



Med Ed Final Project Handbook

2024-2025

Online Master of Education
in Medical Education

This handbook contains information specific to students enrolled in the 18MECI-DL MED-DL **Online Master's Degree in Education for physicians and other healthcare providers** program. If a conflict of guidelines occurs between this and any guidelines provided by the University of Cincinnati; UC Graduate School; College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services; School of Education; or the Curriculum & Instruction program, the program office should be consulted to determine the correct course of action.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments about this handbook or the information contained herein.

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Program Website www.cincinnatichildrens.org/masters

UC Websites www.uc.edu (general)
www.grad.uc.edu (Graduate school)
www.cech.uc.edu (College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services)
www.onestop.uc.edu (OneStop Student Services)

Abbreviations

UC University of Cincinnati
CECH College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services
C&I Curriculum & Instruction program within CECH

Overview of Requirements

Master's students must complete a final master's project. Your master's project is a culminating educational research activity in which you should draw upon what you have learned in the master's program and apply it to a real-world project. The final product is a paper that you submit to your project committee and to the program. You will also present your project to your mentor and others. You are encouraged to seek publication for your paper with appropriate journals and/or presentation at national conferences, although this is not required.

Your project should be based on empirical research which involves gathering data from human participants or actual settings. The purpose of the research project, which can be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods, is to create knowledge driven by research questions and unique settings, such as case study research, replication studies, and survey-based research.

The objectives of the final master's project are to:

- utilize research methods including study design, data collection and analysis, and discussion of results
- write a publishable paper describing the research project
- demonstrate reflective practice
- demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge derived from the program coursework
- understand the educational context of the research project

Steps Required

This is the “short story” or “nuts and bolts” of what you need to do. Further information regarding some of these steps can be found in following sections.

Register for CI7001 Educational Research for Master's Students

You will create your project proposal in this class. The final project is a culminating experience and should draw upon what you have learned in the program; therefore, the research class should be taken toward the end of your program. This course may not be taken before completing at least half of the coursework, and ideally after taking EDST7010 (Stats), EDST8034 (Measurement & Assessment) and EDST8051 (Qualitative Research). If you have not yet identified a project mentor by the time you take this class, you will do so within the first few weeks.

Create your project proposal and have it approved by your project mentor and 2nd reader

Every final project begins with a project proposal, and most students will complete their proposal in CI7001 Educational Research for Master's Students*. After you complete CI7001, work with your primary mentor and 2nd reader to finalize your project proposal. If your 2nd reader is not one of your CI7001 instructors, you should schedule a meeting with your mentor and 2nd reader for you to present and discuss your proposal. Once your proposal is finalized, your mentor and 2nd reader should sign a Proposal Approval Form. Send this signed for and a copy of your proposal to the program office. Once the proposal is accepted, you may begin working on the project.

Register for CI7090 Master’s Project credits

You must have an approved final project proposal and Proposal Approval Form in the program office before you will be given permission to register for CI7090. A minimum of three (3) credit hours must be accumulated toward the final project. You can take them one credit at a time as you are working on your project or you can take all three credits in one semester.

Obtain IRB approval from your home institution and UC IRB

If your project involves human subjects or you are considering or planning to publish your results, you must obtain IRB approval or a waiver prior to starting your project. This should be done in conjunction with your mentor, who may need to be a co-PI on your project, depending on the IRB’s requirements. Since most research occurs in the student’s own institution, you should apply through your own IRB. If you are conducting research elsewhere, you can either apply to the IRB covering that location, or through the UC IRB. If you apply through your home IRB, you will need to also submit an application through the UC IRB because you are conducting this research as a student at UC.

Conduct your research and analyze your data

Be sure to contact your mentor on a regular basis to update him or her on your progress, or to discuss any difficulties encountered. Your mentor and other advisors may be able to provide guidance and valuable input into your project as you progress. It is your responsibility to keep your mentor informed.

Write up your results

If you plan to submit your paper for publication, you should format your paper and use the style required by the journal to which you will be submitting your paper. Most journals are based on either APA or AMA but make modifications to the style. Please provide the name of the journal and the formatting requirements (Author Information) to your committee so they can review your paper with these requirements in mind. Examples of medical education journals include but are not limited to *Academic Medicine*, *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*, *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *Medical Education*, *Medical Teacher*, and *Journal of Contemporary Medical Education*.

If you do not plan to submit for publication, standard APA style is required. If you use APA style, you will basically add your results and conclusion to your proposal to complete your paper, **and** change the tense used in the first three sections (from future tense—what you are going to do—to past tense—what you have done).

Regardless of what format you use, and whether you seek publication, your paper must be of publishable quality, both in content and writing. You must also include an abstract, regardless of whether it is required for your target publication.

