

**Master of Arts in Health
Fields: Health Policy & Equity
OR
Health System Management & Health Data Analytics
School of Health Policy and Management, York University**

Major Research Paper Guidelines

To fulfill the Master of Arts in Health degree requirements, students are required to complete a Major Research Paper. All required forms are available in the [Health MA forms section](#) of the program website.

At the [York Space Library site](#), you can access some of the previously completed MA MRPs which have been made publicly available by the alumni students themselves.

The Major Research Paper (MRP) is an essential component of the MA degree in Health. The students conduct a focused research project under the supervision of a faculty member. Students enhance their critical analytical skills by developing a research question and addressing it through an appropriate theoretical framework, review and synthesis of the literature, analysis of primary or secondary data sources and formation of a set of conclusions. They develop writing and communication skills by synthesizing and presenting their work in both written and oral formats. They also gain experience conducting independent scholarly research. The student's work is evaluated for meeting the educational objectives of breadth, depth, critical synthesis and originality; see the program website for [student expectations](#).

Pre-requisite:

Students should have completed all course work assigned in Health MA degree requirements, before writing a Major Research Paper. Students must have a confirmed supervisor and advisor first before completing a MRP Proposal, and then subsequently writing the MRP.

It is the student's responsibility to register as active in each term in the Registration and Enrolment Module (by simply selecting the term and accepting the tuition fees). All MA students are responsible to register before the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) registration deadlines each term, until the MRP is completed.

STAGES of the Major Research Paper:

- STEP 1: Develop a 2-page overview of research, complete the **Notification of MRP Supervisor/Advisor form** with dates and faculty signatures, and submit both documents to the program
- STEP 2: Write an MRP Proposal and submit with the **MRP Proposal Submission form** to the program, with confirmed approval emails from MRP Committee
- STEP 3: Complete any applicable Research Ethics forms/procedures, and submit documents in STEP 2 and obtain approval of the Graduate Program ethics committee and GPD.
- STEP 4: Research, Analytically Review, Write and Revise the MRP
- STEP 5: Hold Final Discussion for the MRP by term deadlines and the MRP Committee

- submits the result to the program
- STEP 6: Submit a Final Electronic Copy of MRP to the Health Graduate Program and, if in agreement, the YorkSpace non-exclusive distribution form.

STEP 1: 2-page research overview and Committee formation

Develop a 2-page overview of the research

The student begins with drafting and revising a 2-page, double-spaced document that includes their initial ideas and plans for the research. We recommend starting this process in November and using the preliminary version of the 2-page overview as a means to approach potential Supervisor and Advisor to discuss your ideas. Once the student has a Supervisor, the student and that faculty member work together to find an Advisor with the goal of enhancing interdisciplinary perspective and then finalize the 2-page research overview. In addition to research aims and plans, the finalized 2-page overview should also explain how the research involves a critical perspective and conceptual framework(s), and why the student has approached prospective committee members. This step when completed formally establishes the Committee.

Supervisory Structure

The Supervisory Committee will in most cases include 2 members: a Supervisor and an Advisor.

Each student is responsible for identifying and approaching potential committee members (Supervisor and Advisor) who have expertise in the student's chosen research topic and/or methodology and collectively offer interdisciplinary perspective. By the end of February, all students should have identified and entered an agreement with a Supervisor and Advisor.

Roles

A student will work with their Supervisor and Advisor throughout the preparation of the MRP Proposal and the MRP. Both the Supervisor and the Advisor guide the MRP, though primary responsibility is on the Supervisor. The Advisor is often a second reader (though exceptions exist) and is approached when their critical input is deemed crucial throughout the MRP process. The Advisor and the Supervisor work with the student to ensure that the MRP meets the standards of the program and the interdisciplinary requirement of the MRP.

Committee Member Eligibility

The Supervisor will be, in most cases, a faculty member *appointed* to the Health graduate program with Full Member or Associate Member status at the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). Please review the [Health graduate program Handbook](#) for the list of potential MRP supervisors.

The Advisor can be a faculty member of any graduate program at York University, including the Health graduate program, with appointment to the FGS and who is deemed appropriate by the Graduate Program Director. Adjunct faculty appointed to the Health graduate program are also eligible for Advisor role. Please review the [Health graduate program Handbook](#) for the list of potential MRP Advisors who already have appointment in the Health program.

