



**Graduate
Studies**

**Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS) and
Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) Program**

**Master of Arts (MA) Regulations for Preparation of
Thesis Proposal and Composition of MA Thesis Examining Committee**

Introduction

This document focuses on four areas:

1. Role of MA Thesis Supervisor
2. Format and Organization of MA Thesis Proposal
3. Readiness for MA Thesis Defence and Composition of Examining Committee
4. Submission and Deposit of MA Thesis

MA thesis and information related to steps to follow in preparing your MA thesis proposal, pertaining to Ryerson University's Yeates School of Graduate Studies *Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation* Policy, thesis supervision regulations, examining committee composition, conduct of examinations, and submission requirements are available from Web addresses indicated below:

https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/current-students/policies/Thesis_MRP_Dissertation_Guidelines.pdf

<https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol164.pdf>

While Ryerson's YSGS has its own regulations and policies pertaining to proposal submissions, supervision regulations, and examining committees, graduate programs can establish program specific guidelines.

Students interested in the MA thesis option, will first need to meet with the MPPA Program Director to seek approval to complete their degree via this option. Consideration is given to a student's current academic standing and progress through the program. Students not granted permission to write a thesis can complete the Major Research Paper (MRP) or course option.

1.0 Role of MA Thesis Supervisor

Ryerson University requires that MA thesis supervisors be current members of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS). There may be exceptional cases when a graduate student seeks permission for his/her supervisor to be from another university; however, the student must meet the MPPA Program Director to discuss the rationale for this choice of supervisor, and the final decision in this case, rests with the Dean of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies.

The MA thesis supervisor's role is to provide academic advice and monitor student's progress toward completion of MA proposal and thesis. It is also best practice for the supervisor to go over the supervisory checklist at the outset of the research process with the student: [YSGS Supervision Checklist](#)

The Supervisor will review the student's thesis proposal. The MA thesis supervisor will decide when the student's MA thesis proposal is ready to be approved. The MA thesis supervisor will complete the MA Thesis Approval Form and then submit the signed form to the MPPA Program Office, along with a copy of the student's MA thesis proposal. Submission of this form and MA thesis proposal to the MPPA Program Office confirms that the MA thesis supervisor is confident that the student can begin the next phase of his/her MA thesis.

It is expected that the Supervisor will engage regularly with the student and review the state of research and thesis drafts at least once a term. During the course of supervising the MA proposal and thesis, it is important for MPPA students to complete and submit, at the end of each semester, a Progress Report to the MPPA Program Office. The Progress Report must demonstrate satisfactory progress toward degree completion. Expectations of satisfactory progress for the following term will be defined on the Progress Report. A student who does not demonstrate satisfactory progress will be assigned an interim grade of "UNS" (Unsatisfactory). An UNS grade is equivalent to a UNS-failed grade for Academic continuance purposes. Two failed grades (on a Progress Report and/or a course grade) will result in Withdrawal from the MPPA Program.

2.0 Format and Organization of MA Thesis Proposal

Shortly after a faculty member agrees to supervise a student's MA thesis proposal, the student and faculty member are to complete the YSGS Supervisor-Student Discussion Checklist (https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/student-guide/academic-matters/forms/student_supervisor_checklist_july18.pdf), and submit the completed copy to the MPPA Program Office, in advance of the student commencing work on the MA thesis proposal. Information on the organization and format of the MA thesis proposal is located within this document.

Students are to prepare their MA thesis proposal in consultation with their MA thesis supervisor. In advance of the due dates noted below, the student's MA thesis proposal is to be approved by his/her MA thesis supervisor. The MA thesis supervisor then signs and submits the **MA Thesis Proposal Approval Form**, along with an electronic copy of the student's approved thesis proposal, to the MPPA Program Office.

