



# MDS

Migration & Diaspora Studies

Carleton University Ottawa

## **MA Student Handbook**

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# Migration and Diaspora Studies MA Student Handbook

## About this Handbook

This handbook is intended as a resource for students in the MA in Migration and Diaspora Studies. Please note that while the handbook provides guidance as to program requirements and regulations, students should always consult the official university regulations and program requirements as outlined in the Carleton University Graduate Calendar, which is the ultimate authority. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs may also make changes to policies that supersede what is indicated below.

### For more information, please consult:

- Carleton University Graduate Calendar: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/>
- Official Migration and Diaspora Studies Program Requirements for M.A. and Graduate Diploma: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/gradprograms/migrationanddiasporastudies/>
- Migration and Diaspora Studies unit website: [www.carleton.ca/mds](http://www.carleton.ca/mds)
- Graduate Studies - Current Graduate Student Information: <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca>

## Communication Basics

### 1) Your Carleton Email Address

Congratulations on being accepted into the Migration and Diaspora Studies Graduate Program!

Upon acceptance, you will need to activate your Carleton University email address through this link: <https://carleton.ca/its/all-services/email/carleton-student-email> . It is important that you check your Carleton e-mail address regularly or set it up to forward to an email address that you use. All official correspondence from the university (administrators, faculty, etc). will go through this address. When contacting your professors, departmental administrators, etc. you should also use your Carleton email address. This is important to protect your privacy, especially when discussing personal or confidential information. If you email from your Carleton address, we will know it is you and not someone else trying to gain access to your private information!

### 2) Read this Handbook!

If you have questions about program requirements or other matters that are covered in this handbook, please consult the handbook first before contacting one of the people you should know below. If the handbook does not answer your question or you would like further clarification about your specific situation, one of us will be more than happy to help you.

## People you should know

**Program Administrator** — The Migration and Diaspora Studies Program Administrator will be an important point of contact for all administrative matters. The administrator can also help you navigate some of the bureaucracy surrounding graduate studies. Please make use of this resource! email [mds@carleton.ca](mailto:mds@carleton.ca)

**Program Director (Graduate Supervisor)** — The Migration and Diaspora Studies Program Director is an important point of contact for all academic matters. The Program Director will be in contact with you regarding advising, course selection, and will be a resource to consult if you are running into issues that affect your academic performance. Some programs label the role

Graduate Supervisor. Please note that this is a different role from the Research Essay or Thesis Supervisor role described below.

**Faculty Mentor** — At the start of the fall term, all students will be asked if they would like to be assigned a faculty mentor. In addition to the Program Director, the Faculty Mentor is a faculty member you may consult about your program and research interests. Your mentor may also help you in finding a suitable supervisor for your research project (see below) or may become your supervisor. For coursework-only students, your mentor may be a resource throughout your studies. We encourage students to request they be assigned a Faculty Mentor, and for all assigned a Mentor to set up a meeting with them in the first weeks of term.

**Supervisor** — For students who choose the Research Essay or Thesis Pathways, you will eventually need to have a supervisor for your research project. The Program Director and your Faculty Mentor as well as instructors in your core course sequence will assist you in identifying and finding a suitable supervisor for your research project. You will be working closely with your supervisor as you develop and undertake your project, so you will want to choose someone with whom you have a good working relationship and who has the necessary disciplinary background or expertise to supervise your topic.

**Teaching Assistantships** — Some full-time MA students will have received teaching assistantships with their offer of admission. Teaching assistantships are an important part of your professional training and provide a valuable experiential learning opportunity. Teaching assistantships are usually for 130 hours per term and are governed by the CUPE 4600 Collective Agreement: <https://www.cupe4600.ca>. You can find more information about FGPA and University policies surrounding TAs here: <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/teaching-assistants/>

## MA Program Requirements

The MA Program in Migration and Diaspora Studies is a unique, interdisciplinary degree program that brings Migration Studies into dialogue with Diaspora Studies and which combines academic inquiry with practical experience. The 5.0 credit MA degree is expected to be completed in approximately 2 years full-time. The MA degree has three pathways:

1. Coursework Only Pathway
2. Research Essay Pathway
3. Thesis Pathway

Students in each pathway may also take advantage of the Practicum or Cooperative Education options (see below).

All three pathways build on the same **program elements**.