The Supervisory Committee members must be from different academic disciplines so that the

student gains an interdisciplinary research experience. This is the case even when the Supervisor and Advisor are appointed to the Health graduate program. Only 1 adjunct faculty member may be on each committee. A student should take into consideration several factors in choosing the Committee, such as:

- Faculty member's area of interest, expertise and their familiarity with the methodology or conceptual framework that will be applied to the work undertaken by a student;
- Interpersonal and work-style compatibility;
- Availability of faculty members during the research, writing and time of MRP final discussion.

Working with the Committee

Students are encouraged to arrange a joint meeting with their Supervisor and Advisor during the preliminary stage of developing their research. The review process and timelines should be established through mutual consensus among the student and Supervisory Committee. The expectation is that students will submit a minimum of 2 drafts to their supervisory committee – an interim draft and a final draft, before submitting the final MRP 2-page overview.

Completion of Step 1 occurs when the student submits the following to the Health Graduate Program Office for the approval of the Graduate Program Director:

- signed **MA MRP Notification of Supervisor and Advisor Form** (see appendix); and
- the 2-page research overview

STEP 2: MRP Proposal

The MRP Proposal is an outline of the research question(s) and a description of the process for completion of the MRP. The Proposal, in narrative form, should address at least the following questions:

- What is the nature and scope of the topic?
- Why is the topic worthy of consideration? Why does it matter to Health Policy and Equity (HP&E) or Health System Management & Health Data Analytics (HM&HDA) field?
- What is the current research on the topic and what insights does it offer? What are the gaps?
- What is your research question?
- How will you go about answering your question? such as
 - what is your research paradigm? what are the guiding theories/model(s), and why?
 - what are the methods (and why) to collect and examine primary or secondary data sources; what are ethical considerations, if any

Completion of Step 2 occurs when the student submits the following to the Health Graduate Program Office:

- ***MA MRP Proposal Submission Form** (see appendix)
- MRP Proposal
- Emails from each MRP committee member stating its approval
- MRP Protocol form and documentation package, if your research involves human participants and or secondary data analysis (see Step 3)

***The MA MRP Proposal Submission form is required regardless of research involving or not-**

involving human participants.

Proposal development prepares a student to write the MRP. Throughout the writing and revising of the proposal the student works to create a suitable structure for their thinking, synthesizes key literature, and engages in academic work that conforms to academic citation and footnote practices. The MRP proposal serves as a guide for the writing of the MRP, and as a working document that may be revised by the student, Supervisor and Advisor.

The MRP proposal uses the same Title Page as the MRP itself (see appendix).

Length & Format:

The length of the MRP Proposal will vary depending upon the nature of the MRP topic. The average page length is from 4-6 pages up to a maximum of 8 pages, double-spaced or 2000 words (excluding the title page and references). The format is:

- Times New Roman
- Font size 12
- Double-line spacing
- Top and left margins – 1.5”
- Bottom and right margins – 1”

Larger fonts may be used for people with visual impairments, in which case the length of their MRP proposal and MRP will vary accordingly; however, the length will be proportionate to that required for other students.

Components of the MRP Proposal:

1. Statement of the problem

The statement of the problem should address, in narrative form, at least the following questions:

- What is the research question or questions?
- What is the importance of the research?
- What are some of the key concepts?
- What theoretical/conceptual perspectives guide the research and analysis?

2. Statement of key question(s) of the MRP and discussion of relevant literature:

Typically, students consider the following:

- Ways of knowing: the theoretical/conceptual perspective informing the research;
- The central and secondary questions that underlie the research
- The way in which these questions are important to the research?
- The purpose of the research?

Key texts are synthesized throughout the proposal.

3. Research methodology

Describe the methodology and the ways in which data will be collected (the methods). Consider whether or not archival research is needed; what primary and secondary data sources will be drawn upon; and whether primary data collection from human participants (e.g. interviews) are feasible in the timeframe of the degree program. The following should

be considered:

- What steps are necessary to complete the research?
- What resources are necessary to complete the research? Describe the availability of relevant sources, literature, technology.

4. **Concluding statement**

Comment on the suitability of the project to the interdisciplinary nature of Health. Think about what the paper's expected contribution might be. Include an outline of how the paper will be organised and provide a realistic plan of completion composed in conversation with the Committee.

References and Appendices

References/bibliographies must be either in Vancouver, Harvard, APA or Chicago style. For on-line tutorials, workshops and examples, refer to the [York Libraries' website](#) .

Appendices may include data in the form of photographs, questionnaires, lists, and so forth.

