

# **Masters of Education Papers**

# **Student Handbook**

## HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

### Papers for the Master of Education Degree

#### INTRODUCTION

An important part of the Master's Degree is the M.Ed. paper(s). You are required to satisfactorily complete two papers: a bibliographic paper and an integrative paper. This Handbook will explain the purposes of these papers and outline the procedures you will need to follow to satisfy these requirements.

#### PURPOSE OF THE PAPERS

The papers serve two purposes. First is to give you an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of a written competence in a subfield of your discipline. The second is to enhance life long learning. You will find yourself in a variety of situations once you are in the field and will need inquiry skills to pursue continued professional development. You need to be able to ask and find the answer to questions of theoretical and practical natures.

Bibliographic Paper. Once you are a practicing professional, you will probably need to be able to broaden your knowledge base and inform yourself about additional topics, issues, and theories by reviewing and synthesizing existing literature. To do so, you will need a variety of bibliographic skills including searching data bases. In other words, you will need to be able to ask and answer such questions as "What is know about \_\_\_\_\_? What are major issues and themes?"

Integrative Paper. You will also need to be able to observe and/or participate in the reciprocal interaction of theory and practice, by investigating actual practice in the field as it relates to theory. This might take the form of investigating how a particular theory is applied in the field, developing a practical application of a theory, or, conversely, developing/refining a theory based on investigations made

in the field. In other words, as graduates you will encounter new theories and practices and you will need to be able to investigate and evaluate them, asking and answering questions about "How \_\_\_ works."

## **APPROACHES TO PAPERS**

Approaches. A wide variety of approaches, methodological perspectives, or ways of looking at a question are appropriate for the M.Ed. papers and apply to both bibliographic and integrative papers. We honor approaches that are either theoretical or applied, qualitative or quantitative. Within these broad categories students might consider writing a papers from one of the following perspectives:

- philosophical
- historical
- cultural/anthropological
- sociological
- political
- thematic

Topics. In addition, a wide variety of topics or themes could also apply to both bibliographic and integrative papers. For example:

- curriculum
- pedagogy
- human development
- psychosocial development
- learning
- organization theory
- administration
- systems theory

Types of Investigation. Further, the investigations that form the basis for the paper might take a variety of shapes. For example:

- Bibliographic paper:
  - review of literature

**Integrative paper:**

investigation in an educational or human services setting  
investigation at an internship or practicum site  
case study  
secondary analysis of data

**NOTE:** These lists are meant to be suggestive, not restrictive. You may propose other topics which could be approved by the faculty member who is advising you.

**FORMAT**

In this section you will find specific guidelines for the "nuts and bolts" of your paper(s). You will be expected to write the paper(s) in an approved style with appropriate citations and references. Discuss these matters with the faculty member who is directing your paper before you begin.

Format. You may write either:

- (a) two papers that are essentially two separate efforts; or
- (b) the papers may be combined into one project that meets the goals of both papers (a review of the literature and connecting theory with practice).

Length. Papers are expected to be 20-25 pages. If you choose to write one paper (with two aspects), the length should be 40-50 pages. Length of papers may be, to some extent, dictated by the availability of literature and research on a given topic.

References. For the bibliographic paper: you must submit evidence of a data base search to the faculty member who is advising you and cite this research in the paper in an appropriate style. You will need to discuss the type and quantity of references that are appropriate for your paper with the faculty member who is advising you.

For the integrative paper: You must include specific case/program examples from the applied project. These might take the form of transcripts of teaching interactions, excerpts from interviews, journal entries, or descriptions of activities, or be a curricular plan of action.

**Style.** Papers may be written in any acceptable style approved by the faculty member. Examples include:

American Psychological Association  
 Modern Language Association  
 University of Chicago

### **CRITERIA FOR PASSING AND FOR DISTINCTION**

Papers are graded on a pass/fail basis. Faculty will evaluate your work on the basis of the criteria stated below. To receive a passing grade, you must meet all of the following criteria. You should use these criteria as a guide when writing your paper.

