

Guidelines for MA Thesis Route

Unless a student has declared their intention to pursue the thesis option, and their supervisor(s) have approved this choice, all incoming MA students are registered in the course route option. In order to pursue the thesis option after the start of their program all students must declare their intention by filling out a Change of Program form no later than November 30th in the Fall Semester. This form is completed in the department main office in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. Alternatively, students pursuing the thesis option may also change to the course route option up to November 30th. The thesis option may require one less course, but it does require a substantially larger research and writing program, and should only be undertaken in consultation with your supervisor. It can be a challenge to complete in three semesters, but most students who embark on the thesis option do complete in that time, or early in the fourth semester. Whether you undertake the Major Research Paper (course) option or the Thesis option very much depends on your goals, your experience, your proposed research area, and the availability of potential sources. There are good reasons to undertake the thesis option, so please speak to your supervisor(s) and the Graduate Coordinator about the thesis program. The key to success with the thesis is having a feasible research question and getting a start on the thesis research as early as possible.

The “Information for Graduate Students” handbook outlines the course requirements for students enrolled in the thesis route Masters Degree, which are briefly: one required courses in each of Fall and Winter Semesters, and one additional elective taken in the Fall Semester. Once the course work is complete, thesis students will continue to enrol in HIST 9000 each semester until the program is completed. Unlike the Major Research Paper, which is considered a course (HIST 6999) of the Department of History, the thesis is considered a program requirement administered under the regulations of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). While enrolled in HIST 9000, and with all other program requirements completed, the student has a certain number of years to complete the thesis after which the student may appeal to SGS for an extension. This number is not set by the Department of History, but by the School of Graduate Studies, and it is SGS who should be consulted on this matter.

Using primary and secondary source materials, the student will write an original scholarly work on a subject developed in consultation with their supervisor(s). As per the departmental guidelines, the thesis is normally in the range of 100-120 pages, with the department average usually being in the 100-150 range. When a thesis is longer than roughly 120 pages the student should bear in mind that the manuscript will take longer for a supervisor to assess and advise on, and longer for examiners to assess. The MA thesis should have a clear argument, be based in part on original documentation, have introductory and concluding chapters, and have substantial historiographical contextualization. It must conform to the thesis format guidelines of the School of Graduate Studies, which can be found at:

https://www.mun.ca/sgs/go/guid_policies/Guidelines_Theses_and_Reports.pdf

The student will normally provide their supervisor(s) with a complete full draft of the thesis by the end of June of their third semester. Students should bear in mind that supervisors have their own busy schedules and should be consulted about schedules for submitting drafts of the thesis. Once the student has incorporated the supervisor’s suggestions and comments, and with the supervisor’s approval, the student submits a copy (in .pdf format) of the thesis to the Graduate Coordinator of the Department of History. The student’s supervisor is also required to complete two forms, which should be done in

consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. The regulations governing the submission of theses for examination, and links to information about the procedures for examination, can be found at:

https://www.mun.ca/sgs/go/guid_policies/theses.php and
http://www.mun.ca/sgs/masters_examinations.pdf

The Graduate Coordinator, and the Department of History's main office, will coordinate with the School of Graduate Studies regarding the examination of the thesis. The student is responsible for ensuring that the thesis conforms to the formatting regulations, and a thesis will be sent back to the student for revision if it does not. The examination is undertaken by two individuals who have been suggested as candidates by the student's supervisor, and who have informally agreed to undertake the assessment. Their informal agreement simply saves time when SGS approves the examiners list and the individual examiners are contacted formally by the Department of History, and provided with instructions and a copy of the thesis. The two examiners do not need to be within the Department of History, but should be someone with a degree of knowledge of the subject area, methodology, or some other aspect of the MRP. When examiners are external to Memorial University, the student should allow for some additional time for the examination process.

The examiners' assessments are collected by SGS and forwarded to the Department for distribution to the student and supervisor. There is no oral component to the examination of MA theses in our Department. The MA thesis does not receive a grade, but can be awarded one of several results: pass, pass with revisions, rejection. In the case of pass with revisions, the Graduate Coordinator will coordinate with the supervisor, who normally monitors and approves the revisions. In some cases an examiner may require revisions before they will award a pass to the thesis, in which case the Graduate Coordinator will adjudicate that process. Once the thesis is passed, and revised if necessary, the thesis should be submitted to the university by the student, following the procedures outlined under Section 5 of the instructions which can be found at https://www.mun.ca/sgs/go/guid_policies/theses.php

Suggested Timeline:

- * Autumn Semesters: develop thesis research question and sources in consultation with supervisor(s), where possible develop the historiographical background for the MRP and appropriate research methods, locate primary sources
- * January-May: conduct primary and secondary research
- * May-June: write a full draft of the thesis
- * late June: submit full draft to supervisor
- * Early to Mid July: revise the draft, complete any additional research/reading as required
- * Mid-July: submit thesis to the Department of History
- * End of August: deposit final formatted copy with the Memorial University Library system

(revised 08/18)