



# Master of Health Studies (MHST) 719

## Thesis I: Proposal Development (Revision 1)

**Status:** Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision

**Delivery mode:** [Paced study](#)

**Credits:** 3

**Area of study:** Health

**Prerequisites:** [MHST/NURS 603 Facilitating Inquiry](#) AND one of [MHST/NURS 712 Advanced Qualitative Methods for Health Research](#) OR [MHST/NURS 713 Advanced Quantitative Methods for Health Research](#) .

**Precluded:** None

**Faculty:** [Faculty of Health Disciplines](#)

## Overview

*MHST/NURS 719 Thesis I: Proposal Development* is the first of two courses related to the completion of the thesis. The focus of *MHST/NURS 719* is thesis proposal development. The second course, *MHST/NURS 720 Thesis II: Conducting, Writing and Dissemination of Research*, follows *MHST/NURS 719* and focuses on engaging in thesis research and writing the thesis.

During *MHST/NURS 719*, students have the guidance of both the course instructor and their thesis supervisor. The course instructor is responsible for leading *MHST/NURS 719* and for assessing the students' adequacy in course activities. Students are expected to be in regular contact with their thesis supervisor throughout the course, keeping their supervisor informed of their progress in the course. The supervisor and supervisory committee will determine the adequacy of the thesis proposal and the outcome of the thesis proposal examination.

If the requirements of *MHST/NURS 719* are not completed by the end of the session, students will be permitted a continuation of up to 12 months in which to complete course requirements. A continuation fee equivalent to one course registration will apply.

## Course Structure

*MHST/NURS 719* is primarily an asynchronous, paced online course. The course instructor and the class members will participate in conference forums to discuss unit content and relevant, related issues.

In addition, a minimum of three synchronous real-time classes (called Webinars) will be scheduled throughout the term by the instructor in consultation with class members. The Webinars occur in Units 3, 5 and 6 and each is associated with a Required Activity. All students are required to attend and participate in the Webinars in order to achieve a Pass in the course.

The course includes Internet access to health-related Web sites around the world, participation in electronic mail, and computer conferencing with students from across the country. Students are expected to connect to an Internet Service Provider at their own expense.

# Outline

MHST/NURS 719 is comprised of the following units:

## **Unit 1: Setting Yourself Up For Success**

Unit 1 focuses on setting the stage for your success with your thesis. You begin by looking at your personal situation. Are you currently positioned to succeed at completing your thesis? You examine the factors that could influence your success and consider plans for overcoming barriers that you might identify. In this unit you consider what a master's thesis is and consider elements that make a well-written thesis. You also examine your relationship with your supervisor and determine strategies for establishing a successful relationship.

## **Unit 2: Selecting and Shaping Your Thesis Topic and Research Question**

In this unit you explore the most fundamental step in the development of your thesis proposal, selecting your research topic and determining your research question. Students often struggle with making their question researchable. During this unit you will focus on making sure your research question is researchable and of a scope appropriate to a master's thesis.

## **Unit 3: The Literature Review**

In Unit 3 you will explore the reasons why a thorough review of the literature relevant to your research topic is foundational to your study. You will consider alternative ways of approaching your review of the literature including a plan for organizing your citations and findings. The concept of the literature review as an ongoing evolving process will be discussed. By the end of Unit 3 you will be prepared to share a summary of your literature review with the class. Webinar I occurs at the end of Unit 3.

## **Unit 4: Understanding Research Ethics**

Unit 4 focuses on understanding research ethics and applying the principles of research ethics to your study. You will also have the opportunity to reflect on how you will maintain your own personal integrity and professionalism as you proceed through the thesis process. The research ethics application process at Athabasca University is reviewed and you will determine if other research ethics approvals are required for your study.

## **Unit 5: Mapping Your Research Plan**

Unit 5 focuses on your research design choices. Topics include defining and operationalizing key concepts, choosing a research paradigm, selecting the conceptual framework, deciding on participant selection processes, choosing

approaches to data collection, selecting the data analysis procedure, planning to enhance or maintain data quality, and identifying potential study limitations. Webinar II occurs at the end of Unit 5.

### **Unit 6: Mock Oral Research Proposal Examination**

During Unit 6 you will present your draft thesis proposal to the class, your instructor, your thesis supervisor and invited guests during the third real time Webinar session. This is a mock oral proposal examination..