Working with the Committee

Students are encouraged to arrange a joint meeting with their Supervisor and Advisor during the preliminary stage of the development of their research and whenever questions arise; they are also encouraged to stay in regular contact.

The expectation is that students will submit a minimum of 2 drafts to their supervisory committee – an interim draft and a final draft, before submitting the final MRP Proposal.

If you use a copy editor it should be acknowledged. The student should retain a copy of the copyedited version of the MRP proposal and/or MRP as well as any correspondence with the copyeditor until the MRP is approved.

Should there be a change to either the Supervisor or Advisor, and/or to the research outlined after the Form has been approved by the Graduate Program Director, students must submit the **Change of Supervisory Committee/Research Form** to the Health Graduate Program Office as soon as a change occurs.

STEP 3: Research Ethics Review

This step is part of the MRP Proposal stage, if required. If there is data collection involving **human participants** or use of **secondary data analysis**, complete the **MRP Protocol form and associated documents**.

Human Participants

If MRP research involves data collected from human participants, then students need to complete a research ethics review. Students are unable to proceed with their research until they receive an approved research ethics package. Each graduate student **must maintain active registration status** while conducting the approved research. Failure to obtain ethics approval *prior to* the commencement of research activities is considered both a breach of Senate Policy as well as research misconduct. All such instances of non-compliance will be addressed by the appropriate institutional office. The information below outlines the MRP ethics protocols procedures with York University.

1. Students are required to submit the **Health MA MRP Proposal Submission form** (as a cover page) and select the appropriate category with a checkmark to indicate when ethics are required or will not be part of your project
2. Complete the TCPS2: [Course on Research Ethics \(CORE22\) tutorial](#) and save/submit the completion certificate.
3. If active data collection involves interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, fill out the **MRP Protocol form: Research Involving Human Participants** (located in the [Resources and Forms under the Graduate Students \(MRPs only\) section](#))
4. Review the [Graduate Student Risk Assessment Guidelines](#) , under Option B. Complete Graduate Student Risk Assessment Form, Undertaking, Release Checklist prior to departing for field activities (domestic and abroad) using the MoveOn database. Download a pdf version of the signed risk assessment to include in your submission to the graduate office.
5. Develop the **Informed Consent Form Template** to ensure that human participants are fully informed and consent to the research activities by their signing the informed consent form prior to the commencement of the research study. The informed consent form is an integral and important element of research involving human participants. Students are responsible for ensuring that the informed consent form approved as part of the protocol was used in all interactions with human participants and confidentiality/anonymity was and will continue to be maintained as indicated in the protocol.
6. If the research involves secondary data analysis, review the [Guidelines-Secondary Use of Data for Research Purposes](#), and fill out the **HPRC Secondary Data Use Protocol form** as it relates to anonymous and non-anonymous data. Documents are submitted as part of your MRP Proposal package that you share with your graduate office for ethics review. Locate forms under [Resources & Forms](#), under the secondary data analysis section.
7. Graduate students undertaking research involving human participants, for the purpose of a Major Research Paper, and said research **is minimal risk and does not involve either Indigenous peoples or Clinical Trials** complete Steps 1 to 6 with consultation with the Research Ethics section of [Health student guidelines](#). The student submits their MRP Proposal package to gradhlth@yorku.ca for a review undertaken within the Graduate Program in Health's Ethics Committee.
8. As of September 1, 2024, if your research is with Indigenous People (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) Communities and Nations, complete the **Indigenous Research Ethics Board (IREB) Protocol form** as part of your application for the IREB review. To access this form, visit [Resources](#) . For additional assistance, contact ore@yorku.ca.
9. If your research involves human participants and is led by students but with whom faculty members collaborate or is more than minimal risk or it's a Clinical Trial, the student researcher completes the **Human Participants Review Committee Protocol form**. Locate the HPRC protocol form, under [Resources](#). A newly revised HPRC protocol form is available via Passport York access, only for faculty researchers. Please contact the Office of Research Ethics (ore@yorku.ca) for further information.
10. Additional ethics guidelines for research categories for vulnerable populations (such as people who are homeless, minor age participants, educational or hospital environments, etc.) visit [Tips & Guidelines](#) and select the Guidelines tab. Discuss the research population with your MRP Committee so that the appropriate ethics forms are submitted with the MRP proposal.
11. Assemble your MRP protocol package (**Protocol Form, Informed Consent document(s), copies of CORE-22 certificate(s) and other relevant documents** such as survey tools, questionnaires, recruitment materials, etc.) and submit to your Supervisory/Advisory

- Committee for approval and signature (or email approval).
12. Final package is submitted to the Health Graduate Program Office (gradhlth@yorku.ca).
Students begin data collection after they receive program-level ethics committee approval.

