

**Professional Report Guidelines**  
**Master of Urban and Regional Planning**  
**University of California, Irvine**  
**May 2022**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document sets forth guidelines for completing a Professional Report, one of four options for satisfying the capstone requirement of the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) in the Department of Urban Planning and Public Policy (UPPP) at UC Irvine.

**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 analytical document intended to address a planning problem or issue. By integrating knowledge, skills, and ethics and requiring the exercise of professional-level responsibilities, the PR also serves as a vehicle for accelerating student transition from academic to professional work.

**IDENTIFYING CLIENTS & TOPICS**

Students are required to secure their own clients. Students often leverage an internship, professional and personal networks, or consult past PR students to identify a client. The MURP program maintains a database of past PR projects and client contact information that can be a helpful resource.

Clients originate in three sectors: (1) practicing professionals in planning or related fields; (2) community stakeholders, e.g., representatives of community-based or non-profit organizations; and (3) campus faculty members working on professional or community research projects.

Students must identify a client no later than two weeks before the start of Fall quarter by submitting a Client Identification Form (attached below). Students who fail to meet this deadline must drop the PR course (UPPP 292) and add the MURP practicum course (UPPP 294A). In addition, clients must be approved by the program. If a client is not approved, the student will be required to drop UPPP 292 and add UPPP 294A. Please check in advance with the MURP assistant director if you have concerns about a client's fit for a PR project.

**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 comprised of:

- A client (technical advisor and practice role model throughout PR project)
- UPPP 292 instructor (UPPP 292 covers research design, research methods, and writing in Fall quarter)
- PR faculty advisor (principal academic oversight in the Winter quarter)

The student's responsibility is, first, to secure a client and negotiate a deliverable. The student is responsible for maintaining regular communication with the committee, e.g., regular 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 professional reminders of impending deadlines and ultimately is responsible for meeting deadlines.

The client's responsibility is to encourage the student's professional growth through advice and feedback for 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 PR professor is responsible for teaching UPPP 292, which constitutes the principle resource for learning about research design, data collection, and writing. In the Fall quarter, the PR professor has exclusive authority for UPPP 292 grades. The professor's level of formal involvement is high at the beginning of the PR cycle, but is reduced after the Fall quarter.

The faculty advisor's responsibility is academic oversight of the individual PR. Advisors supervise the work of their assigned students in the UPPP 299 independent study course in the Winter quarter, hold exclusive authority for the UPPP 299 grade, and determine if the final PR performance is satisfactory for graduation requirements. Advisors also meet with students at least once during Fall quarter.

### **UPPP 292 and 299 COURSES**

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

### **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 <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
2. Internships submitted to earn practice experience credit hours <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
3. Work for which you will receive any independent study credit besides the UPPP 292 credit already allocated by the MURP program. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

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

Students studying abroad in Fall quarter typically register for independent study (UPPP 299) in lieu of UPPP 292. This requires that students identify a faculty advisor before traveling abroad who can advise students for two quarters of UPPP 299 across Fall and Winter. Thus, the PR committee is comprised of only the client and the faculty advisor in these cases. Students studying abroad assume sole responsibility for regular communication with their committee

members and meeting deadlines. Individual notices or reminders will not necessarily be sent from UCI.

Network for European and U.S. Regional and Urban Studies (NEURUS) and Education Abroad Program (EAP) students must meet the same final PR submission deadline (April 5, 2023) as other PR students, but the faculty advisor may extend prior deadlines. 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.

Human Subjects Protection: students who plan to conduct human subjects research while abroad (e.g., surveys or interviews) may require review and approval from UCI's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB process is discussed as part of UPPP 292. Please submit your application up to two months in advance to secure IRB permissions. For more information, consult this website: <https://research.uci.edu/cascade/compliance/human-research-protectio>

### **UPPP 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 advisor and the MURP program director.

### **PR FORMAT**

The final report should comprise of a minimum of 25 pages of text (12-point standard font, double spacing, 1" margins), including inset tables or figures, but excluding appendices. Reports should be paginated and use American Psychological Association citation formatting. All reports should contain the following:

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. List of Tables and Figures
4. Executive Summary (approximately 250 words)
5. Introduction (with research question)
6. Background and/or Literature Review
7. Data and Methods
8. Analysis and Findings
9. Recommendations
10. Conclusion
11. References
12. Appendices (as needed)

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

## **GRADING**

The UPPP 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. However, the PR faculty advisor has final authority.

