

MLIS THESIS OPTION

Students who have achieved an A- (3.7 GPA) or higher average in their first eight MLIS courses may consider the thesis option in lieu of four half-credit elective courses. Thesis work is subject to School approval and is undertaken according to the research standards required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The thesis must display original scholarship expressed in satisfactory literary form and be of such value as to merit publication.

Please review this document in its entirety; the table of contents is provided for easy reference.

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1. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are expected to have read the FGS regulations for [Thesis Supervisors and Supervisory Committees](#), and [FGS Thesis Regulations](#).

When MLIS students undertake the writing of a thesis, they assume several [responsibilities](#):

- to choose a topic (often with the supervisor's help) and to produce a thesis that is their own work;
- to produce a thesis which meets the standards of scholarship required by the University and SIM, including demonstration of their capacity for independent scholarship and research in their field;
- to acknowledge direct assistance or borrowed material from other scholars or researchers;
- to realize that the supervisor has other duties which may at times delay the student's access to the supervisor at short notice;
- to give serious and considered attention to advice and direction from the supervisor;
- to submit their work to the judgment of SIM and to abide by its decision when any rights of appeal, if exercised, have been exhausted;
- to familiarize themselves with SIM and University regulations and standards to which the writer of a thesis is required to conform;
- to present their thesis research at a SIM public lecture.

“Thesis research is to be presented at a SIM public lecture.”

i. SELECTION OF TOPIC AND SUPERVISOR

Students considering the thesis option should meet with the SIM Director to discuss the topic, selection of a supervisor, the potential timeline, and course selection.

NOTE: It is beneficial to complete a reading course in the area of interest prior to beginning work on the thesis.

ii. THESIS PROPOSAL



The Thesis Checklist will ensure that important details are not missed. Please attach the completed Checklist to your Thesis Proposal; you may want to keep a copy for your own records.

A thesis proposal will vary depending on the nature of the proposed research; however, as a minimum the following must be addressed:

- Title
- Introduction explaining the rationale for the research
- Review of the literature providing the context for the research
- Purpose of the research expressed as a research question or research hypotheses
- Methodology (including a copy of data collection instruments, as appropriate)
- Timeline for the research
- Funding requirements

The thesis proposal must be approved by the Supervisory Committee. A copy of the approved thesis proposal must be submitted to SIM.

Approved thesis proposals must be submitted to FGS no later than one week before the start of class in any term and final approval must be received within the first two weeks of classes.

Download the [Thesis Checklist & Proposal Form](#)

iii. ETHICS APPROVAL



Thesis research projects involving human subjects must receive ethics approval from one of the Ethics Review Boards at Dalhousie (or, as applicable, an Ethics Review Board in the institution where research will be undertaken). Most MLIS theses research projects will be submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Ethics Review Board for approval. Further details about ethics requirements and guidelines for application are available from Dalhousie's [Office of Research Ethics Administration](#).

iv. FUNDING

Students enrolled in a thesis are eligible to apply for a [Graduate Thesis Student Conference Travel Grant](#).

v. REGISTRATION

Students must register for INFO 9000x/y Thesis

Students who have completed all of their MLIS Program courses and have only to complete their thesis must register each term for INFO 9003 Thesis Continuing and REGN 9999.

vi. ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Every student who has opted to complete a thesis is required to submit an [Annual Progress Report](#) to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, through the MLIS Program Coordinator. This report is due on an annual basis, one month prior to the anniversary of the student's admission date. Failure to submit this report may result in delays in registration and funding.

vii. THESIS FORMAT GUIDELINES

For queries about thesis preparation contact the Senior Thesis Clerk (thesis@dal.ca).

MLIS students are responsible for ensuring that their theses manuscripts comply with all aspects of the FGS regulations for [Preparation of Manuscript & Submission of Theses](#).

All theses must be prepared according to the [Thesis Submission & Formatting Guidelines](#) established by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. These guidelines set out style, paper requirements, order of contents, etc.

Review the [Common Thesis Format Review Comments](#) on the FGS site.

viii. THESIS FORMAT CHECK

Title page, signature page, and table of contents are included as well; these are the pages most likely to contain errors.

NOTE: a signature page with an error must be re-signed by all Examining Committee members, often at great expense if couriered.

