

SCHOOL OF NUTRITION

MHSc Nutrition

Communication

MRP Guidelines 2017-18



**RYERSON
UNIVERSITY**

**Yeates School of
Graduate Studies**

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What is an MRP?

The major research paper/project (MRP) is an opportunity for a student to acquire breadth and depth of understanding concerning a topic/issue, demonstrate his/her ability to synthesize evidence, and formulate original ideas in a specific area of nutrition communication. All MRPs involve completion of a comprehensive structured review of the literature to establish the evidence base on which the project is based. The essence of the MRP is the critical examination of the full spectrum of scholarly work on a topic and the development of evidence-based rationales to support all project decisions. Completion of a comprehensive and balanced structured literature review, use of a critical and evidence-based approach in the analysis of findings, and development of rationale-based recommendations/outcomes are essential elements of a high quality MRP. As the final project of your graduate degree, your MRP is an important communications product and should convey a high standard of written communication. As such, in-depth analysis, clarity of thought, conciseness, and proper grammar, sentence structure, spelling and referencing are of the utmost importance.

When will I work on my MRP?

In the School of Nutrition, MRP students are expected to take a NC8205 Directed Studies course with their faculty supervisor in the fall semester through which their MRP work is started. Work on the MRP continues throughout the winter and spring/summer semesters.

What is expected of me as an MRP student?

We expect that you:

- a. are strongly motivated, organized, and committed to completing a very high quality MRP that reflects your best work
- b. have excellent time management skills: it is your responsibility to arrange meetings with your supervisor and meet deadlines
- c. will welcome constructive feedback from your supervisor and reader regarding your work
- d. are highly self-directed and seek guidance when needed
- e. will demonstrate a high level of integrity in your work, particularly with respect to intellectual property rights and submission of completely ORIGINAL work (you are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Student Code of Academic Conduct in relation to academic misconduct, including plagiarism). The School of Nutrition has a zero tolerance policy for academic misconduct in graduate programs.

What constitutes an MRP?

- 1) **COMPLETION OF A RIGOROUS STRUCTURED LITERATURE REVIEW:** A structured literature review is a high quality analysis of primary research evidence that is related to a specific question. A structured literature review entails use of a systematic methodology which includes the use of focused inclusion/exclusion criteria to identify, select and critically appraise a subset of published scientific evidence relevant to the question of interest. Data arising from the literature review are extracted, synthesized and analyzed to formulate an answer to the question. The structured literature review establishes the evidence base for, and enhances the dissemination potential of, the future MRP. The structure review may take employ one of many *established systematic methods*, including, but not limited to:

- i. **US National Library of Medicine: Systematic Literature Reviews:**
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nichsr/hta101/ta10106.html#Heading1>
 - ii. **Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions:**
<http://handbook.cochrane.org/>
 - iii. **Mixed Methods Systematic Reviews:** See: Harden A, Thomas J. Methodological issues in combining diverse study types in systematic reviews. *Int J Social Research Methodology*, 2005;8:3:257-71.
 - iv. **Multidisciplinary systematic literature review:** See: Karunanathan S, Wolfson C, Bergman H, Beland F, Hogan DB. A multidisciplinary systematic literature review on frailty: Overview of the methodology used by the Canadian initiative on Frailty and Aging. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 2009; 9:69 doi:10.1186/1471-2288-9-68.
- 2) **LENGTH:** 40 – 60 pages excluding references, appendices.
- 3) **COMPOSITION:** Typically, an MRP is comprised of multiple components that arise from the evidence-base derived through completion of the structured literature review during the Directed Studies course. MRP components can include:
- i. development/testing of a research instrument, nutrition communication technique, a learning, teaching or assessment piece;
 - ii. completion of an analytic project, such as a policy or secondary data analysis;
 - iii. development of a unique, evidence-based nutrition communication and/or knowledge translation piece suitable for dissemination such as a multi-media product (e.g., audio, video and/or Internet-based) and/or another form of scholarly work (e.g., a paper, poster, abstract, KT piece)
 - iv. Creation of a balanced critique or application of a theoretical framework or construct; or
 - v. participation in a component of an on-going research project, such as primary data collection, data analysis, etc.
- 4) **FORMAT:** MRPs will follow the format outlined in the document titled “Thesis, MRP, and Dissertation Guidelines” available at
[:http://www.ryerson.ca/graduate/currentstudents/academicmatters/dissertations.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/graduate/currentstudents/academicmatters/dissertations.html)

What are the objectives of completing an MRP?