- Migration and Diaspora Studies Core Courses (MGDS 5001 and 5003)
- 5000 level seminars offered by MDS. These courses will have the course code MGDS 5xxx. Please note that many of our courses are offered with special topics course codes that change from term to term or may have multiple sections within the same term (MGDS 5900 or MGDS 5002). You may count multiple sections of these courses to your program, as long as the course deals with a different topic.
- Migration and Diaspora Studies electives. These are courses offered by different units across the university. Students may combine any courses on the electives list. MGDS courses not used to fulfill another requirement also count as Migration and Diaspora Studies electives.

All students need to fulfill similar requirements in their first year of the program, but will usually have different requirements depending on their pathway in their second year. The normal full-time course load is 1.5 credits (3 courses) per term. Students may choose to take less than 1.5 credits (3 courses) per term and still keep full-time status.

### Year 1 — 3.0 credit.

- 1.0 credit in Migration and Diaspora Studies core courses
  - MGDS 5001 MA Core Seminar in Migration and Diaspora Studies (Fall term)
  - MGDS 5003 Research Seminar in Migration and Diaspora Studies (Winter term)
- 0.5 Credit in MGDS at the 5000 level (not including practicum)
- 1.5 credits in Migration and Diaspora Studies Electives (may include practicum)

### Year 2 — 2.0 credit

#### Coursework-Only Pathway

- 2.0 credit in Migration and Diaspora Studies Electives

#### Research Essay Pathway

- 1.0 credit in Migration and Diaspora Studies Electives
- 1.0 credit in Research Essay

#### Thesis Pathway

- 2.0 credit in MA Thesis

## Sample MA First Year (all MA pathways)

### Fall Term

Course Code	Course Title
0.5 credit in MGDS 5001	MA Core Seminar in Migration and Diaspora Studies
0.5 credit in MGDS 5000 level seminar	Seminars in Migration Diaspora Studies with course code MGDS 5xxx.
0.5 credit in MDS Electives	Courses from the Migration and Diaspora Studies Electives List

### Winter Term

Course Code	Course Title
0.5 credit in MGDS 5003	MA Core Seminar in Migration and Diaspora Studies
0.5 credit in MGDS 5000 level seminar	Seminars in Migration Diaspora Studies with course code MGDS 5xxx. Or (instead) another course from the MDS Electives List.
0.5 credit in MDS Electives	Courses from the Migration and Diaspora Studies Electives List. May include MGDS 5101 Practicum.

## Sample MA Second Year:

### Coursework Pathway

Course Code	Course Title
2.0 credits in MDS Electives	Courses from the Migration and Diaspora Studies Electives List. May include MGDS 5101 Practicum.

### Research Essay Pathway

Course Code	Course Title
1.0 Credit MGDS 5908	Research Essay (continuous registration in each term until completed)
1.0 credit in MDS Electives	Courses from the Migration and Diaspora Studies Electives List. May include MGDS 5101 Practicum.

### Thesis Pathway

Course Code	Course Title
2.0 Credit MGDS 5909	M.A. Thesis (continuous registration in each term until completed)

Please note that students may register in the summer term and complete requirements on an accelerated schedule.

Students who add co-op to their degree will need to complete two work-terms, usually starting in the Summer or Fall terms after Year 1. Co-op work terms extend your time to completion.

### Choosing a Pathway

All pathways provide breadth of knowledge through a variety of coursework and depth of knowledge in terms of developing your own original research skills. However, they vary in terms of the emphasis on breadth versus depth in one particular topic and the extent of original research required.

#### Why choose coursework only?

- You prefer to extend your breadth of knowledge in diverse topics through coursework.
- You are not considering pursuing a doctoral degree
- You have professional or other time commitments that make it difficult to focus on an extended research project.
- You are a part-time student and don't have time to focus on a larger scale and longer term project given other obligations.
- You already completed a thesis or research essay in a previous graduate degree

#### Why choose the research essay or thesis option?

- You are considering a career path (in government, non-governmental organizations, private sector) in which research skills are important
- You are considering applying for a PhD program
- You have a passion for a particular topic that you really want to engage with and explore in depth.
- You enjoy working independently

The chart below outlines some of the main differences between them.

	Coursework Only	Research Essay	Thesis
<b>Breadth — diverse range of coursework</b>	More - 10 courses (5.0 credit) to complete program	In-Between - 8 courses (4.0 credit) to complete program plus 1.0 credit of research essay	Less - 6 courses (3.0 credit) to complete program plus 2.0 credit of thesis
<b>Depth in original research</b>	Less - Term paper for MGDS 5003 will involve independent research. Other courses may also require this.	40-50 page original research project — original research. Equivalent to the amount of time of two courses.	80-100 page original research project — a greater primary source base and higher expectations for originality and depth of research. Equivalent to four courses.

