

**UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
COLLEGE OF NURSING**

MASTER'S PROGRAM  
Guidelines for  
Major Paper Submission

**2005-06**

The College of Nursing does not have a thesis requirement, however, students are required to submit "a substantial scholarly work involving significant independent study which is referred to as the major paper." This requirement should be an extension of work completed from prior coursework in the master's program and may be met by either a major paper in the traditional format or **a manuscript for publication. If submitting a manuscript for publication, the journal selected must be approved before work has begun by the faculty member who is serving as the first reader.** Review section 7.45.1 in the Graduate Student Manual for further clarification.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE MAJOR PAPER**

1. Critical examination of a major problem or issue in nursing
2. Syntheses of knowledge and ideas emerging from the student's program of study

**TYPE OF PAPER**

To be chosen by student and approved by major paper advisor (research guidelines appear on pp. 4-6 of this handout)

1. a philosophy paper examining a philosophical perspective and its impact on nursing (e.g., idealism, individualism, relativism)
2. a concept analysis paper
3. a theory paper
4. a program development paper
5. an evaluation paper
6. **research**
7. **other as approved**

**STEPS**

1. Select a type of paper (1 through 7 above) and the format (either major paper or article)
2. Obtain approval of the type of paper by 1st reader and select a 2nd reader after consultation with 1st reader.
3. Submit a written outline to the 1st and 2nd readers. If submission will be to a journal, select a peer-reviewed journal with input from the 1st reader.
4. Establish a procedure for consultation with readers. Submit a draft copy by an agreed upon deadline. It must be approved by readers to be eligible for written master's examination.
5. *Final copy*--two (2) copies are required which must be:
  - APA (5th ed.) format, **except:**
    - (a) eliminate the running header in pagination and
    - (b) add 2-space punctuation after periods and colons.
  - Reference list is the hanging indent style of the 5th edition APA. Style for manuscript must be as required in the Instructions to Authors of the approved journal.
  - letter quality print (dot matrix is not acceptable).
  - for the two required copies, 8.5" x 11" white acid-free, 20-pound (or 24-pound) paper. Only one side of the paper may be used. Off-white or colored paper is not allowed.
  - binding of mandatory two copies—binding fee is \$6.50 per copy.

6. **Two copies of the approved and signed copy must be given to the College of Nursing** with binding fee at least three (3) days prior to the final date grades are due in the Registrar's Office or an "I" will be submitted for the course and graduation will be deferred until the next semester. **Students who received an "I" in a previous semester should consult current semester's graduate school calendar for the final date for change of grade.**  
Manuscript format: The student will present the manuscript as required in the Instructions to Authors of the approved journal. A cover letter will be prepared. The student will submit both letter and manuscript to the journal after approval by the 1st and 2nd reader. Two copies of the final manuscript and cover letter (see below for other format) will be given to the College of Nursing to be bound. All other requirements will be the same.

### **THE BODY OF THE PAPER MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING**

1. Introduction (no heading titled Introduction appears in the body for this section as APA states what comes first is assumed to be the Introduction; however, the heading, Introduction, is used in the Table of Contents) (APA, p. 113).
2. Statement of Purpose
3. Literature Review
4. Presentation of the unique focus of paper, for example,
  - research study
  - nursing strategy
  - concept evaluation
5. Discussion of Findings
6. Discussion of Application and Implementation in Nursing
7. References (remember to use the hanging indent style of the APA 5th edition)
8. Appendixes

### **FORMAT**

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). (2001). Washington, DC: Author.

Margins: 1" top, bottom and right; 1.5" left

**PLEASE NOTE: If preparing an article for publication, in addition to the article, the student will include the following elements for the final copies to be submitted to the College of Nursing for binding.**

1. The same introductory pages (Title sheet, Approval sheet, Biographical sketch, Abstract, Table of Contents).
2. Introduction (a short description summarizing the manuscript or the rationale for the project).
3. An expanded comprehensive review of the literature.
4. **The manuscript in the correct format for the selected journal.**
5. Additional material as necessary.

### **ORDER OF THE PAGES**

All major papers must include the following: **(This is a departure from previous guidelines and from APA--do not number your title page and main body of paper will begin on page 1.)**

1. **Title Page** (see Sample) (not counted, not numbered)
  - title of the paper
  - name of the candidate(s) conducting the investigation and degree sought
  - phrase--"This paper is submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Rhode Island, College of Nursing in partial fulfillment of the degree, Master of Science, Nursing"
  - date (year)

- identify the source of support if received for the completion of the major paper
2. **Introductory pages:** these pages should be numbered with lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, etc.) at the bottom center of the page.
    - a. **Approval Sheet** (see Sample) (i)
      - title of the major paper
      - name of the candidate and degree sought
      - names and credentials of the two readers serving as advisors for your paper
      - date of the approval
    - b. **Biographical Sketch** (see Sample) (ii)
    - c. **Acknowledgements** (if any) (iii)
    - d. **Abstract** Page (see Sample) (iv or iii if no acknowledgments)
      - brief statement of purpose
      - theoretical framework
      - method of inquiry
      - findings
      - recommendations or conclusions
    - e. **Table of Contents** (see Sample) (v or iv if no acknowledgments)
 

