

**Department of Sociology and
Anthropology Carleton
University**

ANTHROPOLOGY Ph.D.

PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

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1) PURPOSE

The Research Preparation Portfolio is intended to be functionally comparable to comprehensive exams—at least the sort of comprehensive exams that are tailored to the needs of the individual student rather than attempting to cover the discipline as a whole. The student, Supervisor and, ideally, the Ph.D. Committee will formulate a strategy for study in the form of a Research Preparation Portfolio proposal, tailored to the student’s specific learning objectives and research goals. The student will create and maintain a portfolio consisting of materials that relate to the student’s learning objectives and research aims. The Portfolio Proposal form may be revised informally with the Supervisor as new issues and concerns arise, and the student can also consult with Committee members as they move along the program.

Beyond attempting to help the student get to the field by providing in one place an outline of all the things (intellectual and practical) that need to be done, the “scholarly preparation” portion of the portfolio aims to cover the ground that a traditional comprehensive exam would in terms of both breadth and depth of knowledge without creating an “event” that might cause undue stress and delay. This portfolio requires that students provide a set of written work (or other information, materials, and formats) that demonstrates proficiency in the ethnographic background regarding the proposed field site, in the anthropological and other relevant discussions of the topic of their research, and in the theoretical literatures they will draw upon in analyzing their topic and that will contribute to their research project. It is the responsibility of the PhD committee to ensure the adequacy of the students’ preparation in terms of their background knowledge and solid grounding in regional ethnography, and anthropological theory and methods that will enable students to produce a well-designed research proposal. It is also expected that students will be developing their ideas for the proposal from the very beginning of their program and that the portfolio will contain these materials in various stages and elaborations.

The committee will also review the student’s portfolio to assess the student’s progress toward their desired outcomes. If the student has demonstrated substantial progress toward fulfilling these outcomes and, in the opinion of the PhD Committee, is prepared to undertake PhD thesis research, then the student will be invited to present the portfolio materials during the Research Proposal and Portfolio defence. If considerable deficiencies exist, the PhD Committee may prescribe remedial action.

2) PROCESS

1st element: Self-Assessment and Learning Objectives (*middle of 1st term*)

During the first term of their doctoral studies, students will meet with their supervisor to discuss their learning objectives in the doctoral program. They will assess areas of strength and weakness as they relate to their research project. Students will be invited to reflect on their prior research work and other relevant experiences, on what they have learned prior to their PhD, on what they hope to accomplish and learn during their doctoral studies, as well as on where they would like to be in terms of their learning goals at the end of their doctoral program. They will also develop a learning plan for the rest of year one. These discussions should be integrated as part of the portfolio materials in the form of reflections and notes. Students may also begin to assemble their portfolio materials (see 3rd element below), with materials that demonstrate their prior preparation in terms of relevant theory, topical literatures, ethnography, and methodology (e.g., previously written essays, conferences papers, theses, etc.). This self-assessment with the Supervisor is intended to facilitate early identification of students' strong/weak areas for establishing learning priorities and may help students to orient their coursework and assignments towards meeting their learning objectives.

2nd element: Portfolio proposal form (*end of first year*)

At the end of their first year in the program and typically once they have completed their coursework, students will meet with their Supervisor and ideally with their Advisory Committee members to assess their first year and what has changed since they started their program in terms of their proposed research project and learning objectives in the program. Students will identify, with the approval of their Supervisor and ideally their Advisory Committee members, the remaining preparatory work necessary to continue developing their breadth and depth of knowledge as it relates to their research project. This process is formalized through the Portfolio Proposal form (see Appendix I), and pertains primarily to the ethnographic and contextual background, anthropological and other relevant discussions of the topic of their research, and theoretical literatures they intend to draw on in their analysis.

3rd element: Assembling the portfolio materials (*starting in first year, to end of second year*)

Students are encouraged to begin assembling materials in their portfolio as soon as they enter the PhD program. Once the portfolio proposal form is filled and approved by the Supervisor and Committee members, students work to complete the remaining "scholarly deliverables" (see next section) and any other remaining elements necessary to begin the proposed research. Typically, this work is done during the second year of doctoral studies, in conjunction with developing the research proposal and applying for ethics.

