# THESIS PROSPECTUS

The major assignment during the fall term is the submission of a prospectus to the thesis adviser. The prospectus is designed to help ensure that a student and faculty adviser are explicit about the thesis topic, to promote continued progress during the fall term, and to increase the likelihood of a final high-quality product. Students are strongly encouraged to work on the thesis throughout the second year. These prospectus guidelines, therefore, are a minimum requirement. Furthermore, given a student's ongoing work, the prospectus is considered more of a "progress report."

A first draft of the prospectus is due to the thesis adviser no later than November 2, with the full prospectus due to the thesis adviser and the YSPH registrar on December 1. The prospectus should be completed using the format below. In addition, it is expected that students include proper citations and references when preparing the prospectus. More information regarding proper citing of sources can be found on the YSPH website at https://ysph.yale.edu/myysph/students/mph/citations.

Please note that the preferred thesis for students is one that is in the style and length of a publishable, peer-reviewed paper.

*Note:* While drafting your prospectus with your advisers, you may have discussions around publication and authorship. Please refer to the Submission and Publication page at https://ysph.yale.edu/myysph/students/mph/thesis/submission for publication guidelines that are intended to avoid miscommunication and differential expectations of authorship between students and thesis advisers.

## THESIS PROSPECTUS FORMAT

Title
Primary Thesis Adviser
Secondary Thesis Adviser

1. *Specific Aims & Hypotheses.* Clear and succinct statement of the thesis objectives, including primary study hypothesis.
2. *Background & Rationale.* Brief overview of existing literature (three to five paragraphs is sufficient for the prospectus). Why is this project important? How is it different from existing research?
3. *Methods.* Brief overview of the basic study methodology. If conducting secondary analyses on an existing database, describe the methods of the original study (a–c) along with your plan for analyzing the data (d).
   a. Study Design (case/control, cohort, observational, cross-sectional, laboratory, other)
   b. Study Population (who, how many, what information is available/to be collected for population members)
   c. Sample Size/Power Calculations (is sample size sufficient to address the primary study aim?)
   d. Data Analysis Plan and Software to be Used

4. *Competencies.* Select three to five M.P.H. core and department-specific competencies that you will master as part of this culminating experience. Briefly describe how this thesis will address these competencies.