Submit your draft paper to your mentor and 2nd reader

They will provide input and request corrections or changes as appropriate. Ideally, this should occur in the semester prior to when you want to graduate (i.e. if you want to graduate at the end of spring, your committee should receive your draft paper in fall semester). Your mentor may require a different amount of lead time. If there are other products created from your project (curriculum, web training, etc.), please provide those materials to your committee also for review prior to your presentation.

- Inform the program coordinator of your intention to graduate and in what term**
The program coordinator will confirm that you have meet all other program and University requirements and are ready to graduate.

- Apply for graduation**
If your mentor agrees that your project will be satisfactorily completed for graduation, and there are no other impediments to graduation, complete the UC Graduate School Graduation Application and pay the required fee. Be sure to pay close attention to the graduation application deadline as the Graduate School is very firm regarding these each term. If you miss the application deadline by even one day, you must wait until the next term to graduate. More detailed information is emailed to eligible students each semester by the program coordinator.

- Schedule your presentation, send your final project paper, prepare a PowerPoint or similar, and present your project**
Schedule your presentation with your mentor and 2nd reader. For most students, this will be conducted via web conferencing (i.e. Skype, WebEx, or similar) or telephone. If you are local to Cincinnati, and your committee members can attend, you may present in person.

Note that the presentation is not a dissertation defense—it should be viewed as a fairly relaxed presentation and discussion about what you did, why, how, results, implications for future research, etc. It should not take more than 45-60 minutes, including Q&A.

Send your mentor and 2nd reader your final project paper at least two weeks prior to your presentation. Create a PowerPoint or similar presentation that summarizes your project. The length should not exceed 30 minutes of actual speaking time, allowing for up to 30 minutes for Q&A.

- Complete the Final Project Approval Form and send it to your mentor and 2nd reader for signature.** They should forward it to the program coordinator.
- Email your final approved paper and abstract to the program coordinator**
This must be held in your file, but is not formally published by the University as a dissertation would be
- Ponder what you will do with all the spare time you now have ☺.**

* If you are in a fellowship program, this timeline will be slightly altered. Fellows may use their fellowship projects as master's projects as long as the project is education-focused. CI7001 might be taken earlier in the program, or fellows may use the course to develop a new project proposal or next step to a current project. **Academic plans should be discussed with your program director.**

Mentor and Master's Committee

Project Mentor

Your mentor is primarily responsible for taking the lead on guiding your master's project.

Mentors are expected to:

1. Provide necessary guidance, assistance, and feedback concerning the master's project, including IRB application, if necessary.
2. Attend a proposal approval meeting with the student and project committee (if 2nd reader is not a CI7001 instructor familiar with your project).
3. Approve the master's project proposal and final project.
4. Refer students to appropriate resources relative to master's project.
5. Identify special needs for academic, professional, and personal development.
6. Meet with students when needed or on a regular basis at a mutually agreeable time to discuss project progress.
7. Attend the final master's project presentation, either in person or via web conference.

Master's Project Committee

Officially, per Graduate School policy, your master's committee consists of a minimum of two UC graduate faculty members, one of which must have official Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) through the Graduate School and who will be considered the "chair." Additional committee members may be added at the student's discretion. For UC and Cincinnati Children's Fellows with a SOC, at least one member must have GFS.

Unofficially, almost none of the faculty who would serve as mentors in our program have GFS status because of specific restrictions and requirements. For this reason, your committee consists of your primary mentor and a 2nd reader. One of them can be from your own institution, and the other must be more directly connected with the program to ensure program requirement and standards are met. If your primary mentor is not connected to the program (ie at your own institution), your 2nd reader from the program will need to be involved in your project much earlier than if your primary mentor is connected to the program.

Your 2nd reader is 1) required to sign off on both the proposal and project approval forms, review both the proposal and project manuscript, and attend your final master's presentation. However, this person may play a more active role in your project by providing additional feedback and guidance throughout the research and writing processes. Work with your committee to determine the most appropriate role.

It is expected that your mentor will assume most of the responsibility for guiding you in your project, including assisting with IRB applications and reviewing early drafts of the manuscript, with the 2nd reader taking a more active role once the manuscript is nearing completion. However, there are times when the student may need assistance or input in an area the mentor is not familiar with. In this case, it is perfectly alright to add additional mentors to your committee earlier in the process.

You will identify a project mentor during the semester in which you take CI7001, if you have not done so already. There is guidance provided during this class to help you identify an appropriate mentor.

Student Progress and Graduation Guidance

The program coordinator will provide assistance and answer questions regarding the graduation process and clearing you for graduation certification.

Project Proposal

Research Topic

For most students, the project proposal is officially begun in CI7001 Educational Research for Master Students *. You are encouraged to keep an open mind throughout the program regarding potential final project ideas. Many students develop their final project from a project in one of their classes. Ultimately, you are urged to select and develop a project that meets the needs of your institution as well as your own interests.