	<b>Coursework Only</b>	<b>Research Essay</b>	<b>Thesis</b>
<b>Enjoying working independently on your own research project</b>	Am fine conducting research in a structured context such as a term paper for a course, but am less interested in developing an extended research project.	Enjoy and want independent research experience, but not to the extent that a thesis would require.	Thrive on working independently on a long-term research project and focusing on your own research interest.
<b>Marks in graduate coursework</b>	Minimum 7.0 (B-) GPA required in first 3.0 credits to continue in this pathway	Minimum 9.0 (B+) GPA required in first 3.0 credits to continue in this pathway	Minimum 10.0 (A-) GPA required in first 3.0 credits to continue in this pathway and approval of Program Director.
<b>Considering continuing to Phd?</b>	Possible to be admitted to PhD, but Research Essay and Thesis option allow you to complete a research project that could help you demonstrate your research abilities.	Recommended if considering PhD.	Recommended if considering PhD.
<b>Are you a part-time student / working full-time during your studies?</b>	Suitable as easier to integrate with full-time work schedules.	Possible, though sustaining momentum and finding time to complete can sometimes be a challenge.	Possible, but more of a challenge given the demands of balancing work and academics over a longer period of time. May be difficult to sustain focus on project.
<b>Other considerations</b>	No examination.	Examination is conducted based on the written product which is marked by your supervisor and another faculty member. No oral examination is required. Essay receives a standard letter grade.	Thesis examination is based on the writing product and an oral examination. Thesis is read by your supervisor, a second reader, and an external examiner. Mark is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory based on oral exam and the thesis itself.

**When do I need to choose a pathway?**

Upon initial registration, you will be asked to choose which pathway you would like to be in - coursework only, research essay, or thesis. If not sure, the research essay is the safest option. You need to confirm the option by the time you begin MGDS 5003 Research Seminar in the Winter term. Students in the coursework only pathway will have different assignments from students in the Research Essay or Thesis pathways in that course. It is possible to change your pathway later in your program, but generally speaking students should try to stick with their pathway once they have completed MGDS 5003 Research Seminar (offered in the Winter term on an annual basis).



## Coursework Only Pathway

The normal trajectory for the Coursework only pathway is to complete MGDS 5001 (offered in the Fall) and MGDS 5003 (offered in the Winter) in the First year of study. Students should also try to complete the 0.5 credit in MGDS at the 5000-level requirement in their first year. This leaves the remaining courses as Migration and Diaspora Studies Electives. Students must complete MGDS 5001 before completing MGDS 5003.

In MGDS 5003 Research Seminar, Course-work only students will have a different term assignment from students in the research essay and thesis pathways, whose main assignment will be their proposal for their research project.

### Coursework Only Term Research Project Guidelines

All students in the MDS MA program must complete a substantial research project in order to meet the learning outcomes of the degree. For coursework-only students, the research paper that they write for MGDS 5003 fulfills that requirement, much like the Research Essay or Thesis does for those pathways.

#### Length

The research paper written for MGDS 5003 should be 20-25 pages (5000-6250 words) in length (excluding bibliography), assuming 12-point font, 1-inch margins, approximately 250 words per page.

**Expectations:** The research paper that coursework only students write for MGDS 5003 is meant to be a research capstone to your degree. The course is designed to give you considerable time to work on your essay, receive and respond to critical feedback on draft sections, produce a full draft of the essay, and then submit a revised final version. The expectations are that you will produce a paper based on original research that contributes to the scholarship. You should expect to spend more time on this paper than you would for a normal term paper for a course. The final product, having gone through a peer review process with comments and suggestions for revision from both your peers and your instructors, will assist you in producing a high-quality paper.

**Structure:** The paper should have an introduction that poses a clear research question, situates the project within the existing scholarly literature, outline its conceptual approach, methodology, and argument, body chapters that engage in an in-depth analysis of source materials, and provide a conclusion that conveys the main findings and the significance of the research.

