What to include in your research proposal

The research proposal should outline the research project that you would like to conduct for your Major Research Paper or Master’s Thesis (no proposal is required for applicants to the course-based stream). Its length should be 1 to 2 double-spaced pages (references not included). This provides us with a good idea of your research interests and preparation for MA study. For most students, these components below will change as students undertake graduate level course work and consult with their supervisor. The proposal should consist of four components:

*Research question and relevance*: describe the question that you would like to answer in your project, and explain its main relevance. For example, does answering this question further the discipline of political science? Does it make an original contribution? Does it shed light on one or more pressing social and political issues?

*Existing literature*: describe briefly what the academic literature has to say about your topic of study, relevant theory, and your research question in particular. Your task here is to demonstrate a basic understanding of the literature on your subject. If you are proposing a very deductive study, you can include hypotheses in this section if you would like.

*Tentative methodology*: describe how you plan to find an answer to your research question. In particular, you should comment on your proposed research design and case selection (e.g. are you proposing experimental research, cross-national comparisons, or case study investigation?), as well as on your methods of data collection.

*Fit with department*: explain why you believe the Department of Political Science at the University of Guelph would be a good place to conduct this research. Identify at least one faculty member who could supervise your project.