* If you are in a fellowship program, this timeline will be slightly altered. Fellows may use their fellowship projects as master's projects as long as the project is education-focused. CI7001 might be taken earlier in the program, or fellows may use the course to develop a new project proposal or next step to a current project. **Academic plans should be discussed with your program director.**

Style Guide Requirements for Proposal

Organization of the proposal

Regardless of style guide used (see below), your proposal must include the following sections:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Review of Related Literature
- Methodology/Design of the Study
- References
- Appendices, if appropriate

See the “[Sample Format for the Research Paper](#)” for additional information or seek clarification from the instructor of CI7001.

Style guide requirements

A style guide specifies details such as page format and margins, paragraph spacing, text styles, handling of images and graphs, abbreviation and acronym use, abstract and paper length, in-text references, and endnote or footnote details.

APA (American Psychological Association) is the standard style guide used among education and educational-related journals. Most of the medical education journals develop their own style guide based on Vancouver, AMA (American Medical Association) or APA. Many also develop their own style guide. It is good to be familiar with different styles and be able to apply different styles because very few journals use the exact same style guides. Use of a citation manager such as EndNote or RefWorks makes switching references between styles very easy.

The default required style guide for the program is APA. However, if you plan to submit your final paper to a particular journal, you may elect to use the style guide for that journal when writing your proposal. You

will need to consult with the journal's Author Information page to determine requirements and you may need to reference an appropriate style guide book or website.

If you wish to use an alternate style guide, you must do the following:

- Obtain approval from your mentor and 2nd reader.
- Indicate the style guide used and the targeted journal on the proposal cover page.
- When you take CI7001, inform the instructor *in advance* of which style guide you will be using. It will be up to you to ensure that you are adhering to the style guide; the instructor will not review your paper for adherence to the style guide or provide corrections if needed.
- Organize your proposal using sections listed under "Organization of the proposal," above.

If you do not have a journal in mind and do not select an alternate style guide to use, you must use APA style. There are numerous APA style guides available in libraries and bookstores. There are also numerous online resources, including the definitive www.apastyle.org, the [UC Library APA guide](#), and the [Purdue OWL APA guide](#).

Proposal Approval

Your mentor and 2nd reader must formally approve your project proposal before you can begin your project, including submission to the IRB. After CI7001 is over and you have a final project proposal, you need to have your project proposal approved by your mentor and 2nd reader via email or optional proposal approval presentation. If you want a presentation, schedule a presentation with your mentor and 2nd reader (optional) to discuss and approve your proposal. For most students, this will be conducted via web conferencing (i.e. Skype, WebEx, or similar) or telephone. If you are local to Cincinnati, and your committee members can attend, you may present in person. Have your mentor and 2nd reader sign the Proposal Approval form and forward it to the program office with a copy of your proposal. Once the proposal is accepted, you may begin working on the project and will be given permission to enroll in CI7090 Final Master's Project.

The Proposal Approval form is included on the following page and can be obtained in the CI7001 course or from the program coordinator at any time.



Project PROPOSAL Approval

Must be completed and submitted to program office before starting final project.
This form and your approved proposal must be on file with the program in order to take CI7090 credits.

Student: _____ UCID: M _____

Mentor/Advisor: _____ 2nd Reader: _____

Working Project Title: _____

Style guide used: APA Other/journal _____

Instructions to Student

Complete the top of this form and submit it with your project proposal document to your primary research mentor and your 2nd reader. You are also strongly encouraged to develop and share with them a project calendar or timeline.

They will evaluate your final project proposal and either accept it as-is or let you know what revisions are needed to make it acceptable. Once they accept your proposal, you can begin work on your final project.

Instructions to Mentor and 2nd Reader

Review the student's project proposal. The proposal should be for a project that is of academic interest to a general medical education audience or to the student's medical education area of specialty. Please see rubrics for specific requirements, but in general, the proposal should be (1) well-written and should (2) clearly articulate the student's research question, (3) demonstrate an adequate understanding of the prior literature and how it relates to the research question, (4) include an appropriate and achievable data collection methodology, and (5) propose use of quantitative and/or qualitative data analysis methods that are appropriate for the research question and data to be collected.

If the proposal is not acceptable as-is, work with the student to develop an acceptable proposal. When you agree that the proposal is acceptable, please sign below and forward this form AND the student's proposal document to the program coordinator, Kimberly Goyette—kimberly.goyette@cchmc.org. The proposal must be a final, clean version and can be a PDF or Word document. We only need one copy of the proposal, but can receive separate approval forms from the mentor and 2nd reader. The proposal and approval can also be mailed if necessary. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Mentor Assessment

I agree that the project proposal is **Acceptable**. The student may begin the final master's project.

Comments (optional):

2nd Reader Assessment

I agree that the project proposal is **Acceptable**. The student may begin the final master's project.