Completion of an MRP will provide the student with opportunities to:

- Engage in a broad range of activities which contribute to the creation, enhancement, and dissemination of knowledge within nutrition communication that may shape policy, practice and teaching through a process of rigorous inquiry.
- To identify an MRP through which you can pursue his/her interests – whether that’s a specific topic, a particular communication medium, or a project
- Delve into a topic of interest in comprehensive detail by completing a comprehensive and balanced systematic literature review, identify and examine divergent viewpoints, use a critical and evidence-based approach in the analysis of findings, and construct and articulate evidence-based rationales for recommendations/choices made (e.g., limiting the scope of the MRP, focusing on specific population groups, etc.).
- Seek and receive ongoing feedback from faculty supervisor and reader to support enhancement of his/her communication skills.

- Create a nutrition communication product that can become the central piece in his/her professional portfolio
- To provide a student with experience working independently under faculty supervision
- Demonstrate his/her understanding of intellectual property rights and take action to avoid plagiarism. The School of Nutrition has a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism.

What are the faculty supervisor's responsibilities?

Decisions concerning the direction and scope of the MRP are made by the faculty supervisor. As the primary academic mentor for the student's MRP work, the faculty supervisor oversees the MRP, provides the student with guidance and instruction to ensure the quality and rigour of the MRP, provides feedback on drafts, ensures that the MRP is reviewed by the School's SRC committee and guides the student in addressing comments provided by the SRC committee and others, identifies resources that may support the student's ability to successfully complete the MRP, maintains regular communication with the student as per the MRP plan and agreement, identifies and invites an external reader/consultant if s/he deems it is appropriate, and grades the MRP. The faculty supervisor has the right to submit any MRP deliverable to Turnitin to detect plagiarism.

What are the 2nd reader's responsibilities?

A full-time School of Nutrition faculty member will be invited as a 2nd reader for the MRP proposal and final report and member of the student's MRP supervisory committee. The 2nd reader will be recruited by the supervisor. *After revising his/her draft MRP documents based on the faculty supervisor's comments*, the student will provide the draft documents to the 2nd reader who will provide comments and suggestions for improvement. The faculty supervisor and 2nd reader will evaluate and sign off on the MRP plan and the final major research project. If the 2nd reader finds the MRP unsatisfactory, he/she should consult with the supervisor about revisions. The supervisor and 2nd reader may request revisions based on the final MRP draft before the finalized paper is submitted to the program. **Please consult with the 2nd reader before setting due dates for review of MRP drafts.**

What is the responsibility of the School of Nutrition SRC Committee?

The School of Nutrition SRC Committee will review and provide constructive feedback on the MRP proposal (completed in the Directed Studies course (NC8205)) during the fall semester to support the student's ability to complete a methodologically rigorous and conceptually sound MRP project.

What are an external reader/consultant's responsibilities?

In cases where the faculty supervisor feels it is appropriate, s/he may invite an expert in the field of the major research paper or a Ryerson University faculty member who is not a member of the School of Graduate Studies as a third (additional) reader upon approval of the Dean of Yeates School of Graduate Studies. The external reader can provide feedback and commentary on the MRP draft(s).

What are my responsibilities?

- 1) **Read the following documents prior to starting your MRP:**

- a) Familiarize yourself with the following policies and documents that apply to completion of your MRP at Ryerson:
- a. School of Nutrition MRP Guidelines
 - b. Student Code of Academic Conduct:
www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol60.pdf
 - c. Ryerson Academic Integrity policies for graduate students
<http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/Students/Graduate/index.html>
 - d. Yeates School of Graduate Studies website:
<http://www.ryerson.ca/graduate/policies/index.html>
 - e. Intellectual Property Guidelines
<http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/assets/pdf/IPGuidelines.pdf>
 - f. Student Supervisor checklist
http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/forms/documents/YSGS_Student_Supervisor_Checklist_SEPT2014.pdf
 - g. Thesis, MRP, and Dissertation Submission Requirements
(http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/policies/documents/Thesis_MRP_Dissertation_Guidelines_06_2014-2.pdf)

- 2) **Avoid academic misconduct.** Please note that there are
“Higher expectations for Graduate Students

a. Graduate students who have gone through several years of post-secondary education prior to their graduate level studies have an obligation to be familiar with the general principles and expectations of academic integrity in coursework, non-coursework requirements, and research in their discipline, Department, Program and/or School. It is expected that Graduate Students will familiarize themselves with the actions that are defined as academic misconduct by the University. Graduate students will be expected to demonstrate that knowledge when engaging in all university-related activities. Graduate students who are unclear about what might be considered academic misconduct should consult with their Supervisor, Graduate Program Director, or the Academic Integrity Office.

b. The University expects that Graduate Students understand the importance of academic integrity principles, and are aware of consequences of departures from these principles.”

