

# NUTR 992

## 2015 Masters Paper Guidance

### Fall Semester

**Important Dates:**

- **September 18: Masters Paper Agreement should be scanned and uploaded as a PDF**
- **November 13: Paper Title Due to Joanne**
- **December 10: Upload PDF of Final Paper with signature page**
- **December 10: Upload final presentation**
- **December 10 & 11: Paper Presentations**
- **December 11: Grades Posted**

## MASTER'S PAPER (NUTR 992)

The master's paper is a requirement of graduate training in public health nutrition. While the Master's Paper may be linked to the student's Advanced Nutrition Experience (NUTR 730), it is a separate three-credit course. It may take the form of:

1. A policy brief or white paper in which the student explores and analyzes an important nutrition policy issue and recommends a realistic approach to addressing it.
2. A manuscript suitable for publication in a scholarly peer review journal that adheres to the Instructions for Authors for a selected journal.
3. A grant proposal following a specific Request for Application (RFA) relevant to the field placement.
4. A clinical case report
5. Other type of paper, for example a business plan (these alternate types must be discussed with and agreed upon by the student's academic advisor)

**PRIOR to the Advanced Nutrition Experience, students should meet with their academic advisor to discuss the Master's Paper.** The student's academic advisor may be the advisor for the Master's Paper. However, the student may identify another Department of Nutrition faculty member with interest and expertise in the specific area of the student's paper. A profile for each faculty member is posted on the Department website. If the paper is linked to the student's Advanced Nutrition Experience then the appropriate faculty coordinator for NUTR 730 should be informed of the option selected and the topic of the paper.

**The PROCESS for writing the paper and due dates must be negotiated with the primary paper advisor.** The "Master's Paper Agreement" (Appendix A) should be completed and uploaded to Sakai with copies to the student and primary paper advisor. The plan includes expectations for submitting paper components; process for receiving feedback; and, final submission deadline.

### **Paper Submission and Paper Presentation**

**Grading: The paper and the presentation receive a COMBINED grade of H (honors), P (passing), L (low passing), F (fail) by the faculty advisor for the student's paper.** Grades are based on the quality of the paper and presentation, and consistency with the guidelines specific to the selected option.

## Policy Brief (Option 1)

### **Purpose:**

- Explore in-depth and analyze an important nutrition policy issue and recommend a realistic approach to addressing it;
- Accomplish the objective above through a well-written, evidence-based paper. This may take the form of a policy brief, white paper or other written product as approved by your advisor(s).

### **Grades are based on the following:**

- Logical, appropriate, evidence-based conclusions, analyses, and recommendations;
- Clearly written paper with topics arranged logically. Well-designed tables and figures (if applicable) that convey relevant, important information;
- Effective, appropriate application of program materials and other resources.
- Professional and readable by a lay audience, the document should be well-written, clean, and of a high enough quality that it could be published in a professional journal.

**Format:** Finished papers will vary in length. Most will be 10-15 single-spaced pages – concise and well-organized but long enough to convey the depth and breadth of a complex policy analysis.

Many sample formats for policy briefs are available via a simple Web search of “writing a health policy brief.” Also see: [http://www.healthaffairs.org/healthpolicybriefs/brief.php?brief\\_id=4](http://www.healthaffairs.org/healthpolicybriefs/brief.php?brief_id=4) and [http://urban.org/UploadedPDF/311379\\_state\\_tax\\_policy.pdf](http://urban.org/UploadedPDF/311379_state_tax_policy.pdf).

### **General Description of the Policy Paper**

The policy paper is meant to be an applied, practice-based, written product of publishable quality that serves a practical need within a health organization or community. The problem the paper addresses should be directly related to the student’s organization or work setting. The specific details of the paper may be worked out between the student, agency or other organization, and advisor(s). However, the student is the primary author of the piece, working in close collaboration with relevant others.

Students will choose to address any of a range of broad topics. Most will then narrow the topic and focus on a specific, significant element, with advisor approval. Finished papers will vary in length. Most will be 10-15 single-spaced pages – concise and well-organized but long enough to convey the depth and breadth of a complex policy analysis.