Comments (optional):

Mentor's Signature Date

2nd Reader's Signature Date

Email (if not at Cincinnati Children's)

Email (if not at Cincinnati Children's)

IRB Approval

Human Subjects Research – United States

All research involving human subjects requires approval by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Since educational research almost always involves humans, your research will most likely require IRB approval or official exemption. Any University or organization, including hospitals, that conduct significant amounts of research will most likely have their own IRB. Other organizations who conduct occasional or contracted research may affiliate with an independent IRB.

Since each IRB has its own application procedures and rules, you will have to contact the IRB you plan to use to determine how to submit an application and what will be required. Your mentor should be able to assist with this process.

Be aware that almost all IRBs have training requirements that will have to be met before the application can be approved. Sometimes this training may take several hours to complete.

Research Outside of the United States

Most countries have regulations protecting human subjects involved in research similar to the regulations of the United States. If your research will be conducted in a country other than the United States, you must follow all such regulations, policies and procedures. If the hospital, health system, or university you are affiliated with has a Research Ethics Board or similar, you should apply for approval, exemption, or waiver (as appropriate) through them.

UC IRB

UC IRB website: <https://research.uc.edu/support/offices/hrpp/irb> . Visit this site for more information on the Research Administration Portal (RAP) and on reliance requests.

As a student at UC, your research must be submitted to the UC IRB even if you are using your home institution's IRB.

All applications to the UC IRB are done electronically through the Research Administration Portal (RAP). You can access the RAP portal through <http://rap.irb.uc.edu/IRB>. You may need to request an account before accessing. Please send your name, department, email address, and M-Number to an HRPP/IRB staff member requesting access to the RAP system and allow a business day for processing.

If your research is at your home institution, and you use that IRB, you are required to submit at both UC and your home institution. Typically, when a study needs to be submitted to two separate IRB's and it has already been reviewed by another IRB, UC often will try to utilize a reliance agreement to rely on the other IRB's determination for the review of the study. However, the study must have been determined to meet the criteria for an "Expedited" or "Full Board," review. In this case, you can submit your study as an "external" study.

If your study was determined to be "Exempt," by your home IRB, we are not able to use a reliance agreement and UC will review your study separate of the review from your home institution, based on

UC policies and procedures. This would mean your study should be submitted as "internal" as we will not be relying on the CCHMC IRB - we are conducting a separate review of your study.

In order to ease the process of submitting two separate protocols to two separate IRBs, the UC IRB/HRPP allows submission of the approved protocol and applicable supporting documents that were submitted to your home institution's IRB (CCHMC) and to supplement with the HRP-508 form to describe UC-specific information (along with PI/Co-PI's CV, a completed HRP-209 HIPAA waiver request if needed, and UC CITI training completion).

The UC IRB uses CITI for its human subjects training requirement. If you will be using the UC IRB, please note that completion of the UC-specific CITI training modules is required.

The HRPP/IRB contact information can be found at <https://research.uc.edu/support/offices/hrpp/staff> . It is in your best interest to contact the HRPP sooner rather than later (and strongly suggested that you contact *prior* to submission), as the HRPP can help you fix any potential problems in your submission **before** you submit it.

Note that fall semester is the busiest time for the UC IRB and there can be a significant backlog that slows down approvals—again, contacting the IRB in advance of submission to fix any problems will ensure a smoother application process.

Publication Requirements—IRB Approval, Exemption or Waiver

Almost all publishers require proof of IRB approval or exemption before accepting manuscripts. If they do not, it is likely not a very reputable journal.

If your research does not involve human subjects and would otherwise not require IRB approval, but you plan to publish your results in the future, it would be prudent to obtain an official statement of waiver from your IRB, as that may be required by the publisher also.

Exempt Human Subjects Research

If your project involves human subjects but falls within certain federally-approved exemption categories, you must apply to your IRB for an exemption. An exemption acknowledges that the research involves human subjects but is of a nature that does not require IRB oversight. There are only a few very specific categories that the federal government allows to fall within the exemption allowance, but several of these involve education-related research.

Exemption Categories specified by Federal Regulations [45CFR46.101\(b\)](#)

The exemption categories changed in the revised common rule –Please see the following for the updated exemption categories.

<https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/45-cfr-46/common-rule-subpart-a-46104/index.html>

General Overview of Application Requirements

While specifics about any particular IRB's requirements cannot be included here, in general, you will likely need to provide information/forms such as the following for your application:

- Research plan or protocol
- Affirmation / confirmation of adequate resources to conduct the research protocol
- Completion of all required training
- Conflict of interest forms for anyone involved with the research (other than subjects)
- Informed Consent/Assent forms for subjects, if required
- Data collection forms
- Number of expected subjects
- Materials used to market/promote the study

Master's Project Credits

Students must accumulate a minimum total of 3 credit hours of CI7090 Master's Project. You may accumulate up to 6 credits total. These credits represent the time spent working on your final project. They may be taken all at once or split over several terms.

