

The Feminist Institute of Social Transformation's MA in Women's and Gender Studies Handbook Carleton University

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(All efforts have been made to ensure the information provided is accurate, including links).

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About this MA Handbook

This handbook is meant to be a supplementary guide and resource. Please be advised that you should always consult the official Graduate Calendar, <http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/>, for important dates and deadlines as set by the university.

You have two key points of contact for program expectations, responsibilities, decisions, and issues. First, the Undergraduate and Graduate Advisor (UGA), is a faculty member located in the Institute who serves a three-year term in this administrative position. Second, the FIST Administrator - Lana Keon – can answer questions regarding registration, application submission, funding, etc. Finally, the Director and faculty in FIST are always ready to help you as you navigate your studies.

This handbook is divided in two parts. Part I focuses on information related to institutional support (departmental, faculty, and campus wide) including funding and training information. Part II focuses on the academic program, roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students, and important dates and deadlines related to the program.

PART I: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES AND WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Important Websites

There are several websites related to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, Library, and CUPE 4600 that you should familiarize yourself with:

Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/>

Graduate Calendar

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/>

Library and grad students

<https://library.carleton.ca/services/services-graduate-students>

The library resource person for Women's and Gender Studies is Martha Attridge Bufton. The Carleton Library has many resources available to students. These include unlimited interlibrary loans through the "Racer" program, access to academic journals, off-campus access to the library catalogue, including online journals, access and borrowing privileges at the University of Ottawa, laptop loans and wireless connection anywhere in the library and pay printers and photocopiers. Students also have access to the University of Ottawa library system. Please visit their website for more information. Finally, students should also familiarize themselves with the resources available via Library and Archives Canada.

CUPE 4600

<http://www.cupe4600.ca/>

Carleton University is a unionized workplace. CUPE 4600 represents teaching assistants (TAs), research assistants (RAs) (who are internally funded) and contract instructors (CIs- all roles critical for the functioning of the university). It is *your responsibility* to read your collective agreement and to familiarize yourself with key articles regarding workload, salaries, and grievances. Do not expect the professor connected to your teaching assignment (or research assistantship if funded through Carleton) to know the details of your collective agreement. In terms of your TAs, all teaching assistants will be asked to accept the statement of duties document prepared with the professor outlining the tasks and time commitment for the assigned course. *This is NOT a contract.* The *ONLY* legally binding contact you have as a teaching assistant is your collective agreement. While this is not required of TAs, we recommend highly that you track your hours to ensure that you are able to complete the tasks assigned to you in the time agreed upon when you accepted the Statement of Duties (online – it will come to your email). If you are unable to mark assignments or prepare for class in the time allotted and this is reflected through your own record of working hours, please communicate this *as soon as possible* with the faculty member for whom

you are working. 'Overwork' situations are serious and grievable. Faculty members appreciate open and honest communication well in advance of a potential issue such as overwork. While the outcome of such interactions will depend on the specific situation, faculty member, etc. and cannot be predicted, this is a good practice. Track hours and communicate any issues openly and as soon as they arise.

Union Steward

<https://cupe4600.ca/become-a-union-steward/>

CUPE 4600 union stewards are responsible for attending the Stewards' Council of CUPE 4600 on behalf of FIST. Consider running for this position if it is vacant.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA)

<http://gsacarleton.ca/>

The Graduate Student Association is your main source of representation, advocacy and support services on campus. The GSA represents the collective interests and the general welfare of the graduate students at Carleton University. Its primary goals are to establish and maintain a barrier free academic and social environment in which all students can thrive. It acts as a line of communication between the graduate student community and the administration. It also strives to support the professional development of its members in addition to their emotional and financial wellbeing. Finally, they are a centre of political, intellectual and social contact for graduate students.

International Student Services Office

<https://carleton.ca/isso/>

The International Student Services Office (ISSO) offers services and programs that contribute to international experiences for all Carleton University students. Please visit this site for information about working on campus, information about immigration services, social events/organizations, etc.

Paul Menton Centre

<https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

Paul Menton Centre provides a multitude of services for disabled students including advocacy and accommodations.

