

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS**  
**Department of Geography**

**GEOG 5800**  
**Research Design and Geographic Applications**  
**Dr. Murray Rice**

## Your Research Action Plan

**You need an action plan** to avoid becoming a career graduate student. It is in your best interest to make your time here as short as possible, because your most significant contribution to society (and yourself) ought to come once you have graduated and started a career beyond university. The best graduate funding pales in comparison with what you should be making in your first job!

The action plan summarized below establishes some key, practical “milestones” in your master’s research. The following is ideal and general, so some steps may be changed in order, abbreviated, or even omitted. However, it does give a good idea of how you may progress from where you are now to a successful thesis defense.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>	
	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Decide on topic		
First meeting with supervisor		
Identify initial readings		
Decide on an appropriate methodology		
Establish an indexing system for all sources used		
Identify and contact relevant people		
Visit study site (where appropriate)		
Conduct pilot study (if necessary)		
Review methodology (if necessary)		
Defend and obtain approval for thesis proposal		
Conduct main study		
Summarize and interpret results		
Produce thesis first draft		
Identify any gaps in your work		
Work on edits and consult with your committee		
Produce final version		
Submit your thesis for defense		

Don’t treat the above as final and all-encompassing – depending on your topic and your supervisor, it may be wise for you to incorporate additional steps and otherwise edit the sequence shown here.