

## THESIS PROPOSALS (from the graduate handbook)

### **Guidelines for the written proposal:**

A written thesis proposal must be submitted to the supervisory committee, and accepted, before the oral presentation. Generally, the supervisory committee meets with the student to discuss the written proposal, and may require revisions prior to accepting it. If major revisions are required, the committee must indicate where the problems lie and what kinds of changes are necessary. If the committee cannot reach agreement about the suitability of the proposal, the student, together with the supervisor or the graduate coordinator, may choose a fourth person to evaluate the proposal. This person provides a written evaluation without consulting the committee. A final decision on the suitability of the proposal is then made by the committee and the fourth person. The proposal is normally submitted before April 15 of the third year, but in any case must be approved by June 15 of that year. A student may be not allowed to continue in the program if an acceptable proposal is not received.

The written proposal should normally be between 20 and 50 pages long. It should contain:

- a clear statement of the major problem to be investigated in the thesis
- an outline of the major areas to be investigated, including discussion of the relation between each topic and the overall problem
- a review of the appropriate literature
- evidence of sufficient relevant prior work to demonstrate the student's readiness to undertake the proposed research (e.g., a draft of a possible chapter, or a relevant course paper, generals paper, or publication)

It is recognized that the thesis will develop from the proposal, and that it may ultimately differ significantly from the specific content of the proposal. Copies of the proposals are not made publicly available.

### **Guidelines for the oral proposal:**

The oral thesis proposal should be presented by April 15 of the third year, on a date to be arranged with the graduate coordinator. The presentation is open to all members of the department; faculty and PhD students are expected to attend.

The presentation should include:

- a clear statement of the topic of research interest
- a synthesis of the major relevant literature, and how the topic relates to it
- an indication of the major areas of research involved in the dissertation
- a sense of the direction the student plans to take in carrying out the research

If the presentation does not meet these criteria, as determined by the faculty present, the student meets with the supervisor, and makes a second oral presentation no more than three months after the first, and in any case no later than August 15 of the third year. If the second presentation is also found to be unacceptable, the student will not be permitted to continue in the program.