Awards/Scholarships/Funding

There are several avenues to access funding. The following are some suggestions.

Internal Donor awards

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/awards-and-funding/internal-awards/>

These awards or scholarships are based on donorships. You must apply via Carleton Central. We encourage you to research these awards and scholarships since the application process is not onerous.

External Scholarships

There are two main categories of scholarships available to graduate students at the provincial (Ontario Graduate Scholarship-OGS) and federal level (Social Sciences and Humanities Scholarship-SSHRC) but these are certainly not the only external funding at your disposal. Please note that OGS domestic and international students are eligible to apply but only domestic students can apply for SSHRC.

Information about SSHRC's scholarship programs can be found at:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/sshrc/>

Information about Ontario Graduate Scholarships can be found at:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/ogs/>

As mentioned, there are variety of other external awards and scholarships available. In addition to the information provided above please also consider the Terms & Conditions booklet at <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/newgrad-students/terms/>

GSA awards/bursaries and other sources of funding

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/2015/where-to-find-funding/>

<https://gsacarleton.ca/emergency-grant/>

Your Graduate Student Association supports you in a variety of ways including helping you to find funding. The GSA also offers travel grants for those students interested in presenting at conferences and family leave grants for students with family responsibilities. Here are some links you should visit

CUPE 4600 and funding advances/loans

<https://cupe4600.ca/about-us/unit-1/>

Your union is also a source of financial support. There are two main sources of financial support but do visit their website for other possibilities. TA Advance (open to all graduate TAs with a regular position at 130 hours per term of up to \$750.00 in advance). For more information go to the link provided above.

Emergency Loan (applicants may be awarded an emergency loan of up to \$700). For more information go to this page, about half way down: <https://cupe4600.ca/about-us/unit-1/>

Workshops about Professional, Writing, and Teaching Training

Graduate Studies offers graduate students professional development opportunities geared to both academic skill building and employability outside of the academy.

Teaching Workshops

<https://carleton.ca/tls/teaching-assistants/training/>

Graduate students offered a Teaching Assistant must complete mandatory compliance training as stipulated under the Collective Agreement between CUPE 4600 (Unit 1) and Carleton University. As such, students should set some time aside to complete several online modules, which can all be found online through Carleton Central under “Online Courses”:

Students also have access to voluntary pedagogical training, which offers them an opportunity to build their pedagogical skills and learn how to manage the job requirements.

Writing Workshops

<https://carleton.ca/gradpd/writing-support/>

<https://carleton.ca/gradpd/professional-writing-modules/>

Enrichment Mini-Course Program (EMCP)

<http://carleton.ca/emcp/>

Each year, Carleton University offers a week-long series of mini-courses for students in grades 8-11 (Ontario) and Sec. 2-5 (Québec).

For professional development to assist your graduate work within the academy and to ready you for life after grad school, please visit: <https://carleton.ca/gradpd/>

Student Office Space/Mail/Keys

Graduate students in the Institute will have access to a desk/cubicle located in a shared room on the 14th floor of Dunton Tower. This shared space also serves as a lounging area. Students also have access to the seminar/board room (located across from the shared room) when it is not occupied or reserved for events (i.e., class in session, defences, talks, etc.). Each graduate student will be assigned a mailbox (also located in this shared space). The Institute's Administrator will assign you keys to the shared space.

All graduate students will also have access to the kitchen on the 14th. Students should note the complimentary food basket in the kitchen, which contains non-perishable food items and is replenished every few weeks. Enjoy!

PART II: COURSEWORK/MRE/THESIS STREAMS IN WGST

Outline of the Streams: Coursework, Major Research Essay (MRE), and Thesis

Students have three options for completing the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Women's and Gender Studies. Please be advised that if you have chosen to specialize in [African Studies](#), [Latin American and Caribbean Studies](#), or [Accessibility](#), you must complete the requirements attached to these specializations as specified in the [university calendar](#).

Option 1: The Coursework: Students who choose this option must complete 5.0 credits at the 5000 level (but can also take up to 1.0 credits at the 4000 level) or 10 courses. This usually translates into two to three courses of 0.5 credits each semester (not including the spring/summer terms).

