

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document sets forth guidelines for completing a Professional Report (PR), one of four options for satisfying the capstone requirement of the Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

## **WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL REPORT?**

A Professional Report (PR) is a professional-quality deliverable produced by a student on behalf of, and in collaboration with, a client in the practice community. The PR is an analytic document intended for decision support in the resolution of the client's planning problem. At the same time, by integrating knowledge, skills and values and requiring the exercise of professional-level responsibilities, the PR is a vehicle for accelerating student transition from academic to professional work.

## **IDENTIFYING PR CLIENTS & TOPICS**

In recent years, most students have secured their own clients through personal networks or by leveraging an internship. As an alternative, students may request individualized assistance from the program for referrals to prospective clients. Requests for assistance should first be directed to the PR (PPD292) instructor no later than mid-August between the 1st and 2nd years of the MURP program.

Clients originate in three sectors. The majority comprise practicing professionals in planning or allied endeavors. A somewhat smaller share comprises community stakeholders, for example, representatives of non-profit organizations. Finally, up to a handful comprise campus faculty members serving through their alternate professional or community roles. Clients must be approved by the program at the start of the PR process. This is accomplished through submission of a student-committee agreement form.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The PR process is student driven. Students must be sufficiently self-directed to act not only as their own agents but as intermediaries among the members of their supervising committee, who comprise:

- A client (technical advisor and practice role model),
- A PR faculty advisor (principal academic oversight), and
- The PR class instructor (teaches problem solving & communication skills).

The student's responsibility first, is to secure a client and negotiate a deliverable. The student is responsible for maintaining regular communication with the committee, e.g. weekly or biweekly meetings or emails with updates. The student solicits and synthesizes the committee's feedback by providing draft documents and addressing edits and comments. The student provides friendly reminders of impending deadlines and ultimately, is responsible for meeting deadlines.

The client's responsibility is to encourage professional growth through advice and feedback on a real world deliverable. In this respect, the client is the principal source of technical or situation-specific advice on the PR planning task. While engaged in the PR process, the client may not be the student's employer.

The instructor's responsibility encompasses year-long administration of the PR process and the teaching of 292, which constitutes the principal resource for improving problem-solving and communication skills. The PR instructor has exclusive authority for 292 grades. The instructor's level of formal involvement is high at the beginning of the PR cycle, but dwindles after 292 ends.

The faculty advisor is responsible for primary academic oversight of individual PRs. Advisors supervise the work of their assigned students in the 299 independent study course, hold exclusive authority both for 299 grades, and determine if the final PR performance is satisfactory. Individual PR advisors will be assigned by the department based on a balance of student and faculty requests, overlaps in areas of interest, and faculty work load.

### **292 and 299 COURSES**

The 292 sequence is required of all students who plan to complete a PR. 292 is a lecture seminar led by an instructor during fall quarter, whereas 299 (4 credits) is an independent study course that is supervised and graded by the student's individual PR faculty advisor.

### **DISQUALIFIED PR WORK**

Work used for the PR must be unpaid work, and may not be used to earn additional credit hours. Thus, the following is disqualified from serving as the basis for a PR:

1. Work performed as a condition of professional employment
2. Internships submitted to earn "practice experience" credit hours
3. Work for which you will receive any independent study credit besides the 292 credit already allocated by the program.

### **STUDY ABROAD: NEURUS and EAP**

Students studying abroad assume sole responsibility for regular communication with their committee members. Students are individually responsible for general assignments and compliance with any deadlines. Individual notices or reminders will not necessarily be sent from UCI.

NEURUS and Education Abroad Program (EAP) students may have extended deadlines specified by the instructor. These deadline extensions are rarely sufficient to compensate for the extra work of travel and acclimation to study abroad. To create a more realistic buffer for their time abroad, NEURUS and EAP students should carry out as much of their PR work as possible during the summer preceding their trips. Students typically register for independent study (299) to fulfill the course requirements.

Human Subjects Protection: students who plan to conduct “human subjects” research while abroad (surveys or interviews, for example) may require review and approval from UCI’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB process is discussed as part of 292. Since it takes up to two months to secure IRB permissions, your early action is imperative.

<http://www.research.uci.edu/compliance/human-research-protections/researchers/activities-irb-review.html> and <http://www.research.uci.edu/compliance/human-research-protections/researchers/student-researchers.html>.

### **PPD DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

Ph.D. students who are also pursuing the MURP will generally have a research orientation that is best suited to the thesis capstone option. Such students should undertake a PR only with concurrence of their faculty advisors and the MURP program director.

### **PR FORMAT**

The final report should comprise approximately 50 pages of text (12 point standard font, double spacing, 1” margins, header with pagination), including inset tables or figures, but excluding appendices. All reports should contain the following:

1. Title page (see sample below)
2. Table of Contents
3. List of Tables and Figures
4. Executive Summary
5. Introduction with Problem Statement, Significance, and Objectives or Research Question
6. Background or Literature Review
7. Main body of report (with appropriate subsections: Data and Methods and Analysis and Findings)
8. Planning Recommendations
9. Conclusion
10. References
11. Appendices (as needed)

The professional report is a planning communication, designed to support professional decision-making. Its quality, form, and organization should reflect conventions and standards in the professional community.

