M.S. Research Project #63930
What aspects of an M.S. research project do you think are most important for success?

44 responses from 18 authors

**Scope** (11) Similar to:

- Appropriate scope of the project
- Appropriately sized project
- Boundaries around the focused task (no rabbit trails)
- Clear
- Clearly defining the scope of the project.
- Define precise scientific questions to be answered asap
- Do-able

---

http://www.qa-umd.appspot.com/results/63930
Having a project with a high likelihood of success without much exploratory work.

Having a tractable scale for the project

Limiting scope to a manageable project that can be completed in two years.

The project must be limited in size such that it only lasts the (time) length of the master's

Motivation (5)

- Engages student interest
  -- CIW

- Publishable

- Student enthusiasm and hard work

- The student taking ownership of their project.
Well defined
-- CIW

**Project design** (5)

- A well-developed working timeline
- Advancement of the overall research goal of the mentor
- Designing the project around a clear and testable hypothesis.
- Finish in at most 2.5 years; the product is enough for a manuscript, and the final thesis is close for submission at least
- High likelihood of success (low risk)

**Basic framework** (3)

- Clear goal
- Limited in scope
- Well thought out timeline with short and long term goals
Structured goal setting (3)
- Perform fieldwork and gather samples as soon as possible
- Well defined goals
- Well-defined

Student training (3)
- Student comes away with improved skills in the lab
- Student has improved skills in experimental design
- Student is a stronger science writer.

Supervision (3)
- Guidance in how to approach an independent research project
- Weekly meetings with advisor
- Writing small chunks of text regularly and discuss them with the supervisor

Broader impacts (2)
- It should be something applicable in real life and useful to society.
- Related to larger research goal
  -- CIW

Career (2)
For an early career faculty member, publication of the thesis is also important.

Learning both technical and broader scientific skills that transfer directly to the professional workplace.

**Organization (2)**

- Short-term goals set in the context of long-term goals
- The scope of the project must be attainable (i.e. highly likely to have a result)

**Outcome (2)**

- Be something novel, not having been done too often before
- Student success, leading to strong self confidence as a scientist

**Time management (2)**

- Project management timing. Two years goes very fast.
- Well-conceived, single field or data collection period/effort

**Supervisor responsibility (1)**

- A cohort of students, so students can teach each other and work together.