#### **Criteria for PASSING:**

##### **Bibliographic Paper:**

**Quality of writing, organization, style, etc.**

logical organization

coherent presentation of topics

clarity of expression

appropriate style (margins, references, bibliography, quality of duplication, etc.)

**Significance of topic**

is a topic of current/ongoing concern to field

adds a dimension to student's knowledge of field

**Incorporation of current and prior research**

identifies major points of view on topic (if appropriate)

reports and organizes current research

reports and organizes prior research as a perspective on current research

**Quality of analysis of research**

discusses and/or analyzes issues, themes, arguments or points of view (if appropriate)

**Quality of conclusion: synthesis, application, implications**

synthesis the research that has been reviewed

recommends applications

discusses implications for further inquiry

### Integrative Paper:

Quality of writing, organization, style, etc.  
 logical organization  
 coherent presentation of topics  
 clarity of expression  
 appropriate style (margins, references, bibliography, quality of duplication, etc.)

Significance of topic  
 is a topic of current/ongoing concern to field  
 adds a dimension to student's knowledge of field

Effectiveness of presentation of project methodology  
 carefully describes project, including method of collecting information or data  
 incorporates cases/examples/excerpts from the project

Quality of analysis  
 thoughtful analysis of outcomes, observations, applications of particular methodology, etc.  
 considers limitations of situation (and generalizations, if appropriate)

Quality of conclusions  
 connects theory and practice  
 poses questions for further inquiry

### Criteria for **DISTINCTION**:

The paper stands out as exceptional in terms of the criteria for passing:  
In addition, the paper must show:

potential to be presented as a model for improving education  
 potential for educational innovation(s) to be based on the study  
 creativity, originality, or divergent thinking  
 potential publishability

Both papers must qualify for distinction if you are to graduate with distinction. If you have chosen to write one larger paper with two aspects (literature review and integrative) each portion of the larger paper will be reviewed for distinction using the relevant criteria stated above. Awarding of distinction is the responsibility of

a faculty committee. The Distinction Committee meets regularly during the Autumn, Winter, and Spring Quarters.

**PROCEDURES**

Below is a list of steps to follow when writing your paper(s). Read this section carefully.

- 1. **Select Faculty Advisor.** Talk to a faculty member about your interests and reach agreement regarding advisement. Have the appropriate form signed regarding topic selection. The faculty member will submit a copy to the office of the Director of Graduate Student Services. The paper(s) could be guided by any faculty member.

**NOTE:** If you have difficulty linking up with a faculty member, contact the office of the Director of Graduate Student Services. Faculty may accept or decline to work with you on you paper(s), especially if they are working with a large number of other students.

You are encouraged to write a paper in conjunction with a course you are taking, but this nor "required." If you develop an interest in a topic presented in class, or a question is raised in class that you would find interesting to pursue further, speak to that faculty member about directing your paper.

**NOTE:** M.Ed. papers cannot simply be papers written as course requirements and then resubmitted for the M.Ed. requirement. However, M.Ed. papers may be substantial extensions or reworkings of course requirements. You will need to get faculty approval.

Once a topic is agreed upon, you and the faculty member should complete 2 copies of the top half of the Evaluation and Approval Form, the faculty member will submit one to the office of the Director of Graduate Student Services and will keep one on file until the paper is completed.

- 2. **Registration.** Once you have an agreement with a faculty member, you must register for non-credit course 606 (bibliographic paper) and 607 (integrative paper) within the program you are writing the paper. You can register for both at the same time or separately if you are writing the two papers at different times. The School of Education Graduate office will register you upon receipt of the faculty member's approval.

At the end of the quarter in which you register for the 606 and/or 607 you will receive a letter "grade" indicating either "continuation" ("R") or "completion" ("P"). If you register but fail to contact your professor, you may receive an Fx. A grade will be entered upon receipt of the approval paper signed by the faculty member.