Full-time MPPA Students - proposals must be approved **before the end of Second term**

Part-time MPPA Students - proposals must be approved **before the end of Fourth term**

The proposal should also include a statement related to research ethics and indicate if the research will involve human subjects and if a research ethics application is required. The application and guidelines for Ryerson University's Policy for Ethics Review of Research Involving Humans are available from the Office of the Vice-President Research & Innovation website: <http://www.ryerson.ca/research/resources/ethics/>. Where applicable, the approved Research Ethics Board (REB) report is to be submitted to the MPPA Program upon receipt.

Students are to include a "preliminary" title in their thesis proposal, along with the name and title of their MA thesis supervisor. Students are to use a writing guide that has been approved by their MA thesis supervisor. Although MPPA students are required to follow the program specific thesis proposal format described below, there can be slight modifications to the proposal categories, with permission from a student's MA thesis supervisor. For major modifications to the MA thesis proposal's format, the MA thesis supervisor is to contact the MPPA Program Director.

Format of MA Thesis Proposal

Length: 8 - 10 pages + title page and References (3,500 words maximum)

Preliminary Title:

Should be succinct and clear.

Introduction:

Brief description of your project and its rationale.

Clear statement of the research question(s).

Objectives:

Indicate clearly your research problem, question, or hypothesis.

Explain your theoretical perspective.

Offer your expected contribution(s) to the field (the originality of the work must be demonstrated).

Methods and Sources:

Provide a brief description of the research methods you will utilize for this study.

Provide a brief overview of the dominant theoretical perspectives/ professional practices in this field of study.

Describe the relationship of your proposed work to existing literature or professional practice.

Indicate where your work fits in and/or where it challenges these perspectives and/or practices.

Discuss any anticipated problems of access (to research subjects, archives, media content, etc.) and your planned solutions.

Research Ethics Statement

Following the research methods section, the proposal should include a statement related to research ethics, an indication if human subjects will be participating in the research, and if a research ethics board application is required.

Proposed chapters

Provide draft listing of your proposed chapter titles.

Proposed Timeline for Completion of Work

Contingent on when work begins, the example below is for information purposes, to give students and MA thesis supervisor a breakdown of timeframe for each section:

Document/Data collection; Interviews; Archival work: May-June

Analysis: July-August

Writing: September-October

Completion: November

References

Provide a list of references used related to MA thesis proposal using an accepted citation format.

3.0 Readiness for MA Thesis Defence and Composition of Examining Committee

Supervisor will evaluate the readiness of the student's MA thesis but will consult with student to arrange a proposed defence timeframe. The MA thesis supervisor will establish the student's MA thesis Examining Committee and schedule the defence. Examining Committee will be composed of four members:

- Student's MA thesis supervisor;
- MPPA Program Director or designate;
- One faculty member from the student's program who is a member of YSGS; and
- One faculty member who is not involved in the student's research but who is a member of YSGS and who may or may not be from within the program.

Where there is a co-supervisor, one vote shall be shared. The Program Director, or designate, shall serve as the non-voting Chair of the committee. The Dean may approve the appointment of an expert professional in the field of the thesis, or a Ryerson University faculty member who is not a member of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies, to serve as a member of the Examining Committee (but not as Chair). Such recommendations are to be accompanied by up-to-date curriculum vitae.

Faculty members appointed in more than one graduate program may act as the outside member of the examining committee, if they have not designated that Program as their primary affiliation. Examining Committee are constituted according to current MPPA Program and YSGS regulations.

When MA thesis is ready to be defended, student's MA thesis supervisor will send a copy of the student's thesis to each member of the student's MA thesis examining committee, at least **four weeks**, before date scheduled for MA thesis defence.

In cases where consensus between MA thesis supervisor and student is not reached with regard to readiness to defend thesis, the student has a right to petition the MPPA Program Director to have the written work stand for defence, establish an Examining Committee, and schedule the defence. Where the Program Director is the student's supervisor, the student may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies.

MPPA Program Administration will assist MA thesis supervisor to book a room for the defence and coordinate delivery and/or set up of any audiovisual equipment. For audio-visual equipment required at the oral exam, please refer to <http://www.ryerson.ca/ccs/services/mediaservices/equipment/>.

