

Guidelines for GSPP 900 Research Project in Public Policy or Public Management

The **GSPP 900 Research Project in Public Management or Public Policy** is a capstone experience which is usually completed in the latter half of a student's academic program. It should use and incorporate the knowledge and skills acquired during the course of study leading to the Master's degree.

The GSPP 900 Research Project is worth a total of 6 credit hours. It is an optional project for either the Master of Public Management or Public Policy program.

The very broad guideline for the GSPP 900 Research Project is that it is to be more than a term paper, but less than an official thesis. The usual length is 50-80 double-spaced pages of text, but this may vary depending on a variety of factors. The project length should be determined in consultation with the Supervisor.

The research project may take a multitude of forms, including using primary and/or secondary data. The research can include:

- case studies
- policy analyses
- historical studies
- sample surveys
- comparative cross-cultural analyses

All of these research methods are forms of disciplined inquiry aimed at understanding and improving public policy or public management. Each is a rational activity involving systematic analysis and interpretation of evidence as a means of clarifying or resolving some unsettled issue or problem. In each case, the validity of the researcher's conclusions are dependent upon the adequacy of the conceptualization of the problem, the clarity of the definitions, the adequacy of the evidence used, and the degree to which other plausible interpretations can be reasonably discounted.

Before choosing a research methodology, students should choose and consult with a research project Supervisor. Students should contact the Program Advisor in the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy to obtain information on available Supervisors. In addition, students should read and be familiar with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research *Academic Calendar* (<http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/calendar/index.shtml>).

The Role of the Supervisor

The Supervisor is normally a faculty member who is appropriately accredited by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. The Supervisor has several responsibilities:

1. To provide technical guidance on the research project, including ensuring the student has a sufficiently narrow topic of research.
2. To guide the student's project in the right direction and double-check the student's reasoning on the problem at hand.
3. To ensure that the student is on the path to producing an academically sound research project, upholding the standards of the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.
4. To provide feedback to the student within 3 weeks on any written work that has been submitted.
5. To choose a Second Reader for the research project (i.e., a second faculty member who will also read and comment on the final version of the student's research project).
6. To advise the student whether the submitted written research project is of a sufficiently high level of quality and completeness and, in consultation with the Second Reader, to approve the written research project when it reaches this point.
7. To schedule a research project presentation date once the submitted written research project has been approved.
8. To ensure the student does not exceed the 20-minute limit for presentation of the research project.
9. To lead the questions and discussion after the research project presentation.
10. To provide the student with detailed feedback after the research project presentation regarding whether the student needs to make any further changes to the written research project.
11. To approve the final, formatted written research project before submitting to the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
12. To submit a final grade (credit/no credit) for the GSPP 900 research project course.

There will normally be a single Supervisor. Where there are co-Supervisors, if both Supervisors are appropriately accredited by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, there is no need for a Second Reader.

The Role of the Second Reader

The Second Reader is a faculty member who is appropriately accredited by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and who is chosen by the Supervisor based on expertise in the topic area of the research project. The Second Reader's responsibilities are:

1. To read the completed research project.
2. To provide comments and feedback to the student on the completed research project, with a copy of this feedback provided to the Supervisor. (This reading and feedback must occur *prior* to the student's public presentation of the research project.)
3. To attend the student's research project presentation.

The Role of the Student

The GSPP 900 Research Project is intended to be a distinctive experience for students in the Johnons-Shoyama Graduate School's MPA program, as it allows a student to conduct specialized study in an area of interest relevant to their program and academic interests. Past projects have ranged from theoretical research to the practical application of concepts and theories to the work place. Students are expected to undertake the project as an independent study, in consultation with their Supervisor.

The GSPP 900 Research Project features individual design and initiative on the student's part, as well as considerable freedom during the time of the project.

Although the project is usually completed in the latter half of the program, students are encouraged to begin research on their project as soon as their topic has been approved. They can use the work done in courses throughout the program as the basis for their project.

Students are expected to:

1. Request a Supervisor prior to beginning the research project and prior to enrolling in GSPP 900.
2. Decide on a project topic early in the program.
3. Prepare a research proposal that is 5-10 double-spaced pages in length, and obtain the Supervisor's approval of the proposal prior to enrolling in GSPP 900.
4. Consult with the Supervisor on issues or questions regarding methodology or analysis.
5. Provide the Supervisor with a progress update at least once a month (minimum).
6. Complete the research project in a timely manner (typically one to two terms).