Secondary Data Analysis

The TCPS2 defines secondary use of data as “the use in research of information or human biological materials originally collected for a purpose other than the current research purpose” (2022: p. 20). Secondary data examples include but are not limited to; social science and health survey data sets, school records, biological specimens, vital statistics registries, unemployment records, and hospital administrative datasets, all of which originally collected information for a purpose other than the current research project. Access and use of research data collected by a researcher for a purpose that was not originally identified in the research protocol or consent processes is also described as secondary use of data.

Discuss with your MRP Committee on the use of anonymous and non-anonymous secondary use of data for the MRP, as there are additional forms and guidelines to review and submit. Students are required to submit the **MA MRP Proposal Submission form** (as a cover page) and indicate with a checkmark, of use of secondary data analysis.

STEP 4: Analyse, review and write the MRP

After the MRP Proposal approval, the student begins to undertake the work and write the MRP. Here are some recommendations for timely completion of MRP:

- Student and supervisory committee establish the structure of MRP early on (e.g. draft a Table of Content)
- Student shares the writeup drafts section-by-section for timely feedback from supervisory committee
- Supervisory committee shares their time availability with the student, and provide feedback within 2-3 weeks
- Student and/or supervisory committee send their inquiries to the Graduate Program Office as deemed appropriate

Length and Format: The MRP will have a required minimum length of 50 pages (double-spaced) and a maximum length of 65 pages (double-spaced). This length includes only the main text of the MRP; the title page, table of contents, abstract, appendices, and references are additional. Up to three pages of tables and/or figures could be within the main text of the MRP. For people with visual impairments, larger fonts can be used in which case the length of their Proposal and Research Paper will vary with the font size; however, the length will be the proportionate to that required for other students. The format is:

- Times New Roman
- Font size 12
- Double-line spacing
- Top and left margins – 1.5”
- Bottom and right margins – 1”

Front matter section:

The front matter includes following items:

- Title page (similar template as for proposal)
- Abstract

- Dedication (where applicable)
- Acknowledgements (where applicable)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (where applicable)
- List of Figures (where applicable)
- List of Appendices (where applicable)
- List of Abbreviations, Symbols,
- Nomenclature (where applicable)

Body matter section:

Remember that your MRP will

- problematize an issue, relevant to **Health Policy & Equity** or **Health System Management and Health Data Analytics** field, through review of scholarly work
- describe your research aims and objective(s);
- articulate your research paradigm and guiding theoretical framework(s)/model(s);
- explain/justify the methods used to collect and examine primary or secondary data sources and ethical considerations when relevant
- synthesize and provide research findings through interdisciplinary lens; and
- offer a critical discussion of the area of focus/findings that shows it moves beyond description and/or argumentation into critical exploration and synthesis of practices, policies and/or theories; which supports a contribution to an expanded understanding of the issue addressed

End matter section:

- Endnotes (where necessary)
- References/Bibliographies (must be in either Harvard, Vancouver, APA or Chicago style. For on-line tutorials and examples, refer to the York Libraries' website (click on the "Research & Learn" tab).
- Appendices

Academic Integrity

All research papers are subject to academic integrity procedures. To understand expectations and apply various strategies, skills and habits for student success, review the valuable [information](#) to support the research and writing process.

STEP 5: Advancing to the MRP Discussion and term deadlines

Students receive feedback and finalise a written Major Research Paper. When the MRP Committee (supervisor and advisor) deems that the written MRP meets academic standards of the specialization and Graduate Program in Health degree, they will contact the Graduate Program Director and Graduate Office to schedule a MRP Discussion.

Term Deadlines for holding an MRP Discussion and receiving a "PASS" result

Between May to August 15th – Summer term

Between September to December 15th - Fall term

Between January to April 15th – Winter term

A student must be registered as active and have an approved MRP Proposal on file with the graduate program to proceed to the MRP Discussion. Students will not graduate in the same term as the MRP Discussion is held. There is no extension of the term deadlines. If students are unable

to complete the MRP Discussion by the end of the term, they register as active for the subsequent term and continue.

