



# UNIGIS

## MSc. in Geographical Information Systems

### MSc. Project Proposal Form

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#### INTRODUCTION

This form is intended to satisfy two requirements:

- 1) To allow a prospective student to clearly and methodically produce a viable MSc research project proposal. This is achieved by careful consideration of aspects of the proposed work such as title, aims, objectives, scientific content, originality, ethics and health & safety etc.
- 2) To permit the MSc coordinator to assess the intended proposal, provide useful feedback and to make any changes deemed necessary.

Ideally, this form will be completed by the student **PRIOR** to the formal start of the MSc and giving enough time for the MSc coordinator to suggest changes, additions, revisions and guidance. It is the intention of the UNIGIS team that when the student begins his or her MSc project, this document will be sufficiently well written and formulated to allow a rapid and successful start. It is this document that will ultimately be passed to the student's own academic project supervisor.

A late submission of this document will **not** prevent a student from starting the MSc stage (assuming enough credits have been awarded at prior exam boards and fees are paid) but doing so may lead to a poor quality proposal which will have to be improved in collaboration with the supervisor before work can begin in earnest. **A failure to complete ethics and health & safety documentation – WILL PREVENT you from proceeding as both are a REQUIREMENT.**

As with all research proposals, you should seek to choose a subject that you will find personally rewarding, interesting and that will satisfy your academic curiosity. It is also important not to make the work geared too much to existing workplace commitments or technical. There is a great difference between a work project and an academic dissertation – so this must be reflected in both your project proposal and the final dissertation itself.

Please **DO NOT** write additional notes or write outside of the space provided. The form has been designed such that the amount of space provided in each section is enough for a correct response.

## PROJECT PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

**BEFORE** submitting this proposal, please consider whether you have adequately addressed the following points. Failure to meet these requirements would lead to a request for redrafting of the proposal and if left unaltered might seriously affect the efficiency and/or quality of your future M.Sc work



**Does your chosen topic match academic staff area of knowledge and expertise?**  
[choosing a topic that is unusual or unique may make it difficult to select an appropriate supervisor]

**Is your chosen topic relevant to your named degree pathway?**  
[Examiners will expect the subject matter of your thesis to match your degree pathway]

**Is there sufficient and appropriate GIS content in your chosen topic?**  
[All degree pathways must demonstrate use of GIS in some form]

**Have you secured permission for data or agreed workload changes from your organisation/employer (if appropriate)?**

**Have you read the online Resource pack, Grade Descriptors and past M.Sc Workshop documentation available from the UNIGIS-UK M.Sc website?**

### **VERY IMPORTANT**

**BEFORE** starting your M.Sc and at the time a final version of this proposal is formally submitted **YOU MUST COMPLETE AND ATTACH THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:**

**Ethics Checklist and declaration form** (latest version downloadable) -  
<http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/downloads/apcxviii.DOC> )

[You CANNOT continue your M.Sc UNLESS UNIGIS has received the completed ethics documentation]. The current available version is attached at the end of this project proposal form – please check the above link in case a revised version has become available before submitting the attached version

**Health and Safety Form**

[It is a requirement that you think clearly and objectively about any health and safety implications of your work. In many cases you will not need to address any issues other than use of computer equipment and using correct posture and taking regular breaks etc... however if your work requires fieldwork or laboratory analysis then you may need to consider additional hazards]

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You can discover the areas of specialist knowledge and expertise each academic staff member has from the UNIGIS-UK website

## **BASIC DETAILS**

NAME:	DATE:	INTAKE: (or 'DE' if direct entry)
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## **TITLE OF PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT**

*Title should be interesting, relevant and informative and grab the attention of the reader.*

## **WHY CONDUCT THIS RESEARCH?**

*What is your motivation for this work? Why is it acceptable for study at MSc level?*