Option 2: Major Research Essay (MRE): Students who select this option must complete 4.0 credits at the 5000 level, write a 60-page MRE (1.0 credit), and have an A- or higher in all MA courses. The requirements for the MRE are listed further down.

Option 3: Thesis: Students who select this option must complete 3.0 courses, write a 90-page thesis (2.0 credit), and have an A- or higher in all MA courses. The requirements of the Thesis are listed further down.

Students are automatically registered for the coursework stream at the start of the program. Students looking to pursue a MRE or Thesis must apply at the end of their first year of study (see applicable forms: www.carleton.ca/fist/handbooks-forms). Students who choose a MRE or Thesis stream but decide to switch into a Coursework stream should consult with the UGA and/or the Institute Administrator.

Coursework Description:

Coursework requires students to take ten courses from the comprehensive offerings available to them from our department and across the university. In addition to the required courses (WGST 5900, Graduate Program Seminar; WGST 5906, Feminist Theory; and WGST 5907, Researching Women's and Gender Issues), students are free to choose an additional seven courses from those listed in the Graduate Calendar: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/gradprograms/womensandgenderstudies/>. Other courses may be selected, but students should confirm eligibility with the UGA before registering.

If students select to take a course not on the approved list of graduate courses indicated in the Graduate Calendar they must complete the [MA Course Permission Form](#). Similarly, students who select to do a Directed Reading course (WGST 5910 or WGST 5911) with a faculty member, must complete the [MA Directed Reading Application](#)

Form. Both forms must be submitted it to the UGA and Institute Administrator. Students should note that the UGA has to approval their requests to take courses outside those listed in the Graduate Calendar. Students will receive an email informing them of the Advisor's decision.

Major Research Essay Description:

A research essay assesses and evaluates existing scholarship meaning that it is *primarily* a critical reflection on the scholarly, artistic, and/or activist work on a clearly specified topic (e.g., queer archives, trans healthcare, decolonizing reproductive justice). The research essay can have a wider scope than a thesis because it can be more speculative and agenda-setting. Its role is to provide illustrative evidence, rather than definitive, well-documented answers. The outcome of a research essay could be a well-grounded set of new research questions or the initial explanation and preliminary development of a working argument. Formal decision on applications for this option/stream is made by the end of April to allow you to begin the work in the summer.

We encourage our graduate students to pursue and engage with different forms of knowledge production. If you wish to submit an MRE that is **research creation oriented** (i.e., research combining creative and academic research practices through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation), please discuss this option with the UGA and your chosen supervisor. Keep in mind that faculty who are trained in humanities may have more experience or expertise to guide you through this process should you choose to embark on a research creation essay.

The MOST IMPORTANT thing to remember is that an MRE is not supposed to be original work. You are not being asked, at this level, to conduct research that will dismantle a field or usurp its relevance (☺). You are expected to write about your research by taking a provocative and generative approach to give insight into a concept, social practice, community, etc.

Students wishing to write a Major Research Essay (MRE) must apply to the Institute's Graduate Committee for approval. To apply, email the UGA and Institute Administrator the following in one PDF document. Please put "MRE Application" in the subject line. Plenty of guidance will be provided throughout your first year of study.

1. A short proposal (approximately 10 typewritten double-spaced pages) indicating a tentative title, the area of study and the essay's contribution to this area. The proposal should reflect a critical engagement with the literature;
2. A work plan which **must** include a timeline for completion;
3. A bibliography;
4. A sample of your written work: specifically, an ungraded version of previously submitted coursework;
5. [MA MRE/Thesis Application Form](#) and
6. [MA MRE/Thesis Advisory Committee Form](#).

Students, with their supervisors, will also have to complete the [MA MRE Second Reader Approval Form](#) when that faculty member has been selected and agreed to participate. This form must be sent to the UGA and the Institute Administrator.

Please note: Students pursuing the MRE option must have earned an **A- or higher** for all grades in the MA program. If you have any questions about these requirements, please speak to the UGA.

