November 2020

The Proposal Approval Meeting is a key step in the MA thesis/project process. At this event, the supervisor and second reader, in person, respond to theoretical, methodological, substantive, and practical elements of the student’s proposal. The main goal is to assess and refine the plan, and (if the plan seems strong enough) to launch the student into the work. Other goals are making sure that the student is working at a pace to get their work done within the funding window, and ensuring that the role of the second reader is clear to all.

The Chair conducts the meeting, acting as a representative of the Program and keeping an eye on the time and the process. The Chair is not required to read the thesis/project.

* The Chair **welcomes the candidate**, **goes through the possible outcomes** of the meeting as defined on MA Form C (which do not include failure if this is the first proposal approval meeting), and then **has the candidate leave the room**, reassuring them not to worry if the pre-discussion takes a bit of time.
* The Chair confirms with the supervisor and reader how much time the student has left to complete the thesis/project and **checks that the timeline is appropriate** – or, if missing, that it will be generated during the meeting.
* The Chair **invites the supervisor and reader to briefly review their appraisal of the work** and their lines of questions — the point here is to make sure they each know if the other has serious concerns or particular lines of questioning.
* The Chair **invites the candidate back** and questioning proceeds starting with the second reader.
* The Chair **asks the candidate out again** and examiners decide on the outcome. **If “committee directives” are included, the wording must be worked out during this time.** Also, this is a **good time for the readers to clarify their anticipated roles** in guiding the student going forward (e.g., will the second reader only read the penultimate draft, or will they be involved before? Various options are possible, so clarity is helpful.)
* The Chair **calls the candidate back and delivers the news**.
* If the proposal is deemed insufficient (“revise and resubmit”), the student will have one opportunity to rewrite the proposal and defend the revision within the following three months.