MASTER'S RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

Revised November 2025

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
• consult with Faculty Advisor, Course Instructors and Program Director to identify potential MRP Supervisor	• 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 WIL:	TIMELINE
● If required by supervisor, submit a (1) one-page proposal to the MRP Supervisor	● approve the one-page proposal (and any subsequent revisions) as the basis for work on the MRP	● Full time students: At the start of the Winter term Part time Students: During the 3rd term of registration
● complete the [MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form](#) with the Supervisor ● Complete [the YSGPS Student-Supervisor discussion checklist](#) with the Supervisor ● Update the Plan of Study ● submit the MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form and YSGPS Student-Supervisor discussion Checklist with required signatures to the Graduate Program Administrator	● complete the [MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form](#) with the student ● Complete the [YSGPS Student-Supervisor discussion checklist](#) with the student ● Update the Plan of Study	● MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form, YSGPS Student – Supervisor Discussion Checklist 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
● submit an on-line application to Research Ethics Board (REB) if applicable ● Copy supervisor and Graduate Program Administrator on REB **approval** (email)	● review REB protocols with the student and approve student application to REB prior to submission	● REB due as soon as application is approved by supervisor ● Copy of REB approval due prior to Examining Recommendation and Scheduling Form ● 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 WIL:	TIMELINE
● establish a timeline for research and writing and contact with the supervisor ● Timeline/expectations should be written down on the Plan of Study form *recognize that producing multiple drafts is a normal and expected aspect of writing the MRP*	● 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	● 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 $4^{th} – 6^{th}$ 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 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 oral examination. The second reader will read the paper and normally agree that it is ready for oral examination. In the event that the second reader deems the paper unsatisfactory, they will consult with the supervisor about possible revisions before an oral is held. Based on the oral examination, the second reader may require that major or minor revisions be made to the paper before it is approved.

STUDENT WILL:	MRP SUPERVISOR WIL:	TIMELINE
● consult with MRP Supervisor on selecting a second reader	● Determine in consultation with the student, which faculty member will serve as second reader of the MRP. Program Director can be available for consultation.	● Full Time/Part Time Students confirm second reader by May $15^{th.}$

5. **The Oral examination** is the final stage of faculty review of the student's paper. This is normally a discussion of the paper between the student and the Oral Examination Committee. Typically, the sessions will last 45-60 minutes. It will begin with a brief (about 10 minute) oral summary of the paper by the student focusing on the

major findings, followed by questions from the committee. The oral examination is an opportunity for the student to engage in a focused, sophisticated discussion of their research.

The **Oral Examination Committee** is comprised of the Program Director (or designate) as Chair, the Supervisor, and the Second Reader. The role of the Chair of the Oral Examination Committee is to ensure that the oral examination is conducted according to established guidelines. The guidelines are available in the [Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation Policy 170 (b)](#)

The **evaluation** of the MRP is jointly determined by the supervisor and second reader. The MRP is graded pass/fail. No letter grades are assigned. Following the oral examination, the supervisor and second reader will jointly assign a pass/fail grade for both the student's oral examination and written paper.

STUDENT WILL:	MRP SUPERVISOR WIL:	TIMELINE
	● declare a completed draft ready; that no major revisions to the MRP are required for the examination	
● Once supervisor declares a completed draft ready, send an electronic copy of the MRP to each member of the Oral Examination Committee **at least two weeks or sooner prior** to the examination date. Hard copies can be requested by committee members if necessary.	● schedule the oral examination through consultation with the student, Program Director and Second Reader; complete and submit the **Examination Recommendation & Scheduling Google Form** *(link to form will be sent by the Graduate Program Administrator)* to the Graduate Program Director, cc'ing the Graduate Program Administrator	● Submit Examination Recommendation & Scheduling Form by the end of June

the oral exam is best held before August 15th |

6. **Revisions and MRP formatting**. Following the oral examination, the Examining Committee will likely require the student to make revisions to the paper prior to its approval. The MRP format must be prepared in accordance with the procedures and information outlined in the YSGPS document [Thesis, MRP, and Dissertation Submission Guidelines.](#) Note that blank pages as well as headers are discouraged. The final MRP is 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 WIL:	TIMELINE
● complete revisions as required *It is advisable to leave plenty of time after the oral exam so that corrections and/or changes can be made in time for the submissions deadline*	● advise student of any revisions required to the MRP based on the Oral Examination ● Ensure that the Chair of the Examining Committee has submitted the **[Report of the Oral Examining Committee](#)** to the Graduate Program Administrator	● Immediately following the Oral Exam *Allow 2 to 3 weeks prior to the submission deadline to complete revisions and formatting of MRP*

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
● 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)**.** The e-copy must be in PDF format without any restrictions or passwords.	● Will ensure student has made all the necessary corrections required by the Examining Committee ● 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** The email should read "I, (supervisors Name), confirm that (Students Full Name), has completed all corrections required or recommended by the Examining Committee. The	● The deadline is **before noon on August 31** (or student will be re-registered for and charged fees for the next term)

	student's MRP: "(MRP FULL TITLE) is a final corrected version.	

References:

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

- MRP and Supervisor Agreement Form
- Report of Oral Examining Committee
- Examination Recommendation & Scheduling Form *(link sent by Graduate Program Administrator)*

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