Please note, students must be enrolled in at least 1 credit hour in the academic year they are planning to graduate, per UC policy. Academic years run Fall through Summer terms. If you expect your project will extend into the next academic year, it would be prudent to wait to enroll in the final credit hour of CI7090 until the Fall semester of that academic year to avoid paying extra tuition. If your project takes additional some time to complete, or you put off completing your project, you may accumulate more than 3 credit of the final project. Continued active status will be maintained by registering for 1 credit hour of the final project each academic year, preferably in Fall so that you are covered for the year.

Project and Paper

Project Paper

Regardless of the type of project undertaken and other materials produced, you are expected to create a publishable paper as an end project. Actual submission to an appropriate journal is at your discretion. This paper is submitted to your committee (along with appropriate other materials).

If your proposal was completed using APA style, you may elect to finish the paper in APA style or to prepare the paper in a publication-required format. If you use a style other than APA, you must provide on the cover page the name of the journal and the URL of the Author's Information page on the journal's website. If you do not provide alternate format information, then APA style will be required.

Cover Page and Abstract

You must include a cover/title page and an abstract with your final paper, regardless of which style or format the paper is written in. If an abstract is not required for your publication, then the one included with your paper should adhere to the following requirements:

- Include the abstract on a separate page, after the cover page
- Clearly label it as the Abstract, following the same formatting as the rest of your paper
- Aim for no more than 250 words.
- No references/bibliographic citations or quotes
- Do not simply copy sentences from your main paper text; the abstract should concisely highlight or review the major points covered along with the content and scope of the writing.

Essential elements of the abstract are (you can use these headings to organize it):

- **Background:** A simple opening sentence or two placing the work in context.
- **Aims:** One or two sentences giving the purpose of the work.
- **Method(s):** One or two sentences explaining what was done. (Described at length only if it is unusual)
- **Results:** One or two sentences indicating the main findings. (Absolutely essential)
- **Conclusions:** One sentence giving the most important consequence of the work. (Telling what the results mean).

Academic Writing Quality

The final project has certain basic expectations, including clear and concise writing, coherent sentences and paragraphs, good flow of ideas within and across paragraphs and sections, correct spelling, proper grammar, and uniform use of tense throughout.

Writing Rubric and Acceptable Paper Criteria

Guidelines for the following items are included in the following pages:

- Writing Rubric: provides expectations for quality writing at the graduate level.
- Proposal Criteria: provides expectations regarding content included in an acceptable project proposal.
- Final Paper Criteria: provides expectations regarding content and execution of an acceptable final paper.

In addition, a sample format for APA is included after the rubrics with additional tips about what to include in each section.

Writing Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Meets Expectations	Below Average	Deficient
Purpose, Audience Awareness and Content	Responds directly and thoroughly to directions and meets needs of audience. Insights are rich, varied, moving or provoking. Reader is absorbed, sits up and takes notice, feels illuminated.	Responds directions. Insights sufficient to give the reader something of real value. Demonstrates audience awareness.	Responds vaguely or inconsistently to direction. Pedestrian and unremarkable insights are of limited value to reader. Only partially meets requirements of assignment, demonstrates limited audience awareness.	Does not respond adequately to direction. Offers reader little or nothing of value.
Focus and Clarity	Sharply focused with no superfluous material. Presents clear, definite, narrow thesis. Paragraphs connected with meaningful transitions. Topic sentences express controlling idea throughout paper. Clear and precise language. Direct and indirect quotes used to substantially to drive discussions clearly and with focus.	Focused. May contain superfluous material but not enough to obscure main ideas. Thesis relatively clear but falls somewhat short in sharpness and focus. Transitions and topic sentences effective but not as creative, varied and precise as in excellent papers. Direct and indirect quotes used consistently to drive discussion. Some areas could still benefit from cleared connect to the text. Occasional lapses in clarity of words and phrases.	Focus not consistently maintained. Main ideas somewhat obscured. Thesis somewhat indefinite, fuzzy or too broad. Occasional lapses in connections and transitions cause confusion. Frequent distracting lapses in clarity of words and phrases. Few direct and indirect quotes. Quotes used inappropriately and without much focus.	Focus not effectively established. Much superfluous material. Thesis unclear or absent. Ideas not clearly expressed or connected. Many words and phrases unclear or badly used. Lacking direct and indirect quotes.
Organization and Development	Very well organized. Amply developed. Topic fully and logically treated, ideas forcefully elaborated. If appropriate, objections fairly noted, compelling counter-arguments offered.	Fairly well organized. Sufficiently developed to convey and support ideas but not with great force. If appropriate, objections noted, counter-arguments offered.	Discernable organization, but rather mechanically executed. Thinly developed. Ideas only somewhat elaborated. If appropriate, objections are irrelevant or vaguely expressed, with ineffective or inappropriate counter-arguments.	Flawed or no organization. Underdeveloped. Argument fails to acknowledge objections.
Diction and Syntax	Word choice and phrasing precise and powerful. Sentence structure varied and highly effective to express complex ideas and satisfy audience.	Word choice and phrasing effective. Sentence structure effective, with less originality and variety than in excellent papers.	Word choice only partially effective in precision, clarity, inventiveness or power. Ineffective sentence structures occasionally impede reader's understanding.	Frequent unclear word choice and phrasing. Sentence structure often inadequate, awkward and incorrect.
Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling	No serious grammar, punctuation or spelling errors and very few minor ones.	Few serious errors in grammar, punctuation or spelling and several minor ones.	Frequent minor errors and more than a few major ones in grammar, punctuation or spelling.	Frequent major errors in grammar, punctuation or spelling
Format/Style Requirements	Follows exact requirements specified by instructor for paper format and citation style. APA/other format is followed with precision.	Contains few errors in format and citation style. APA/other style is followed with little error	Numerous errors in format and citation style. APA/other style and citation followed with frequent minor errors	Shows lack of awareness of format and citation style requirements. APA/other style and citation not followed and has numerous errors.