### **Unit 7: Acquiring Funding and Other Resources**

In this unit you will explore funding opportunities available to graduate students at Athabasca University. You will also investigate other funding sources that may be available to you from external sources. You will consider other resources (beyond financial) that you may need to complete the planning, conduction, and dissemination of your thesis and determine strategies to acquire these.

### **Unit 8: Next Steps in the Thesis Process: Where Do You Go From Here?**

In the final unit of the course you will identify the next steps in your thesis journey. You will be encouraged to think about your thesis study as an element in a program of research. A dissemination of findings plan will be developed and you will consider elements of effective thesis writing. By the end of Unit 8 you should view yourself both as a life-long learner and as a life-long researcher.

## **Learning outcomes**

After completing MHST/NURS 719 , students will have:

- Presented selected elements of their thesis proposal in written and oral form to the class and received feedback from class members, the instructor and their supervisor.
- Provided substantive feedback to other class members regarding selected elements of their thesis proposals.
- Considered the ethical implications of the research design of their thesis proposal.
- Investigated funding sources to assist them with their research.
- Received approval from the supervisory committee of the thesis proposal.

- Received a “Pass” from the supervisory committee in the oral thesis proposal examination.

## Evaluation

MHST/NURS 719 is a Pass/Fail course. To receive a Pass in the course, students must achieve a Pass in each of the required activities.

A final grade (Pass/Fail) for MHST/NURS 719 will be assigned after the MOCK thesis proposal examination.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Research Question and Literature Review Forum Presentation	Pass/ Fail
Webinar Session I: Your Research Question and Literature Review	Pass/ Fail
Webinar Session II: Your Conceptual Framework, Sampling, Data Collection and Data Analysis Plan	Pass/ Fail
Webinar Session III: Mock Oral Proposal Examination	Pass/ Fail
Thesis Proposal	Pass/ Fail
Thesis Proposal Examination	Pass/ Fail

### Research Question and Literature Review Forum Participation

You will post a summary of your research question and literature review to a course forum and discuss the summary with your classmates online. You also will comment on the summaries of your classmates.

### Webinar Session I: Your Research Question and Literature

## **Review**

You will participate in a real-time Webinar in which each member of the class will share a summary of their research question and literature review and answer questions from classmates and the instructor. Following the session, you will submit a written summary of your research question and literature review to your course instructor and thesis supervisor.

## **Webinar Session II: Your Conceptual Framework, Sampling, Data Collection and Data Analysis Plan**

This Webinar gives you an opportunity to present selected elements of your thesis proposal to your classmates, course instructor and supervisor during a real-time Webinar Session. You will receive feedback and provide feedback to classmates.

## **Webinar Session III: Mock Oral Proposal Examination**

This Webinar gives you an opportunity to participate in a mock oral examination of your thesis proposal with your classmates, course instructor, supervisor, and invited guests (by mutual agreement) during a real-time Webinar Session. You will ask your classmates questions related to their proposals.

## **Thesis Proposal**

With the guidance of your supervisor and supervisory committee, you must develop a thesis proposal that will be approved by the supervisory committee. Consult with your supervisor and refer to the information available through the Faculty of Graduate Studies as you develop your thesis proposal.

## **Thesis Proposal Examination**

You must pass an oral examination of your thesis proposal. The examination is conducted with the supervisor and supervisory committee, in accordance with procedures set out by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Consult with your supervisor to plan the thesis proposal examination.

## **Materials**

MHST/NURS 719 comprises online, print-based course materials.

## Online Materials

- Introduction: Provides essential information about the course design and materials.
- Schedule: Outlines the timing of course activities.
- Units: Contains the units that comprise the course.
- Assessment: Outlines the assignments/evaluation procedure of the course.
- Reference: Listing of required readings and web sites included in the course.

## Textbooks





There are no print materials supplied with this course. There are many books and articles about writing a thesis available. For example, you might want to locate one of the following:

Burton, S., & Steane, P. (2004). *Surviving your thesis*. New York: Routledge.

Heppner, M., & Heppner, P. (2004). *Writing and publishing your thesis, dissertation and research: A guide for students in the helping professions*. Belmont, CA: Thomson.

Oliver, P. (2008). *Writing your thesis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

*Updated May 21, 2024*

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