## **RESEARCH AIM**

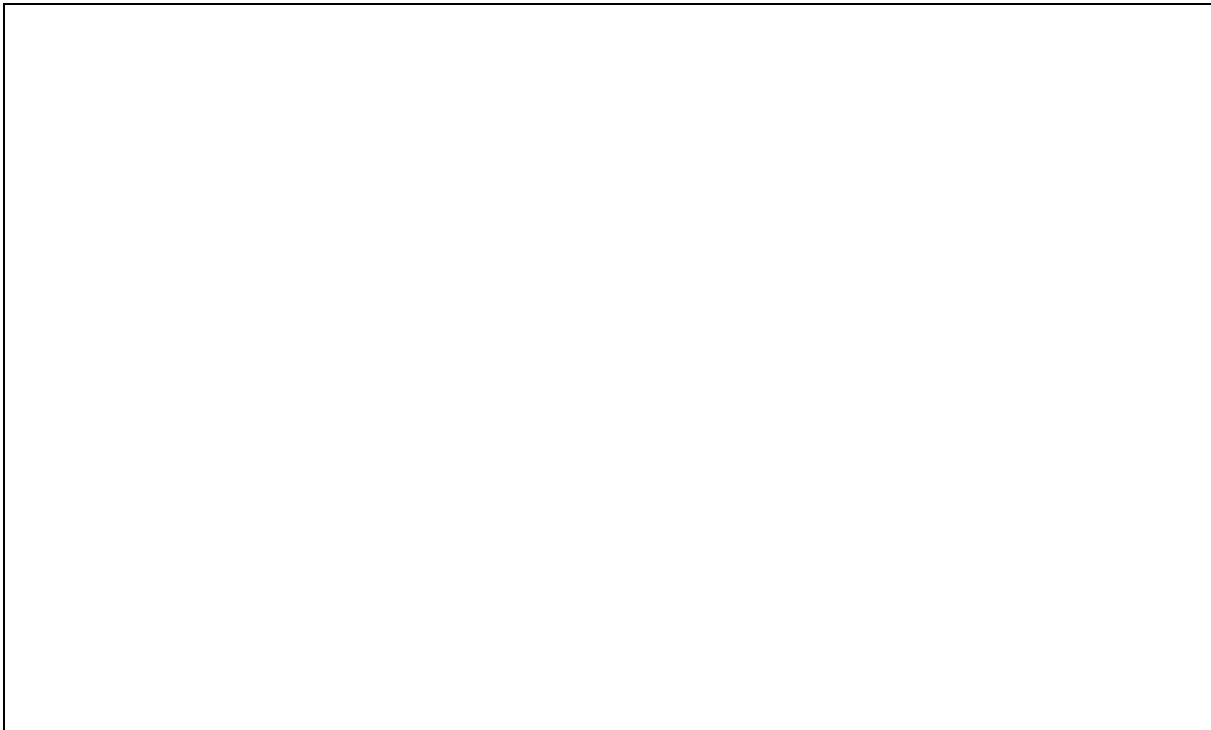
*This should state your research question – what exactly you want to achieve. This is a very important section and requires careful consideration. Avoid multiple aims.*

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**



*A bullet-point list of actions you intend to perform in order to address your Aim. These should be in the order you anticipate completing them. They should progress logically and allow the Aim to be successfully met. Avoid too many objectives – start with a review of relevant literature.*

## **SCIENTIFIC CONTENT & ORIGINALITY**



*What is your proposed methodological approach to data collection and analysis? Will you be using qualitative or quantitative means of acquiring and synthesising information? In what way is your work distinct and original – rather than using existing methods and approaches?*

## **RESEARCH TECHNIQUES**

*What are the research techniques you plan to use to fulfil the aim(s) of your project? State clearly if you intend to use, for example, interviews, questionnaires, remotely sensed data, database records etc and how will you analyse your data?*

## **DATA SOURCES AND BIAS**

*Briefly say what data you think you will need to collect/use for your work, where you expect your data to come from and what the quality of the data will be. State clearly any problems relating to experimental bias that your data may have (incomplete, poorly collected, small sample size etc)*