(Policy 60, page 12, Section E5)

Familiarize yourself with Ryerson University policy on Academic Integrity (www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity) and produce work that respects intellectual property rights and adheres to the policy. **It is the student’s responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to take appropriate action to respect intellectual property rights.** The student must ensure that the deliverables created for this milestone are **COMPLETELY ORIGINAL** works of his/her own creation; that the use of other peoples’ ideas and intellectual property are appropriately recognized, and that all citations provided are accurate. Ryerson University policy on Academic Integrity applies to all aspects of the MRP milestone. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in a final grade of zero for the MRP milestone project. **The School of Nutrition has a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism.**

Your MRP will be submitted to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism prevention and detection service to which Ryerson subscribes. It is a tool to assist faculty members in determining the similarity between student work and the work of other students who have submitted papers to the site (at any university), internet sources, and a wide range of journals and other publications. While it does not contain all possible sources, it gives faculty some assurance that students' work is their own. No decisions are made by the service; it simply generates an "originality report". Faculty must evaluate the originality report to determine if something is plagiarized. ***Students who do not want their work submitted to this plagiarism detection service must, by the end of the second week of class, consult with the instructor to make alternate arrangements.*** **NOTE:** Graduate program faculty have agreed to specify MRP documents not become part of the Turnitin repository when setting up their Turnitin assignments. This means that your work will NOT become part of the Turnitin database.

- 3) **Meet** with faculty supervisor as agreed.
- 4) **Meet deadlines** as per the schedule of dates below.
- 5) **Seek and welcome feedback** on your work to improve your communication skills.
- 6) **Conform to the format and style requirements for MRPs**, as per (http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/policies/documents/Thesis_MRP_Dissertation_Guidelines_06_2014-2.pdf)
- 7) **Ensure that your final MRP conveys a high standard of written communication.** As such, in-depth analysis, clarity of thought, conciseness, and proper grammar, sentence structure, spelling and referencing are of the utmost importance.

What are the deliverables and due dates for my MRP?

Students must obtain a passing grade in each component to earn final approval of the MRP. Students may be required to revise and resubmit a component until a passing grade is achieved. Failure to achieve a passing grade in each of the MRP evaluative components will result in a final grade of F for this milestone project.

DRAFT Schedule of Dates for MRP Completion

DATES THAT FALL ON A WEEKEND OR HOLIDAY ARE MOVED TO THE NEXT BUSINESS DAY

NOTE: This schedule is a draft. The final schedule for your completion of your MRP must be negotiated and discussed with your faculty supervisor and second reader. Dates that are preceded by an * reflect latest possible dates for submission of that element. These dates can be moved ahead (made due sooner) but cannot be extended.

F A L L S E M E S T E R

1. Consult your faculty supervisor Before Sept
 - a. Discuss and complete the [Student-Supervisor Discussion Checklist](#), sign and submit it to the Program Administrator Oct 15th
 - b. Complete your MRP proposal Oct 25th
 - c. Complete your structured literature review Dec 20th
2. Schedule regular meetings with your supervisor by Sept 10th
3. Submit your MRP proposal to your 2nd reader for feedback Nov 1st
4. Revise MRP proposal based on 2nd reader feedback Nov 15th
5. Submit your MRP proposal to the School's SRC committee Nov 30th
6. Revise MRP proposal based on SRC committee feedback *Dec 10th

W I N T E R S E M E S T E R

1. Schedule regular meetings with your supervisor Jan 12th
2. Complete NC8205 Directed Studies course outline by Jan 19th
3. Submit MRP data collection protocol to Research Ethics Board (if applicable) ASAP
4. Submit revised MRP proposal to Graduate Program Director Jan 15th
5. Submit fall MRP progress report to Program Administrator Jan 25th
6. Submit REB Report (if applicable) to Program Administrator *Mar 30th
7. Initiate implementation of your MRP proposal Jan 12th
8. Start drafting feasible sections of your final MRP report Ongoing

S P R I N G / S U M M E R S E M E S T E R

1. Work on MRP and meet with supervisor as scheduled ongoing
2. Submit winter MRP progress report to Program Administrator *May 16th
3. Submit draft final MRP report (including all deliverables) to supervisor June 15th
4. Revise final MRP report per supervisor's feedback by June 30th
5. Present MRP summary (to date) to MHSC students in NC8301 July
6. Submit revised final MRP report to supervisor & 2nd reader July 1st
7. Revise final MRP report per supervisor & 2nd reader's feedback July 20th
8. Submit revised final MRP report to supervisor & 2nd reader July 30th
9. Revise final MRP report based on supervisor & 2nd reader feedback Aug 10th

- 10. Submit final MRP to Program Administrator¹ * Aug 15th
- 11. Submit signed MRP evaluation to Program Administrator * Aug 15th
- 12. Engage in MRP dissemination activities if applicable

*** These dates can be moved ahead (made due sooner) but cannot be extended.**

How is an MRP graded?

