How to: Develop Research Question; Thesis Proposal

A thesis is an individual student effort; a creative, scholarly work developed from independent research. The research includes a literature review to delineate a problem or gap in knowledge, statement of objectives, formulation of hypotheses, explanation of methods, collection and analysis of data, report of results, discussion of conclusions, and an abstract.

It is the responsibility of the student to recruit three faculty members who are able to serve on the supervisory committee. The student must develop a thesis proposal, which summarizes the purpose of the research, the research question(s), the data and methodology to be used, the expected results, and expected timeline.

Suggested Timeline

Year 1

Fall (by end of semester)	Spring (by end of semester)	Summer
Identify thesis topic and committee chair	Submit thesis proposal to committee	Conduct research
Form committee	Schedule proposal defense for Fall	
Start writing proposal	Begin conducting research	

Year 2

Fall (by end of semester)	Spring (by end of semester/Graduate College deadlines)
Defend proposal	Finish writing
Complete data collection and analysis	Hold oral defense

Developing a Research Question

Tutorial: Developing a Research Question
ASU Library tutorial on developing research questions. Learning outcomes include:

- Differentiate between a research topic and research question
- Use characteristics of good research questions to successfully create one
- Articulate purpose of and ways you can construct a strong research question
- Apply guidelines for developing a research question using who, what, when, where, why, and how questions

How to Write a Research Question
The Writing Center at George Mason University discusses:

- what is a research question
- why it is essential to the research process
- steps for developing a research question
- research question examples (good and bad)

MUEP Thesis Proposal form
Submit to thesis committee to propose research question(s), the data and methodology to be used, the expected results, and expected timeline