Many sample formats for policy briefs are available via a simple Web search of “writing a health policy brief.” Also see: [http://www.healthaffairs.org/healthpolicybriefs/brief.php?brief\\_id=4](http://www.healthaffairs.org/healthpolicybriefs/brief.php?brief_id=4) and [http://urban.org/UploadedPDF/311379\\_state\\_tax\\_policy.pdf](http://urban.org/UploadedPDF/311379_state_tax_policy.pdf).

## Manuscript Suitable for Publication (Option 2)

### **Purpose:**

- Gain experience in preparing a publishable paper, following specific “Instructions for Authors” for an appropriate scholarly peer-reviewed journal.

### **Grades are based on the following:**

- Selection of an appropriate journal and adherence to Instructions for Authors for that journal;
- Appropriate methods
- Clear, concise prose; well-designed tables and figures; appropriate citations.

**Format:** Varies dependent on the Instructions for Authors for the selected journal.

### **General Description of the Research Paper Option**

Particularly for students considering a career that may involve leading or participating as a member of a research team, this option for the masters’ paper provides the student with experience in manuscript preparation, and can result in a first-authored publication for the student. Here are some important considerations:

1. Ideally, the paper can be “real”; in other words, a paper that is actually submitted for publication. This is not a requirement, however. The paper can simply serve as an exercise for the student; in which case, the field preceptor or faculty advisor can use sections of the masters’ paper for other purposes (including for publication in a different paper, in which case it is expected that the student will be among the set of authors as appropriate).
2. The paper **MUST** be written according to Instructions for Authors for a real journal.
3. Papers are commonly written collaboratively, and it is expected that the field preceptor and/or others at the agency will contribute, at least in terms of editing while the paper is in development. It is required that the student independently write a majority of the abstract and the body of paper. Specific expectations in this regard will be established between the student, the advisor and the preceptor.

## Grant Proposal (Option 3)

### Purpose:

- Gain experience in preparing a grant proposal, following a specific Request for Application (RFA) relevant to the field placement.

### Grades are based on the following:

- Adherence to RFA guidelines including goals of the funding agency and requirements for the proposal;
- Clear, concise prose; well-designed tables and figures; appropriate citations.
- Clearly articulated scientific evidence base for the proposed work.

**Format:** Varies depending on the RFA guidelines.

### General Description of the Grant Proposal Option

Because grant writing is an important skill, this option for the masters' paper provides the student with additional experience in developing this skill, and is likely to provide the field preceptor or faculty advisor with a useful document as well. Here are some important considerations:

1. The proposal can be “real”; in other words, a proposal that the field preceptor will submit for funding. This is not a requirement, however. The proposal can simply serve as an exercise for the student; in which case, the field preceptor can use sections of the masters' proposal for other purposes (including for different funding mechanisms).
2. The proposal **MUST** be written in response to an existing RFA, adhering to the given instructions. If the proposal is not to be actually submitted for funding, then details of which administrative pieces of the proposal are required will be decided between the student, the advisor, and the field preceptor. Completion of a budget and budget justification is required; other administrative sections are optional.
3. The proposal **MUST** be **DIFFERENT** than the proposal written for NUTR 728. Communication between the student and the instructor of NUTR 728 is required to provide documentation that this requirement is met.
4. Proposals are commonly written collaboratively, and it is expected that the field preceptor and/or others will contribute to the proposal. It is required that the student independently write a majority of the abstract and the body of the grant. Specific expectations in this regard will be established between the student, the advisor and the preceptor.

## Clinical Case Report (Option 4)

*\*Please visit the course Sakai site for the complete case report guidelines. The below is an abridged summary of the Case Report Guidelines found in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association. JADA 2000, Volume 100, Number 11 pgs.1293-1295.*

### **Purpose:**

- To describe a familiar problem and reveal how you managed a challenging case.
- To assist readers in becoming more comfortable with defining and solving problems using analytical skills, in contrast to the traditional read-and-memorize approach.

