

HOW TO



Prepare Your Summary of Research Interests

OVERVIEW

As part of your application to the Arctic & Subarctic Futures Graduate Programs (Master's and PhD pathways), please prepare a **one-page summary** of your research interests that includes: (1) *Your potential research focus*; (2) *How your research interests connect to the program*; and (3) *Your commitments to working with Northern communities, governments, and/or organizations*.

What is a summary of research interests?

A **summary of research interests** is a short document that provides a brief overview of the work you intend to complete through your graduate program. This summary is one of five components of your application package, which the acceptance committee will use to determine if your interests and experiences align with the program and connect with the goals and priorities of Northern communities, governments, and/or other organizations.

As you prepare your summary, remember to be confident in your skills and abilities. Your summary is your opportunity to demonstrate how your knowledge and experiences make you an ideal candidate for the program, and show that you are self-motivated and passionate about your project.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about the program: Dr. Ashlee Cunsolo, Vice-Provost, Labrador Campus & Dean, School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies (ashlee.cunsolo@mun.ca).

For additional guidance on preparing your summary of research interests: Dr. Alex Sawatzky, Knowledge Mobilization Manager, Labrador Campus & School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies (asawatzky@mun.ca).

For information on graduate student funding opportunities: Chelsea Arbour, Project Coordinator, Research Support & Advancement, Labrador Campus & School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies (chelsea.arbour@mun.ca).

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the [School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies faculty member](#) they are interested in having as a supervisor to discuss their interests and potential research projects before to applying to the program.

Application package components for Master's and Ph.D. programs:

1. **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**, outlining your academic, professional, and personal experiences.
2. **Most recent transcripts** (e.g. graduate, undergraduate).
3. **Two letters of reference** (1 academic source + 1 professional or community source).
4. **One sole- or first-authored writing sample** (e.g. academic, report, policy, or creative).
5. **One-page summary of research interests.**

Recognition of prior learning, professional background, lived experience, and cultural knowledge are included in acceptance decisions.

Once you have prepared all components of your application package, please apply through the [Memorial University School of Graduate Studies Website](#).



SAMPLE TEMPLATE

We put together the following template to help you develop a concise and clear summary. Your summary should fit onto one page of a Word Document (approximately 500 words, single-spaced, using 12pt font).

Please use the seven numbered headings provided. Then, for each heading, we've listed a few guiding questions for you to consider in developing that section of your summary. These questions are meant to guide you in identifying your research interests, connecting them to the program, and demonstrating your commitment to working with Northern communities, governments, and/or other organizations.

Remember: Please use the seven numbered headings provided, but otherwise, this is a general template that you can modify and expand upon to suit your specific research interests.



1

Introduction (~75 words)

Briefly overview your research interests, emphasizing the **relevance and significance** in Northern contexts. Highlight the **specific challenges or opportunities** identified and experienced by Northern communities, governments, and/or organizations that you aim to address through your work. And remember to include why you, personally, are interested in and motivated by this research!

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- What is my overarching research interest or area of focus?
- Why am I interested in this area? What specific questions do I want to answer?
- What knowledge, skills, and experiences do I have that make me well-suited for doing this work?

2

Goals and Objectives (~50 words)

State the main research question and objectives of your research in a concise and clear manner. This is where you get to share your research or **overall big picture question**, and the steps you will take to explore this question.

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- What is the main question driving my research?
- What are the steps I will take to explore my question (i.e. my smaller questions/objectives)?
- How will my work contribute to addressing and responding to Northern challenges or opportunities?

3

Connections with the Program (~50 words)

Connect the focus and goals of your project with the [Arctic & Subarctic Futures Program](#).

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- How do my research interests align with the program's objectives or areas of expertise?
- Why is the Arctic & Subarctic Futures program the right place for you to do this work?

4

Commitments to Communities, Governments, and/or other Organizations in the North (~75 words)

Highlight your **commitment** to working with Northern and/or Indigenous communities, governments, or organizations. Describe your approach to **community engagement**, including strategies for building partnerships, involving stakeholders, and ensuring the research is respectful of local cultures, values, and knowledge systems.

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- How will my research respond to challenges identified by communities, governments, and/or other organizations in the North?
- What strategies or approaches will I use to collaborate and engage with communities, governments, and/or other organizations in the North?

5

Proposed Methods / Approach (~100 words)

Outline how you plan on addressing your research questions, and what **techniques or approaches** you will use. Consider including details about data collection methods (e.g., interviews, surveys, observations), recruiting participants for your research, and any **special considerations** for working in Northern communities, such as decolonial research approaches, Indigenous-led research, community-based participatory research, arts-based methods, and/or culturally sensitive approaches.

Address the **ethical considerations** specific to your research in Northern and Indigenous contexts. Discuss measures you will take to ensure the well-being, privacy, and informed consent of research participants. Consider any special considerations related to Indigenous research protocols, ownership of data, or intellectual property.

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- How do I intend to find answers to my research questions?
- What techniques or methods do I plan on using to answer my questions within this area of research? Why did I choose this approach?
- How will I make sure that my project is ethical, and aligns with Indigenous research protocols?

6

Potential Contributions (~100 words)

Describe the **anticipated outcomes or findings** of your research. Emphasize how these outcomes will contribute to knowledge development, policy formulation, or practical applications in Northern communities, governments, or organizations.

Explain the **broader significance and potential impact** of your research in Northern contexts. Discuss how your findings could inform policy, practice, or decision-making, and contribute to sustainable development, cultural preservation, or improved quality of life in Northern communities.

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- How could my research findings potentially inform policy, practice, decision-making, or further research in Northern contexts?
- What are my long-term goals and aspirations in terms of research and work with Northern communities, governments, and/or organizations?

7

Conclusion (~50 words)

Summarize the key points of your research and its [alignment with the Arctic and Subarctic Futures program](#), as well as **connections** with the unique characteristics and needs of Northern contexts.

Reiterate your commitment to **working collaboratively and respectfully** with Northern communities, governments, or organizations to achieve meaningful outcomes, and highlight your **excitement and enthusiasm** for this research and why you would be a great fit in our unique program!