



Master of Environmental Studies

Thesis Mini-Prospectus (updated Fall 2022)

Name:

ID Number:

Email:

Student Final Submission (date):

Faculty Reader Approval (date):

MES Director Approval (date):

The mini-prospectus is *required* of any MES student that intends on collecting data for their thesis before completing Case Studies & Thesis Design, the last core program. These are similar to the questions that are on the Full Prospectus (which has 5 additional questions). Students completing a mini-prospectus need to ask a current MES faculty member to read and approve their mini-prospectus. You will not be officially assigned a thesis reader until the quarter you are in Case Studies & Thesis Design.

- 1) Working title of your thesis¹.
- 2) In 250 words or less, summarize the key background information needed to understand your research problem and question.
- 3) State your research question(s).
- 4) Situate your research problem within the relevant literature. What is the theoretical and/or practical framework of your research problem?
- 5) Explain the significance of this research problem. Why is this research important? What are the potential contributions of your work? How might your work advance scholarship?
- 6) Summarize your study design². If applicable, identify the key variables in your study. What is their relationship to each other? For example, which variables are you considering as independent (explanatory) and dependent (response)?
- 7) Describe the data that will be the foundation of your thesis. Will you use existing data, or gather new data (or both)? Describe the process of acquiring or collecting data³.

- 8) Summarize your methods of data analysis. If applicable, discuss any specific techniques, tests, or approaches that you will use to answer your research question.
- 9) List any specific reviews you must complete before data collection (e.g., Human Subjects Review or Animal Use Protocol Form).
- 10) List specific research permits⁴ or permissions you need to obtain before you begin collecting data (e.g. landowner permissions, agency permits).
- 11) Provide the 5 most important references you have used to identify the specific questions and context of your topic, help with issues of research design and analysis, and/or provide a basis for interpretation. Annotate these references with notes on how they relate to/will be helpful for your thesis. For any other sources cited in your prospectus in other answers, provide a complete bibliographic citation here as well.

¹ You are not locked into this title; we want you to identify the main point or topic of your thesis.

² You might discuss selection of case studies, sampling methods, experimental design, and/or specific hypotheses you will test. You should also address any specialized knowledge or skills that are necessary to complete the research.

³ If you are planning to use existing data, explain the specific source, contact information, arrangement with collaborating agencies, and expectations about use of data and final products of your research. If you are planning to gather new data, describe specific methods, time, place, and equipment that will be required.

⁴ If you are collecting ANY samples or data, even observational data, on public lands (city, county, state and/or federal) it is your responsibility to find out the permit requirements BEFORE you collect data. Conducting research with tribal members/on tribal lands will have different and additional requirements.