**Scope and Sources:** As this is a paper for a course, the scope should be manageable. Approach it with a question that you would normally use for a research paper. The primary research required should be realistic in scope and should draw on sources and data that are readily available or accessible via interlibrary loan (but secure these materials early in the term!). For practical reasons and given the timeline to complete the research, we do not recommend that you attempt a research project that would require research ethics clearance (interviews, surveys, focus groups or other research methods that involve interacting with human subjects). This is not realistic for a term assignment, given that both data collection and the research ethics approval process can be time consuming. Students interested in these sorts of methods should consider the research essay or thesis options.

## Research Essay and Thesis Pathways

### How do I find a supervisor for a research essay or thesis?

You should discuss with the Program Director, your faculty mentor, or the core instructors for MGDS 5001 potential ideas for supervisors. Usually, students should have identified a supervisor and met with them to discuss their research project in by the middle of the Winter term. The core instructors in MGDS 5003 will encourage you to find a supervisor and can assist you.

Your supervisor will normally be a full-time faculty member who is a faculty associate or cross-appointed to Migration and Diaspora Studies. For a current list of MDS Faculty Associates, see: <https://carleton.ca/mds/our-people/faculty-associates/> If you are unsure whether a faculty member you are interested can supervise in MDS, please consult the Program Director. You must have a supervisor in order to register for the Research Essay or Thesis in your Second Year.

### How do I choose between the research essay or thesis?

Both the research essay or thesis options allow a student to engage in the rewarding exercise of exploring a particular topic in depth and to practice research techniques that will aid them in future professional or scholarly work. The chart below outlines some key differences between them:

#### Main Differences Between Research Essay and Thesis Options

	Research Essay	Thesis
<b>Length</b>	40-50 page = 10,000-12,500 words (excluding footnotes/endnotes and bibliography)	80-100 page = 20,000-25,000 words (excluding footnotes/endnotes and bibliography)
<b>Conceptual Framework and Originality</b>	A research essay should be thought of as an extended term paper for a research seminar. You should develop a clear topic and research question that you wish to explore. You should provide a conceptual framework for evaluating the topic, place the study within the context of the existing scholarly literature, and provide an organized approach to answering your research question.	A thesis has greater expectations of original research and use of primary sources than a research essay. The conceptual and theoretical approach should be more developed and sophisticated. The thesis will explore the research question in greater depth than is possible in a research essay. The expectations for an original contribution to scholarship are greater for a thesis than a research essay.
<b>Credit weight</b>	Worth 1.0 credit (equivalent time commitment of two courses, expect to spend 1-2 semesters full time working on it)	Worth 2.0 credit (equivalent time commitment of 4 courses, 2 semesters full time)
<b>Evaluation</b>	Written research essay is evaluated by the supervisor and an examiner. Final mark is a letter grade.	Thesis is evaluated by the supervisor, a second reader, and an examiner. An oral examination is held. Final mark is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

<b>Minimum GPA to continue in pathway</b>	9.0 (B+) GPA required in first 3.0 credits to continue in this pathway	10.0 (A-) GPA required in first 3.0 credits to continue in this pathway and approval of Program Director.
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**Students who are interested in the thesis option should be aware of the following:**

- Only students with an A- or A average in the first 3.0 credits of coursework will be allowed to continue in the thesis option.
- Students who want to write a thesis should have a clear conception of their research topic when they begin considering their research proposal in MGDS 5003
- Students who wish to write a thesis should be self-disciplined and capable of adhering to a regular work schedule. They should be highly motivated to pursue their topic in depth.
- The choice of the thesis option requires both the approval of the Research Supervisor and the Program Director.
- Students who choose the thesis option but are unable to continue may continue their research project in the research essay pathway.

**Research Essay and Thesis Guidelines**

**Choosing a Research Topic**

When choosing a topic for a research essay or thesis, think of a topic that would be suitable for a long-term paper. You are not expected to write a book! If you have some ideas for a topic but are having difficulty figuring out which direction to go or narrowing it down, talk to faculty members. You should approach your faculty mentor or the core instructors for 5001 and 5003 for suggestions. But also begin approaching potential supervisors whose research interests overlap with your topic. Doing so will help you both to narrow your topic and to see whether that faculty member might be a suitable supervisor. You should also think about what research materials you might need to write about a particular topic and whether they are available. Also, do you have the language skills to use those materials? You will want to avoid taking on a topic that is too broad, since it will make it much more difficult to find your angle or to say something new. Narrowing the scope (by focusing on a particular time period, particular region or country, particular populations, particular institutions, particular author, artist, genre, or theme, etc.) will make your work more manageable and make it more likely that you will find something unique to say that will contribute to the scholarly conversation.