Each main heading in your Table of Contents should start a new page in your document.
  3. **Main body of paper:** the page number (**start at 1**) should appear at the top right in Arabic numerals (NO small header).  
 Remainder of body as listed under the heading, The Body of the Paper Must Include the Following, on p. 2 of this handout. Remember to repeat your paper's title on the first page of the body of your paper and know that it counts as a level of heading even though it is only used that once (APA employs five levels of heading) (see APA, p. 113).
  4. **References**
  5. **Appendixes**

### **SUBMITTING MAJOR PAPER**

Students **must** obtain signatures by major readers **before** submitting copies for binding. The College does not accept responsibility for obtaining signatures.

**The student must submit each signed copy to the College of Nursing in its own manila envelope** (measuring at least 10x12") as the bindery considers each document to be a separate job. The following information will be requested:

- an abbreviated title for the spine (do not exceed 40 characters including letters, *spaces*, author's last name and year of completion)
- selection of color for binding to be determined by student; lettering will be gold

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURES TO PROTECT HUMAN SUBJECTS**

In any study involving human subjects, it is important to safeguard their rights and welfare.

Therefore, the proposed research for major papers that involves the use of human subjects must first be submitted to the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Office of the Coordinator of Research for review. (See the Graduate Manual, Appendix D, for guidelines.)

IRB materials can be accessed via the Research Office website at <http://www.uri.edu/research/compliance/humansubj.htm> or through <http://www.uri.edu/research/tro/>

### **Guidelines for a Philosophy Paper**

You may choose either of the following options. The emphasis of this paper is on logic, in-depth thinking and analytical rigor.

A.

1. Describe the phenomena of nursing practice, knowledge development, and/or knowledge utilization, or describe selected theories relevant to your area of practice.
2. Critically analyze, compare and contrast the major philosophical perspectives underlying these phenomena or theories.
3. Explore the congruence among philosophical assumptions and phenomena or theories and relevance for nursing practice, both general and specific.

**OR**

B.

1. Select a philosophical perspective.
2. Discuss its historical evolution, describe its major aspects, and critically analyze the perspective.
3. Based on this analysis, discuss how selected major issues in nursing theory or nursing practice are addressed by the philosophy,

### **Guidelines for a Concept Analysis Paper**

1. Select a clinical phenomenon of interest (from the Client, Client-Nurse, or Practice Domain) for an in-depth study from your clinical experience.
2. Consider how you will conceptualize this selected phenomenon--decide upon a concept.
3. Apply the Hybrid Model of Concept Development, including the theoretical phase, empirical phase, and final analytical phase. (Use the references on the Hybrid Model for detail.)
  - Make sure in the theoretical phase that you formulate a working definition of the concept.
  - Carry out the empirical phase fully.
  - It is important to focus primarily on developing a definition for the concept and then move into identifying definitional attributes in the analytical phase.

This type of paper is mainly seen as an extension of the paper completed in NUR500, although it may be started in other courses. In thinking about how to extend the work completed in NUR500, one might consider expanding (a) Phase One, by increasing the breadth or depth of literature initially covered (e.g., see Gerry Verhulst Testa's major paper on psychosocial withdrawal), or (b) Phase Two, by observing a different group of patients or additional patients (e.g., see Annette Brown's Major paper on respect).

If you are interested in the conceptualization of two or three related phenomena or concepts, you may apply the Concept Differentiation Model instead of the Hybrid Model.

### **Guidelines for a Theory Paper**

1. Select a clinical phenomenon of interest (from the Client, Client-Nurse, or Practice Domain) for in-depth study.
2. Investigate various conceptualizations of the phenomenon as evidenced in the literature.
3. Select a theory or theoretical framework which is appropriate to study the selected phenomenon.
4. Describe the selected theory in terms of theory-content (that is, in terms of basic premises and assumptions, key concepts in the theory, and theoretical statements).
5. Analyze previous work done with the theory in addressing nursing-relevant questions.
6. Discuss in what ways the theory is appropriate in addressing (that is describing, explaining, or predicting) the selected phenomenon, including a specific conceptualization of the phenomenon within the theory.
7. Critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the theory when used to study the phenomena of interest in nursing.

For this paper, one might extend the problem, strategy, theory paper in NUR531 to deepen the analysis of the theory and extend the discussion in step 7 to practice. One could use the term paper in NUR507 as a basis for working through steps 1 through 7 once again but in more depth.

