal and agree that the above has been fully accomplished:

Signature of Thesis Advisor

Date

Signature of Second Reader

Date

Signature of Third Reader

Date