**Research Proposal**

All students engaging in the Research Essay and Thesis options must submit a research proposal that is approved by their Supervisor and the Program through the normal process. The Research Proposal will be one of the main assignments that students in the research essay or thesis pathway will work on in MGDS 5003 Research Seminar. In most cases, the expectation is that your research proposal will be approved by the end of that course.

The Research Proposal is required to include the following eight elements (more detail about these elements will be provided to students in MGDS 5003).

- 1) **Your topic and the scope of your project:** The proposal should provide a clear statement of what the topic is that you are studying and how you will limit the scope of your inquiry — i.e. focusing on a particular time period, location, region, country, or population group, body of texts or writers, etc. or delimiting the subject matter.

2) **Statement of your research question:** What are your research objectives? What puzzle are you trying to solve? Your proposal should provide a concise statement of the issue that your project will be exploring and the questions that you are trying to answer. Normally it should not be just a “what” question, but a “why” or “how” question.

3) **Conceptual Framework and Working Argument:** Your proposal should outline the theoretical approach or concepts that you will be employing as you undertake your research project. What approach you take may vary depending on your disciplinary or interdisciplinary background and training, and what concepts might be most useful for your particular project.

You should also think about potential answers to your research question. What factor might explain a phenomenon or what interpretation do you have that might help explain the problem or issue you are addressing? This “hunch” can be your working argument or preliminary hypothesis — your educated guess of potential answers to your research question. As you work on your project, this may change as you may find that other factors are more important. But having a sense of your research question and potential answers can guide you in your inquiry and help you in crafting an argument.

4) **Literature Review — Situate your project in the existing scholarly literature:** In your proposal, you will need to provide a brief discussion of the scholarly debates in the existing literature on your topic or that your topic touches on, and how your own project fits into that discussion. In a Master’s research project, you are not just reiterating what others have said, but you are also making a contribution to the conversation through your own research, argument, and interpretation. For different types of projects and depending on their disciplinary or interdisciplinary focus, this may involve drawing on different types of literature (conceptual, theoretical, case studies, etc.). You might wish to think about how your approach or inquiry addresses gaps in the existing literature, whether your approach is influenced by particular concepts, theories, or methods that other scholars have employed. Ideally, you should see this section as doing two interrelated things — 1) showing your command of the scholarly literature and debates on your topic and 2) showing how your project (once completed) will contribute to addressing issues in the scholarly discussion or filling gaps in the literature. This section is your chance to make the scholarly contribution of your research project clear to your reader.

5) **Sources and Methodology:** This section should provide a detailed discussion of how you plan to undertake your research. Here we are interested in the mechanics of how you will go about answering your research question. What particular methods or approach will you use? (i.e. discourse analysis, in-depth interviews, surveys, textual analysis of literary works, visual analysis of artworks or film, archival research, participant observation, analysis of existing data sets or primary sources among others). You also might discuss the primary sources (in some disciplines your “data”) that will be at the centre of your analysis and how you might approach or interpret those sources. Do particular types of sources help you answer your research question? When thinking about sources and methodology you also will need to consider issues of scope and feasibility — are your sources available? How will you delimit the source base (temporally, geographically, particular population groups, countries, etc.)? You want your research process to be manageable — that you could complete your research in the summer and fall terms and write up the final product in the winter term before you submit your project.

**6) Chapter Outline:** A preliminary outline of the chapters to be included in the research essay or thesis, including titles and a brief description of each. This provides a sense of the overall structure of the project.

**7) Schedule for Completion:** The student should outline a schedule for completing the research project. This should include both the conduct of research (and any necessary research travel for the project) and the writing up of the findings. Your outline should provide goals and deadlines for completing different stages and aspects of the project (i.e. submitting draft chapters to your supervisor, conducting interviews, doing library or archival research etc.).

**8) Bibliography:** Your proposal should include a preliminary bibliography of your main primary and secondary sources for the project. If your project draws on sources that are not available in the Ottawa area or online, you may need to discuss in your methodology section how you will get access to these sources.

**Remember that you are not alone and that you will have guidance in this process!**

Please keep in mind that the core course sequence (MGDS 5001 and 5003) will guide you in choosing a research topic, finding a supervisor, and writing your proposal for your project. The expectation is that by the end of the first year, you will have completed your proposal and be on your way to begin your research project.