### **Guidelines for a Program Development Paper**

1. Describe the processes for a systematic needs assessment and those used to collect the data and analyze the data in order to determine program design.
2. Discuss the results of the needs assessment in relation to relevant contextual issues such as the goals, objectives, needs, organizational constraints and philosophies in institutions within which the program is to be implemented.
3. Discuss the theoretical, empirical, and professional body of literature that provides a theoretical framework for program design.
4. Describe in detail the proposed program specifying the objectives and expected outcomes, procedures, participants, settings, and resources.
5. Present and discuss the rationale for statements of desired objectives and outcomes selected for the proposed program.
6. Describe how the program objectives will serve the needs of participants and relevant organization(s).
7. Describe the proposed plan in terms of the stages of implementation.
8. Describe and analyze the resources needed and their use in the proposed program.
9. Describe a comprehensive evaluation plan for the proposed program.

### **Guidelines for an Evaluation Paper**

1. Describe a situation or an area of concern, problem, or issue which is thought to require some form of change or a new program.
2. Describe and analyze the selected program from a theoretical perspective.
3. Identify and describe a theory of evaluation that can be used to assess the program implementation or impact.
4. Assess and analyze the program's structure and process, and critically analyze the effects of the program addressing the contextual issues.
5. Propose an alternative approach or an approach for redesign and revision of the program providing the rationale.
6. Discuss limitations and recommendations.

### **Guidelines for a Research Paper**

1. You may do a quantitative or a qualitative research study for your major paper. Students generally use the work they began in NUR 500, General Study of Nursing Knowledge for Nursing Practice, and NUR 505, Nursing Research. Your major paper may be a pilot study, part of a larger study, or a replication of a study. Regardless of type of study, you must include the collection and analysis of data.
2. A quantitative study may be a descriptive survey, a quasi-experimental study, or a true experimental study. Additional types of research may be considered. A qualitative study may be a field study (ethnography, phenomenology, or action research). Other types of qualitative studies also may be considered.
3. The traditional guidelines for qualitative and quantitative research methods should be followed. It will be helpful for your major professor to have background knowledge in the type of research that you select.

This paragraph and the following one represent two of the appropriate font styles to be used for your APA document. **The font used in this paragraph is called Courier; the second paragraph appears in a font called Times New Roman.** APA (5th ed.) states that the font needs to be easily read, should be at least 12 point, and that most default settings are acceptable. The "final" paper should have a left margin of 1 1/2 inches for binding purposes, be double spaced, employ two spaces after periods and colons and one space after commas and semicolons. A sample of some major paper pages follows. Please note that the print is simple, not "fancy."

This font is the Times New Roman. Note that the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of APA allows the use of **bold** and *Italics*. However, no indication was found in the new edition to support the use of bullets. Your document should show a ragged edge as opposed to right justification. Each main heading in your Table of Contents should begin a new page in the body. APA requires your document appear as simple and clean (though you may be using a computer). The following are samples of the Introductory pages of your major paper (J. R. Deacon, personal communication, December 19, 2001).

*S A M P L E of Title Page*

A Study of One of the Final Obligations  
Required To Obtain A Master's Degree:  
The Major Paper

by

Jane R. Done

Major paper submitted to the faculty of the  
Graduate Program of the University of Rhode Island  
College of Nursing in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Science, Nursing

2004

SAMPLE

Approval Sheet

Title of Major Paper: A Study of One of the Final  
Obligations Required To Obtain A  
Master's Degree: The Major Paper

Name of Candidate and Degree: Jane R. Done  
Master of Science, 2003

Major Paper and Abstract Approved:

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(1st reader)  
Sarah Jones, RN, PhD  
Professor of Nursing  
College of Nursing

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(2nd reader)  
Helen Brooks, RN, EdD  
Associate Professor of Nursing  
College of Nursing

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE

Biographical Sketch

Name: Jane R. Done

Permanent Address: 4 Happiness Way  
Peace Dale, RI 02883

Date of Birth: September 27, 1965 (optional)

Place of Birth: Providence, RI

Secondary Education: East Providence High School  
East Providence, RI

Post High School Education:

1982, Diploma, The Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing  
1990, BS, Boston University  
2001, MS Candidate, University of Rhode Island

Professional Positions Held:

Clinical Supervisor, Rhode Island Hospital, Providence, RI  
Instructor, In-Service Education, Newton Wellesley Hospital, Newton Lower Falls, MA  
Clinical Nurse, General Duty, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, MD

## *SAMPLE*

### Abstract

The abstract is written as one large block paragraph and is limited to one or two pages.

Contents of the abstract are delineated on page 2 of this handout under the heading,

Format, #4.

SAMPLE

Table of Contents .....	Page
Introduction.....	1
Statement of Purpose .....	2
Theoretical Framework.....	3
Literature Review .....	4
Nursing Strategy .....	5
Discussion of Findings.....	6
Discussion of Application and Implementation in Nursing .....	7
Conclusions.....	8
References.....	9
Appendixes .....	10