Criteria for an Acceptable Proposal

The Proposal is “Acceptable” when it meets expectations of the writing rubric and the:

Introduction/Background

- Sets study topic in broad historical, social, political context at national/state levels.
- Builds strong foundation for rationale for study on this topic.
- Demonstrates selection of appropriate theories/studies; thematic analytical discussion of the literature showing clear understanding of your topic.
- Critically engages with the literature and reflection on its implications for your study (e.g., making connections, posing questions, critiquing studies).
- Shows clear, logical organization that integrates information/ideas across studies, avoids annotations, and leads reader through the material.
- Includes clear sections on research questions, definitions, and limitations.
- Shows evidence of revisions based on peer and instructor comments.
- Follows main points of APA style or other *pre-approved* style (citations, references, headings, quotes).

Methodology

- Demonstrates clear and general understanding of quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research goals, methods, and study design.
- Articulates research hypotheses.
- Describes study setting, target and study populations, and sampling frame.
- Includes a description of study variables and measurements.
- Details a description of study procedures.
- Articulates a plan for data analysis procedural preview.
- Shows evidence of revisions based on peer and instructor comments, etc.
- Follows main points of APA style or other *pre-approved* style (citations, references, headings, quotes).

Criteria for an Acceptable Final Paper

The final paper is considered “Acceptable” when it meets expectations of the writing rubric and the following questions have been carefully considered by the student and committee members:

Topic:

- Is the topic of the study appropriate in the realm of medical education?

Title

- Does the title accurately reflect the content of the paper/manuscript (e.g., the purpose, design, results, and conclusions of the study)?

Abstract

- Is this a succinct, clear, and comprehensive summary of the main text of the paper (e.g., the purpose of the work, what was done, what was found, and the significance)?
- Is the content (data, conclusions, etc.) consistent with that presented in the main text?
- Are data or other key information presented here but not in the main text (or vice versa)?

Introduction/Background

- Does the introduction stimulate the reader’s interest and provide pertinent background information necessary to understand the rest of the paper?
- Does the introduction succinctly state what is known and unknown about the topic?
- Are any important findings from previous studies omitted or misrepresented?
- Is the significance of the topic established?
- Is the hypothesis or the specific research question(s), goal, or aim to be addressed stated?

Methods

- Is it clear from the description whether the study is qualitative, quantitative or mix method?
- Is the study design appropriate for the research question and objectives?

Participants and Settings:

- Are the settings and subjects/participants adequately described?
- Is the subject population appropriate for the question(s) posed?
- If this is a quantitative study:
 - Is the number of subjects sufficiently large to provide the necessary statistical power to show a difference if it is really present?
 - Will the subject population allow extensive or rather limited generalizability?
 - Was the assignment of subjects to conditions randomized?
- Are ethical issues such as informed consent and institutional review board approval described?

Procedures and Instruments/Measures

- Are the measurement techniques or instruments described sufficiently (e.g., reliability, validity, etc)?
- Is the rationale for using each measurement tool explained well?
- Does the design address control for potential confounding variables or factors?
- Was the methodology described in sufficient details for others to repeat the study? If not, do the authors provide a proper reference that would provide such details?

Data Collection

- Has the data collection method been described thoroughly?