7. Ensure the written research project meets the suggested length requirements of 50-80 double-spaced pages of text (or whatever length has been recommended by the Supervisor).
8. Provide the Supervisor with a completed version of the research project at least 4-6 weeks prior to the proposed tentative presentation date. A copy must also be provided to the Second Reader (a faculty member who is chosen by the Supervisor).
9. Obtain the Supervisor's approval of the written research project, as well as the Second Reader's approval of the written research project. This approval is essential before the Supervisor can confirm the presentation date.
10. Prepare and deliver a 20-minute presentation on the assigned presentation date, explaining the results of the research project. The presentation will be attended by faculty members and graduate students. Other persons whom the presenter has invited may also attend.
11. Be prepared to answer questions from the Supervisor, the Second Reader, and other faculty members at the conclusion of the 20-minute presentation.
12. Make any necessary corrections to the written research project as directed by the supervisor, given the feedback received at the presentation.
13. **Format the written research project according to the guidelines contained in *A Guide for the Preparation of Graduate Theses* (revised April 15, 2004)**
<http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/publications/Thesis%20Guide.pdf>
14. Submit the corrected and completed written research project to the Supervisor for final approval. The Supervisor will submit this final version to the Director of the GSPP.

Research Project Phases:

The **GSPP 900 Research Project** usually consists of several phases:

Pre-Project	This may be done any time during the student's program. It is up to the student to choose a project Supervisor, prepare a proposal for the Research Project, and receive approval from the Supervisor. This is done in preparation for subsequent registration in GSPP 900 during the Research Terms.
Research Term 1	In this term, students register for the first three credit hours of GSPP 900 Research Project and pay the appropriate fees. At the end of the semester, a grade of Credit or No Credit will be assigned, indicating the Master's Project is in progress.
Research Term 2	In this term, students register for the last 3 credit hours of GSPP 900 Research Project and pay the appropriate fees. Students must complete their projects to the satisfaction of the Supervisor and give the oral presentation during this term. All required corrections to the written research project must be made after the oral presentation, and a final formatted version of the written research project must be submitted to, and approved by, the Supervisor. A grade of Credit or No Credit will be assigned.
Subsequent Terms	Students who have not completed their research project by the end of Research Term #2 must annually enroll in a program maintenance course, GRST 995, to maintain their candidacy and pay the appropriate fees. A student must be enrolled in a program maintenance course for the semester in which they present their oral presentation if this was not completed during a Research Term.

When to Enroll in GSPP 900:

- Students who have selected the project option must, at some time in the program, enroll and receive credit for 6 credit hours in GSPP 900 to complete the program requirements and convocate. Once the research project proposal has been approved by the Supervisor, the student may work on the research project any time throughout the program and/or without being enrolled in GSPP 900.
- Students may use other classes as opportunities to begin research for their project. For example, a project proposal can be developed and refined for GSPP 804, while another class may present an opportunity to do a literature review or develop survey questions.

- It is recommended the student enroll in only 3 credit hours of GSPP 900 at a time. If, during the semester, the student discovers that the project can be completed and defended within a single semester, the student may enroll mid-semester in the final 3 credit hours of GSPP 900, and thereby obtain the required 6 credit hours for the project.
- *It is recommended that the student not enroll in the final 3 credit hours of GSPP 900 until a firm presentation date has been set.* This will ensure that the student does not end up paying course maintenance fees for GRST 995 due to lack of completion of the presentation and/or completion of possible subsequent corrections.
- *Keep in mind, however, that in order to maintain status in the program you must register at least once every three semesters. This may require paying maintenance of candidacy fees in order to remain within the program.*

Research Proposal:

Prior to enrolling in GSPP 900, the student must prepare a research proposal that is 5–10 double-spaced pages in length. This should be provided to the Supervisor prior to registering for GSPP 900. This research proposal should include the following:

1. A clear statement of the problem the study is intended to resolve, accompanied by:
 - An explanation of the practical or theoretical significance of this problem.
 - A list of the research questions, objectives (purposes), or hypotheses on which the study will focus.
 - Definitions of the main concepts or variable to be analyzed or investigated.
2. A brief summary of previously published research that is closely related, or a description of the research literature to be reviewed.
3. A detailed description of the procedures to be used:
 - For quantitative-empirical studies, this should include:
 - A description of the population about which inferences will be made
 - The research design to be used
 - The various kinds of data that will be gathered and the methods and instruments to be used in collecting this data
 - The analysis procedure or test-statistic that will be used for each hypothesis or question
 - For qualitative studies, this section should include:
 - The type of role the investigator plans to assume
 - The specific contexts or settings to be investigated and the data collection

- procedures to be used
 - The data analysis and cross-validation procedures to be used
 - For analytical studies, this section should include:
 - The primary and/or secondary sources to be analyzed
 - The analytical procedures to be employed
 - Criteria and procedures to be employed
4. If the project involves other people (i.e. interviews), the student will require Research Ethics Board approval (see page 9 for more information). The student's intent to request approval should be included with the proposal.
 5. A schedule for conducting the project which indicates the steps to be taken, the sequence in which they will occur, and the estimated length of time required for each step.

