

M. A. in Health
Health Policy & Equity or Health System Management & Health Data Analytics
Faculty of Graduate Studies
York University

M.A. Major Research Paper Guidelines

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

At the [York Space Library site](#), you can see the titles of previously completed MA MRP's.

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, searching for relevant literature and analytically reviewing the scholarly work through application of learned critical lenses/theories. 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 in order to begin comprehensive research and its synthesis, and subsequently write the MRP.

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 and form a Committee, and submit to the program

STEP 2: Write an MRP Proposal and submit to the program

STEP 3: Complete Research Ethics Review procedures, if needed, and submit documents to the program and obtain approval of the
Graduate Program Director

STEP 4: Research, Analytically Review, Write and Revise the MRP

STEP 5: Hold Final Discussion for the MRP and submit forms 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. The 2-page overview should also explain how the research involves a critical perspective, and why the student has approached prospective committee members. Once the student has a Supervisor, the student and that faculty member work together to find an Advisor and finalize the 2-page research overview. 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. 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 appointed 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 occur 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?

Completion of Step 2 occur 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 package, if your research involves human participants (see Step 3)

*This 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.

Writing 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 literatures 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 and examples, refer to the [York Libraries' website](#) (click on the "Research & Learn" tab). 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 copyeditor 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** (see appendix), to the Health Graduate Program Office as soon as a change occurs.

STEP 3: Research Ethics Review

If MRP research involves data collected from human participants, then students need to complete this step of 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. Complete the TCPS2: [Course on Research Ethics \(CORE22\) tutorial](#)
2. Review the [Student Researcher Responsibilities document](#)
3. 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 Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples or Clinical Trials should complete the **MRP Ethics Protocol Form** (located under Research Ethics section of [Health student guidelines](#))
4. If your research is more than minimal risk and involves research with Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples or Clinical Trials, complete the **Human Participant Research Committee (HPRC) Protocol form**. To access this form, visit [Resources and Forms](#) and locate under Indigenous Research. For additional assistance contact

ore@yorku.ca. Familiarize yourself with the [Guidelines for Research Involving Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples](#) and refer to the **Checklist for Researchers using Aboriginal-Related Research**.

5. Additional ethics guidelines for research categories (such as people who are homeless, minor age participants, educational or hospital environments, etc.) can be reviewed at York's Research & Innovation webpage, under [Guidelines](#).
6. Use the **Informed Consent Template** to ensure that human participants are fully informed and consent to the research by 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. You 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.
7. Students are required to submit the **MA MRP Proposal Submission form** (as a cover page) and indicate with a checkmark, when ethics are required or will not be part of your project. This form is found on our Health website and in appendix of this document.
8. Assemble your MRP protocol package (**Protocol Form, Informed Consent document(s), copies of TCPS 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).
9. Final package is submitted to the Health Graduate Program Office (gradhlth@yorku.ca)

Depending on the nature of the research, clearance for MRP Proposals will be granted by the HLTH Graduate Program's Ethics Review Committee under an expedited review process for 'low-risk' research as described by the Human Participant Research Committee (HRPC) at York University (maximum of a 2-week turnaround).

Submit your MRP proposal package, with **email confirmations from the MRP committee** that state its approval. This package must be submitted to Health Graduate Program Office. The Graduate Program submits the approved MRP proposal to the ethics review committee and informs the student of the results, once a decision is made.

If there are significant changes after the MRP Ethics Protocol is approved, please complete the **Amendment to an Approved Protocol form**.

STEP 4: Writing and Revising the MRP

Remember that your MRP will

- use an interdisciplinary lens to explore an issue relevant to Health;
- articulate the conceptual and methodological framework that supports the MRP research;
- provide a synthesis of the literature in the fields;
- provide a critical discussion of the area of focus that shows it moves beyond description and/or argumentation into critical exploration and synthesis of practices and theories; which supports a contribution to an expanded understanding of the issue addressed.

Working with the Committee: follow the recommendations provided in earlier sections.

Length & Format: The MRP will have a required minimum length of 50 pages (double space) and a maximum length of 65 pages (double space). This length includes only the text of the MRP. Appendices, references, title page and table of contents are additional. 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.

The MRP uses the same Title Page as the MRP proposal (see appendix). An overview of Front Matter, Body, and End Matter is described here. Select which academic style (e.g., APA, Chicago, Harvard or, Vancouver style) you would follow for the written MRP and stick to it throughout.