Thesis Description:

The overall scope of a thesis is a purposeful and narrow focus on a specific topic or argument supported by theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and evidence-standards recognized by our interdisciplinary fields (i.e., women's and gender studies, sexuality studies, critical disability studies, and critical race studies). Students typically choose the thesis option during the *Winter term* of their first year in the program (formal decision for this option/stream is made by second week of April as part of your proposal submission). While completing the first semester, students can start to develop ideas and do preliminary work as part of their courses (e.g. literature reviews). By the end of your first year, you will have had the opportunity to make a connection with a potential supervisor, completed the required WGST course work, and will feel inspired to take up a more substantive piece of writing in an area that interests you most.

Critical programs eschew one form of scholarship and draw on multiple practices of knowledge creation and circulation; therefore, we support new initiatives and interventions from our graduate students into existing discussions. If you wish to submit a thesis that is **research creation oriented** (that is, research that combines creative and academic research practices through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation), please do not hesitate to discuss this option with the UG and your chosen supervisor(s).

The MOST IMPORTANT thing to remember is that a thesis is not supposed to be original work. You are not being asked, at this level, to conduct research that will dismantle a field or usurp its relevance (☺). You are expected to write about your research from a provocative and generative approach that will help give insight into a concept, social practice, community, etc.

Students should consult this link for templates regarding the thesis title page, copyright language, formatting instructions, etc: <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/resources-page/thesis-requirements/thesis-forms-templates-policies/>

Students wishing to do a Thesis must apply to the Institute's Graduate Committee for approval. To apply, email the UGA and Institute Administrator the following in one PDF document. Please put "Thesis Application" in the subject line.

1. A proposal indicating (approximately 10 typewritten double-spaced pages) a tentative title, the area of study and the contribution of the essay to this area. The proposal should reflect a critical engagement with the literature;
2. A work plan for the thesis which **must** include a timeline for completion;
3. A bibliography;
4. A sample of your written work: specifically, an ungraded version of previously submitted coursework;
5. [MA MRE/Thesis Application Form](#) and
6. [MA MRE/Thesis Supervisor/Committee Member's Form](#).

Please note: Only students whose grades in the MA program are at the A- level and higher will be considered for the Thesis option. If you have any questions about these requirements, please speak to the UGA.

Outlines and Timelines for MRE and Thesis Streams

	Major Research Essay	Thesis
Credits	1.0	2.0
Proposal	10 pages	10 pages
Supervisor (s)	Yes	Yes
Defence	No. A Second Reader and the Supervisor will mark the final submission	Yes. An external examiner and member of the department chosen by the supervisor and student will be present.
Length of manuscript	60 pages max (excluding works cited)	90 pages max (excluding works cited)
Final deposit	Electronic copy to Administrator (remains on file)	Electronic copy submitted to Graduate Studies via Carleton Central
Grade	Letter grade (submitted to the UGA)	Submitted by Defence Chair after the formal defence via Carleton Central
Submission dates*	End of Winter term of 2 nd year	End of Winter term of 2 nd year
Submitting defendable/final draft copy	2 weeks before agreed upon date for Second Reader to send mark to Supervisor	3 weeks before agreed upon defence date
Submitting defended/final copy	Submit clean/corrected copy of MRE to Institute Administrator for the Institute's records	Ideally, 4 days before the due date to upload your defended copy via Carleton Central set by Graduate Studies

Finding a Potential Supervisor

All faculty members who have permission from Graduate Studies to supervise welcome the opportunity to do so. Indeed, it is part of their overall teaching and research duties to train graduate students however, faculty choose with whom they wish to work. Like most things in the academy, do not take faculty members' refusal to supervise your project as a personal rejection. Faculty may say no to taking you on as a student because they are already supervising too many students and feel they cannot give you the proper attention you deserve; they may be taking a sabbatical or planning a leave in the year you are writing; they may have their own research commitments to fulfill during the year you are writing and cannot do justice to your project; or, it may be that your research area and/or methodology is beyond their field of expertise and they believe you would be better supported by another colleague. Whatever the case may be, you should not feel discouraged.