An MRP is a “milestone” project, as defined in Policy 142 (<http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol142.pdf>). MRP’s are graded as Pass or Fail; a final grade of B+ or higher is considered a passing grade.

A Milestone is a component of a program which is required for graduation, but is not offered in a traditional in-class course framework. Examples are graduate seminars, theses, major research papers/projects, comprehensive/candidacy examinations, dissertations, and WHIMIS certification. The final assessment will normally be Pass/Fail. Students will normally be enrolled in a Milestone when they are ready to commence work on the Milestone. A student with satisfactory performance in a Milestone (as recorded on the Progress Report) will continue in with “INP” (in progress) on the Progress Report in every term until completion. A student with unsatisfactory performance during a term will have UNS (unsatisfactory) on the Progress Report. An UNS is equivalent to an F for Academic Standing calculations. A failed course taken previously or in the same term in combination with an UNS result in a Milestone, or a second UNS result in a Milestone, will result in academic withdrawal from the program.

Master’s Grading System

Letter Grade	Conversion Range Percentage Scale to Letter Grades
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
F	0-69 (Master’s Unsatisfactory Performance Level)

Final academic performance in each course is recorded as one of the above letter grades or as AEG, AUD, CNC, CRT, FNA, GNR, INC, INP or PSD.

Incomplete Grade (INC)

The assignment of an incomplete grade normally follows discussion between the faculty member and student concerning the work to be completed and the relevant due date(s). To confirm arrangements that are already mutually understood or to provide the necessary information where prior consultation has not taken place, when an Incomplete Grade is assigned the faculty member(s) will complete a prescribed Incomplete Grade Form that specifies work to be completed and due dates. Copies of this

¹ The MRP completion will not be recorded in a student’s academic record until the student has submitted the requirements documents to the Program by the deadline. **Students who do not submit an approved MRP by August 15th may need to enrol in a subsequent term until conditions are met.**

completed form will be provided to the graduate program department, which will in turn provide a copy to the student. The due date set by the faculty member will be no later than the end of the following semester, but will normally be earlier than this.

Passed (PSD)

The assignment of a PSD grade is given for acceptable performance in a course graded only Pass/Fail, as predefined in the Calendar.

Can I publish, present, or disseminate my MRP?

It depends on the nature of your MRP. Some projects may include components that are intended for dissemination by publication, presentation, or in other way(s). If you and your faculty supervisor have planned that component(s) of your MRP will be prepared for dissemination, you will have had a conversation about authorship rights when you completed the Student-Supervisor Checklist (page 5). At that time, you will have decided who will, and will not, contribute to your project and who will, and will not, earn authorship credit in relation to any dissemination activities.

If your MRP plan includes submission of appropriate MRP components for dissemination, it is expected that you will follow through with this responsibility. If you do not complete the dissemination aspect of your MRP by the time you graduate from the MHSc program, your faculty supervisor may decide to go ahead with these tasks and will notify you by email if this is the case. Depending on the nature and amount of work that needs to be done to accomplish dissemination, changes in authorship order may be discussed.

Completion of your MRP falls under Ryerson Senate Policy 118 on Scholarly, Research and Creative Activity Integrity (<http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol118.pdf>) which describes the requirements for ensuring that all those who make a significant contribution to your work are properly acknowledged. Each person included as an author of an SRC product (e.g., a manuscript, presentation, abstract, etc.), must be given the opportunity to give or deny their consent for her/his name to be included. No SRC product can be disseminated without all authors' consent. All authors must receive a final copy of the SRC product as submitted for dissemination.

How does my MRP fit in my portfolio?

Your MRP can be the cornerstone of your nutrition communication portfolio. We encourage you to consider binding the final, revised version of your MRP. You may wish to provide your 2nd reader with a bound copy of your final MRP.

What other policies apply to completion of my MRP?

Consult the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS) policies website for complete text of all graduate policies: www.ryerson.ca/graduate/currentstudents/academicmatters/policies.html

- 1) Codes of Conduct:** Students are expected to adhere to the Ryerson University Student Code of Academic Conduct (Policy 60) and the Student Code of Non-academic Conduct (Policy 61) available at: www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/

2) **Alternate Arrangements:** Students are required to inform their instructors of any situation which arises during the semester which may have an adverse effect upon their academic performance, and must request any considerations and accommodations according to the relevant policies and well in advance. Failure to do so will jeopardize any academic appeals.