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

*State any ethical considerations you think your work may have. Have you permission to use data/information, will you respect the desire for (for example) of questionnaire respondents to remain anonymous? Are you using data that pertains to children, hospital patients or disadvantaged members of society?*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Please list any scientific (or peer reviewed) papers or documents that you have ALREADY consulted in preparation for this proposed work. To be sure your proposed work IS original and viable you should search for existing published material and use these references to help you formulate your aim, objectives and research techniques.*

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### Return completed forms to:

UNIGIS UK  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
Dept of Environmental and Geographical Sciences  
John Dalton Building  
Chester Street  
Manchester M1 5GD  
UNITED KINGDOM

### OFFICE USE ONLY

- ACCEPT AS IS
- ACCEPT WITH MINOR CHANGES
- NEEDS FURTHER WORK

DATE CHECKED:

BY:

# APPENDIX

## Ethics Documentation Health & Safety Documentation

## Ethics Check Form: Notes for Guidance

Before completing the Ethics Check Form the person undertaking the activity should consider the following questions:

		YES	NO	N/A
1.	Is the size of sample proposed for any group enquiry larger than justifiably necessary?			
2	Will any lines of enquiry cause undue distress or be impertinent?			
3	Has any relationship between the researcher(s) and the participant(s), other than that required by the academic activity, been declared?			
4	Have the participants been made fully aware of the true nature and purpose of the study?  If NO is there satisfactory justification (such as the likelihood of the end results being affected) for withholding such information? (Details to be provided to the person approving the proposal).			
5	Have the participants given their explicit consent?  If NO is there satisfactory justification for not obtaining consent? (Details to be provided to the person approving the proposal).			
6	Have the participants been informed at the outset that they can withdraw themselves and their data from the academic activity at any time?			
7	Are due processes in place to ensure that the rights of those participants who may be unable to assess the implications of the proposed work are safeguarded?			
8	Have any risks to the researcher(s), the participant(s) or the University been assessed?  If YES to any of the above is the risk outweighed by the value of the academic activity?			
9	If any academic activity is concerned with studies on activities which themselves raise questions of legality is there a persuasive rationale which demonstrates to the satisfaction of the University that:			
	i the risk to the University in terms of external (and internal) perceptions of the worthiness of the work has been assessed and is deemed acceptable;			
	ii arrangements are in place which safeguard the interests of the researcher(s) being supervised in pursuit of the academic activity objectives;			
	iii special arrangements have been made for the security of related documentation and artefacts.  <i>Appropriate expert advice should be sought as appropriate</i>			
10	Have the ethical principles and guidelines of any external bodies associated with the academic activity been considered?			

**Ethics Check Form**

1 Name(s) of Applicant:

2 Department:

3 Name of Supervisor:

4 Title of Project:

5 Resume of ethical issues:

6 Does the project require the approval of any external agency?  
YES/NO \*If YES, has approval been granted by the external agency?  
YES/NO \*\* *delete as appropriate*

7 Statement by Applicant

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge I have made known all relevant information and I undertake to inform my supervisor of any such information which subsequently becomes available whether before or after the research has begun

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

8 Statement by Supervisor/Line Manager (*please sign the relevant statement*)**Approval for the above named proposal is granted**

I confirm that there are no ethical issues requiring further consideration.  
(*Any subsequent changes to the nature of the project will require a review of the ethical considerations*):

Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approval for the above named proposal is not granted**

I confirm that there are ethical issues requiring further consideration and will refer the project proposal to the appropriate Committee\*\*

Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* For work forming part of an MMU taught programme– refer to Faculty Academic Standards Committee

\*\* For work forming part of an MMU research programme – refer to Faculty Research Degree Committee

\*\* For PhD by published work – refer to Research Degree Committee

\*\* For any other work – refer to appropriate Faculty/Department Committee or line manager.