### **Proposal Approval Process**

The standard process for proposal approval will be handled in MGDS 5003 Research Seminar, in which students will complete a proposal as a course assignment and the instructors will recommend it for program approval upon completion.

The approval process involves two steps:

- 1) Program approval involves the approval of the program (either by the core instructors of MGDS 5003 or by the Program Director). In some cases, consultation with other faculty members with expertise in the area of the proposal may be required during the approval process.
- 2) Supervisor approval — confirmed by submission of Form A “Supervisor Approval of Research Proposal”.

Both steps - Program Approval and Supervisor approval, need to be completed before the student registers for in order for you to register for MGDS 5908 Research Essay or MGDS 5909 MA Thesis.

The normal pathway to complete these steps is through MGDS 5003 Research Seminar core course offered in the Winter term.

- Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
  - Originality and significance of the proposed research and its potential to make a scholarly contribution
  - Clarity of the research question, aims, and objectives
  - Feasibility of the project
  - Conceptual and theoretical sophistication of the project

- Soundness of source-base and methodology that will help you answer your research question
  - Extent to which proposal is situated in the scholarly literature
  - Completeness of proposal (are all required elements included)
  - Clarity in Writing, Formatting, and overall Presentation
- Course instructors in MGDS 5003 will make a determination of whether the proposal is approved either as submitted or with minor revisions. In cases where proposals are not approved, comments and suggestions for revisions will be provided. In some cases, the instructors may ask that in lieu of revisions, the student submit an addendum to the proposal that addresses a particular issue or area of concern (for example an elaboration on the conceptualization of the project or on an aspect of the methodology).
  - While proposal marks are for the evaluation of course requirements and separate from the approval process, in most cases, it is expected that proposals that receive a final mark in the A range (not including late penalties) would be approved as submitted or with suggestions for minor revisions. Proposals that receive a B or B+ will likely require more substantial revisions before receiving program approval. In most cases, proposals that receive a mark of B- or lower are unlikely to receive program approval without substantial revision.
  - Students whose proposals are not approved in MGDS 5003 should consult the Program Director about the next steps.
    - They may be asked to engage in further revisions and re-submit the proposal to the Program Director for final approval.
    - They may be asked to submit an addendum to the proposal to the Program Director providing clarification or addressing issues that were not covered in the proposal.
    - They may be advised to choose a different topic for their research project if a project is deemed not to be feasible. They would then need to develop a new proposal for that project in consultation with the research supervisor.
    - They may be advised to change program pathway (i.e. move from thesis to research essay or to change to the coursework-only pathway).
  - In exceptional circumstances and with approval of the Program Director, students may submit a proposal for approval outside the MGDS 5003 process (for example, because of starting in a later term or because of a late switch from the Coursework Only to the research essay or thesis pathway). But the expectation is that the vast majority of Research Essay and Thesis students will complete their proposals in MGDS 5003.
  - Please note that program approval does not mean that the supervisor approval is guaranteed. In some cases, supervisors may require additional revisions or changes before approving a research project even if it has already received program approval. These changes will need to be completed before the supervisor signs the approval form. This is an additional reason why students are encouraged to meet with potential supervisors while they are completing MGDS5003. The course instructors in MGDS5003 will advise on this process.

### **The MA Supervisor for Research Essay/Thesis**

As mentioned, your faculty mentor, the Program Director, the core course instructors will all be resources whom you may draw on in identifying an appropriate supervisor. Please see the graduate studies guidelines on supervisor/student relation and respective roles and responsibilities of each <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/graduate-supervision-responsibilities-expectations-policy/>

**Supervisor's role:**

- Your supervisor has the primary responsibility for supervision of your research project and serves as a mentor as you undertake your research.
- The supervisor is expected to approve the proposal for the research essay or thesis. As mentioned above, Even if a student's proposal has received program approval in 5003, the supervisor may require that the student make additional changes to the proposal before signing off on Form A. Full approval of the research proposal requires both program and supervisor approval.
- The supervisor is expected to be a resource that you can draw on as you research and write your research project. The supervisor will assist you in developing a realistic timeline for completion of the project.
- The supervisor is expected to read and comment on drafts of portions or chapters of your project. The supervisor will aim to provide feedback in a reasonable period of time. Please note that longer documents (such as full chapters or a full draft of the research essay or thesis) may require a longer turn around time than shorter ones). Students should keep in mind that supervisors are often working with multiple students and have other obligations and commitments at different times of the year.
- Once provided a full draft of the project to read, the supervisor will advise the student whether the project is ready to be submitted for examination.