3. **Timeline for completion.** You will consult with your faculty advisor on a timeline for completion of stage of the paper(s). Generally, faculty and students meet from 3-5 times at the following stages of paper completion
- topic selection
  - completion of bibliographic search or design of integrative project outline (or equivalent)
  - draft (or portions of draft as agreed upon)

You should plan on spending one to two quarters to complete a paper (or each section of the paper if you are writing them in combined form).

If you have not finished the paper(s) by the time you have complete all of your course work you will need to register for 60 (Registered student in good standing). The 600 number involves a small fee, and accords you continuing access to University facilities including the library.

**NOTE:** All papers must be approved by faculty and submitted to the Director of Graduate Student Services at least 4 weeks before graduation. If you are writing your paper(s) during the last quarter before you plan graduate, you must pay attention to University deadlines. These are stated in the Graduate Bulletin. You must submit the paper to your advisor in plenty of time to be read, revised (if necessary), and approved before the University submission deadline. Although you must clear this with the faculty member directing your paper, in general, a draft of your paper(s) should be submitted to faculty no later than April 15

4. **Submission of paper(s).** You must submit two copies of the paper(s) and a self-addressed envelope. You will have one of them bound in an inexpensive, velo-binding with a clear cover available at the DePaul Copy Center. A model for the correct title page appears in the appendix of this handbook. The faculty member submits both copies to the Director of Graduate Student Services. Once copy along with a copy of the Evaluation and Approval Form will be returned to you by mail. The bound copy will be kept on file in the School of Education.
5. **Evaluation.** Your paper(s) is (are) evaluated by the faculty member advising you, based on criteria stated above. The faculty member fills out the Evaluation and Approval Form and submits 2 copies of the form along with both copies of the paper to Graduate Office. A copy of the form and one copy of your paper will be returned to you by the Graduate Office.
6. **Distinction.** A paper of outstanding quality may be awarded distinction at the discretion of the School of Education faculty. Distinction will be conferred as follows: Faculty member judges that the paper(s) meet(s) the criteria for distinction (discussed above) and submits it (them) to the Committee for MEd Papers. If submitted, it will be identified by social security number only. The

three members of that committee read and evaluate the paper and, if the criteria are met, confer distinction. If your paper is submitted for consideration of distinction, you will be notified on the Evaluation and Approval Form. If your paper is awarded distinction, the committee will notify you by letter.

In order for you to graduate with distinction, you must have a GPA of 3.75 and both papers (or both components of a combined paper) must be awarded distinction by the committee.

- 10. Failing grade.** If you receive a "no pass" grade on a paper, you may either contact the faculty member and discuss the possibility of rewriting the paper, or you may begin working on a new paper with another faculty member.

## APPENDIX 1

## CHECKLIST FOR COMPLETION OF PAPER

Expected  
Completion  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Select faculty advisor.

\_\_\_\_\_ Meet with faculty member to select topic.

\_\_\_\_\_ Upon receipt of the faculty member's signing of the approval, bring the approval sheet to the School of Education Graduate Office. You will be registered in the appropriate course and section of 606 or 607.

\_\_\_\_\_ Meet with faculty member to present data base search or project design.

\_\_\_\_\_ Meet with faculty to discuss outline of paper.

\_\_\_\_\_ Meet with faculty to discuss working draft of paper.

\_\_\_\_\_ Receive final approval of draft

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit two copies of paper.

\_\_\_\_\_ Receive Evaluation and Approval Form.

**REMINDER:** The University deadline for submission of papers to the School of Education 4 weeks before graduation. Check the University Graduate Bulletin. The paper must be approved by your advisor by this date. If you plan to graduate in June, this means that your paper must be into your advisor no later than April 15.

(Model of Title Page)

**TITLE**

**A Paper Presented to  
The Faculty of  
The School of Education  
Name of Your Program**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**by**

**Your Name**

**Month, Year**

**DePaul University  
Chicago, Illinois**