### **GRADING**

The 292 instructor has exclusive responsibility for grading during fall quarter. Beyond fall quarter, individual PR faculty advisors have exclusive grading responsibility. In determining whether the final submittal satisfies degree requirements, the advisor shall consider the client’s feedback about the student’s performance. Nonetheless, the advisor has final authority.

## **DEADLINE EXTENSIONS**

The Professional Report simulates a professional planning experience. Fixed deadlines are central to professional practice. Thus, except in cases of acute emergencies beyond the student's control, deadline extensions will not be granted.

## **MAJOR PR DEADLINES**

These deadlines on this page (for winter and spring quarters) represent a *minimal* set of checkpoints. Many students and their committee members will agree to insert additional cycles of submission, feedback, and revision. The student, ultimately, is responsible for meeting all deadlines.

### **Due: Oct. 4, 2017**

Statement identifying prospective client and topic, plus five PR advisor preferences (for PR faculty advisor matching process).

### **Due: Oct. 11, 2017**

"Committee Agreement" form confirming client including information on the problem statement or research question.

### **Due: Dec. 5, 2017**

Submit PR "First Half" to full committee. The 292 instructor will provide feedback and evaluate this document for the course grade; other committee members should provide feedback no later than January 17, 2018.

### **Due: Jan. 26, 2018**

Submit "Draft Three-Quarters" (version 0.75) to faculty advisor and client: revised in response to committee feedback; data /results and analysis 50% completed.

### **Due Feb. 16, 2018**

Submit Full Draft (version 1.0) to faculty advisor and client, including completed data, results, analysis, and recommendations.

### **Due: Mar. 2, 2018**

Faculty advisor and client must transmit feedback on PR version 1.0.

### **Due: Mar. 5-9, 2018**

Practice oral presentation with timed delivery ( $\leq 8$  minutes). Collective rehearsal is usually most effective (students themselves should initiate this activity).

### **Due: Mar. 9, 2018**

Submit Executive Summary ( $\leq 200$  words) for re-transmission to Capstone Day jury members.

*University of California, Irvine Urban Planning & Public Policy  
Professional Report Guidelines (revised September 2017)*

**Due: Mar. 16, 2018**

**MURP Capstone Day**, a juried showcase of PR and Practicum projects. Clients, students, guests, the faculty, and the community are invited to this celebration.

**Due: April 6, 2018**

Submit Full Draft (version 2.0) to faculty advisor and client, with final revisions addressing feedback on version 1.0 or on the Capstone Day presentations.

**Due: April 20, 2018**

Submit final PR to the Graduate Coordinator and the “Committee’s Final Approval” form with signatures. Please refer to form for submittal requirements.

► **PRs not signed-off by April 20 risk delaying conferral of the MURP degree until the following academic year.**

[Sample Title Page]



[Graphic should be representative of the report contents]

## **20-Year Air Quality Forecast for Orange County, California**

Peter D. Anteater

Professional Report

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the  
Master of Urban and Regional Planning  
Department of Urban Planning and Public Policy  
University of California, Irvine

CLIENT: [Type client's name, title, name of organization, organization contact information]

PR FACULTY ADVISOR: [Type faculty member's name]

DATE: [Quarter and year of submission]

**Committee Agreement Form**

**AGREEMENT to SERVE as a PROFESSIONAL REPORT CLIENT or FACULTY ADVISOR**

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of the proposed Professional Report (PR) project (2-3 paragraphs including a clear statement of the problem, discussion of its significance, specific objectives, and specific method for acquiring and analyzing information):

We agree to serve as committee members for the above named student who is completing a Professional Report in partial fulfillment of the capstone requirement in UCI's Master of Urban and Regional Planning program.

**CLIENT:** I am satisfied that the proposed work is at an appropriate PR starting point. I have read the Professional Report guidelines and understand the client's responsibilities as therein described.

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organizational affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**FACULTY ADVISOR** (must hold PPD faculty appointment):

PR Faculty Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT:** I approve the committee and understand that it is primarily my own responsibility to maintain regular communication with its members. I will provide a hard copy and electronic copy of draft and final documents to my client and other committee members for their review and comments.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee's Final Approval**

**SUPERVISING COMMITTEE'S APPROVAL of FINAL PROFESSIONAL REPORT**

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

**CLIENT:** The faculty advisor has solicited my evaluation of the student's Professional Report. I have received a copy of the final report.

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FACULTY ADVISOR:** I approve this final report as acceptable for completion of the Professional Report capstone requirement.

Faculty Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Collect signatures from your committee and transmit this completed form to Janet Gallagher, Graduate Coordinator.

**Submit to department (Janet):**

One bound print copy (to be used by the Planning Accreditation Board);

One all-inclusive file in .PDF format, both on (1) an optical medium (CD or DVD) and (2) submitted on line to the designated electronic drive or folder.

Media must be clearly labeled, and electronic file names must include the author's name.

**Submit to committee members:**

Print or electronic copy (as each member requests).