

**SPROTT SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
CARLETON UNIVERSITY**

MSc Research (Thesis) Proposal Guidelines

As stated in the Graduate Calendar ([12.2 Master's Thesis](#)):

The master's thesis should exhibit a competence in the research process by applying an existing body of knowledge in the critical analysis of a new question or of a specific problem or issue in a new setting. On the basis of that conceptual understanding and methodological competence, it should demonstrate at least one of the following:

1. the development and support of a sustained argument in written form
2. originality in the application of knowledge

Format

The length of the proposal will vary but students should be expected to write between 3-5 pages (single spaced), not including the title page, list of references, and appendices. Use Times New Roman, 12 point size font (or equivalent).

The Research Proposal is submitted before the student starts working on the thesis and needs to be approved by the thesis committee. The student will submit a written proposal including the rationale and outline of the topic to be covered in the thesis with indication of the scope of the literature to be reviewed. The proposal should include a background rationale, hypothesis/research questions, proposed methodology and data analysis plan. The components of a thesis proposal may include:

Section	Components
Abstract	a synopsis providing the essential topics and conclusions of the thesis
Introduction	overview of the issue, research objectives, scope, research question(s)
Background to the research / literature review and/or theory	review of relevant literature
Research model / hypothesis / core concept definitions	core concept / research model, propositions / hypothesis / constructs and measurements
Methodology	description of methods to be used; specifics of methods, samples, etc.; data collection and data analysis
Data analysis and results	data analysis, results, findings
Research contributions and discussion	theoretical and managerial contributions, limitations, future research
Chapter outline	anticipated chapter titles, subtitles, and/or themes
Timeline	anticipated research, analysis, and writing activities, by month; anticipated completion and defense dates
References	a bibliography that includes both sources cited in the proposal, and other sources relevant to the research

Registration and Timing

There is no course associated with the MSc Research (Thesis) Proposal. At the beginning of the Summer term (Year 1), students are required to register in BUSI 5989 (MSc Thesis). The thesis proposal should normally be completed by the end of the same term. If there are extenuating circumstances preventing the completion of the proposal in the Summer term, please contact the MSc Program Office.

Thesis Committee Approval

Each student will have a supervisor who will serve as a mentor and guide for their research program and thesis. The supervisor will work with the student to establish a thesis committee. The thesis committee will have the following composition: the supervisor and two additional faculty members internal to or external to the Sprott School of Business, Carleton University. The additional faculty members will be chosen on the basis of their ability to contribute to the development and execution of the student's thesis research. It is recommended that one of the two additional members is from the same functional area as that of the student's supervisor. As soon as the committee is formed, the supervisor should complete and submit the **Committee Approval Form** (page 4) to the MSc Program Office by email or hard copy.

The student should submit the written research proposal to their thesis committee by August 1st. The thesis committee will meet to evaluate the student's written research proposal. The committee members will review this document and make recommendations concerning its acceptance or amendments to the proposal. Should the student fail to obtain permission from the thesis committee to proceed with the research, the student may be granted the option to re-submit the proposal.

MSc Research (Thesis) Proposal Approval

The recommendation from the thesis committee to the MSc Program Director must be submitted by August 31st by completing the **MSc Research Proposal Examination Approval Form** (page 5). The Research Proposal should be submitted to the MSc Program Office with the Proposal Approval Form (by email or hard copy). Once approval has been given, the student may begin working on the thesis.

Research Ethics

All research involving human participants that is associated with a faculty member (including Adjunct Faculty) or students at Carleton University must be cleared by the appropriate Research Ethics Board. This includes research conducted at Carleton, research conducted off campus (e.g., businesses, hospitals, prisons, schools), research approved by another academic institution, and may include archival research. To be clear, all research conducted with human participants requires ethics approval with the exception of the use of anonymous (not anonymized) secondary data.

State whether your proposed research will require an ethics review, briefly explaining why or why not. If it will require an ethics review, also briefly explain:

- a) the anticipated risks and benefits of the proposed research for the research participants;
- b) how you are planning to recruit the participants and obtain their informed consent;

- c) whether you are anticipating difficulty in obtaining research ethics clearance because of any specific circumstances (e.g., vulnerable population, nature of the participant relationship to researcher, conflict of interest). If so, please explain how you are planning to address this anticipated difficulty in your research ethics application.

Note. Research that require ethics review will have to be submitted to the university's [Research Ethics Board CUREB-A](#).

MSc RESEARCH PROPOSAL COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Student Email: _____

Proposed Thesis Committee:

Supervisor: _____

Co-Supervisor (if applicable): _____

Committee Member: _____

Department and/or functional area: _____

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Approved by MSc Program Director: _____

Date: _____