Data Analysis

- Have the data been analyzed in the most appropriate manner?
- Are the statistical techniques used appropriate for the quantitative data?
 - Is there any information about treatment of missing data, outliers and rejected participants?
 - Are any critical assumptions of the statistical techniques violated?
 - Are the alpha-levels used to determine statistical significance appropriate and clearly stated?
- Is the data analysis inductive or deductive and the findings adequately corroborated (this is for qualitative studies)?
 - Has the study addressed quality measures in the qualitative analysis process?
 - Is the triangulation method reported (e.g., source/data, methods, theories, researcher)?

Results

- Are the data reported in a clear, concise, and well-organized manner?
- Are the data on all measurements described in the Methods section?
- Have the data been presented in the appropriate units or properly adjusted statistically?
- Are the tables and figures appropriate to the content of the paper? If so, are they helpful and well-designed?
- Are all the figures and tables needed?
- Are the tables and figures properly labeled with the correct units/measurement terms?
- Is the scaling of the figures appropriate and unbiased?

Discussion and Conclusion

- Are the major new findings of the study clearly described and properly emphasized?
- Are the major findings both novel and important (i.e., has sufficient new knowledge been gained)?
- Are the results properly presented and believable?
- Are the key conclusions adequately supported by the data?
- Is there any other way to interpret and/or explain the data other than that suggested by the author?
- Is the significance of the present results described?
- Is it clear how the findings extend previous knowledge in a meaningful way?
- Are important findings from previous research studies described in the context of the present results?
- Does the author support his/her statements with appropriate references?
- Does the author discuss his/her data in a manner that provides insight beyond that presented in previous sections?
- Are the unique aspects and strengths of the study properly highlighted?
- Are the important limitations of the study described so that the reader will be able to interpret the findings appropriately?
- Did the findings contribute to theory development and future practice or research?
- Does the author make suggestions as to how the results of his/her study need to be extended in the future to learn more about the issue in question?
- Are the data adequate to support the conclusions?

References

- Are the references error-free and conform to the journal format?
- Are all necessary references included, and are they as current as possible?

General

- Is the research original (e.g., does the study findings add to the existing field of knowledge)?
- Is the paper/manuscript concise (are there unnecessary sections that should be shortened or eliminated)?
- Was the paper well written, properly organized, and easy to follow?
- Are all statements properly referenced?
- Was the information presented in an open-minded and objective manner?
- Are there any ethical concerns (e.g., fabrication, plagiarism, AI generated)?
- Any comments that would describe the overall quality of the study and manuscript?
- Any suggestions for improvement?
- Comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the paper?
- Writing style, abbreviations, symbols, and language quality? Are these misused?
- Has the tense been changed throughout from the proposal (future tense, “I will do...”) to the final paper (past tense, “I did...”)

(Criteria and rubrics for proposal review and final project review developed by Kadriye O. Lewis, Ed.D.)

Sample Format APA Style for the Research Paper

Cover Page

Title of Your Paper

A project submitted to the

Division of Graduate Studies and Research
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION (MEd)

from the Curriculum and Instruction program in the School of Education
in the College of Education Criminal Justice and Human Services (CECH)

by

Name of the Student

Date

Committee

Primary Mentor

2nd Reader

Any others who served on your committee

*Style used: Not required if APA style used; if style of a particular journal is **pre-approved** for use, indicate the journal name and the URL for the author's information.*

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Abstract

An abstract is a summary of a body of information in a paragraph—100-350 words for a descriptive abstract, 100-250 words an informative abstract. An abstract expresses the main claim and argument of a paper. It never includes bibliographic citations. An abstract concisely highlights or reviews the major points covered along with the content and scope of the writing.

Essential elements of the abstract are:

- Background: A simple opening sentence or two placing the work in context.
- Aims: One or two sentences giving the purpose of the work.

- Method(s): One or two sentences explaining what was done. (Described at length only if it is unusual)
- Results: One or two sentences indicating the main findings. (Absolutely essential)
- Conclusions: One sentence giving the most important consequence of the work. (Telling what the results mean).

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

- B. Purpose/Research Questions/Hypothesis
- C. Significance of the Problem
 - Definition of important terms
 - Assumptions and limitations

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- Summarize the main findings reported on your chosen topic by others.
- Make sure you list these readings in *References* at the end of the project paper (APA style)

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY/DESIGN OF THE STUDY

- A. Subjects and Setting/Sample or study population
- B. Data sources and measures
- C. Data collection procedures
- D. Data analysis

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

- Description of the Analysis
- Findings
- Summary of Results

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Summary of the Project (Summarize purpose, procedures, etc.)
- Discussion (Assumptions and Limitations of the Study)
- Conclusions and Implications (What does this research mean?)
- Recommendations for Future Research

REFERENCES

Provide a list of references in APA style or other *pre-approved* style.

APPENDICES

If applicable.

