For most MURP students, the professional report is the preferred exit requirement, because the professional report allows students to develop and hone practice-related skills. Recognizing, though, that for some students a research experience will be more appropriate, the PPD Department allows a small number of research oriented MURP students to write a thesis in lieu of a professional report. Typically, students who choose a masters thesis option will be considering Ph.D. study or research careers. To be considered for the thesis option, students must follow the procedures below:

1. Students wishing to pursue the thesis option must take U297, Research Design, or the equivalent in their first year of the MURP program. Taking U297 is necessary to be eligible for the thesis option but is not a guarantee that the student’s application for the thesis option will be approved.

2. Students who wish to pursue the MURP thesis option must apply, in writing, to the PPD graduate coordinator by May 24 of their first year. The application should include the following elements:

   - Clear statement of proposed thesis topic
   - Written statement from a PPD faculty member agreeing to advise the thesis
   - Statement of literature including relevant references
   - Explanation of anticipated research approach, design, and methods
   - If data will be needed, include an explanation of data sources that will be used, including citations to secondary data sources or a plan to collect original data, as appropriate
   - If thesis will be a case study approach or require qualitative data, include an explanation of how the needed case study or qualitative information will be collected
   - A statement of the relevant theory/theories, which will be especially important if the thesis will be primarily theoretical research.

Applications should be concise and to-the-point, not exceeding seven typewritten, double-spaced pages.

The faculty director of the MURP program will consult the student’s proposed thesis chair and other faculty members as needed. Applicants for the thesis option will be informed of the department’s decision within a month of the application. Students who are approved to pursue the thesis option will follow the plan outlined below. Students not approved to pursue the thesis option must complete either the professional report or the MURP comprehensive exam.
Writing the Thesis

Students who write a masters thesis will not be required to take U292 A-B (Professional Report) and instead will enroll in independent study (U299) with their thesis advisor. Thesis students should enroll in four units of U299 in each of the Fall and Winter quarters. The PPD Department limits the number of U299 units that MURP students can take (usually four units of 299 is the most allowed), but for thesis option students eight U299 units will be required.

The MURP thesis will be completed in accordance with UC Irvine Academic Senate rules for the masters degree thesis, available at:

http://www.senate.uci.edu/senateweb/default2.asp?active_page_id=720

The UC Irvine Academic Senate requirements specify the size and composition of the thesis committee. Following UC Irvine Academic Senate requirements and adapting to the MURP timeline, MURP thesis students should:

1. Defend a thesis proposal (approximately 20-30 pages) before a committee of three faculty members, including the thesis chair, by end of the second week of Fall quarter of their 2nd year in the MURP program. The chair of the thesis committee must hold a primary or joint (without salary) academic senate appointment in the PPD Department.

2. Complete the thesis after approval of the thesis proposal. The student completes the research and writes the thesis under the primary direction of the thesis committee chair. Approval of the thesis by the committee of three faculty members is necessary in order to graduate. The thesis should be approved in time to graduate by the end of the second year of the MURP program. That will typically require a final defense by mid- to late-May. Remember that your advisor and thesis committee will need to review a draft thesis well in advance of your defense. To accommodate campus deadlines, the department will require the following deadlines:

**Draft Masters Thesis**, complete in all respects, delivered to committee **not later than May 1**

**Final Date for Committee Approval of Thesis:** **May 20**