Students are responsible for assembling the portfolio, in consultation with the Supervisor first, then it is circulated to other Advisory Committee members for comment and final approval before the oral Research Proposal and Portfolio defence can take place (for more details on the oral defence, see [PhD handbook](#)). The portfolio can take different formats (e.g., blogs, Dropbox folder, hard copies), but is typically shared virtually with the Supervisor and Advisory Committee members unless otherwise specified. Students are responsible to provide their Supervisor and Advisory Committee members with the portfolio in their preferred format.

3) CONTENT

Students will consult with their Supervisor to decide how best to organize their materials in the portfolio so that the different sections are clearly demarcated. This can be done thematically, by material types, using a table of content, etc. The portfolio can work as storage for the collection of materials, as a workspace with a focus on the learning process, and/or as a showcase of various achievements. While there are different possibilities for how to visually organize materials, students may find it helpful to think of the materials as belonging to the following categories, as per the proposal form (see Appendix I).

- I) Ethnographic background
- II) Topical Background
- III) Theoretical Background
- IV) Methodological Skills
- V) Fieldwork preparation
- VI) Ethics

Students should refer to the portfolio proposal form in Appendix I for further guidance as to what to include in their portfolio.

Below is a list of common inclusions:

- **SELF-ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
 - Note from self-assessment meeting with Supervisor during 1st term
 - Prior relevant work (e.g., theses, papers, publications)
- **FUNDING APPLICATIONS** (e.g., OGS, SSHCR, Wenner-Gren Foundation)
 - In cases where students do not apply for any funding, they should include a brief description of their dissertation research topic (300-500 words)
- **TRANSCRIPT SHOWING ALL COURSEWORK COMPLETED**
- **ETHICS APPLICATION AND CLEARANCE LETTER** (if applicable)
- **UPDATED CV**
- **FIELDWORK PREPARATION**
 - Includes possibly budget; timeline; contacts; resources; location; language training; mastery of technology such as filming, recording, data analysis software; logistical issues such as visa, insurance, equipment, etc.

- **SCHOLARLY DELIVERABLES**

The bulk of the work included in the portfolio will take the form of “scholarly deliverables”, i.e., a set of written work (or in other formats) where students demonstrate their proficiency in the ethnographic and contextual background regarding the proposed field site, the anthropological and other relevant discussions of the topic of their research, the theoretical literatures they will draw upon in analyzing their topics, and the methodological approaches they intend to engage with. Students are invited to consult with their supervisor to discuss possible inclusions and expectations in terms of items and length.

This includes:

- Relevant term papers and other assignments from the doctoral program (reading notes, essays, critical book reviews, exploratory writings, etc.)
- Additional scholarly deliverables as per the portfolio proposal form, such as:
 - annotated and cumulative bibliographies;
 - reflexive notes;
 - critical essays;
 - critical book reviews;
 - synthesis of materials;
 - creative outputs.

- **REFLECTION ON HOW STUDENTS INTEND TO ENGAGE THEIR RESEARCH WORK ETHICALLY AND RESPONSIBLY**

Students are invited to reflect on how they intend to engage their research work ethically and responsibly. This is a different exercise than the one required by the Carleton’s Office of Research Ethics which focuses more on procedural aspects as it relates to ethics (e.g., data storage).

Here, students should instead reflect on some of the potential ethical challenges they may encounter in the field, some of the ethico-political issues their research work may open, and what it means, for them, to engage in ethical and responsible research in the complex context of their work.

- **ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS**

In addition to the above, students should include anything that is useful to the advancement of their research project. Beside materials in written format, students may include films, photo projects, blogs, audio files like podcast or sound recording, drawings, etc., that are related to their research projects.

NOTE: Sample portfolios from previous PhD students are available for students to review. (These portfolios are to be viewed in the department or accessed online; they are for personal use only and cannot be shared with others; requests are made through the Graduate Administrator or Graduate Coordinator).

APPENDIX I: PORTFOLIO FORMS

- A) Portfolio Proposal Form
- B) Portfolio Approval Form

A) Portfolio Proposal Form

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Anthropology Research Preparation

PORTFOLIO PROPOSAL FORM

The attached should be filled out by the end of the student's first year in the PhD program when they have completed their coursework, collaboratively between the Supervisor, the student, and ideally, the Advisory Committee Members. This form should then be signed in triplicate by the Supervisor and any Advisory Committee Members involved in this process, and subsequently by the Graduate Coordinator. One copy will be retained by the Supervisor, one by the student and a copy will be placed in the student's file in the department.