4.0 Submission, Format and Deposit of MA Thesis

Immediately following MA thesis examining committee's decision that the student's MA thesis has met the necessary academic requirement, the Chair of the MA thesis examining committee will ensure all members of the examining committee sign the Report of the MA Thesis Oral Examining Committee, which is then submitted to the MPPA Program Office.

The student's MA thesis supervisor will ensure and verify that the student has completed, in the time recommended, all required corrections as per examination, in accordance with Yeates School of Graduate Studies. Following completion of above, the student will submit the final copy of the approved thesis to the MPPA Program Office.

The MA thesis must adhere to acceptable academic standards and conform to scholarly requirements with respect to citations, bibliography, etc. Your MA thesis must include a title page that contains the following information: title of the paper, student's name, past degrees/institutions/dates, and the following sentence: "A thesis presented to Ryerson University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the program of Public Policy and Administration". The thesis should also include an abstract and table of contents.

All final MA thesis' submitted to the MPPA Program Office will be deposited to the Ryerson University Library for public access via the digital repository ([Digital Library MPPA](#)). The MA thesis format must be prepared in accordance with the procedures and information outlined in the *YSGS Thesis, MRP, and Dissertation Submission Guidelines* which are available on-line:

https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/current-students/policies/Thesis_MRP_Dissertation_Guidelines.pdf

The responsibility for submitting an MA thesis in the correct format rests with the author.

If, at the time of final submission of the MA thesis, the student wishes to:

- protect any rights to publication
- obtain a patent that may arise from his/her research
- delay circulation of the MA thesis for any other legitimate academic reason.

Student may apply in writing to the Dean of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies to withhold the thesis from circulation or copying, for a period of no more than twelve months from the date of successful final examination.

As a condition of engaging in a graduate program of the University, the author of a thesis grants certain licenses and waivers with respect to the circulation and copying of the thesis. These licenses and waivers take effect upon the submission of the copies listed above, except in the case defined in the previous paragraph, where they will take effect following the period of withholding.

They are as follows:

- The University Library will be permitted to allow circulation of the MA thesis as part of the library collection, produce single copies for another library or similar institution, or for an individual for private study and research.
- Submission of the MA thesis to the Library and Archives Canada will be made as agreed to by the candidate on the *Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Non-exclusive Licence to Reproduce Theses* form. The LAC does not accept major research papers/projects.

5.0 MA Thesis and Academic Integrity

All MA thesis submissions must adhere to Ryerson's academic integrity policy [Policy 60 Academic Integrity]. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with Policy 60.

<https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/students/what-is-integrity-and-misconduct/>

Any questions about plagiarism or academic integrity should be discussed with the supervisor.

All final MA thesis submissions are submitted to Turnitin. Ryerson subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention tool.

The student uploads a final draft of their thesis through D2L. The folder is accessible under the Public Policy and Administration organization shell under Assessments/Assignments/Theses.

Turnitin produces an originality report feature, which allows for the MA thesis to be cross-referenced with Turnitin.com's in-house database of millions of manuscripts turned in from schools in Canada, the United States, and the entire internet. The results are compiled into an originality report that outlines any similarities to these sources.



**Public Policy and Administration Program
MA Thesis Proposal Approval Form**

Last Name	First Name	Student ID
Preliminary MA Thesis Title		
<p>If yes, read the Guidelines and Applications for Ethics Review of Research Involving Human Subjects at: https://www.ryerson.ca/research/resources/ethics/, and, if already available, attach a copy of approved Research Ethics Board report to MPPA Program Office.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes , submit your REB report upon receipt

NOTE: An electronic copy of the approved MA thesis proposal is to accompany this form and be submitted to MPPA Program Office.

MA Supervisor Approval of MA Thesis Proposal

Name (please print)	Signature	Date
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Approval of MPPA Program Director

Name (please print)	Signature	Date
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