



evergreen

Master of Environmental Studies

Thesis Prospectus 2022-23

Name:

ID Number:

Email:

Student Final Submission (date):

Faculty Reader Approval (date):

MES Director Approval (date):

- 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) Address the ethical issues⁴ raised by your thesis work. Include issues such as risks to anyone involved in the research, as well as specific people or groups that might benefit from or be harmed by your thesis work, perhaps depending on your results. List any specific reviews you must complete first (e.g., Human Subjects Review or Animal Use Protocol Form).
- 10) List specific research permits⁵ or permissions you need to obtain before you begin collecting data (e.g. landowner permissions, agency permits).

- 11) Reflect on how your positionality as a researcher could affect your results and how you will account for this in the research process⁶.
- 12) Provide at least a rough estimate of the costs associated with conducting your research, if any. Provide details about each budget item so that the breakdown of the final cost is clear.
- 13) Provide a detailed working outline of your thesis.
- 14) Provide a specific work plan and a timeline for each of the major tasks in the work plan. Be as realistic and specific as you can at this point, including the deadlines for Spring quarter.
- 15) Who (if anyone), beyond your MES thesis reader, will support your thesis (in or outside of Evergreen)? Be specific about who they are and in what capacity they will support your thesis. If you are working with an outside agency or expert, be specific about their expectations for your data analysis or publication of results.
- 16) 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're not sure where to start, consult a 'Code of Ethics' or other similar document from an academic society in an applicable field of study.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Your *positionality as a researcher* refers to the fact that one's "...beliefs, values systems, and moral stances are as fundamentally present and inseparable from the research process as [one]'s physical, virtual, or metaphorical presence when facilitating, participating and/or leading the research project..." (The Weingarten Blog 2017).