The aim of this form is to provide an opportunity for the student to discuss with their Supervisor and ideally their Advisory Committee members the necessary preparation required to conduct their research. The emphasis of these necessary preparations should centre on the "scholarly deliverables" and on what the Supervisor and any Advisory Committee members deem necessary in terms of preparation for fieldwork. The scholarly deliverables typically include a set of written work (or in other formats) where students demonstrate their proficiency in the ethnographic and contextual background regarding the proposed field site, the anthropological and other relevant discussions of the topic of their research, the theoretical literatures they will draw upon in analyzing their topics, and the methodological approaches in which they intend to engage.

Where indicated below in the spaces provided, please provide details of how a particular component will be fulfilled. Enter the date when the component is expected to be completed (see the usual timeline for completion in parentheses). As each component is completed and added to the Portfolio over the course of the student's progress, the student should check it off and enter the date.

The student then works on assembling the portfolio materials and completing the required scholarly deliverables, under the guidance of their Supervisor. Once all requirements have been fulfilled, the student must arrange to submit the completed Portfolio to the entire Advisory Committee for review a minimum of two weeks prior to the Research Proposal and Portfolio oral defence. The Advisory Committee must then hold a defense with the student in which both the Research Proposal and Portfolio are discussed (see [PhD handbook](#) for further information on the Research Proposal and Portfolio oral defence). At that time, the Portfolio Approval form (see Appendix I) must be completed and signed by the student and all Advisory Committee Members, and subsequently by the Graduate Coordinator. Any differences between the final Portfolio components approved and this proposal must be annotated and explained. Additional components added to the Portfolio subsequent to this agreement should also be listed. If minor components in section (8) are yet to be completed, this is acceptable as long as planned completion dates are indicated.

	COMPONENT	Expected Date	Date Completed
1	<p>Self-assessment and learning objectives (during the 1st term)</p> <p>May include notes from 1st meeting with Supervisor; prior relevant work</p>		
2	<p>Funding applications (e.g., OGS, SSHRC, Wenner-Gren) (1st term)</p> <p>In the absence of any application for funding, include a brief description of dissertation research topic (300-500 words)</p>		
3	<p>Updated C.V. (update as needed until portfolio approved)</p>		
4	<p>Transcript, showing all required coursework complete (typically end of 2nd term)</p>		
5	<p>Ethics application (if applicable) (typically end of 2nd year)</p>		
6	<p>Ethics clearance letter (if applicable) (typically end of 2nd year)</p>		

7. Scholarly Preparation /Deliverables (during second year)

Please indicate how each requirement is to be fulfilled in the spaces provided or on an attached sheet. Possible means of fulfilling these requirements could include: course term papers/response papers in the area combined with a more extensive bibliography of sources; annotated bibliographies; book reviews or short written works on specific topics, etc. Under methodological preparation, methodology courses or workshops to be completed (or previously completed) can be indicated, as well as other methodology reading or training to be completed.

	Preparation and deliverables	Expected Date	Date Completed
A	Ethnographic Background		
B	Topical Background		
C	Theoretical background		
D	Methodological approaches and skills		

8. Fieldwork Preparations (end of second year)

Insert details of how this is to be fulfilled, what contacts and affiliations will be sought, etc., in the space provided, and anticipated date for completion. The student should include a page at the end of the Portfolio documenting how these have been fulfilled. It is recognized that some of these components may not be entirely complete before fieldwork begins (e.g., language acquisition, establishing affiliations). In such cases, this can be noted on the Portfolio Approval Form (which follows) with an explanation of plans for completion. (Use not applicable [N/A] as needed – e.g., field language may not be required in case of domestic research)

	Component	Expected Date	Date Completed
A	Acquire field language skill		
B	Establish fieldwork contacts		
C	Establish institutional affiliation Research approvals Research visa for fieldwork		
D	Arrange travel logistic (e.g., collect travel advisory information, obtain passport, get health insurance, immunizations, visa, etc.)		
E	Budget for research Create funding statement (i.e., list anticipated funding source) and budget		
F	Other		

9. Reflection on intentions to engage research ethically and responsibly

Students are invited to reflect on how they intend to engage their research work ethically and responsibly. This is a different exercise than the one required by the Carleton’s Office of Research Ethics which focuses more on procedural aspects as it relates to ethics (e.g., data storage). Here, students should instead include a reflection on some of the potential ethical challenges and issues that relate to their research, and what it means, for them, to engage in ethical and responsible research in the complex context of their work.