Students are required to submit a paper or an electronic copy of their thesis to FGS for an initial format check before the thesis defence. For this purpose, a paper copy can be delivered to room 314 of the Henry Hicks; electronic copies (in PDF/A format) can be emailed to thesis.review@dal.ca.

ix. ELECTRONIC THESIS SUBMISSION

FGS has moved to electronic submission of theses as PDF/A documents. As of October 1, 2010 all theses must be submitted electronically. Please view [eTheses guidelines](#) for further details on submission.

x. DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION

Theses submission deadlines are established by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for details see the [Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar](#)). Since these deadlines are for submitting the final approved thesis, students who wish to meet a particular deadline must plan to submit their thesis for examination at least one month prior to the Faculty of Graduate Studies deadline. The External Reader must be granted sufficient time to read and comment on the thesis, and the student must allow time for possible revisions.

2. THESIS SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES



Thesis Supervisors are expected to have read the FGS regulations for [Thesis Supervisors and Supervisory Committees](#), and [FGS Thesis Regulations](#).

A thesis supervisor must be a member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and will normally be from SIM ([see regulations](#)).

When faculty members accept the supervision of graduate students, they assume several [responsibilities](#):

- to provide reasonable access to students and to be available for consultation at relatively short notice;
- to be as helpful as possible in suggesting research topics and in assisting students to define their theses;
- to tell students approximately how long it will be before written work, such as drafts of chapters, can be returned with comments;
- to be thorough in their examination of thesis chapters, supplying, where appropriate, detailed comments on such matters as literary form, structure, use of evidence, relation of the thesis to published work on the subject, footnoting, and bibliographical techniques, and making constructive suggestions for rewriting and improving the draft;
- to indicate clearly when a draft is in a satisfactory final form or, if it is clear to the supervisor that the thesis cannot be successfully completed, to advise the student accordingly;
- to know the departmental and University regulations and standards to which the writer of a thesis is required to conform, and to make sure that the student is aware of them;
- to continue supervision when on leave, possibly with arrangements also being made for members of the supervisory committee to assist the student for the leave period;
- to advise and help the student to approach other faculty members for assistance with specific problems or even to request the reading of a chapter or section of the thesis;
- to see that all ethics approvals as appropriate, are secured;
- to notify the MLIS Program Coordinator in the case of an outright rejection or a rejection with a right to resubmit.

3. SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE



Members of the Committee are selected by the thesis supervisor, in consultation with the student, and approved by the SIM Director. The Committee should complement the expertise available to the student in completing their research program ([see regulations](#)).

The Supervisory Committee is comprised of three members. It normally consists of two faculty members from the School of Information Management, one of whom is the direct thesis supervisor, and one external member.

All members of the committee must be acceptable to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Normally the agreement of all committee members is required before a department brings forward a thesis for examination ([see regulations](#)).

4. EXAMINING COMMITTEE



The Examining Committee is comprised of four members. It is composed of the SIM Director as Chair, a minimum of two members of the Supervisory Committee, and one External Reader who was not on the Supervisory Committee (preferably, external to the School). Recent External Readers have been external to Dalhousie.

The SIM Director, in consultation with the student's thesis supervisor, will select the External Reader. When the External Reader has been confirmed, the student and the supervisor must not have direct contact with the Reader until the examination is completed.

5. EXAMINATION



The thesis supervisor submits the thesis, in written form, to all members of the Examination Committee in a timely manner.

Examination of an MLIS thesis is conducted by the Examining Committee either by use of oral defence or by written submission.

A thesis will normally be assessed according to the following Faculty of Graduate Studies categories:

- approved as submitted;
- approved upon specific corrections being made (a clear timetable for completion of the revisions must be presented to the student, normally with a maximum of one month to complete the revisions);
- rejected but with permission to re-submit a revised thesis for re-examination (a clear timetable for completion must be presented, normally with a maximum of one year to re-submit);
- rejected outright.

In the case of an outright rejection or rejection with a right to re-submit by a specific date, the MLIS Program Coordinator must send a written notification of failure to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. A thesis that is "rejected outright" results in failure of the MLIS program.

In exceptional cases, with the unanimous agreement of the examiners, the designation "Approved with Distinction" may be awarded.

All members of the Examining Committee must sign the thesis signature page for an approved thesis. All signatures must be original.

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