Content of GSPP 900 Research Project:

The text of the written GSPP 900 Research Project should be approximately 50-80 double-spaced pages in length (or a length recommended by the Supervisor). It should normally include the following elements (where applicable):

- Title Page (see Appendix A)
- Abstract (**maximum** of two pages, double-spaced, and preferably 350 words or less)
- Acknowledgement (optional - **maximum** one page, double-spaced)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (where applicable)
- List of Figures (where applicable)
- List of Appendices (where applicable)
- Body of the Project:
 - Introduction/Problem Definition
 - Literature Review
 - Hypothesis
 - Methodology:
 - Research design
 - Data collection
 - Statistical applications
 - Results:
 - Data analysis
 - Reporting of results.
 - Discussion
 - Conclusion
- Appendices, including Ethics Approval (where applicable)

Much of what is written in the approved research proposal (i.e., problem definition; literature review; description of procedures) will be useful for preparing the initial sections of the written research project.

As mentioned earlier, the written research project should be formatted according to the guidelines contained in *A Guide for the Preparation of Graduate Theses* (revised April 15, 2004) <http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/publications/Thesis%20Guide.pdf>. Also check Appendix A and B of this document.

Research Project Presentation:

Before the research project presentation may be scheduled, it is necessary for the written research project to have been submitted to the Supervisor and the Second Reader, and to have been approved by both. If the student has a tentative presentation date in mind, the written research project should be submitted to the Supervisor and Second Reader at least 4-6 weeks prior to this date.

Once the Supervisor and Second Reader have approved the project, the Supervisor will set the date for the research project presentation, in consultation with the student and the GSPP Administrator/Graduate Advisor. Students should keep in mind that they must complete the written project to the satisfaction of the Supervisor and Second Reader prior to having a firm presentation date set.

The research project presentation should be no longer than 20-30 minutes in length. Use of PowerPoint as a visual aid is recommended. At the conclusion of the presentation, the Supervisor will lead a question period, where the Supervisor, Second Reader, and faculty members may ask questions of the student about the research project.

Once the question period has concluded, the Supervisor will consult with the Second Reader and determine whether the student has successfully completed the research project requirements, and whether or not any further corrections are required on the student's written research report. The student will be advised whether the written research report is acceptable 'as is,' or whether the written research report must be revised.

The student is expected to complete revisions to the written research report prior to the end of the semester in which the presentation has taken place. The final written research report must be formatted according to the guidelines contained in *A Guide for the Preparation of Graduate Theses* (revised April 15, 2004) <http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/publications/Thesis%20Guide.pdf>

The final completed written research report must be handed in to the Supervisor. After approving it, the Supervisor will submit the written research report to the Director of the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School. The School will bind two copies, one of which will be given to the student – the remaining copy will be kept in the GSPP offices.

Dates to Remember

- January 31 Last day to apply for Spring Convocation
- March 31 Last day to submit corrected, presented research project in order to qualify for Spring Convocation
- July 31 Last day to apply for Fall Convocation
- July 31 Last day to submit corrected, presented research project in order to qualify for Fall Convocation

Research Ethics Board

The student must be sure that any research adheres to the Research Ethics Board guidelines. The student **must** have approval from the University of Regina Ethics Board (REB) regarding the proposed research protocol **before the research begins** if their research project involves human beings (e.g. interviews). Students who are in doubt as to whether their research projects should be reviewed by the REB should address the matter with their supervisor and the Chair of the REB. **Failure to obtain this approval causes delay in completion of the program and can result in discontinuation.** Ethical clearance forms part of the official documentation required when the project is presented. Students must be enrolled in order to access the REB and must be registered in order to conduct research towards their degree and represent themselves as students at the University.

Although the Board strives to review projects in a timely manner, the student should apply for approval one to two months prior to the time they want to begin working on their project.

APPENDIX A: Sample of a project title page

A STUDY OF
SEMICONDUCTOR MODULATORS
FOR USE IN SENSITIVE D.C. AMPLIFIERS

A Project

Submitted to the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Public Administration

University of Regina

by

Larry Michael Doe

Regina, Saskatchewan

September, 1983

Copyright 1983: L.M. Doe

PROJECT PREPARATION

Summary of Requirements

1. Correct paper

The first copy is to be on 20-24 lb. bond.

2. Spacing/Font

The body must be double-spaced; font should be Times New Roman or similar font, 12 point.

3. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents is to include the Abstract, Acknowledgements and all sections of the thesis, Appendices, Ethics Approval etc. See page 2 of the [FGSR] thesis directions.

3. Acknowledgement

Acknowledgment of all sources of funding must be made. As may apply, the full name of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research is to be used when indicating such.

4. Margins

Proper margins of 1 1/2 inches (3.8 cm) on the left side of the page and 1 inch on all other margins must be observed. This applies to text, pagination, tables, figures and appendices. This is most easily accomplished with a framing page.

5. Literature Cited or References

Care must be taken to ensure that any reference material cited in the body of the thesis, tables, figures, and appendices is correctly cited in the reference section. Be consistent in the form of citation used – use GSPP guidelines.

6. Copyright or patented material or equipment

Any material (literature, tests, surveys, questionnaires, figures, etc.) covered by copyright that was used in the thesis must have the proper reference or permission for its use. Patented equipment must be referred to by name. Where copyrighted material has been used in the thesis, letters of permission from the person/s or publishing company holding the copyright must be included.