	Component	Expected Date	Date Completed
	Individual Reflection		

10. Additional component to be included

List any additional components to be included in the Portfolio, that have been agreed upon by the student, Supervisor and Committee Members: e.g., additional course papers, reflective journal on research ideas and progress, record of networking/discussion with contacts, etc. Include expected dates for completion.

	Component	Expected Date	Date Completed

Signatures:

Date:

Student

Dissertation Supervisor

Advisory Committee Members

(optional)

Graduate Coordinator

B) Portfolio Approval form

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

<p>Anthropology Research Preparation</p> <p>PORTFOLIO APPROVAL FORM</p>
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This form should be filled out by the Supervisor at the student's Research Proposal and Portfolio oral defence, and signed by the student, the Supervisor, and Committee Members.

It should then be submitted for approval and signature to the Graduate Coordinator.

1. Please list any additional components that have been added to the Portfolio, that were not listed on the Portfolio Proposal form:

	Additional Component(s):	Date Completed

2. Please list and explain any additional changes that have been made to the components of the Portfolio, as originally outlined on the Portfolio Proposal form:

	Changes to original component (s):	Date Completed

3. Please indicate any components (from section 8 of the portfolio Proposal form) that have not yet been fulfilled and outline the target date and plans to fulfill them. This might include components such as language study and finalizing institutional affiliations.

	Outstanding Component(s)	Expected Date	Date Completed

The Portfolio has been satisfactorily completed and approved.

Signatures:

Date:

Student

Dissertation Supervisor

Advisory Committee Members

Graduate Coordinator

APPENDIX II: Anthropology PhD Checklist

ANTHROPOLOGY PhD CHECKLIST

– A quick guide for PhD Students and Supervisor Committees

The following checklist should serve as a guide for both students and faculty on the various stages of a typical or common PhD trajectory.

YEAR ONE, FALL TERM



COURSE SELECTION: Students must consult with their Temporary Supervisor on the selection of courses to take for both the Fall & Winter Terms. The "Course Approval Form" needs to be completed and signed off by both student and Supervisor.



SELF-ASSESSMENT MEETING BETWEEN STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR: Students will meet with their Supervisor to discuss their learning objectives in the doctoral program. They will assess areas of strength and weakness as it relates to their research project. They will also develop a learning plan for the rest of year one. This self-assessment with the Supervisor is intended to facilitate early identification of students' strong/weak areas for establishing learning priorities and may help students to orient their coursework and assignments towards meeting their learning objectives. These discussions should be integrated as part of the portfolio materials, in the form of reflections and notes.



FUNDING APPLICATIONS: Students typically apply to SSHRC and OGS during the Fall Term and are encouraged to develop their funding applications with guidance from their Supervisor. Students should plan ahead of the deadline to provide opportunities for feedback and revisions.



INITIATE PhD RESEARCH PORTFOLIO: Students are encouraged to begin assembling materials in their portfolio as soon as they enter the PhD program. During the first term, in addition to notes from their self-assessment meeting, they should include materials that demonstrate their prior preparation in terms of relevant theory, topical literatures, ethnography, and methodology (e.g., previously written essays, conferences papers, theses, etc.). They may also include funding applications, and as they progress during the term, any paper, assignments, and other relevant work completed during the term (e.g., publications, conference papers, etc.)

YEAR ONE, WINTER TERM

✓

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE: Students should approach TWO (2) faculty members to serve as Committee members in addition to their main Supervisor. Normally, Committee members are from Soc-Anth, but one can be a CU professor external to our department if the person's expertise is germane to the thesis project and they have FGPA supervisory privileges.

STUDENT-SUPERVISOR MEETINGS: Student-Supervisor meetings vary among students and faculty. However, it is important to meet fairly regularly (minimum once per term) to provide an opportunity to discuss and revisit learning objectives, monitor the student's progress, and continue developing the research project. Students should reach out to the Supervisor if they need to arrange for a meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Students should meet with individual committee members separately to discuss aspects of their research work on a need basis.

