

MASTER’S RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

Revised April 2026

Introduction

This document outlines the requirements, procedures, and timelines associated with successful completion of the Master’s Research Paper (MRP). This guideline is intended to supplement the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS) [Thesis, MRP and Dissertation Submission Requirements](#) in providing guidance on the scholarly development of the MRP.

MRP Scope

The Master's Research Paper should be a sustained exploration of a topic related to early childhood studies. The range of acceptable research topics and methodologies is broad: from theoretical to applied.

Papers with an academic focus may address an early childhood topic from any disciplinary perspective in an advanced, scholarly fashion. Papers in the applied category may engage any issue related to early childhood policy, service-delivery or advocacy context. The MRP in other words, will typically strive to answer ‘how’ questions.

The MRP in the MA ECS Program usually involves primary empirical research. In some cases, the MRP may also take the form of analysis of secondary data, or a critical review of the literature in a field in order to yield new perspectives, or insights on current issues. The MRP may also be an applied case study exploring how an institution or community might optimally address such an issue.

Where such research with human subjects is planned, ethics review approval will be required in advance. Detailed information on the Application and Guidelines can be found on the [Office of the VP Research & Innovation website](#).

The MRP should be between 40 and 60 double-spaced pages in length, not including references.

The MRP is written under the guidance of a faculty supervisor, and evaluated by the supervisor and a second reader, both of whom are members of the Oral Examination Committee.

- 1. Identifying and Confirming an MRP Supervisor.** The MRP Supervisor must be a [member of the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) at Toronto Metropolitan University. The student’s Faculty Advisor, Course Instructors and Program Director will assist in identifying potential supervisors. The MRP Supervisor is the primary academic mentor and assessor of the student’s MRP.

STUDENT WILL:	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consult with Faculty Advisor, Course Instructors and Program Director to identify potential MRP Supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full Time Students: confirm an MRP Supervisor by the end of the first term after initial registration into the Program (sometimes this occurs at the beginning of the second term). Part Time Students: confirm an MRP Supervisor by the end of the first year to the beginning of the second year after initial registration into the program

2. **Once Confirmed, there are forms to fill out.** Supervisors *may* request a one page proposal. The research proposal *could be* based on work pursued in the Research Design course. If this is the case, students should expect to make some modification to their proposal as required by their MRP Supervisor.

STUDENT WILL:	MRP SUPERVISOR WILL:	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If required by supervisor, submit a (1) one-page proposal to the MRP Supervisor ● complete the MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form with the Supervisor ● Complete the YSGPS Student-Supervisor Collaborative Agreement: Expectations, Accountabilities and Responsibilities with the Supervisor ● Update the Plan of Study ● submit the MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form and YSGPS Student-Supervisor Collaborative Agreement with required signatures to the Graduate Program Administrator ● submit an on-line application to Research Ethics Board (REB) if applicable ● Copy supervisor and Graduate Program Administrator on REB approval (email) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● approve the one-page proposal (and any subsequent revisions) as the basis for work on the MRP ● complete the MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form with the student ● Complete the YSGPS Student-Supervisor Collaborative Agreement: Expectations, Accountabilities and Responsibilities with the student ● Update the Plan of Study ● review REB protocols with the student and approve student application to REB prior to submission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full time students: At the start of the Winter term Part time Students: During the 3rd term of registration ● MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form, YSGPS Student -Supervisor Collaborative Agreement:Expectations, Accountabilities and Responsibilities and an updated Plan of Study Full time students: due no later than the middle of the Winter term Part time Students: due no later than the start of the 4th term ● REB due as soon as application is approved by supervisor ● Copy of REB approval due prior to scheduling final meeting with Supervisor and Second Reader ● As soon as email approval is received from REB

3. Research and Writing Approval. The MRP Supervisor guides the student to produce the strongest possible academic work before it is submitted to the second reader. In a course, the instructor’s comments reach students after the paper has been submitted. This reflects the fundamental difference between writing an MRP and writing a course essay. Both student and supervisor should review the [YSGPS Supervision Guidelines](#).

