

Prospectus Template

A signed prospectus is required to be submitted to GER before enrollment in a Thesis course will be permitted to assure the thesis student and all members of the thesis committee are aware of the expectations.

Programs are encouraged to modify the main sections of this template as appropriate for your discipline.

The thesis prospectus is a document that provides a road map for the proposed thesis. It is intended to get you thinking about your project early enough to ensure completion in a timely fashion. Below you will find a suggested template outlining the elements for a strong prospectus. Please incorporate as many of these elements as possible. This document also serves to assure that all members of the committee, the department chair, and the graduate student are all aware of, and in agreement with the scope of the thesis at an early point in the student's degree program.

To achieve this, all thesis students must submit a signed prospectus (i.e., approved by the academic program) to Graduate Education and Research (GER) before they will be cleared for enrollment in a thesis course. Failure to submit a prospectus to GER will block the student's ability to enroll in their required thesis course. The narrative of the prospectus should be less than 3 pages in length (single-spaced, 12 pt font), not including the required title page (see below). It is very important that all elements of the title page be completed, including the thesis title, student's full name, the printed name of the thesis chair, committee members, and department chair (with original signatures), and an acknowledgement regarding the status of your application to either UCM's Human Subjects Committee or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

It is expected that the direction of the thesis might change after the prospectus is submitted. In the event that changes are required, the student should work with their thesis advisor to develop these changes. The planned changes should be communicated to all committee members through email or letter to document the planned revisions.

I. Introduction

The introduction paragraph must frame the importance/relevance of the thesis topic and culminate with the identification of the **research question** to be addressed in the thesis. Adequate information should be provided to establish the research question as unique or justified to be in need of further exploration, and warrant a thesis-length in-depth response.

II. Literature Review/Knowledge Gap

This paragraph should assess previously published approaches to your research question, focusing on the merits and limitations of existing scholarship in the discipline. In this section, comment on how your own proposed response to the question develops, challenges, departs from, or fills in the gaps of existing scholarship.

III. Primary Sources

In this section you will identify the primary sources that will frame your thesis research. You should discuss the location and accessibility of these sources, demonstrate your ability to use these sources in their original languages, and critically assess (where applicable) editions of such primary sources. This could be just a bulleted list of your main primary sources and where you can access them. At this point in the process you may be uncomfortable with this portion because you may only have skimmed these sources to identify if they are useful to your thesis. This is okay.

IV. Methodology

The methodological approach should be current, practical, and unique when possible, but must be appropriate to address your main research question and achievable with resources available to you. You should consider the ways your methods will compare to, contrast with, or otherwise relate to the approaches of existing peer-reviewed, published work on your topic. This section should be no more than 2 paragraphs when possible.

V. Chapter outline

A tentative outline of the thesis chapters should be developed. Information should be arranged in such a way that demonstrates a logical and progressive flow to your thesis. Your focus should be on the main objectives and components of each chapter. Discipline-specific differences are expected in this section, as certain disciplines have very different approaches to the thesis format.

VI. Timeline

The thesis is a significant, multi-semester work that will be made available to the public through the UCM JCKL Digital Institutional Repository. This work should reflect the quality of a published article in a professional academic journal. The scope of this high quality learning experience will include the development of skills in research methods, public presentation, critical thinking, problem solving, and writing. While the timing of a thesis project is discipline-specific, a careful plan should be developed with your Thesis Chair to assure adequate time to develop these skills.

Sample 1st Page

Thesis Prospectus

(Student First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name)

700#: _____

Date: _____

(Department)

(Program)

Thesis Title:

Thesis Student: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thesis Committee Chair: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thesis Committee Member: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Thesis Committee Member: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Department Chair: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Institutional Review Board:

Human Subjects Approval needed: ___ Yes ___ No (Check one)

Animal Care and Use Approval needed: ___ Yes ___ No (Check one)