Front Matter: Following the title page, present Table of Content and Abstract. These items should be listed in Roman numerals. For Abstract use the academic style you have selected.

Body of the MRP: The presentation of the main content of the MRP should be discussed with the Committee and included in the MRP Proposal. The sections may include Statement of the problem; Statement of key question(s); Research methodology; Findings and Discussion; and Concluding statement.

The interdisciplinary lens is fundamental to the M.A. (Health) program. In the MRP-Proposal and MRP, it is realized primarily through the following strategies:

- The Supervisor and the Advisor will represent at least 2 different academic disciplines.
- Students will demonstrate that they have explored their research questions using theories, literature, concepts, knowledge, and methods of at least 2 academic disciplines related to their research questions.

End Matter: Include Endnote (where necessary), References and Appendices (where necessary) at the end of the MRP, after the complete text with consecutive page numbers.

References/Bibliographies must be in the academic style you are following throughout (e.g., APA, Chicago, Harvard or, Vancouver style). For on-line tutorials and examples, refer to the [York Libraries' website](#) (click on the “Research & Learn” tab).

STEP 5: MRP Final Discussion

Once the Supervisor and Advisor have read and approved the MRP, a final discussion will be scheduled by the student in consultation with the Committee. The home graduate program office books the room or Zoom meeting at York University. In general, the Supervisor and Advisor will work towards the final discussion being held in the 1 to 2 weeks following the supervisory committee's agreement that the MRP is ready for the final discussion.

Students who are preparing for their final discussion will:

- Submit a hardcopy of the final draft of their MRP to their supervisory committee at least 1 week before the final discussion.
- Submit the abstract of MRP to the GPD with the final date of discussion at least 1 week before the final discussion. The GPD may choose to attend the oral discussion and inform the student and committee.

Students are required to bring a hardcopy of the **MRP Final Discussion Report** (see appendix) to the meeting for completion by the Supervisor. They will also bring a hard copy of the front page of the MRP title page for signatures and scanning.

The final discussion meeting provides an opportunity to discuss the MRP, its development, conclusions and findings. At the beginning of the Final Discussion, the student is asked to give a 15-minute presentation. Students may use Power Point slides for the key points and focused discussion. This is followed by comments and questions from the committee. The student is asked to leave the room while the committee consults on the final discussion. The student is then invited back in to hear the committee's comments.

The total length of the MRP final discussion varies from 1 - 1.5 hours.

In some instances, students will be asked to make minor changes at the final discussion meeting. Revisions are to be completed within 10 business days after the meeting.

The MRP will be given a final grade of "**Pass**" or "**Fail**" at the meeting. If revisions to the MRP are required at the meeting, the final grade will be submitted by the Supervisor to the Health Graduate Program Office only after the revisions are approved.

Completion of this stage involves the Supervisor submitting to the Health Graduate Program Office: MRP Final Discussion Report (signed and completed)

STEP 6: Submission of a Final Electronic Copy & YorkSpace

Upon completion of any revisions required by the Supervisor and Advisor, the student provides an electronic copy of the final MRP to the Supervisor and emails the Graduate Program Assistant an electronic copy as well.

The Health Graduate Program Office will proceed to complete the degree audit. The MRP is then made available to the graduate community at York University, if the student chooses for

it. If you would like to have your MRP available electronically, please sign **MA MRP YorkSpace Non-Exclusive Distribution License** (see appendix).

Completion of this stage involves the student submitting to the Supervisor and Health Graduate Program Office: an electronic copy of the finalized MRP

Academic Integrity

The program has zero-tolerance for breaches of academic honesty.

For detailed explanation for each type of offence, refer to the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#)

Major Research Papers or their drafts/proposals that breach academic honesty will be given a grade of “FAIL” as the minimum penalty, resulting in the student being withdrawn from the program due to failure to maintain academic standards.

More severe penalties may be imposed.

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 Mgwigwi](#) who is the HEALTH subject area specialist librarian. Below are a series of guides.

1. [York University Libraries - Academic Writing Guide](#)
2. [The Relationship Between the Research Question, Hypotheses, Specific Aims, and Long-Term Goals of the Project](#)
3. [Writing Centre at Harvard University](#)
4. [Developing a Research Question](#)
5. [In Pursuit of the Dissertation Proposal](#)
6. [Dissertation calculators](#). These assist in creating manageable timelines; although this tool is written for students at the University of Minnesota it may work for HEALTH grad students as well in that it helps break down categories and tasks into achievable parts.
7. and more broadly:
[The Thesis Whisperer](#)
[University Affairs](#)

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 4 documents by the corresponding deadlines as listed below.