STUDENT WILL:	MRP SUPERVISOR WILL:	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● establish a timeline for research and writing and contact with the supervisor ● Timeline/expectations should be written down on the Plan of Study form <p><i>recognize that producing multiple drafts is a normal and expected aspect of writing the MRP</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● establish a timeline for research and writing and contact with the student ● Timeline/expectations should be written down on the Plan of Study form ● guide the student’s research/writing and requiring revisions as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● should be agreed upon at the start of the MRP writing process and written in the Plan of Study. Full time students should hold meetings through the Winter and Spring/Summer terms with MRP Supervisor as needed. Part time students: hold regular meetings through 4th – 6th terms with MRP Supervisor as needed

4. Second Reader

The **Second Reader** represents an additional academic review of the student’s work. However, the second reader is not a co-supervisor. The second reader will be asked to read an MRP only when the supervisor has deemed a completed draft satisfactory; therefore, they will receive the paper after the supervisor has declared it ready for review. In the event that the second reader deems the paper unsatisfactory, they will consult with the supervisor about possible revisions. The second reader may require that major or minor revisions be made to the paper before it is approved. The Second Reader must be a [YSGPS Member](#)*.

** The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies may approve the appointment of an expert professional in the field of the MRP. In order for a second reader who is not a member of YSGPS to be appointed as a second reader, a cover letter and CV must be sent to the Graduate Program Director who will request Associate membership for the Second Reader.*

STUDENT WILL:	MRP SUPERVISOR WILL:	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● consult with MRP Supervisor on selecting a second reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine in consultation with the student, which faculty member will serve as second reader of the MRP. Program Director can be available for consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full Time/Part Time Students confirm second reader by May 15th.

5. The evaluation of the MRP is conducted jointly by the Supervisor and the Second Reader. A discussion meeting will be held with the student, Supervisor and Second Reader to review the paper. Following this meeting, the Supervisor and Second Reader will jointly assign a pass/fail grade for the written paper. The MRP is graded on a pass/fail basis only; no letter grades are assigned. **Tab 4 - MRP Final Evaluation in the Student Plan of Study form must be completed after the discussion meeting.**

STUDENT WILL:	MRP SUPERVISOR WILL:	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the supervisor declares a completed draft ready, send an electronic copy of the MRP to the Second Reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> declare a completed draft ready; that no major revisions to the MRP are required before sending to the second reader schedule the discussion meeting through consultation with the student and Second Reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The discussion meeting is best held before August 15th to allow the student time to complete revisions by the August 31st deadline</i>

6. **Revisions and MRP formatting.** Following the discussion meeting, the Supervisor and Second Reader will likely require the student to make revisions to the paper prior to its final approval. The MRP format must be prepared in accordance with the procedures and information outlined in the YGPS document [Thesis, MRP, and Dissertation Submission Guidelines](#). Note that blank pages as well as headers are discouraged. The final MRP is an electronic PDF emailed directly to the Graduate Program Administrator. The responsibility for submitting an MRP in the correct format rests with the author.

STUDENT WILL:	MRP SUPERVISOR/SECOND READER WILL:	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete revisions as required <p><i>It is advisable to leave plenty of time after the discussion meeting so that corrections and/or changes can be made in time for the submissions deadline</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advise student of any revisions required to the MRP based on the discussion meeting Complete Tab 4 - MRP Final Evaluation in the Student Plan of Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately following the discussion meeting <p><i>Allow 2 to 3 weeks prior to the submission deadline to complete revisions and formatting of MRP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately following the discussion meeting

7. **Submitting the MRP.** The MRP completion will not be recorded in a student’s academic record until the student has submitted to the Program Office the following requirements by August 31st.

8.

STUDENT WILL:	MRP SUPERVISOR WIL:	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> submit (1) one electronic copy via email of the MRP to the Supervisor in the appropriate format (refer to The YSGPS Thesis, Major Research Paper and Dissertation Submission Guidelines). <p>The e-copy must be in PDF format without any restrictions or passwords.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will ensure the student has made all the necessary corrections required. submit (1) one electronic copy via email of the MRP to the Graduate Program Administrator. Cc’ing the Graduate Program Director, with the following Faculty Supervisor Verification email <p>The email should read “I, (supervisors Name), confirm that (Students Full Name), has completed all corrections required or recommended. The attached MRP "(MRP FULL TITLE)" is a final corrected version.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The deadline is before noon on August 31 (or student will be re-registered for and charged fees for the next term)

References:

All MA ECS Forms - <https://www.torontomu.ca/early-childhood-studies/graduate/student-resources/forms-and-guidelines/>

- [MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form](#)
- [Student-Supervisor Collaborative Agreement: Expectations, Accountabilities and Responsibilities](#)

[MRP Digital Repository](#) (for examples of past MRPs)

[YSGPS Significant Dates](#)

[YSGPS Masters and PhD Policies and Guidelines](#)

YSGPS [Procedures](#)

[YSGPS Thesis, MRP, and Dissertation Submissions Requirements](#)

[YSGPS Graduate Supervision Guidelines](#)