

**Geography Masters Research Proposal – Tips
(Notes from the Feb 13, 2015 Workshop)**

General

- Research proposal is 2500 – 4000 words, approximately 10 pages double spaced
- Discuss what your supervisor’s expectations may be in advance
- The proposal is reviewed and approved by a faculty supervisor. Supervisor may ask for revisions prior to approving. It may take a few weeks for supervisor’s approval. Once approved, the student can begin with ethics review, research, etc. There is no submission to the graduate office for review.
- Proposal must include an outline of the topic/question, literature review, review of methodology and timeline for completion (ethics, data collection, analysis, writing, defense)
- Your research may change after the proposal is approved and research has begun. Changes should be discussed regularly with your supervisor. Also be aware that some changes may require ethics revision/modification.
- Consult with your supervisor throughout the proposal writing and research stages
- When you have submitted your proposal it may also be useful to discuss a thesis committee with your supervisor – who should be on it and how you might consult with them throughout the research and writing stages. The student is responsible for approaching faculty members and confirming their participation on the committee.

Outline – Intro

- What is the question and why is it relevant?
- Outline research questions (as a narrative, point form, etc. Try to narrow broader questions into smaller questions)

Literature Review

- Be comprehensive, define key terms, concepts, theories
- Identify gaps
- “Build on” rather than “tear down” existing literature
- May be helpful to organize thematically or in sections, rather than as a list

Methodology

- Explain why you are using a particular method – what kinds of questions will this method answer?
- Explain how you will use this method, e.g. interviews – how will they be conducted and the format of the questionnaires.

- Explain how you will analyze the data
- A detailed methodology will help to determine timelines

Appendices

- Might be useful – e.g. questionnaires, list of chapters, interview guides

Timeline

- If ethics review is required, can take about a month – can't work with human subjects until approved
- Keep in mind that access to archival materials may be restricted and may take a long time to get access depending on the type of material – be sure to research the requirements ahead of time
- Talk to your supervisor about realistic timeline
- If you are planning to complete by end of academic year, a draft thesis/MRP should be done by end of July, a final thesis to the committee by end of August and a defense by mid-Sept
- Timeline can be formatted as a table, narrative – discuss with your supervisor