

APPENDIX 3: M.A. THESIS REQUIREMENTS

(POLI 697 and 698)

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

All M.A. thesis research involving human subjects must receive ethics certification from McGill's REB-1. While certification is not required for submission of the proposal, *certification must be received before any research may be conducted.* 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.

1. M.A. THESIS GUIDELINES (POLI 698)

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>.

2. M.A. THESIS PROPOSAL FORMAT

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 facilitate evaluation of thesis proposals, students are normally expected to follow the format given below:

I. Introduction

- a. The problem or topic to be investigated; The precise focus of the study; The relationships or

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.

II. Methodology

- a. Concepts, approaches, and conceptual frameworks
- b. Methods – e.g., case selection, surveys, interviewing, statistical methods, etc.

III. Plan of work; accessibility of resources; probable time; travel.

IV. Tentative outline of the proposed thesis

V. Brief bibliography

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.

3. M.A. THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES (POLI 697)

Proposal Submission and Evaluation Procedures:

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).

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.

4. THESIS SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

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

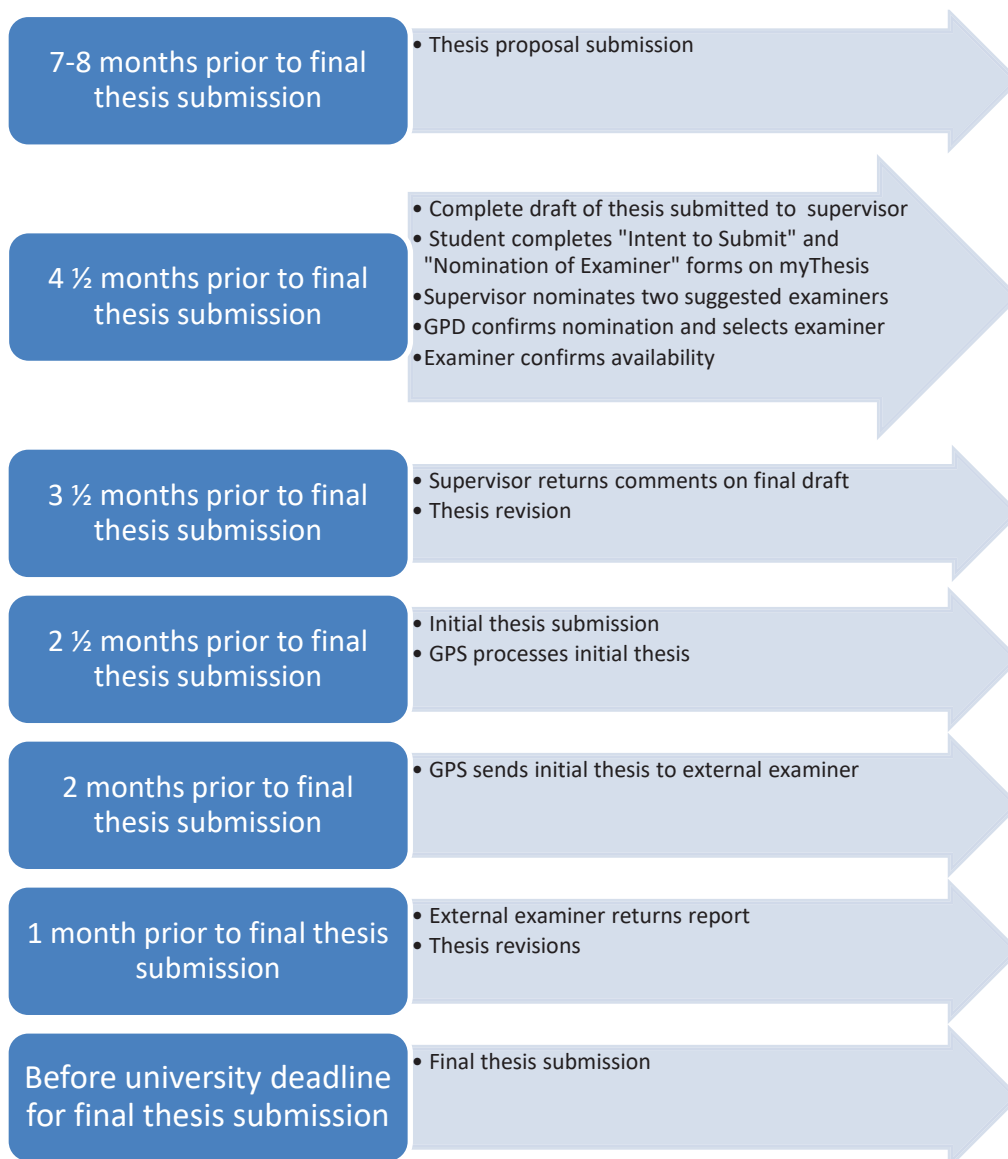
is the revised version that will be deposited in [eScholarship@McGill](https://www.mcgill.ca/eScholarship@McGill), the digital repository, which collects, preserves, and showcases the publications, scholarly works, and theses of McGill University faculty members, researchers, and students.

