

***SUBSTANTIAL RESEARCH PAPER
2008-2009***

1) Purpose:

The overall purpose of the SRP is to require Masters Candidates in the International Development Program to undertake a serious and sustained exercise in original research and writing, based either on secondary or primary material or both. More specifically, it is intended that students will enhance their research, analytical, and presentation capacities or skills through:

- *applying research methods and principles to an in-depth undertaking;*
- *relating research findings to major themes in both the ID field and in the area of concentration;*
- *planning and organizing material for a reasonably lengthy document;*
- *presenting findings thematically, clearly and logically;*
- *crafting convincing and persuasive arguments with careful use of evidence;*
- *drawing conclusions that not only include principal insights and themes, but also relate findings to selected themes in the field;*
- *sharing research experiences and findings with colleagues; and*
- *preparing formal and effective oral presentations on their findings.*

2) Requirements:

Length: The document should be 50 to 60 pages in length (all page requirements refer to text, and exclude footnotes, endnotes, and citations) and use double spacing.

Chapter 1: Themes and Methods

Section 1: a 4-5 page discussion of some key themes of ID drawn from at least three of the core courses and explaining the relevance or connection or contribution of the research to these themes. (A minimum of three ID themes should be discussed; and a minimum of 9 authors should be included in these discussions.)

Section 2: a 4-5 page discussion of some of the key themes in the student's elected concentration, explaining the relevance or connection or intended contribution of the research to the concentration. (A minimum of three concentration themes should be discussed; and a minimum of 9 authors should be included in these discussions.)

Section 3: a 2-3 page explanation of the purpose and method of the research; for example,

question(s) or problem(s) being investigated and why, a hypothesis or principal research question, survey methods, criteria for selection of documents, the sources relied upon, people interviewed, the libraries used etc.

Content Chapters: 30-40 pages logically divided into chapters, providing a report and analysis of the findings.

Concluding Chapter: 5-10 pages containing a summary of key points, major themes and insights emerging, the significance of the findings, realistic recommendations where appropriate, and a substantive discussion relating the research to some of the themes discussed in Chapters 1, Sections 1 and 2.

A List of Works Cited, divided into i) International Development Field; ii) Concentration; and iii) SRP Content

3) Faculty Supervision:

Students will be informed at the first year orientation of the requirements of the SRP. There will also be at least one well-publicized orientation meeting a year specifically to explain the SRP.

Students will be made familiar (and should make every effort to familiarize themselves) with faculty members' main areas of technical and geographical interest or expertise. This will assist them to approach faculty in good time. Although numbers may vary from semester to semester, on average it is anticipated that **faculty will take five registered students a semester**, giving preference to students working in their area of interest. **Once a faculty has a full quota of students, this situation will be treated like a full class**, and students will need to wait a semester or find another professor to supervise the SRP.

It is possible that a student will find a supervisor in another department of SIS or AU; in that case the student should explain the above requirements to the 'external' supervisor. (A student may request an IDP faculty member to help clarify this if necessary). Students who work with a non-IDP faculty member will need to become a part of, and participate in, all meetings of IDP SRP groups, as discussed below. For the purpose of group presentation and participation, and to assist with and supervise the sections on themes, **the student will require the supervision of an IDP Faculty Supervisor.**

4) Enrollment and Registration:

A student must **'pre-enroll'** with a professor in the semester prior to that in which he/she intends to register for the SRP. This means that in the semester preceding their formal registration students must do the following:

by week 9, obtain preliminary faculty agreement to supervise the SRP (you are advised to do this earlier in order to ensure that you work with the professor of your choice); and

by week 12, get agreement in principle from the faculty member, based on a one page outline including a) one paragraph on the purpose of the research; this should include either your hypothesis or your principle research question; b) one paragraph on intended research methods and c) suggested a list of contents in the form of chapter heading and sub-headings. (If this agreement in principle is not obtained the earlier preliminary faculty agreement no longer holds.)

To register formally for the SRP, a student must prepare a research proposal.

Students are very strongly encouraged to prepare all the materials necessary for registration well in advance; preferably these should be ready before the end of the preceding (i.e. pre-enrollment) semester and certainly no later than the first week of the semester in which they register.

The research proposal should contain the following:

- 1) A suggested outline of contents (chapter headings and sub-headings);
- 2) One paragraph on the purpose of the research, including the hypothesis or principal research question;
- 3) One paragraph on intended research methods;
- 4) Brief discussion of ID themes that may be of relevance (minimum of three themes);
- 5) Brief discussion of concentration themes of relevance (minimum of three);
- 6) Preliminary bibliography; and
- 7) Work plan for the semester, indicating stages of preparation and dates for completion.

It should be emphasized that the above headings, themes, etc, are meant to be preliminary in nature and that their purpose is to assist with planning and "thinking through" the paper. Students will be free to alter these as the research and writing progresses.

If the faculty is satisfied, the student, with faculty signature, may register. The student will then be told of the dates of meetings that she or he should attend, and deadlines for completion of a preliminary and final draft. In the semester in which the student wishes to complete he/she will need to conform to those deadlines and dates. Students are expected to complete the SRP in the semester in which they register.

There will be no formal supervision over the summer, although students may of course carry out research and write over the summer.

5) Group Participation and Final Presentation:

During their membership of an SRP group students will have to attend meetings called by their Faculty Supervisor. Most faculty require students to attend three meetings. Students in a group will also be encouraged to hold further unsupervised meetings amongst themselves or possibly with other groups to discuss informally their experiences and findings.

At the final meeting, students will make fifteen minute formal presentations after which they will be questioned both by the supervisor and their colleagues. The responsibility of the student will be to highlight key findings in a manner that is clear and of interest to their

colleagues, and provide some of points of relevance to the themes in the literature. The grade for the SRP will be determined by the paper rather than the presentation; however, a presentation that shows serious lack of preparation may affect the grade negatively and in severe cases the student may be asked to present at a later date, which will amount to a delay in his/her progress. It is hoped in time that outsiders, possibly alumni, or other professionals, may attend these presentation meetings.

Students are encouraged to attend group meeting in the semester before they register in order to benefit from attendance at meetings of an SRP group that is ahead of them.

6) Additional Clarifications:

i) There is no written comprehensive examination in ID. Satisfaction of the University's comprehensive exam requirement is based on the following:

a) the quality of discussion of ID and Concentration themes and methods as required in Chapter 1;

b) the quality of discussion in the Concluding Chapter which relates the findings of the SRP to the themes dealt with in Chapter 1;

c) The quality of discussion on themes (oral presentation) at a group meeting during the course of the semester (if the faculty requires); and

d) The quality of the final presentation (oral presentation, using handouts, visuals, power point etc) of the SRP at the end of semester group meeting.

ii) If a student writes two SRPs, the above requirements will affect only one of the two. The student will select at the outset which of the two will accord with these requirements.

iii) If a student selects to write a Masters Thesis, all the above requirements will apply to the thesis.

(Please See Attached Format for SRP Title Page)