Master of Arts in
Public Policy and Administration
Toronto Metropolitan University

MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER (MRP) GUIDELINES

MRP Overview

The Major Research Paper (MRP) is a critical exploration of a practical or empirical problem, or a study of a theoretical question relating to public policy or administration. An MRP is a research-based paper that is specific in scope but less complex in methodology and data gathering than would be required for a Master's thesis. Unlike a thesis, an MRP does not require original research or primary data collection. Normally, an MRP should be between 10,000 and 15,000 words in length, or approximately 40 to 60 double-spaced pages. The MRP is worth 2.0 course units/credits, and therefore, the work to complete an MRP is expected to be equivalent to taking two courses.

MRP Supervisor

MRPs must be supervised by a faculty member who is a member of the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS), Toronto Metropolitan University. MPPA students are responsible for approaching potential supervisors. The MPPA Program Director and Program Administrator can assist students to identify potential supervisors. Most MRP supervisors will be faculty who are affiliated with the MPPA Program; however, there may be the occasion when a student is interested in securing an MRP supervisor from another Department or Faculty. If this is the case, the student is encouraged to contact the MPPA Program Director or Program Administrator for guidance. Students are strongly encouraged to have one faculty member from the Department of Politics and Public Administration as their MRP supervisor or second reader.

MRP and Previous Course Work

An MRP can build on work the student has completed in other graduate courses. However, students should be aware that doing this must be approached with caution. Policy 60, Academic Integrity, does not permit the use of the same work in two or more courses without permission. If permission is not provided it is considered 'self-plagiarism'.[1] Further, students should recognize that the MRP is intended to be an advanced examination of a policy or public administration issue, equivalent to the work in two single courses, and is expected to be original.

In general, previous course work **should not** constitute more than 20% of an MRP; the MRP supervisor has the final decision about what percentage of previous course work can be used in the MRP. If the supervisor says no previous work, or 5% or 10%, that decision is final. The student can accept the supervisor's decision or seek another supervisor.

The following steps should be followed if a student wishes to use 'large sections' of past work in the MRP; by 'large' the program means several sentences or paragraphs of the exact same content.

1. Inform their MRP supervisor of the overlap in content and receive their written consent to use/include this material in their MRP. (The MRP supervisor has the right to request to receive a copy

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[1] Policy 60 defines self-plagiarism as "the practice of submitting the same work, in whole or in part, for credit in two or more courses, or in the same course more than once, without the prior written permission of the instructor. Self-plagiarism can also include presenting one's own previously published work as though it were new."

of the paper to be used in the MRP; if a request is made then students must provide the paper.)

2. Receive written consent from their course instructor(s) that material originally written for an MPPA course (or TMU graduate elective) can be used in their MRP.

3. When submitting the MRP for final approval to the program, include the above written confirmations to the program.

The purpose of the written consent is to maintain the integrity of the MRP and to protect the student from any accusations or concerns of self-plagiarism.

MRP Proposal

The Major Research Paper proposal is a one- to two-page description of the proposed work, with a brief list of references. Please refer to the "Early Bird Deadline" table for information related to the stages for completing your MRP.

YSGPS guidelines indicate that full-time MA students must submit a formal proposal, approved by the MRP faculty supervisor to the MPPA office, **before the end of the second, Winter term.** MA part-time students must submit a formal proposal **before the end of the fourth term**. However, the MPPA Program encourages students to follow the "Early Bird Deadline" table. After an MRP proposal has been approved, a student may modify the proposal or focus of the MRP, with permission from the MRP supervisor.

MRP Second Reader

Major Research Papers will be evaluated by the supervisor and a second reader. Students discuss possible second readers with their supervisor and the preferred process for approaching and appointing a second reader. The second reader is not a co-supervisor, and should remain "at arm's length" from the paper. The second reader reviews the paper after it is deemed satisfactory by the MRP supervisor. If the second reader finds the paper unsatisfactory, or in need of revision, they will inform the MRP supervisor. The supervisor and second reader will agree on the revisions required for the MRP to be deemed 'satisfactory'. Hence, the second reader may request revisions before the final paper is submitted to the program.

MRP Format

The MRP must adhere to acceptable academic standards and conform to scholarly requirements with respect to citations, bibliography, etc. Your MRP must include a title page that contains the following information: title of the paper, student's name, past degrees/institutions/dates, and the following sentence: "The Major Research Paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MA degree in Public Policy and Administration, Toronto Metropolitan University". [Refer to the sample page at the end of this document.]

The MRP should also include an abstract and table of contents.

