

GUIDELINES: THE MASTER'S RESEARCH ESSAY (MRE)

Students wishing to pursue an MRE must identify a Supervisory team, take the research methods class (INAF 5015), and complete the research proposal in their first year of study.

Supervision

MREs are supervised by a Supervisory Team consisting of a Supervisor and an Advisor or Co-supervisors.

Supervisors must be NPSIA faculty members. Students are responsible for identifying a Supervisor and seeking their approval to supervise. Please familiarise yourself with the [Responsibility and Expectations Policy](#) developed by Graduate Studies.

Co-supervision requirements: MA/JD students must have a **co-supervisor** from University of Ottawa Law School; Latin American Studies and African Studies Specialisations require a co-supervisor from these respective programmes. For MREs with co-supervisors, advisors are optional.

Advisors (second readers) should be identified in consultation with the Supervisor and their participation should be finalised early in their research process. Advisors are recognized experts in the subject area and can be any of the following:

- Faculty members at NPSIA, other relevant departments at Carleton, or another university;
- NPSIA fellows or senior fellows or adjunct professors;
- Government officials such as analysts, diplomats in any department or agency relevant to the work;
- Experts at non-governmental organizations, including think tanks.
- A retired person or expert outside of the above list who is identified in consultation with the Supervisor.

The Proposal

Proposals are due on March 1 using the Research Proposal Form. Proposals are approved jointly by the Proposed Supervisor and MA Associate Director.

The Proposal format should include the following information:

1. TENTATIVE TITLE
2. PROBLEM AND QUESTION. Describe the problem/puzzle/issue you are investigating, its relevance, and identify the research question or hypothesis you will be analyzing.
3. RELATED RESEARCH. List some principal sources and summarize their basic arguments as they relate to the above problems.
4. BASIC APPROACH. Describe what you plan to do in your research and how you plan to do it, i.e. the methods you will employ to collect and analyze information and evaluate your research question or hypothesis.
5. TENTATIVE CHAPTER TITLES

Research and Writing Process

MRE Prerequisite: Students must take INAF 5015 Research Methods (for Data Science students DATA 5000) in their first year of study.

MRE Course Credit: Students must register in the MRE course (INAF 5908 – MA/JD INAF 5906) continuously until the MRE is completed, per Article 8.2 of FGPA regulations.

MRE Length: The maximum MRE word limit is **15,000 words**, which is approximately 60 pages. This word limit applies to the entire text and includes bibliography and any appendices. Students wishing to submit longer papers must receive permission from their Supervisory team. Formatting requirements are less strict than for theses and should be discussed with your Supervisor.

Academic Integrity Policy: Students are subject to and should be familiar with [Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Research Ethics: Research involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by Carleton's Research Ethics Board (CUREB-A). Applications for ethics approval must be submitted prior to the commencement of the research. Students should familiarise themselves with the processes outlined by the [Office of Research Ethics](#), including the frequency of CUREB-A proposal reviews. Students need to plan sufficient time for the review and revision of their Application for Ethics Clearance.

Submission and Evaluation

MREs are evaluated jointly by the Supervisor and Advisor, or if applicable, Co-Supervisors.

When a research essay is completed to the satisfaction of the Supervisor, it is then submitted to the Supervisory team for evaluation. Three submission deadlines exist:

- April 1st for Summer Graduation
- August 1st for Fall Graduation
- December 1st for Spring Graduation

A student may insist on submitting a research essay that the Supervisor has deemed not ready for evaluation. In that case, the Supervisor and Advisor will evaluate the paper according to standard procedures.

Grading: The Supervisor and Advisor each evaluate the MRE. Together, they jointly determine the grade as per the normal NPSIA grading system. A minimum grade of B- is required to pass.

After Grading: The Supervisor conveys to the student the agreed grade, specifying any revisions required.

The Supervisor must certify that all revisions/corrections have been completed satisfactorily and the final grade submitted to the MA Associate Director prior to Carleton's grading deadlines to ensure graduation in a given term.