**Student's role:**

- The student is responsible for choosing a research topic and writing a proposal for the research project.
- The student is responsible for maintaining regular contact and communication with the supervisor and should discuss the progress on the research project at regular intervals.
- The student should expect that the supervisor will have comments, feedback, and criticism of the work. Such feedback is part of the writing process and when revising the work, students should aim to take such feedback seriously.
- Students should allow the supervisor or other readers sufficient time to read and comment on their work.
- The student should be advised that a supervisor may wish to read multiple drafts of a chapter. Writing and revision is a normal part of the research process, so please do not be discouraged if you have to submit multiple drafts of a particular chapter or of the whole project. In most cases, supervisors will read at 2-3 drafts of the whole project (initial chapter submissions and at least two readings of a full draft). This is an essential part of the writing process.
- The student is responsible for meeting all deadlines for their project and deadlines set by the University.
- If the student has concerns about the working relationship with the supervisor or whether the supervisor is the proper fit, he/she/they should consult the Program Director for guidance. If the research supervisor is also the Program Director, the student should consult the Associate Dean and Director of Kroeger College.

**Ethical Conduct of Research**

Students should be aware that all research conducted at the University must conform to acceptable ethical norms for the conduct of research. All research projects that involve human subjects (including projects that require surveys or interviews) will need to go through a university research ethics approval process. The Office of Research Ethics handles the ethics review process (<https://carleton.ca/researchethics/>). This will also be discussed in MGDS 5003.

Please note that students need to allow time for their application to be approved by the relevant Carleton University Research Ethics Board and that they may be asked to revise their submission.

## **Ideal Research Essay and Thesis Completion Timeline**

### **Year 1: Fall term**

- Begin thinking of your research topic and potential supervisors
- Assignments in MGDS 5001 MA Core Seminar in Migration and Diaspora Studies will help you to brainstorm and to explore the scholarly literature around your topic and think about different theoretical or conceptual approaches. Your other courses may help you develop ideas as well.
- You also should try to discuss your topic with relevant faculty members to begin the search for a potential supervisor. Don't be afraid of meeting with a faculty member who has expertise in the area you are interested in exploring. Faculty usually enjoy discussing such projects and informal meetings can be the start of a conversation that leads to a faculty member agreeing to being your formal supervisor.

### **Year 1: Winter Term**

- January — approach a faculty member and ask if they will supervise your project. When choosing a faculty member, try to pick faculty with an expertise that is relevant for your particular project.
- In MGDS 5003 you will write your research proposal. In most cases, the proposal will be approved by the end of the winter term.
- You will want to consult your research supervisor as you develop your proposal.
- Once your proposal has program approval, have your supervisor sign Form A: "Approval of Research Proposal." You should submit it to the Program Administrator.
- The Program Director will confirm that your proposal has been approved and that you can register for MGDS 5908 Research Essay or MGDS 5909 MA Thesis courses in the summer or fall, depending on your schedule.

### **Year 2: Summer and Fall term**

- Depending on completion timeline, students may or may not need to register in the Summer term. Please note that once you register in MGDS 5908 Research Essay or MGDS MA Thesis, you need to remain registered in that course in each subsequent term until you have completed your research project.
- Complete the research for your project and plan any research travel necessary to complete it.
- Begin drafting chapters and submit to your supervisor for feedback.
- Complete any remaining course work needed for your program.

### **Year 2: Winter Term**

- March - Complete a full draft of your project and submit to your supervisor.
- March/April — Complete revisions based on your supervisors comments
- April — Submit Form B "Permission to Examine," signed by your supervisor, and the examination copy of your research essay or thesis for your committee to evaluate.
- For thesis candidates, your oral defence will be scheduled after you have submitted the above.



## **Research Essay and M.A. Thesis Examination Procedures**

### **Applying to Graduate**

Students who are in their last term for completing degree requirements and are planning to submit their research essay or thesis for examination should submit an "Application for Graduation" electronically via Carleton Central at the beginning of the term in which they are planning to complete the program.

Usually the deadlines are:

- Feb. 1 for Spring Convocation
- Sept. 1 for Fall Convocation
- Dec. 1. for Winter Graduation (no ceremony for winter graduation).