There are different ways to approach a potential supervisor. You should try to approach FIST faculty first. The Institute is fortunate to have several talented [cross-listed faculty](#) across the university who are often willing and able to work with you. You can also search for faculty who are not cross-listed and the faculty member can request to be cross-listed by contacting the Institute Director. A good first step is to read through departmental websites to find out more about potential supervisors and their research expertise/interests. If you are having trouble locating someone, do not hesitate to ask the UGA or other FIST faculty for faculty they think could be a 'good research fit.'

Once you have made a list of about 2-3 potential supervisors, your next step is to email them (one at a time, starting with your top choice first). The anatomy of such an email may look like the following:

- Introduce yourself: your current area of research (title of your MA/MRE); year you are in; what stage you are in (research, writing, finished first draft, etc);
- Indicate that you are contacting them because they have influenced your work. Show them that you have done your homework and you know who they are and what they work on;
- Explain your work briefly/what your research interest are/information you think is pertinent but professional and academic in nature (not exceeding 3 sentences);
- ask them if they need more info and ask them for an appointment to discuss further.

Here are some things you should remember after you send the email:

If you have not received an answer in two weeks, follow up with a reminder about your original email. If you still do not receive an answer about a week after, then move on to another choice on your list. If they email you or ask to meet with you this DOES NOT mean they want to be your supervisor. It means you have piqued their interest, and they want to learn more about you.

Preparing to meet with potential supervisor:

- First impressions count. Be punctual and professional and show them you are serious about your work. One of the best ways to convey your commitment to your graduate research is communicate your ideas in more detail verbally and in an accessible manner (no matter what stage you are in). If you do not know a lot about what you want to do, make sure you show them you are open to learning. Perhaps you can express to them what you are reading currently as it pertains to the topic you want to explore; or, discuss your favorite class and how it shaped your research topic.
- You may want to discuss the ways that your research interests speak to their past or current research. Faculty members are very passionate about their research and often welcome the chance to discuss this field with graduate students and discuss shared interests.
- You should feel like you are establishing a possible intellectual relationship based on mutual respect and exchange. This is incredibly important because you will be working closely with a supervisor for a very intense year while you write your MRE or thesis. You deserve to work with a supervisor that will assist you to meet, and exceed, your professional goals during your MA. Faculty members often view these initial meetings as initial exploratory conversations and will not take it personally if you decide it is best to work with someone else. While speaking with a faculty member can be daunting, remember that we were once graduate students too and can relate to your stage of education. Do not be afraid to ask pointed questions.
- You may want to ask about supervisory style, including expectations of frequency and style of meetings, feedback and independent work, timelines for submission of work and express what you feel are your strengths and weaknesses (for example, maybe you are an excellent writer but struggle with theory or methods). Often this is a time to receive reassurance concerning how they will mentor you through the tough spots.

Take and provide the time to your potential supervisor to reflect on the meeting and the potential of a dynamic working relationship that produces an MRE or thesis that you can both be proud of. Remember to thank the faculty member for their time and ask them when you can expect to hear back from them OR express to them politely that you need a bit of time and will get back to them in a particular time frame. You should also note that other students are most likely approaching them too so don't take too long.

How to write a MRE/Thesis proposal: A guide

A thesis proposal is a document that offers a road map of the research you *intend* to conduct as part of fulfilling your degree requirements. All students writing a MRE or Thesis must submit a proposal. This proposal is approved by a committee comprised of the FIST Director and the UGA (i.e., your supervisor or co-supervisors are not eligible to comment on the proposal but should be familiar with it). The proposal review committee will assess your proposal focusing on (1) whether you have presented a well-developed research project that is viable and relevant to *contemporary* scholarly topics in Women's and Gender Studies, (2) the appropriateness of your methodology (i.e., both the theoretical framework(s) informing your analysis and your specific research method (s), and (3) the feasibility of your timelines. Your timeline is a breakdown of the weeks/months it will take you to move through the phases of your project from start to finish. You will provide an overview of time spent engaging in research and information gathering -analysis-writing draft (MRE)/drafts of chapters (Thesis)-incorporating feedback/editing-defence (thesis only)-revisions.

