**Policy on Major Research Papers (MRPs)**

Approved by MA Philosophy Program Council, 6 October 2015

Revision approved by MA Program Council, April 2020



A Major Research Paper (MRP) is a sustained investigation of a philosophical topic. Normally, an MRP should be about 35-40 double-spaced pages in length (roughly 12,000 words). The typical standard for MRPs, in format and content, is an article in a refereed, academic Philosophy journal. Papers must adhere to the specific formatting requirements of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS; see the document “Thesis, Dissertation and MRP Submission Requirements” on their website). More generally, the MRP must be prepared to a professional standard and conform to normal scholarly standards with respect to citations, bibliography, etc.

Students will typically complete their ARE and MRP requirements under the supervision of the same faculty member. Students are responsible for approaching potential supervisors, who must be members of YSGS (see the list of current members on the YSGS website). The Program Director can assist students in identifying potential supervisors. By October 15th of the fourth term of study, students will submit a 1-2 page description of the proposed work, with a suggested bibliography, to the program office. This proposal must be approved by the supervisor and the Program Director.

Upon completion MRPs will be evaluated by the supervisor and a second reader, who is normally also a Faculty Member in the program. Although the student may consult the second reader on matters related to his/her project, the second reader may not co-supervise the project and the only official role of the second reader is to give an evaluation of the completed MRP. Consenting second readers will be appointed by the Program Director, on the recommendations of the supervisor and student, after submission of the project proposal. The student is responsible for submitting two hard copies of the MRP, one for the supervisor and one for the second reader. The second reader must be allowed a minimum of two weeks to assess the MRP.

MRPs are pass/fail program milestones. A student does not complete the MRP milestone unless (1) both evaluators file, with the program office, a signed MRP evaluation form passing the MRP; (2) the student files, with the program’s office, an MRP abstract submission form signed by the supervisor and the student; and (3) the student files, with the program office, an electronic copy of the MRP incorporating any required revisions (if the student is co-supervised, each supervisor must submit an MRP evaluation form). **The Program Administrator will not file an official acknowledgement of completion until both these conditions have been met.**

Evaluators must complete the MRP evaluation form, on which they may

1. pass the MRP
2. pass the MRP, with suggested revisions. These revisions may concern either form or content, but should not be of such scale that major reworking or rewriting of the MRP, or radical modification of its central argument or development, is required. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the appropriate revisions have been made before filing of the MRP with the program office.
3. refer the MRP for major revision. The evaluator must specify in writing, on the MRP Evaluation form, a list of suggestions for improving the paper. The student may submit a revised version of the MRP for re-evaluation, in which case the evaluator will submit a new MRP Evaluation form for the revised MRP.
4. fail the MRP. Papers should only be failed outright in the event that even a major revision would be insufficient to bring it to a passing level. In this event the evaluator must specify, on the MRP Evaluation form, detailed reasons for this evaluation.

MRP evaluations must be approved by the Program Director. A copy of the MRP evaluation form will be forwarded promptly to the student by the Program Office.

Deadlines for filing MRPs with the Program Office, in order to meet the June and November convocation dates, shall be announced by the program each year.

A suggested timeline for timely completion of the MRP requirement is the following:

* October 15th: submit MRP proposal to program office
* Late October: second reader is assigned by Program Director on advice of student and supervisor
* March 1st: submit a draft of MRP to supervisor
* March 15: supervisor returns draft with comments
* April 1st: submit revised version for evaluation by supervisor and second reader
* April 15th: supervisor and second reader complete MRP evaluation form
* Late April/early May (date TBA): filing of MRP evaluation form, the MRP abstract submission form, and completed MRP (with any required revisions) with program office.