

# The thesis proposal

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# Purpose of the Proposal

- Intended to demonstrate that you have :
  - defined a problem or issue
  - an organized plan for addressing it
    - Collection of field samples or laboratory data to address problem; field work
  - Determined appropriate methods of analysis
  - An agreement between you and your supervisor
    - Sets out what needs to be done
    - Defines the scope of the project
    - Clear route for achieving the goal and finishing on time



# Purpose of Proposal

- The proposal may change because of variety of unforeseen circumstances: it is research!
- Evaluation of proposal is not based on a solid proposal with zero chance of failure: it is research!
- Rather, we want to give you experience with the *process* and *structure* of research or tackling a problem
  - reasonable research idea
  - relate it to the relevant literature
  - justify its significance and relevance
  - identify methods for investigating it and the steps that will lead to a reasonable conclusion
  - thesis proposal is success regardless of whether you modify it

# Structure of Proposal

- Consists of these parts in this order:
  - Title page
  - Abstract
  - Table of contents
  - Introduction
  - Thesis objective(s): define problem or issue
  - Literature review: evidence of serious consideration of the literature
  - Description of Study site (may not be necessary if laboratory experiment)
  - Approach or Methods: (a) field, (b) laboratory
  - Expected or preliminary results and discussion
  - Work plan including time table
  - Implications of research (may or may not be necessary)
  - References (provided in format as defined in course outline)

# Title page

- A short, descriptive title. Should be self-explanatory. No longer than necessary; snappy but informative.
- Author (i.e. you), institution, department, supervisor(s), and date



# Abstract (optional for proposal)

- Brief summary of the thesis proposal
- Should not exceed 200 words
- More explicit details when we talk about how to write an abstract



# Table of Contents

- List all headings and subheadings with page numbers
- Indent subheadings



# Introduction

- Review what is known about your proposed topic; *hint*: should really capture reader's interest
- Explain the background of your study from a broad picture narrowing in on your research question
- Should be written at a level that makes it easy to understand for readers with a more broad and general understanding; should not be for the narrow specialist



# Thesis objective(s)

- State your thesis in a couple sentences
- Can be in the form of a hypothesis, research question, project statement, or goal statement
- Should capture the essence of your intended project and also help to put boundaries around it



# Literature review

- Review what is known about your research topic; only the most relevant to your thesis
- Cite relevant references
- Some thesis will require a substantial review of the literature which may be several pages; this section can usually be used directly as part of the final thesis



# Study Site

- If your topic involves field work, you should describe the study site
  - Location and Access; include map(s) usually local scale with inset of more regional scale map
  - Geological Setting and/or geological history
  - Any other relevant information regarding the study site relevant to where you conducted field visits and collected samples



# Approach or Methods

- This section describes your approach, materials and procedures
  - What methods will be used?
  - How will data be collected and analyzed?
  - What materials will be used?
- Include calculations, techniques, procedures, equipment and calibration graphs
- Citations should be limited to data sources and more complete description of procedures
- How much to put in thesis and how much to leave to citation: Enough so that anyone reading your thesis, they could repeat what you did
- Do not include any results or discussion of results here

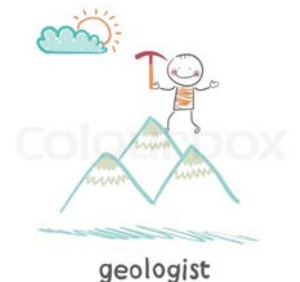
# Preliminary results and discussion

- Present any results you may already have
- Discuss how they fit into the framework of your thesis
- Remember to use tables and figures; they do say 1000 words



# Work plan including time table

- Describe in detail what you plan to do until completion of your thesis (Hint: remember to hind cast)
- List stages of your work in bulleted list or table (see Table example in Course Outline)
- Indicate deadlines or milestones for each stage
- Include presentation at Seminar Day



# Citations and List of references

- Cite all ideas, concepts, data that are not your own
- If you make a statement, back it up with data or a reference
- Use the format as given in Thesis Guidelines
- References are to be listed in alphabetical order by the first author



# Other information

- More details are given in the Thesis Guidelines on LEARN
- Deadline for submission is October 31, 2016
- Ensure your supervisor has a copy and deposit a copy in the Dropbox on LEARN
- This counts towards 15% of your final mark





# References

- Adapted from: Your BSc (Honours) Thesis Proposal. <http://ees.acadiau.ca/proposal.html>