The role of your supervisor(s) is to assist you to formulate and articulate your preliminary ideas. They should help you with editing and commenting on drafts of your proposal. While all the components of the proposals are important, the sections addressing the theoretical approach you will draw on to frame your thesis/research paper topic and the methodology are the most significant. Be sure to dedicate time in your discussion with your supervisor(s) to these components. This will help you to write a solid proposal that you can use as a foundation/concrete 'roadmap' (or GPS) that will help you maintain your focus as you work on your MRE or thesis.

Remember, a *proposal* signifies that you are in a preliminary stage of research. You will need to have a clear research objective or research questions, however, you *do not* need to have the answers to these questions nor are you expected to draw and conclusions concerning your topic. In many cases, what you write in your proposal will change as you delve deeper into your research, analysis, and writing. This is entirely acceptable and expected.

Components of a Proposal

Title and title page

Please give your work a tentative title. It can change and, in all probability, will change. Titles convey the core thoughts, theory, research area, and sometimes, date range, related to your research topic. The title does not have to be creative or imaginative, but it does have to be short and succinct. It should communicate your main ideas(s) to your reader.

Introduction/Theory section (approx. 3 pages)

- a) describe your topic, context and focus of your research
- b) explain the background of your research/study to help you set the stage for your research/thoughts/ideas

- c) provide a research objective or questions
- d) discuss the theoretical approach(es) you will use and *why*

Literature review (approx. 3 pages)

Scholars often position their own research, argumentation and findings through a literature review. While never comprehensive, the 'lit review' offers an overview of existing work that you deem most relevant to your topic. Literature reviews mainly include the work of any major thinkers/scholarship/material/reports/documentation related to your topic and sub-topic. Similar to reading reflection assignments or critical analysis of books that you have completed in your undergraduate studies, the literature review is a space where you discuss the ways in which scholars, artists, activists have approached the subject/topic. You do so by: (a) offering brief but focused descriptions of these sources – what were the author(s)'s major research questions? What (if any) key concepts did they introduce to the discussion that influences your work on the topic? What argument did they present? What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of this argument as it relates to your proposed research? Perhaps you agree enthusiastically with specific thinkers in your research area and seek to evaluate if their argument holds true when applied to the specific demographic, community, region that you are studying. Or, perhaps, you take issue with a particular argument or key concept because it fails to address considerations that you believe to be crucial to developing a fuller understanding of the topic. You should also provide details of your proposed research addressing where you think your study fits in. Does it fill a gap in the literature? Are you positioned to add a crucial dimension to an existing consideration (e.g. 'queering' a topic)?

Please note that the following discussion is meant to be a guide and tends to reflect work in social sciences more than the humanities. While all students are required to engage in thorough background research, you and your supervisor may decide to present evidence of your knowledge of scholarship related specifically to your topic in a different manner.

Methodology (approx.3 pages)

In its simplest form, methodology refers to the theoretical approach you take to studying your topic *and* how (the data collection, material, sources, archives, et cetera) you will achieve or implement this approach. In this section, indicate if you will use a discourse analysis methodology, oral interviews, surveys, participatory observation, etc. Once you have decided upon methodology you need to address *why* you chose this methodology? You do so by answering the following questions:

- a) how will this methodology help you answer your major research questions? What are the strengths of this methodology for your study?
- b) what are the limitations of the methodology and how will you deal with these issues?
- c) how does this methodology dovetail with the theoretical approach?

Thesis Chapter/MRE sections outline and timeline to completion (approx. 1 page)

This allows the proposal examining committee to determine whether your project is feasible within the time available for the completion of all degree requirements. Your proposed outline and number of chapters should align with your selected literature, theoretical frame, and methods. Indicate the time to draft and complete chapters and to submit the final draft for assessment/evaluation, which should be at least three weeks prior to the proposed defence date.

- Tentative chapter titles/sections in the chapters
- Indicate deadlines you have set. It is best practice to be realistic here and take into consideration other areas of your professional and personal life that might impact your studies. While no one can plan for life's unforeseen circumstances, as TAs you will be very busy marking midterms and final assignments; you may have an RAship that requires more of your time at certain points. It's best to think ahead and make these allowances in your timeline. For example, some faculty advise their graduate students to omit December as a month they will be writing given that as TAs they will be grading. This is also the holiday season (for both you and your supervisor).
- Indicate the research and writing stages/timeline for each.