Presentation

You must present/defend your project to your committee. The presentation is not a dissertation defense—it should be viewed as a fairly relaxed presentation and discussion about what you did, why, how, results, implications for future research, etc. It should not take more than 45-60 minutes, including Q&A. Note you should send your mentor and 2nd reader your final project paper at least two weeks prior to your presentation.

Work with your mentor to schedule your presentation. If you, your mentor, and your 2nd reader are local to Cincinnati, you can present in person. If you are not local, you can set up a virtual meeting using Teams or your video conferencing platform of choice.

Timing for Presentation

Plan on approximately one hour for your presentation, including Q&A time. If your mentor and 2nd reader are very informed of your work and you have kept in contact with them, the presentation may be shorter as they will likely have fewer questions. If there has been less contact with your committee, the presentation may be longer as they may have more questions and further requests for changes to your paper.

PowerPoint

You are expected to prepare a PowerPoint (or similar) to guide your presentation. This can be as simple or as involved as you would like, but should cover the main aspects of your research including why you chose the topic, how you conducted your research, unexpected “bumps in the road” and how you dealt with them, your results and how you analyzed and interpreted your data, implications for future research, and applicability to the field in general. Your mentor can provide additional guidance about what he or she would like to see in your presentation.

Final Approval by Committee

Upon conclusion of your presentation, your mentor and/or 2nd reader may request some final changes to your paper. These should be completed quickly, and the final paper turned into your committee members and the program coordinator.

Your mentor and 2nd reader will sign the Final Master’s Project Evaluation form (sample follows) indicating final approval of your project. This form, plus your final paper will be kept on file indefinitely.

Publication of Paper

If your paper is published, congratulations! Please let us know, and provide us with the citation or DOI.

Grading, Transcript and Graduation

Final Project Grading

When you register for one or more credit of CI7090 during a semester in which you will *not* graduate, you are required to submit a progress report and project timeline in Canvas.

Receiving a P grade for the semester does not indicate that you have passed the project requirement overall. It is simply a recognition that you are making *general overall progress* toward completion of your project. If you have not worked on your project at all during the semester in which you took credit(s) of CI7090, but you are generally progressing on your project, we will assign a grade of P. This is because we know that sometimes work progresses during semesters in which you did not register for credit. **Essentially, if you complete the assignments, you will receive a P for the semester.**

If you do not complete these requirements, or you have not made *general overall progress* toward completion of your project since starting it, we may assign a grade of I (Incomplete) for the semester. The I grade will expire after one year and become an I/F (Failure) automatically. **Essentially, if you receive an I grade for final project credit, you have one year to complete your project and graduate or you will have to make up the credit that became an F.**

Graduation Certification

After you have successfully completed all requirements for the program, including all final project requirements, you can be certified to graduate. We can only certify students who complete the graduation application for the given semester. The program office will complete the initial degree certification, which then moves to the School of Education Director of Graduate Teacher Education for approval. The Graduate School does the final graduation certification, and this final step does not start until after the final grading deadline for the semester (several days after the end of the semester).

Your graduation checklist may show some red Xs indicating that certain items are required or have not been met in order to graduate. These are often not cleared until the Graduate School concludes their final certification step, so do not panic. Occasionally, clearing an item may require a waiver; if a waiver is required, the program office will submit it, the Director of Graduate Teacher Education will approve it, and the Graduate School will apply it.

Degree Designation on Transcript

Once your graduation has been confirmed by the University, your official transcript will be updated to show the following:

```
***** UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI AWARD *****  
COL: EDUCATION, CRIMINAL JUSTICE, & HUMAN SERVICES  
DEG: MASTER OF EDUCATION  
DATE:  
PROGRAM: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION  
*****
```

Mailing of Diploma

Diplomas are issued in a [certified electronic format](#) (CeDiploma) that can be printed and securely shared. If you wish to [order a paper copy](#) of your ceremonial diploma, you may do so for a small printing and shipping fee. CeDiplomas will be available after the Graduate School completes the final degree certification process. An email from the Registrar's Office will be sent to your UConnect email. The University begins graduation certification after the semester ends and final grades are submitted. The entire process takes 8-10 weeks. Transcripts are updated with the degree information and you can pull a degree certification if you need it for any reason.

Graduation Ceremony

The master's and doctoral hooding ceremony is held on the last Friday of the semester, the day before the undergraduate ceremony. If you plan to walk, you must RSVP by the deadline. No tickets are needed for your family and guests. The ceremony is also live-casted on the web for anyone who cannot attend.

After you have applied for graduation, you will receive emails regarding hooding requirements, ceremony RSVP instructions, and the link to view the ceremony live on the web. **IMPORTANT:** These emails will *only* be sent to your UConnect email address; you should either check that email or have it forward to an email that you do check.

If you do plan to attend the ceremony, please let us know! We would love to meet you, if we have not already, and congratulate you in person. We'll even take you to lunch if you don't have other plans!