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>

5. TIMELINE FOR M.A. THESIS PROPOSAL AND THESIS SUBMISSION, 2022-2023

Recommended timeline for MA thesis proposal and thesis submission



Deadlines: There are 3 University deadlines for final thesis submission:

Apr 15: June graduation

Aug 15: October graduation

Dec 15: February graduation

*Please submit your initial thesis well in advance of the final electronic thesis deadline. External examiners are given 4 weeks to grade the initial thesis, but delays sometimes occur.

5. REGISTRATION STATUS

Students who submit their initial and final theses in the same term will have the registration status of "Additional Session" for that term. Students who submit their initial theses and their final theses in separate terms will have the registration status of "Additional Session" for the first term and "Thesis Evaluation" for the second term.

Tuition fees differ by registration status. See:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/student-accounts/tuition-charges/fallwinter-term-tuition-and-fees/graduate-fees>

The deadline for initial submission will affect students' enrolment status and tuition, but not affect the final submission time and graduation. The final submission deadline will directly affect the time of graduation.

Initial and Final Thesis Submission in different terms					
Thesis Proposal Submission	Initial Thesis Submission	Final Thesis Submission	Additional Session	Thesis Evaluation	Graduation
5 months prior to initial thesis submission	Apr 16 – Aug 15	Aug 16 – Dec 15	Summer	Fall	February
5 months prior to initial thesis submission	Aug 16 – Dec 15	Dec 16 – Apr 15	Fall	Winter	June
5 months prior to initial thesis submission	Dec 16 – Apr 15	Apr 16 – Aug 15	Winter	Summer	October

Initial and Final Thesis Submission in the same term					
Thesis Proposal Submission	Initial Thesis Submission	Final Thesis Submission	Additional Session	Thesis Evaluation	Graduation
5 months prior to initial thesis submission	Apr 16 – Aug 15	Apr 16 – Aug 15	Summer	None	October
5 months prior to initial thesis submission	Aug 16 – Dec 15	Aug 16 – Dec 15	Fall	None	February
5 months prior to initial thesis submission	Dec 16 – Apr 15	Dec 16 – Apr 15	Winter	None	June

Should the deadline date fall on a weekend or a holiday, the effective deadline date will be the previous working day.

For example, students planning to graduate in October have two options:

1. Initial and Final Thesis Submission in different terms: students submit the initial thesis in Winter by April 15, submit final thesis in Summer by August 15, and graduate in Summer (October convocation). They will be registered as “additional session” for the Winter term, and “thesis evaluation” for the Summer term.
2. Initial and Final Thesis Submission in the same term: student submit their initial thesis in early Summer, submit final thesis in late Summer by August 15, and graduate in Summer (October convocation). They will be registered as “additional session” for the Summer term.

Students should always register for the term following their planned final thesis deadline (in case of a failure or missed final thesis deadline).