Bibliography/Works Cited

Your bibliography should include any works cited and a few other selections using a consistent citation style. This does not have to be an exhaustive list.

Research Ethics Review: If your research requires conducting interviews, surveys, participatory observation or any research involving human beings, you must submit an ethics review application with the Office of Research Ethics (<https://carleton.ca/researchethics/>). Please note that this process is governed by the Tri-Council Regulations (https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html). Be sure to consult with your supervisor(s) regarding this process. Requesting ethics approval is a time-consuming affair. Be sure to consider this component of your research as you prepare your timeline to completion.

What to expect during the defence (Thesis stream only)

The structure of the defence (when it takes place, who is in the room, what are the procedures) is regulated by the Carleton Senate, an academic policy-making body bound by the university's constitution. Consequently, the procedures that dictate the thesis defence are highly-standardized and governed or designed to ensure fairness for the degree candidate (you). Students should consult the following link for information about the **thesis requirements** as stipulated by Graduate Studies:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/resources-page/thesis-requirements/>

In a nutshell, here is what to expect during a thesis defence (based on Graduate Studies **Thesis Examination Policy** <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/wp-content/uploads/Thesis-Examination-Policy.pdf>):

- The members of the defence committee ALWAYS include: 1) the external, an academic who is an expert in your research field but has never read your work until this point and must not be a permanent faculty member in FIST; 2) the internal or member of department, a FIST faculty member or cross-listed member of the Institute whom you may know and has seen your previous work but has not commented or edited your examinable thesis); and 3) your supervisor(s). The Chair of the Defence (usually the UGA) is present as the arbiter of the proceedings. The Chair of the Defence is the person you turn to during the proceedings if you feel uncomfortable, feel ill, or need to stop. They will follow your instructions.
- Once everyone gathers, the Chair of the Defence will ask you to leave the room and wait nearby.
- The Chair of the Defence asks the defence committee, starting with the external, if the defence should proceed. Don't worry because they will have confirmed it can a week before the defence. Once everyone confirms, the Chair of the Defence will ask you to return to the room.
- You are asked to give a short presentation.
- The first round, also known as the formal round, is an interrupted session of questions from the examination committee member and you. The external is given 20 minutes followed by the internal who is allotted 15 minutes. Your supervisor(s) is also given 10-15 minutes. Supervisors can elect to forego their allotted time. The Chair of the Defence is the timekeeper. Remember: The volume of questions you answer is based on how long you take to answer a question. The allotted time is based on the duration of the exchange. The first round usually lasts about 1 hour and 10 minutes.
- The Chair of the Defence usually asks if everyone wants a short break (5 min) after the first round. You may leave the room during this time.
- After the break, the second round and more informal round begins. The Chair of the Defence invites the external to ask additional questions but other members of committee may join the conversation. The second round usually lasts about 30 minutes.

- After the closing of the second round, the Chair of the Defence asks you if you have any concluding remarks. This is voluntary. You will then be asked to leave the room by the Chair of the Defence (but don't go far!).
- The members of the defence committee deliberate on your written work and oral defence. The oral defence is graded as "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" and the written work is graded as "As is", "Minor Revisions" or "Major Revisions." The most common outcome is "Minor Revisions."
- The final part is inviting you back to announce the results. Congratulations, the defence is now complete.

Remember that your supervisor(s) has been through this process and is the best person to help you deal with any questions you may have. You are also welcome to discuss this process with the UGA. Most important to remember is that everyone involved in this process is interested and invested in your success.

A final reminder: These guidelines are partially dictated by university-mandated dates and internal suggestions to satisfy those requirements. Students can request an extension into the summer term of their second year to meet degree requirements. Please consult the UGA and your supervisor if you are considering this option.

Good luck on your research and academic endeavours! Remember: All faculty members in the Institute are happy to answer your questions, share thoughts, give you guidance, and offer a helping hand.