## **DEADLINE EXTENSIONS**

The Professional Report simulates a professional planning experience. Fixed deadlines are central to professional practice. Deadline extensions are granted only in emergency situations.

## **PR DEADLINES**

### **Due: Sept. 8, 2022**

Submit "Client Identification Form" to MURP assistant director.

### **Due: Oct. 7, 2022**

Submit "Committee Agreement Form" specifying proposed scope of work and signed by the client and faculty advisor to MURP assistant director and UPPP 292 PR instructor.

### **Due: Dec. 7, 2022**

Submit PR "First Half" to PR instructor, client, and faculty advisor. The UPPP 292 instructor will provide feedback and evaluate this document for the course grade; client and faculty advisor should provide feedback no later than January 13, 2023.

### **Due: Jan. 13, 2023**

Faculty advisor and client transmit feedback on PR "First Half" by this date or earlier.

### **Due Feb. 24, 2023**

Submit Full Draft (version 1.0) to faculty advisor and client.

### **Due: Mar. 10, 2023**

Faculty advisor and client transmit feedback on PR version 1.0 by this date or earlier.

### **Due: April 5, 2023**

Submit Full Draft (version 2.0) to faculty advisor and client, with final revisions addressing feedback on version 1.0. Request signatures on the "Committee's Final Approval" form.

### **Due: April 14, 2023**

Submit final PR and signed "Committee's Final Approval" to the MURP assistant director.

► PRs not signed-off by April 28, 2023 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**

[Your Name]

Professional Report<sup>[SEP]</sup>

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]<sup>[SEP]</sup>

FACULTY ADVISOR: [Type faculty member's name]<sup>[SEP]</sup>

DATE: [Quarter and year of submission]

### Professional Report Client Identification Form

This completed form must be emailed to MURP Assistant Director Jorge Padilla: [j.padilla@uci.edu](mailto:j.padilla@uci.edu) no later than **September 8, 2022**.

Student name:

Student email:

PR Client Organization Name:

PR Client Organization address:

Client Contact (person):

Client Contact email:

Client Contact phone:

Brief description of client organization and activities (1-2 sentences):

Preliminary PR project description (1-2 sentences):

**Committee Agreement Form**  
**Agreement to serve as a PROFESSIONAL REPORT CLIENT or FACULTY ADVISOR**

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

Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) Professional Report (PR) students should collect signatures (electronic signatures are acceptable) from your committee and transmit/email this completed form to MURP Assistant Director Jorge Padilla: j.padilla@uci.edu.

Description of proposed Professional Report (PR) project (1 paragraph describing the research topic, purpose of the research, and deliverable):

*[insert text here]*

**CLIENT:** I agree to serve as a committee member for the above-named student who is completing a Professional Report (PR) in partial fulfillment of the capstone requirement in UCI's MURP program. I have read the PR guidelines and understand the client's responsibilities, such as providing guidance and feedback on draft versions of the PR and reading and evaluating the final PR.

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

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

[1]  
[SEP]

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

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

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

**FACULTY ADVISOR** I agree to serve as a committee member for the above-named student who is completing a Professional Report (PR) in partial fulfillment of the capstone requirement in UCI's MURP program. I am satisfied that the proposed work is at an appropriate PR starting point. I have read the PR guidelines and understand the faculty advisor's responsibilities, such as to providing guidance and feedback on draft versions of the PR during Winter quarter and reading and deciding on approval of the final PR in Spring quarter.

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 an electronic copy of draft and final documents to my client and other committee members for their review and comments.

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

**Committee Final Approval Form**  
**Supervising Committee's Approval of Final Professional Report**

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

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) Professional Report (PR) students should collect signatures (electronic signatures are acceptable) from your committee and transmit/email this completed form to Jorge Padilla, MURP Assistant Director (j.padilla@uci.edu).

The Professional Report will be shared with future and current MURP students, the Planning Accreditation Board, and other planning professionals affiliated with the department.

**Submit to department (MURP assistant director) and committee members:**

One all-inclusive file in .PDF format submitted by email as an attached file or with a link to a designated electronic drive or folder (check sharing settings).

Electronic file names must be formatted: PR\_LastName\_FirstName\_2023 [1]  
SEP

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