

# **MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER (MRP) PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

## **Nature of the MRP**

The MRP is the final, largest piece of work to be done by students who have opted to go the route of six courses plus MRP. The MRP may be one of several different types of extended investigation:

- In-depth critical analysis of a particular topic in the field including a thorough search of the relevant literature and a discussion of the implications and applications of the issue.
- A quantitative research project
- A qualitative research project (e.g. a case study)
- A mixture of qualitative and quantitative research
- Classroom-based research
- An action research project

Students are encouraged to think in the first instance of an insightful literature review. If the idea for an empirical study grows from this, they could use the MRP to lay out the proposal for the study (once the literature review is completed). If the study is small, it might be carried out as part of the MRP. Large empirical projects should be the subject of a thesis rather than an MRP.

## **Ethics Procedures**

MRPs that involve human subjects/participants, even if the individuals are only observed, must be accompanied by a signed Human Participants forms.

Unlike a thesis, an MRP involving human participants does not require the approval of the Human Participants Research Council. MRP ethics approval is given at the program level by the Supervisor, Second Reader and GPD and therefore doesn't involve a lengthy review process. Students are asked to ensure that their consent and human participants forms printed from the FGS website are adjusted to reflect the LAL Office as the source of contact.

## **Approximate MRP Length**

The MRP is approximately 50-75 typed, double-spaced pages in length, excluding appendices and list of references cited. The exact length will depend on the precise nature of the work.

## **Planning the MRP**

Throughout a student's MA studies, they should be thinking about a potential area/topic of interest. Students need to be thinking well in advance of the time they allocate themselves for the MRP work. Students may consult with the Director and/or graduate faculty members who will help to crystallize their thoughts. Moreover, students need to be talking to faculty in order to arrange a supervisor for their project. Please bear in mind that students will need to interact with their supervisor on an on-going basis while working on the MRP, and it is therefore essential that students ensure that the faculty member they have in mind will be available for consultation in person or on e-mail. Students in the Applied Linguistics field interested in the MRP option should complete and submit an MRP declaration form by the March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline to the appropriate faculty member.

Students should plan on their MRP taking in the order of three months, if working on it full-time. Therefore, if a student has completed all or most of their course work by April 30th, the MRP will take the entire summer (May to August) to finish.

## **The MRP Proposal – what it should contain and who must approve it?**

When a student has decided what they want to do, and found a faculty member who is willing to supervise their work, they need to write up a formal proposal for approval. This should be approximately a 5-10 page document. What the proposal must contain:

- A description of the project – what will be analyzed or investigated and how.
- A brief chapter-by-chapter outline of what will be covered.
- A timetable for completion.
- A bibliography of 8-20 primary sources that are central to the topic (articles/books/book chapters) that have been read to date as background reading.
- If the research included human subjects/participants, the necessary consent and ethics forms.
- A signed statement from the supervisor that s/he has agreed to supervise the project, and approves the proposal as it is submitted

## **Submitting the MRP Proposal**

Proposals are expected by the start of the summer term, May 1st. A hard copy and an electronic copy of the proposal together with the signed form from your supervisor must be submitted to the GPA. Both copies will be sent to a second faculty member, appointed by the Director in consultation with the supervisor, for their approval.

The MRP Proposal approval process takes approximately two weeks and does not prevent the student from continuing working on the MRP. Any data gathering or other work with human subjects must wait for the appropriate ethics approval. Only when signed approval from two faculty members has been received can students consider

their project officially “approved”. Students, and their supervisors, will receive an email from the GPA confirming the approval of the MRP Proposal.

### **Enrolling in the MRP Option?**

The writing of a MRP is not a course. Students who are concentrating strictly on the writing of their MRP during the summer term need only be registered for the term and not enrolled in any courses.

### **Working with a Supervisor**

Throughout the time that students are working on the MRPs, they should be consulting with their supervisors, fine-tuning their plan, designing an outline of the project with timelines, showing drafts and discussing their findings and thoughts as work on the MRP progresses.

#### **Notes:**

- *A suggested “average” meeting schedule with a supervisor is one meeting per month. This may vary according to the needs of the student and the nature of the project. Depending on the nature of the project, meetings/consultations can be conducted in person or through phone and email communications.*
- *The supervisor should not be expected to do language editing. Students needing such assistance should go to the ESL Open Learning Centre or seek private help.*

### **Submitting the Final MRP**

When the final MRP is submitted, it should be submitted in hard copy and electronic copy to the LAL Office with the date of submission, title, and name of supervisor, on the title page.

The MRP should not be bound at this point in time, as it is highly likely that the student will be asked to make some minor corrections. Once available, the LAL Office provides students with a set of timelines for the submission of Summer, Fall and Winter term MRPs. These deadlines will guide students as to the dates by which they have to finish in order not to pay fees for an additional semester, and in order to graduate at the Convocation ceremony.

### **MRP Submission Procedures**

When a supervisor signs off on their student's final MRP, they are stating that the work is complete and ready for a second reader. The student submits the paper and completed form to the main office and the Director, in consultation with the supervisor, finds a second reader. Keep in mind that the faculty member suggested by the

supervisor may not be available or agreeable. Also, the second reader of your MRP Proposal is not necessarily the second reader of the final MRP.

### **Evaluation of the MRP**

The second reader of a MRP has a maximum of three weeks in which to read the work, make comments, and contact the supervisor to discuss whether the MRP rates as a “pass” or a “fail”. The supervisor contacts the LAL Office once the conversation with the second reader has taken place and the determination of pass or fail for the MRP has been made. The student is then informed of the decision via email. Again, this entire process is expected to be done, from start to finish, in three weeks. In the event that the supervisor and the second reader are not able to reach a consensus, the MRP may be submitted to a third reader.

### **Feedback and Submission of the Final Corrected MRP Copy**

Students will be notified, via email by the LAL Office, as soon as the final pass grade is known. If minor revisions are required, students will receive the comments and/or list of typographical and editorial corrections that they will be required to make. Having made the corrections, students must submit a final corrected copy, in hard copy and electronic form, to the LAL Office for our program collection. Students are asked to submit the final corrected hard copy in a black three-ring binder. It is a courtesy, not a requirement, that the student provide a copy for their supervisor.

### **Preparing for Convocation**

On the basis of a pass grade submission from the supervisor and second reader, if students have met their program course requirements, they will be eligible to graduate.

Once a student has submitted their final MRP to the LAL Office, they will be asked to log onto the convocation website and rsvp their graduation ceremony attendance or non-attendance. This action of rsvping to the ceremony automatically flags a student’s file for a degree audit. The degree audit is completed by the GPA who will verify the completion of six courses, handing in of the MRP and the pass of the MRP by the supervisor and second reader.

The incorporation of the minor revisions recommended by the second reader does not delay the student’s degree audit or the processing of the student’s convocation paperwork.