### **Examination Committees**

Both the research essay and thesis have examination committees. For the Research Essay, the committee consists of the supervisor and an examiner. For the MA thesis, the committee consists of the Supervisor, a Second Reader, an Examiner, and a Chair. Committees will be formed in consultation with the supervisor and must be approved by the Program Director. The student may provide suggestions for potential committee members to the supervisor or Program Director.

### **Submission of the Research Essay and Assessment**

Your supervisor must approve that your Research Essay is ready to be submitted for examination. The supervisor does this electronically in consultation with the Program Administrator and the Program Director. You will then be instructed by the Program Administrator how to submit your Research Essay for examination. Unit deadlines for submission of research projects will be posted in each term.

The Program Director in consultation with the Supervisor will choose an examiner for the research essay. If either the supervisor or examiner requires a hard copy of the Research Essay, it is the student's responsibility to provide the faculty member with the hard copy. Otherwise, electronic copies will be circulated by the Program Administrator.

The examination committee will review the research essay, confer with each other, and decide on a letter grade. If they cannot mutually agree on a mark, they will each provide a mark and average the two marks in order to calculate the final mark. In all cases, the supervisor should inform the Program Director of the final mark and indicate whether the mark was mutually agreed upon or was an average of marks.

The examiner should provide the supervisor with a brief one paragraph assessment of the research essay that will be circulated to the student and a list of typos or corrections that required. The supervisor or examiner may also choose to provide marginal comments on the essay (as hard copy or electronic file) to the student. The student should complete any required revisions and correct any typos and submit the final version according to the instructions of the Program Administrator.

### **Submission of the MA Thesis, Assessment, and Oral Defence.**

Your supervisor must approve that your Thesis is ready to be submitted for examination. The supervisor does this formally through the e-Thesis system in Carleton Central. This process is completed electronically. You will then be instructed by the Program Administrator how to submit your Thesis for examination. Unit deadlines for submission of research projects will be

posted in each term. Usually, an MA Thesis must be submitted six weeks before the date of examination.

Once your thesis is submitted, the Program Director will form the examination committee in consultation with your supervisor (and with input from the student).

### **Oral Defence Procedures:**

The oral defence has a standard procedure.

1) Usually the first thing to happen is that the Chair will ask you to leave the room. Don't worry! This is a normal process. The examination committee will discuss procedures and any issues or concerns before the defence begins. You will be called back in when they are done.

2) At the beginning of the examination, you will be given the opportunity to make some brief comments about your work (c.a. 8-10 minutes). You should plan to have these prepared in advance as a short oral presentation. This is an opportunity to highlight the main arguments that you made in the thesis and the main scholarly contribution of the work. This is also an opportunity to explain things that may not be evident to the board from having read the thesis (for example, issues that arose during your research or issues with source material).

3) First round of questions — Each committee member, starting with the examiner, then the second reader, and then the supervisor, will have an allotted time period (10-15 minutes each) for one-on-one questions. The Chair's role is not to ask questions, but to keep everyone to time and to be sure that all examination procedures are followed. Committee members may ask more general questions (about conceptualization, theory, methodology, or contribution to scholarship) or more specific questions (questions about particular cases discussed, particular chapters etc). While you may be (understandably!) nervous, please keep in mind that the examination committee is trying to provide you with constructive, critical feedback. Stay calm, and try to think of the defence as an extended conversation about your project. Remember, you have undertaken the research for your project, so you are the expert on your topic!

4) Second round of questions — In the second round, each committee member will have the opportunity to pose follow up questions. The second round can often be a more interactive roundtable discussion. Usually it is shorter than the first round.

5) Committee Deliberation — After the conclusion of both rounds of questions, you will be asked once again to leave the room so that the committee may consult with each other and come to a final evaluation. The committee will judge the oral defence "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." The Master's Thesis will be graded: "Accepted", "Accepted after minor revisions," "Accepted after Major Revisions," or "rejected." The committee will present the candidate with lists of typographical errors or corrections and any revisions that are required. The supervisor must approve that the revisions are done satisfactorily before the submission of the final copy.

### **After the Thesis Defence — Submitting Final Filing Copies**

After completing corrections and revisions of the thesis, and once receiving approval that the changes are completed from their supervisor, students should submit an electronic version of the Final Copy of their thesis via e-Thesis system in Carleton Central. Be sure to note the deadline for submitting the final thesis copy to be eligible for graduating in a given term. These deadlines are included in the Academic Year calendar:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>