MA Thesis Proposal Guidelines

The MA Thesis Proposal is a formal written document that provides both the student and their committee members with a concise description of the proposed research, anthropological questions addressed, a statement that describes the significance of the study, and a detailed synthesis of the anthropological literature related to their proposed study.

Administrative Paperwork Requirements
1. At the beginning of the proposal semester (no later than four weeks into the semester), the student will complete the upper portion of the Comprehensive Exam Request/Approval form, available in the department office or from the MA GAR. Each committee member must sign by her/his name. Once completed, the student will turn in the form for department and college approval and signatures. The MA GAR will keep the approved form until the student’s thesis proposal is approved.

2. Once the thesis proposal is approved, the student will contact the MA GAR to get the Comprehensive Exam Request/Approval form. The student will complete the bottom portion of the form, which will include signatures of all committee members. Once the student has completed the bottom portion of the form, the student will return the completed form to the MA GAR for department and college approval and storage in the student’s file.

3. The student’s advisor will send the GAR a memo detailing the results of the committee’s assessment of the proposal. The memo should include each member’s grade for the proposal.

Enrollment Requirements
The student must be enrolled in the semester s/he successfully completes the proposal. If the student is not enrolled in coursework, s/he should be enrolled in ANT 6961: Comprehensive Examination (1 hr).

Deadlines
There are two required submission deadlines for the MA Thesis Proposal: an initial draft submission and a final draft submission. The initial draft must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the final draft. Actual dates vary by semester:

**Fall**
- Initial draft: November 1
- Final draft: December 1

**Spring**
- Initial draft: April 1
- Final draft: May 1

The Comprehensive Examination/Proposal Committee
A. The committee is responsible for working with the student while she/he is writing the MA Proposal draft. Additionally, the committee is responsible for rating the student’s performance on the proposal. To ensure continuity in expectations and mentoring, it is recommended that the
constitution of a student’s comprehensive examination and Master's thesis committees be the same.

B. Members of the committee will be selected by the student in consultation with her/his advisor.

C. The committee will consist of no fewer than 3 individuals. All committee members must hold terminal graduate degrees in their respective disciplines. The majority of committee members, including the chair, must hold Ph.D.'s in anthropology. Additional members may be drawn from anthropology or related disciplines. The majority of committee members, including the chair, must be full-time teaching faculty in the anthropology program at UTSA. All committee members must be approved as members of UTSA's graduate faculty (for more information see http://graduateschool.utsa.edu.php5-21.dfw1-1.websitetestlink.com/faculty-staff/special-and-adjoint-members-of-the-graduate-faculty/)

D. The committee should be constituted prior to beginning the proposal draft, as each committee member should provide feedback during the writing process.

Committee Involvement
It is expected that the student will work closely with all committee members in the development of the thesis proposal. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule meetings with committee members and to ensure all committee members are involved in the development of the thesis proposal. The student should begin conversations with his/her advisor no later than one semester before the proposal semester, in order to review expectations for the proposal writing and content and also to draft a timeline for writing, review by committee members, revisions, additional committee member review, and final revisions.

MA Proposal Requirements
The MA thesis proposal must be submitted to their committee at least four weeks prior to the final thesis proposal due date (May 1st for Spring semester or December 1st for Fall semester).

Length. The thesis proposal should be approximately 15-30 double spaced pages, excluding references and figures.

Content. The MA thesis proposal will provide a formal description of the proposed study. It will be typically in the format of a grant proposal. It should include a problem statement, review of pertinent literature, statement of objectives, discussion of methods, statement of significance, and an optional proposed budget. In addition, the proposal should include a timeline for completion of the thesis. Additional or specific form and content of the MA thesis proposal will be negotiated with the student’s advisor in coordination with the MA Thesis Committee.

Evaluation of the Proposal
A. All committee members will evaluate the proposal and report their evaluation to the committee chair as expeditiously as possible.
B. Students may receive a pass, pass with revisions, or fail on the proposal. The majority decision must be a pass (or pass with revisions) in order for the proposal to be approved. If the student receives a majority decision of a pass with revisions, a revised proposal must be submitted within four weeks to the chair of the committee for final approval.

C. The committee chair is responsible for communicating the results of the evaluation to the student within a month of the submission of the formal proposal document. The chair also will report the outcome to the GAR and to all committee members.

D. Students will progress to the Master's thesis stage after their proposal is approved. Students may enroll in MA thesis hours after approval of the proposal.

*If the Proposal is Not Approved*
If the MA thesis proposal is not approved, the student will be placed on academic probation. The student has one semester, with the deadlines noted above, to revise the MA thesis proposal and receive approval by the committee. If the student does not receive approval within that semester, the student will be dismissed from the program.