After receiving a “Pass” result, the student is responsible to revise and submit a final e-copy of the MRP to the graduate program office for its records – within a few days (maximum a week). The graduate program will begin a degree audit based on the completion date and **after** the final MRP is submitted to the Graduate Office. Allow time for program administration to code program completion with the York University Registrar’s Office.

If student wishes to sign the YorkSpace License Agreement, it will serve as their permission to have the MRP in the YorkSpace repository for open access to the public. Do not share your MRP widely via email as you must consider your intellectual property of the paper and if you are recommended or thinking of pursuing a future publishing opportunity. Graduating students tend to share the link of the YorkSpace version with an interested party.

Information on Writing a Research Paper

The [liaison librarians](#) can be key resources for writing research papers. They are subject area specialists & because HEALTH is interdisciplinary it is likely that you will have conversations with several librarians. I recommend that you start by making an appointment with [Thumeka Mgwigi](#) who is the HEALTH subject area specialist librarian. Below are a series of guides.

1. **York University Libraries - [Academic Writing Guide](#)**
2. **[Graduate Student Writing Support, York Library](#)**

Frequently Asked Questions

When are students eligible to graduate?

York University holds two convocation ceremonies for graduate students each year and one in absentia, as listed below. To ensure convocation and to avoid the need of registering in further terms, the Health Graduate Program Office must receive the following documents by the corresponding deadlines as listed below.

- the completed **MRP Final Discussion Report and result**;
- an electronic copy of the finalized MRP.
- the final grade of all courses in fulfillment of the M.A. degree requirements.

Convocation

Documentation Submission Deadlines

Fall convocation (October)

before August 20 ¹

Winter convocation in absentia (February)

before December 18¹

Spring convocation (June)

before April 20 ¹

¹ Registration deadlines for each term vary and are posted under [Important Dates](#) on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website.

What is the degree completion time limit?

As per Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) regulations stated in the FGS Calendar, all students are reminded of the importance of timely completion of their program requirements (course work and Major Research Paper).

In the M.A. (Health) program, full-time students must register for a minimum of 3 terms and part-time students must register for a minimum of 6 terms to complete the program. All M.A. students, regardless of their registration status, have a maximum of 12 terms to complete the program.

If there is a need to take a break, consult with the Graduate Program Office. With successful petition for an “Extension of Program Time Limit”, students may be granted up to 3 additional terms to complete the program. Terms in which students are registered as “Leave of Absence”, “Maternity Leave”, “Parental Leave”, or “No Course Available” are not included in these time limits.

What if students require more time to complete their MRP?

Unless students have/have been withdrawn from the program or are on leaves of absence of any kind, students must maintain continuous registration on a term-to-term basis by the following deadlines and pay the corresponding term tuition fee. Failure to register by the deadlines will result in program withdrawal and subject to a late registration fee of \$200, if applicable.

Suggested Timeline

November - December <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortlist MRP topics• Attend MRP Orientation session• Draft 2-page research overview• Approach potential Supervisor & Advisor
January - February <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm Supervisor & Advisor• <i>In end February submit</i> to Grad Pgm Office: 2-page research overview; and MRP Notification of Supervisor & Advisor
March - April <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop MRP Proposal• <i>By end of April</i> submit to Grad Pgm Office: MRP Proposal & required Forms• Develop timeline with Supervisor/Advisor to share writeup for feedback (work backwards from mid of August)
May, June, July <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research, critically review, synthesize & write beginning sections• Share write up with Supervisor/Advisor for feedback• Continue other sections (while waiting for feedback on sent sections)• Incorporate feedback on the beginning sections• Share remaining sections for feedback• Compile all sections & send full draft• Plan for Oral Discussion
<i>By Mid August</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MRP Oral Discussion

• Submission of Full MRP
& Forms to Grad Pgm
Office

Appendix

1. Proposal/MRP Title Page for Major Research Paper

Access the [updated MA Health forms](#) under the Guidelines section of the Current Students webpage

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL/FINAL PAPER

(format - IN CAPITALS, CENTRED AND SINGLE SPACED)

AUTHOR'S NAME

(format - IN CAPITALS)

Supervisor's Name: (format - Upper and Lower Case)

Advisor's Name: (format - Upper and Lower Case)

Supervisor's Signature:

Date Approved:

Advisor's Signature:

Date Approved:

A Research Paper Proposal (delete the word "Proposal" if you are using this title page for your drafts of or finalized MRP) **submitted to the Graduate Program in Health in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts
Graduate Program in Health
York University
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3**

(Indicate the date of submission here in this format - Month Year)