### **Grades are based on the following:**

- A clear description of the case, anchoring it within the standard symptoms, criteria for diagnosis and tenets of standard care;
- Clearly written paper with topics arranged logically. Well-designed tables and figures (if applicable) that convey relevant, important information;
- A discussion of the decision tree for your treatment plan, giving rationale and justification;
- Useful application to dietetics
- Professional and readable by an RD and DTR audience, the document should be well written, clean, and of a high enough quality that it could be published in a professional journal.

**Format:** Finished papers will vary in length. Most will be 5-10 double-spaced pages – concise and well-organized but long enough to convey all four steps in the Nutrition Care Process.

### **General Description of the Clinical Case Report Option**

The clinical case report should address the following:

1. **Title of the case**
2. **Abstract**
3. **Introduction** that addresses the significance of the case (why you chose to write the report). A brief review of background literature should be included to help link previous knowledge to the significance of the case.
4. **Case presentation/Description of the Case** including presenting features, medical, social and family history. You may find it helpful to use figures, tables or photographs. Please focus on the most significant, unique aspects of the case.
5. **Discussion** that highlights the salient features of the case, its perceived significance, and the knowledge of perspective gained from the experience. Discuss your insights regarding its application to practice as well as directions for future investigation.



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**Masters Paper Agreement  
(TEMPLATE)**

The purpose of the Masters Paper Agreement is to allow the student and the MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor (NOTE: this is different from an academic advisor) the opportunity to lay the groundwork for the student's masters paper. The student is responsible for completing the form in collaboration with their chosen MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor.

**The final signed copy of the Masters Paper Agreement should be scanned and uploaded to the NUTR 992 Sakai website as a pdf no later than Friday, September 18, 2015.**

**The MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor**

The MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor for the MPH paper (NUTR 992) is a faculty member with relevant experience and interest to advise the MPH paper for the student. This faculty member will be expected to mentor the student on their paper and will interact with the student in a timely manner to determine the topic and format of the MPH paper. The MPH paper is commonly linked with the Advanced Field Placement experience, but is not required to be so linked. The MPH paper advisor/mentor can be either a tenure-track, clinical track OR a research track faculty with primary appointment in the Nutrition Department. The MPH paper advisor is responsible for assigning the final grade for the MPH paper, which is the final grade for NUTR 992.

**Masters Paper**

Students work with their MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor to determine the focus of their Masters Paper. In many, but not all cases, the student will choose to write a paper that is related to their Advanced Nutrition Experience. Please meet with your MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor to decide upon your proposed paper type based on your area of interest. During this meeting, it is important for you and your MPH Paper Advisor to review the guidelines for the chosen paper format. See the course Sakai website for specific paper guidelines.

**After talking with your MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor, please select the proposed format for your paper:**

- A policy brief in which the student explores and analyzes an important nutrition policy issue and recommends a realistic approach to addressing it.
- A publishable manuscript that adheres to the Instructions for Authors for a selected journal.
- A grant proposal following a specific Request for Application (RFA) relevant to the field placement.
- A clinical case report
- An alternate format proposed by the student: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible Topic for Masters Paper** (student to confirm topic and timeline with MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor): \_\_\_\_\_

**Timeline for Completing Paper**

- **November 13: Paper Title Due to Joanne**
- **December 10 & 11: Paper Presentations**
- **December 10: Upload PDF of Final Paper with signature page (Appendix B) to course Sakai site**
- **December 11: Grades Posted**

<b>Timeline for Completing the Paper (negotiated with Paper Advisor)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity/Section/Revision</b>

**PLEASE NOTE:** NUTR 992 requires an oral presentation of the Masters Paper. Students should work with their MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor to find a time during the scheduled presentation date(s) to present. (Please see the course Sakai site for exact dates and times). If the student and/or MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor are not available during the scheduled NUTR 992 Seminars, the student AND MPH Paper Advisor/Mentor may schedule another time for the student to present. If another time is scheduled, please notify the MPH Committee of this date and time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
MPH Paper Advisor Signature

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

*Appendix B: Sample Title Page*

Title of Master's Paper  
(Raleigh, North Carolina)  
by

Jane Smith

A paper submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Health in the Department of Nutrition

Chapel Hill

Month, Day, Year

Approved by:

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MPH Paper Advisor (signature & date)