All final MRPs submitted to the MPPA Program Office will be deposited to the TMU Library for public access via the digital repository (https://rshare.library.ryerson.ca/). The MRP format must be prepared in accordance with the procedures and information outlined in the *YSGS Thesis, MRP, and Dissertation Submission Guidelines* which are available on-line:

https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/graduate/student-guide/academic-matters/dissertation-thesis-exams/Thesis_MRP_Dissertation_Guidelines.pdf

The responsibility for submitting an MRP in the correct format rests with the author.

Although there is no mandate obligating graduate programs to submit MRPs to the TMU Library, the MPPA Program has implemented this internal requirement as it found that many students do like their papers to be online as they are accessible in support of job applications and future applications to graduate programs. Having both theses and MRPs in the TMU Library online also provides a repository and record of research conducted by program students on a wide range of topics.

MRP and Academic Integrity

All MRP submissions must adhere to TMU's academic integrity policy [Policy 60 Academic Integrity]. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with Policy 60.
https://www.torontomu.ca/academicintegrity/students/what-is-integrity-and-misconduct/

Any questions about plagiarism or academic integrity should be discussed with the supervisor.

All final MRP submissions are submitted to Turnitin. TMU subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention tool. The GPD turns on the Turnitin originality report feature, which allows for the MRP to be cross-referenced with Turnitin.com's in-house database of millions of manuscripts turned in from schools in Canada, the United States, and the entire internet. The results are compiled into an originality report that outlines any similarities to these sources.

Students and supervisors will be permitted to see the similarity report for their MRP before the final version is approved.

MRPs will also be cross-checked with software to assess the likelihood that a document was written using Artificial Intelligence (AI). Students should review the YSGPS 'Guidance on the use of Generative AI in Graduate Studies' information.

MRP Evaluation and Final Steps

Upon successful completion of the MRP, the supervisor and second reader will assign a final grade using TMU's graduate grading system. The MRP notation on a student's transcript will indicate Pass or Fail.

A written evaluation will be submitted to the program office, signed by both the supervisor and second reader. A form is available from the program office for this purpose and a copy is included toward the end of this document. The supervisor and the second reader may opt to meet with the student to discuss the paper but this is not required. The completed "MA MRP Supervisor and Second Reader Report" will be filed at the MPPA Program by the supervisor and a copy is NOT made available to the student.

If the supervisor and second reader are satisfied that all final minor revisions requested by them have been completed in accordance with academic standards, the final version of the MRP is then considered approved. Please note that the final version of the MRP is to include the Author's Declaration, which is reproduced below and is to be placed on page two of your MRP and can be cut and pasted from below. The final electronic version of the MRP (including the Author's Declaration) is submitted to the MPPA Program Office via Turnitin.

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this MRP. This is a true copy of the MRP, including any required final revisions.
I authorize Toronto Metropolitan University to lend this MRP to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.
I further authorize Toronto Metropolitan University to reproduce this MRP by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research. I understand that my MRP may be made electronically available to the public.

Master of Arts
Public Policy and Administration Toronto
Metropolitan University

MA MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL

Working Title:		
Student's Name:		Student ID:
MRP Supervisor:		
Second Reader (if known at this stage)		

The proposal should consist of a one- to two-page description of the proposed work, with a suggested bibliography.

Does your research involve the use of human participants?

☐ **No**

☐ **Yes (REB approval letter is required in MPPA Program office on or before submission of final electronic copy of MRP)**

If the research involves the use of human participants, please read the Policy on Research Involving Human Subjects at: https://www.torontomu.ca/research/resources/ethics/.

_____   _____
Student's Signature   Date of Submission

_____

I have read and approved the attached proposal and bibliography and agree to serve as supervisor for the Major Research Paper.

_____   _____
Supervisor's Signature   Date

_____

Approved by Graduate Program Director:

_____   _____
Signature   Date

FORMAT FOR TITLE PAGE

TITLE OF THE MRP

by

[Full name of the author,
including (under name of author) past degrees, institutions, dates]

An MRP (or: A Major Research Paper)

presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts in

the program of

Public Policy and Administration

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, year of convocation

© Name of author, year of convocation

Student: Please attach this form to your research paper

Master of Arts
Public Policy and Administration Toronto
Metropolitan University

MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER
Supervisor and Second Reader's Report

Student's Name:	Student's ID:
Title of the Paper:	

Assessment: (if additional space is needed, please attach separate page)

Transcript entry for the MRP: Passed ☐   Failed ☐

Grade: _____

In signing this form the Supervisor and Second Reader confirms that the MRP has no concerns with respect to similarity to other work (e.g. Turnitin.com similarity index) and that the satisfactorily meets expectations for an MRP in the MPPA.

Supervisor (PRINT): _____   Date: _____

Supervisor (Signature):

_____

Second Reader (PRINT): _____   Date: _____

Second Reader (Signature):

_____

Supervisor: Please forward this form to the program office and DO NOT return it to the student when completed.

Approved:

_____   _____
Graduate Program Director Signature   Date