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

Convocation

Documentation Submission Deadlines

Fall convocation (October)

before the registration deadline for the Fall term ¹

Winter convocation in absentia (February)

before the registration deadline for the Winter term ¹

Spring convocation (June)

before the registration deadline for the Summer term 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).

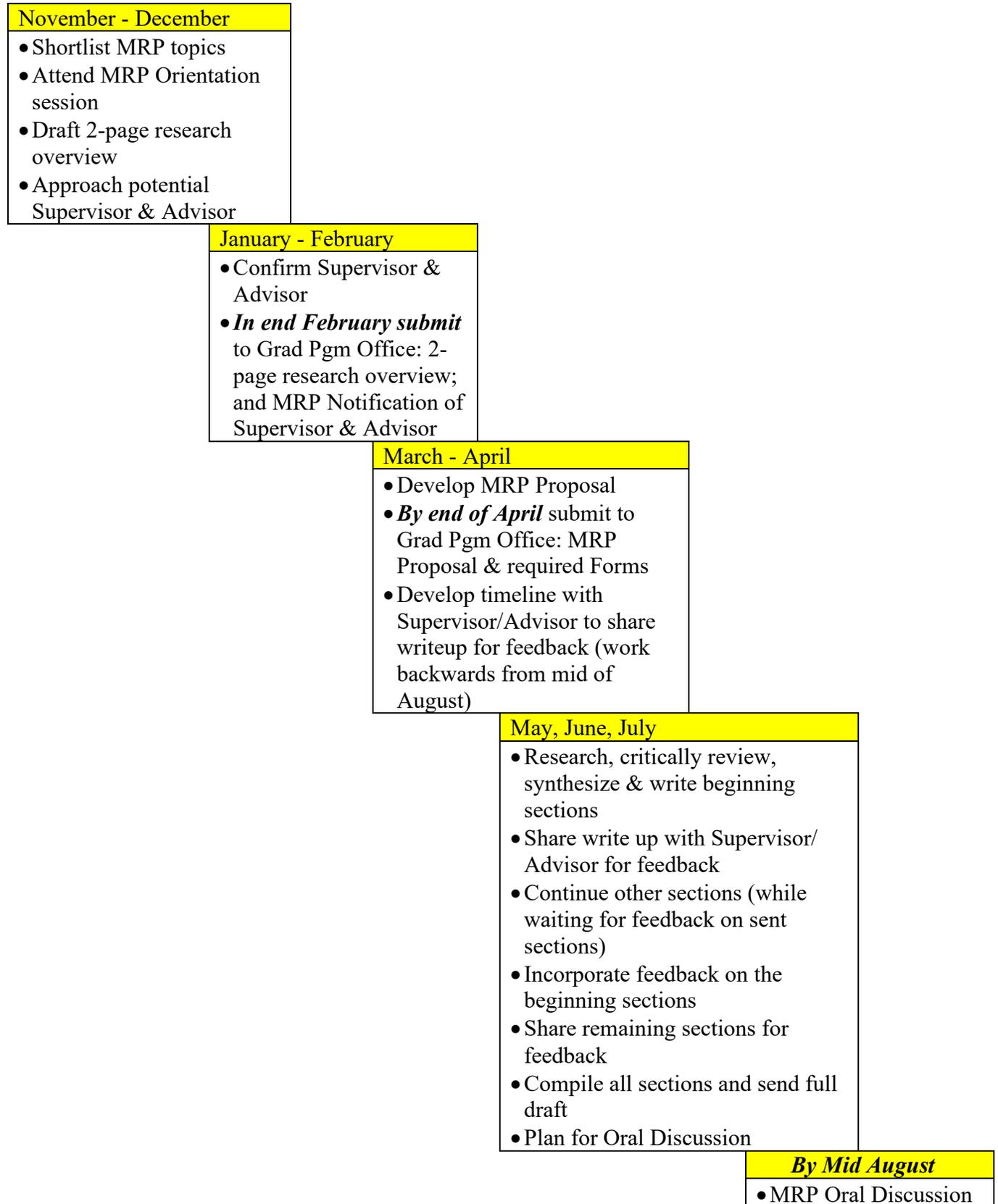
In the M.A. (Health) program, full-time students must register for a minimum of 3 terms and part-time students must register for a minimum of 6 terms to complete the program. All M.A. students, regardless of their registration status, have a maximum of 12 terms to complete the program.

