

# NEUROSCIENCE JUNIOR THESIS PROPOSAL FORM

For 6<sup>th</sup> semester students (typically junior spring) considering writing a thesis

***PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY***

**\* \* \* NOTE: DO NOT USE THIS FORM IF YOU ARE ENROLLED IN NEURO 91 \* \* \***

Please complete this form and attach your thesis proposal as described on page two. Email your form and proposal to the Advising Office ([undergraduate\\_neuroscience@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:undergraduate_neuroscience@fas.harvard.edu)) by **11:59 PM on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (May 2027 grads)** or **Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (off cycle March 2028 grads)**. You must also send a copy of your proposal to your lab director. Please check in advance to see if s/he would like to read the proposal before you submit it to us.

The Head Tutor and the Concentration Advisor will review your proposal, and you will be notified over the summer with feedback. This form should be submitted if you are considering writing a thesis, but it does **not** obligate you to do so.

If you have any questions, contact Dr. Laura Magnotti ([magnotti@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:magnotti@fas.harvard.edu)), Dr. Ryan Draft ([draft@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:draft@fas.harvard.edu)), or Dr. Kristina Penikis ([kpenikis@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:kpenikis@fas.harvard.edu)), Neuroscience Concentration Advisors.

**Part A.** Complete the following sections:

<b>Student Name:</b>	<b>HUID:</b>
<b>Thesis Title:</b> (May be tentative – Be sure to review title with your research director before submitting.)	
<b>Harvard email:</b>	

<b>Research Lab Director:</b> (GRADUATE STUDENTS OR POST-DOCTORAL MENTORS SHOULD <u>NOT</u> BE LISTED HERE.)	
(Please print)	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Director's Signature:</b> (GRADUATE STUDENTS OR POST-DOCTORAL MENTORS SHOULD <u>NOT</u> SIGN HERE.)	

<b>Daily lab supervisor</b> (if not Research Lab Director):	
(Please print)	
<b>Email:</b>	

\*\* if your research director cannot provide an electronic signature, please have her/him email us the completed form directly to acknowledge her/his approval of your thesis project.

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**Part B.** Attach your thesis proposal to this form (as a .docx file if possible). Do not exceed **4-5 pages (double spaced)**. Include the following:

- **Background & Rationale:** In approximately 2-3 pages (double spaced), introduce your broad topic and provide a background for your research project. You should read the relevant literature and provide a brief context for the question(s) you plan to address. Be sure to include in-text citations of all relevant published work. Begin this section by broadly introducing your topic, then focus in on any pertinent background studies (not just from your own lab but others as well), and eventually end with a statement of your specific research question(s). A reader should be able understand why you are asking your question(s), based on what you describe in this background section about earlier work, current debates in the field, etc. You can think of this section as eventually being developed into your thesis introduction.
- **Experimental Approach:** In approximately 1-2 pages (double spaced), describe the experiments you plan to complete in the coming year. Describe the specific methods you will use and explain how they will provide mechanistic insight into how the brain works. Provide enough detail so that the reader will have a clear idea about what you plan to do in the lab. We will use this section to make sure that your project will be appropriate for a thesis in Neuroscience. Do not just describe the overall research plan of your host laboratory; rather, try to be specific about the work you plan to do. Your research director and your mentor should help you to define your specific role in the project. Also, make sure that your mentors read a draft of your proposal for suggestions and revisions.
- **References:** (not included in page count) Provide key references regarding the background and experimental design of your project. Provide complete reference information (authors, year, title, journal, volume, pages numbers, etc.).
- **Joint Concentrators:** If you are a joint concentrator, your thesis proposal must demonstrate how you will integrate both of your concentrations into an interdisciplinary thesis. This means you must show how approaches from both fields will be applied to your work and how both provide essential contributions to further your central thesis question. Your proposal will be reviewed by the Neuroscience Standing Committee (and also your joint concentration) to determine if it meets the standards for a coherent and integrated project. This checkpoint is a requirement to continue to pursue a joint concentration.
  - *Joint concentrators must submit the [Joint Concentration Information Form](#) along with their junior thesis proposal.*

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PLEASE SUBMIT THE SIGNED FORM ALONG WITH YOUR PROPOSAL TO  
[UNDERGRADUATE\\_NEUROSCIENCE@FAS.HARVARD.EDU](mailto:UNDERGRADUATE_NEUROSCIENCE@FAS.HARVARD.EDU) (AND CC YOUR PI) BY:

11:59 PM on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (May 2027 grads)

or

11:59 PM on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (March 2028 grads)

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