ASSEMBLING RESEARCH PORTFOLIO: Students continue to assemble materials for inclusion in their research portfolio, which should include, at the end of the Winter term, a transcript showing that all required coursework is completed, as well as term papers from their coursework.

YEAR ONE, SPRING/SUMMER TERM

✓

PORTFOLIO PROPOSAL FORM: At the end of their first year in the program and typically once they have completed their coursework, students will meet with their Supervisor and, ideally, with their Advisory Committee members to complete the Portfolio Proposal Form and to agree on the remaining preparatory work necessary to continue developing their breadth and depth of knowledge as it relates to their research project.

ASSEMBLING PORTFOLIO MATERIALS: Students begin working on their scholarly deliverables as laid out in the Portfolio Proposal form.

PROPOSAL: Students continue to work on their proposal, drawing on the work done in Research Design.

YEAR TWO, FALL TERM



ASSEMBLING PORTFOLIO MATERIALS: Students continue to work on their scholarly deliverables, including the reflections on how to engage their research ethically and responsibly.



PROPOSAL: Students continue to work on their proposal, drawing on the work done in Research Design.



STUDENT-SUPERVISOR MEETINGS: Student-Supervisor meetings vary among students and faculty. However, it is important to meet fairly regularly (minimum once per term) to provide an opportunity to discuss and revisit learning objectives, monitor the student's progress, and continue developing the Research Proposal and Portfolio. Students should reach out to the Supervisor if they need to arrange for a meeting.



COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Students should meet with individual committee members separately to discuss aspects of their research work, especially as it relates to their Research Proposal and Portfolio, on a need basis.



FUNDING APPLICATIONS: Students typically apply to SSHRC and OGS during the Fall Term and are encouraged to develop their funding applications with guidance from their Supervisor. Students should plan ahead of the deadline, to provide opportunities for feedback and revisions.

YEAR TWO, WINTER TERM



PROPOSAL AND PORTFOLIO ORAL DEFENCE: Before proceeding to the oral defence, students must submit both their Research Proposal and fully assembled Portfolio to the Supervisor and all Advisory Committee members, who are entitled to comment and request revisions. Typically students work more closely with their Supervisor first to develop a solid draft of their Research Proposal, and then share with the Advisory Committee until it is judged ready for defence (see [PhD handbook](#) for further details about the Research Proposal and Portfolio oral defence).



ETHICS APPLICATION: It is the responsibility of students to apply for ethics clearance and to familiarise themselves with the ethics process, forms, and deadline.

YEAR THREE



CONVERTING TA TO "OTHER DUTIES" FOR FIELDWORK PERIOD

(application due July 15) PhD Students may be eligible to have up to three (3) TA terms converted to 'Other Duties' in order to be able to conduct their field research (Fall and Winter terms). This is only available during fieldwork, which can range from 12-16 months (Note: There is no guarantee that this option is available at all times, as this depends entirely on the need for TAs by the department/university).

The process: Applying for "Other Duties": Due - July 15

- Student:
 - a) Complete the "Other Duties" application form in consultation with the Supervisor, who must sign off on it. This is only completed if the ethics, proposal, portfolio, and oral defence will be completed in time for fieldwork during the relevant term(s) [Submit to Graduate Coordinator via the Graduate Administrator]
 - b) Student must sign off on assigned 'Other Duties' in the TA Management System (this is a multi-stage effort requiring two rounds to sign off)
- Supervisor: Email Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Administrator the anticipated date for the proposal / portfolio defence if not done already and the date that the student will be 'IN the field'

* NOTE: Scheduling TA assignments is a massive task, and last-minute changes messes up the entire scheduling process. This is a time-sensitive process, so please keep these guidelines in mind. If in doubt, please contact the Graduate Coordinator or Graduate Administrator.

YEAR FOUR+



REGISTER IN THESIS WRITING SEMINAR FOR A MINIMUM OF TWO TERMS (offered in Fall-Winter terms). Students work on their draft chapters under the guidance of their Supervisor, and when relevant, with individual Advisory Committee members.



THESIS SUBMISSION AND ORAL DEFENCE: See [PhD handbook](#) for further details.