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



• Submission of Full
MRP & Forms to Grad
Pgm Office

Appendix List

1. MA MRP Notification of Supervisor and Advisor Form
2. MA MRP Proposal Submission Form
3. Proposal Title Page
4. Change of Supervisory Committee/Research Form
5. YorkSpace Non-Exclusive Distribution License

**M. A. (Health)
Faculty of Graduate Studies
York University**

Notification of MRP Supervisor and Advisor

Student Name:	
ID #:	
Tentative Title of Research Proposal:	
Supervisor's Name:	
Member of York Graduate Program in <i>(List program relevant to current supervision; See the faculty listing http://Health.gradstudies.yorku.ca/research/faculty/)</i>	
Supervisor's Signature: <i>(Please sign or attach e-mail acknowledging the agreement of being a MRP supervisor.)</i>	
Date Signed:	
Advisor's Name:	
Member of York Graduate Program in <i>(List program relevant to current supervision; See the faculty listing at http://Health.gradstudies.yorku.ca/research/faculty/ or FGS Appointment list at http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/faculty-staff/academic-affairs/faculty-membership/current-members/)</i>	
Advisor's Signature: <i>(Please sign or attach e-mail acknowledging the agreement of being a MRP Advisor.)</i>	
Date Signed:	

Graduate Program Director's Signature

Date Approved

**Student submits this form, along with a 1- to 2-page research outline
to the Graduate Program Office.**

**M. A. (Health)
Faculty of Graduate Studies
York University**

MRP Proposal Submission Form

Name:			ID #:	
<u>Tentative</u> Title of Research Proposal:				

The Graduate Program/Department Ethics Review Committee confirms that the above stated proposal:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>does not</u> involve human participants and hence does not require an ethics approval.
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves human participants (non-funded <u>and</u> at minimal risk) and <u>is given</u> an ethics approval.
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves human participants (non-funded <u>and</u> at minimal risk) but <u>is NOT given</u> an ethics approval.
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves human participants (funded <u>or</u> not minimal risk). The above stated student is, therefore, required to follow an alternate ethics approval process to be carried by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee (HRPC) through the Office of Research Ethics (ORE), 5th Floor of York Research Tower. MRP Supervisor is required to first contact the Chair of the Graduate Program/Department Ethics Review Committee to establish and follow through the approval process.

Ethics Review Committee Member's Signature

Date Approved

Ethics Review Committee Member's Signature

Date Approved

Graduate Program Director's Signature

Date Approved

Student encloses this form to the MRP proposal upon submission to the Graduate Program Office, regardless of whether the research involves human participants.

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)

**M. A. (Health)
Faculty of Graduate Studies
York University**

Change of MRP Supervisory Committee

Student's Name:		Student ID #:	
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Tentative Title of Major Research Paper:

Which Supervisory Committee member has been changed?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advisor

Fill out the following.

Supervisory Committee Member	Member of York Graduate Program in <i>(List program relevant to current supervision; See the faculty listing at http://Health.gradstudies.yorku.ca/research/faculty/ or FGS Appointment list at http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/faculty-staff/academic-affairs/faculty-membership/current-members/)</i>	Date (DDMMYY)	Supervisory Committee Approval <i>(Please sign or attach e-mail acknowledging the agreement of being a committee member.)</i>
Previous Member:			
New Member:			

Graduate Program Director's Signature

Date Approved

Student submits this form, along with an 1- to 2-page research outline to the Graduate Program Office as soon a change occurs.

M. A. (Health)
 Faculty of Graduate Studies
 York University

Major Research Paper Final Discussion Report

A. Information to be filled out by the student.

Student's Name:

Student ID #:

Final Title of Major Research Paper:

Date of Discussion:

B. Comments and Grade to be filled out by the Major Research Paper Supervisor. (Use the back of this page if more space is needed. If the student is required to make changes, specify work to be done within 5 business days.)

Grade assigned to the Major Research Paper	<input type="checkbox"/>	PASS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FAIL
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	Supervisor	Advisor	Reader (if applicable)
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Names:

Signatures:

The Supervisor fills out this Report and submits it along with a hardcopy of MRP title page signed by the committee members to the Graduate Program Office.

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York University will clearly identify your name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to your submission.

Dated this _____ day of _____, _____

Student _____ Signature _____