

## **Program Policies for the Professional Project**

Community and Regional Planning 898

*Effective September 2014*

(Approved by the Community and Regional Planning Program Graduate Committee, September 2014)

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These policies pertain to the Professional Project completion track (UNL Graduate Studies “Option III”) for the Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP) degree at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

### **I. Credit Hours, Registration, and Grading**

- A. A maximum of six credit hours for the professional project, CRPL 898, is permitted for inclusion in the 48 credit hours required for the Master of Community and Regional Planning degree. Even though one may register for more than six professional project credit hours, only six are allowed for fulfillment of degree requirements.
- B. Professional project credit hours may be distributed across more than one semester. Students should register for professional project credit hours only in the semesters during which they intend to work on the project. Students are entitled to seek professional project advising from faculty advisors only if they register for professional project credit hours. If students are not registered for professional project credit hours, advising takes place entirely at the discretion of the faculty advisors.
- C. Completion of the professional project, including the final presentation of the project, must occur as the final required component of all course work in the student’s program of study for the MCRP degree.
- D. Grading for the six required CRPL 898 professional project credit hours is on a pass/no-pass basis only. Prior to completion of all CRPL 898 credit hours in the semester when the oral examination is scheduled, increments of CRPL 898 credit hours registered in previous semesters will be graded Incomplete (“I”) until the semester in which the oral examination is scheduled.

### **II. Professional Project Advisory Committee**

- A. Each student pursuing a professional project must have an advisory committee consisting of at least three University of Nebraska faculty members and one nonfaculty practicing professional or a project client representative. Selection of the practicing professional or client representative by the student is subject to approval by the chair of the advisory committee.
- B. The three faculty members of the professional project advisory committee constitute the voting members of the committee. At least two members of each project advisory committee, one of whom must serve as chair of the committee, shall be members of the faculty of the Community and Regional Planning Program.
- C. Student requests for individual faculty members to serve as professional project advisory committee chairs or committee members will be considered and accommodated when possible, but equitable distribution of faculty workloads may necessitate assignment of faculty to project advisory committees.

### **III. Professional Project Scope and Format**

- A. The professional project involves emulation of professional planning work, wherein the student pursues a project having the following characteristics, the precise nature of which are subject to approval by the project advisory committee:
  - 1. An explicit project subject and scope of work;
  - 2. A project schedule with explicit established deadlines;
  - 3. At least one component of significant documented research (e.g., exploration and evaluation of various methodologies that could be utilized in the project, comparative analysis of other similar projects elsewhere, etc.) which may or may not be presented as an integral part of project final product(s), but which must be presented to the project advisory committee;
  - 4. Recommendations pertaining to the project, derived from the application of appropriate methodologies;
  - 5. One or more products that convey project results and recommendations, including a report document that must include or summarize all of the essential components of the project; and
  - 6. At least one formal presentation of the project results, in person, to the project advisory committee and other interested persons.
- B. A student's professional project must be pursued and completed individually, with advice from his or her project advisory committee.
- C. All written materials submitted for review by the professional project advisory committee chair and committee members must be in computer-generated format.
- D. All research for the project utilizing other source materials shall be documented and presented in conformance with a standard citation system, such as Kate L. Turabain's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Latest Edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).

### **IV. Professional Project Presentation/Critique, Scheduling, and Deadlines**

- A. A final formal presentation/critique (oral examination), with all members of the project advisory committee present, must occur at the conclusion of the student's professional project.
- B. The student is responsible for scheduling the final formal presentation/critique (oral examination). This is accomplished by submitting a Graduate Studies "Final Examination Report" form, approved by the student's advisory committee chair and the Community and Regional Planning Graduate Committee chair, to the Office of Graduate Studies before the deadline noted on the Graduate Studies website. The "Final Examination Report" form specifies the time and place of the final oral examination and will be approved for submission to the Office of Graduate Studies only under the following conditions:
  - 1. The student and the faculty advisory committee chair and all members must agree that they can and will be present at the scheduled presentation/critique time. (The feasibility of completing the professional project during the summer may depend upon availability of project advisory committee members for the formal presentation (oral examination)).
  - 2. The notice of the final formal presentation/critique (oral examination) must be approved by the student's project advisory committee chair and the Community and Regional Planning Graduate

Committee chair no later than four weeks (during the academic year)/three weeks (during the summer sessions) prior to the desired presentation date. *The student's project advisory committee chair and the Community and Regional Planning Graduate Committee chair will approve the scheduled time for the presentation/critique only if they judge that the student will be fully prepared for the presentation. Normally, this means that a full draft of the student's professional project document (including all components of the text; figures and tables, appendices, table of contents, lists of figures and tables, etc.) must be presented when the presentation date is set, in the timeframe described in this section (IV.B.2.).*

- C. Copies of any project final products (materials upon which the final presentation will be based) must be distributed or made available to all members of the project advisory committee at least two weeks (during the academic year)/one week (during summer sessions) prior to the scheduled presentation/critique. *Failure to satisfy this deadline for distribution of final professional project copies to members of the student's advisory committee will result in cancellation, by the Community and Regional Planning Program Graduate Committee chair, of the scheduled oral examination.* The format (printed or digital) of the copies distributed to advisory committee members is to be determined by each of the committee members.
- D. Successful completion of the professional project requires affirmative votes of at least two of the three faculty members on the project advisory committee.
- E. Any changes to the final project products required by the project advisory committee following the final presentation/critique (oral examination) must be completed no later than the deadline published by the Office of Graduate Studies for submission of final master's theses for the term in which the student wishes to graduate. The chair of the project advisory committee will hold the "Final Examination Report" form until the student satisfactorily completes all required changes.
- F. The signed "Final Examination Report" form is submitted to Graduate Studies.
- G. The student uploads the professional project to the University Library's Digital Commons. Instructions are included in the Office of Graduate Studies booklet, "Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of an Electronic Thesis," even though the document to be uploaded in this case is not a master's degree thesis.