- **Medical certificates** – If a student misses the deadline for submitting an assignment, or the date of an exam or other evaluation component because of illness, he or she must submit a Ryerson Student Medical Certificate AND an Academic Consideration form to the program office within three working days of the missed date. Both documents are available at www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/medical.pdf.
- **Religious observance** – If a student needs accommodation because of religious observance, he or she must submit a Request for Accommodation of Student Religious, Aboriginal and Spiritual Observance AND an Academic Consideration form to the program office within the first two weeks of the class. If the required absence occurs within the first two weeks of classes, or the dates are not known well in advance as they are linked to other conditions, these forms should be submitted with as much lead time as possible in advance of the required absence. Both documents are available at www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/reobservforminstr.pdf
- **Students with disabilities** – should register with Academic Accommodation Support to facilitate their academic success. See <http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support/index.html>. Before the first graded work is due, students should also inform their instructor through an “Accommodation Form for Professors” that they are registered with Academic Accommodation Support and what accommodations are required.

3) **Assignments:**

- **Due dates:** Students are responsible for ensuring that assignments are submitted to the instructor on or before the designated due date and time. Unless otherwise stated in writing by the instructor, the penalty for late submission of an assignment is a loss of 5% of the value of the assignment for each 24-hour period the assignment is late (including weekends). For example, if an assignment is marked out of a total of 40 marks, 2 marks (5%) will be deducted for each 24-hour period late. Thus, if it is submitted 42 hours after the due date, 4 marks will be deducted and the maximum possible mark achievable for that assignment will be 36 marks.
- **Missed Deadlines:** Students are responsible for submitting assignments on or before the due dates. If any form of evaluation is missed due to medical or compassionate reasons, a student must **inform** the instructor and the Program Administrator (416-979-5000 ext 2761) as soon as possible and/or within 12 hours of the missed event. Appropriate documentation must be submitted upon return to avoid a zero grade for the assignment/test/exam. Students who are too ill to participate in an evaluative component of a course (e.g. make a presentation, sit a text/exam) must present the Ryerson Medical Certificate to the Professor and the Program Administrator **within 3 days of the missed event**.
- **Copies:** Students are required to keep a complete copy of each assignment, as submitted, for their records. In the unlikely event that an assignment is lost after submission to the instructor, the student will be asked to submit the copy to the instructor.

4) **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Plagiarism** is a serious offence. Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will be penalized as per Ryerson’s Student Code of Academic Conduct (Policy 60), available at www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol60.pdf. *The **minimum penalty for academic***

misconduct on any assignment or other form of evaluation is a mark of zero for the work. As a consequence of any determination of misconduct, a DN will be placed on the student's academic record.

If you are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the Graduate Studies website at www.ryerson.ca/graduate OR. Click on Policies and download the "Intellectual Property Guidelines". It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this document. Information on academic integrity for graduate students is also available at:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/Students/Graduate/index.html>

Misrepresentation: Submitting someone else's work as your own:

Ryerson's Student Code of Academic Conduct (Policy 60, <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>) states that "submitting stolen or purchased assignments or research" is academic misconduct. Regardless of how or where you obtain it (e.g., from another student, from a website, from a paper mill, etc.,) submitting someone else's work as your own is misrepresentation. "Copying another person's answer(s) to an examination or test question; copying another person's answers to individually assigned projects" is academic misconduct.

Allowing other people to use your work:

"Offering, giving or selling essays or other assignments with the knowledge that these works will likely be subsequently submitted for assessment" is also academic misconduct (Policy 60, <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>).

- 5) Merit of Work and Recalculation:** At any time during the semester, students who believe that an assignment, test or exam, either in whole or part, has not been appropriately graded must first review their concerns with their instructor within ten (10) working days of the date when the graded work is returned to the class. It is an instructor's responsibility to return graded work in a timely manner. Grades not questioned within this period will not be reassessed at a later date. For additional information please review Policy 152 at www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/pol152.pdf
- 6) Contacting the Instructor by Email:** Students may use email to contact the instructor regarding this course. The instructor will make every effort to respond to student email messages **within 3 days** (72 hours) of **receipt** of the message. Students should keep this timeframe for response in mind when sending messages asking for information or clarification relating to assignments or tests. It *may not* be possible for instructors to respond to messages sent less than 3 days prior to the test or assignment prior to the due date.