**Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) Thesis Option Requirements and Procedures**

**Note: For most MURP students, the Professional Report (PR) or the Practicum will be the preferred capstone exit requirements. The PR option allows students to develop and hone practice-related skills working individually with an outside client, while the practicum option allows for a similar experience in a group setting.**

Recognizing, though, that for some students a research experience will be more appropriate, the MURP program allows a small number of research-oriented MURP students to complete the thesis capstone option. Typically, students who choose this option will be considering Ph.D. study or a research career.

**Application Process – How to Get Approval to Pursue the Thesis Option**

To be considered for the thesis option, students must apply, in writing, to the MURP Assistant Director by June 1st of their first year. The application should include the following elements:

* Clear statement of proposed thesis topic
* **Written statement from a UPPP faculty member agreeing to advise the thesis**
* Review of relevant literature including references
* Explanation of anticipated research approach, design, and methods
* If data will be needed, include an explanation of data sources that will be used, including citations to secondary data sources or a plan to collect original data, as appropriate
* If thesis will be a case study approach or require qualitative data, include an explanation of how the needed case study or qualitative information will be collected
* A statement of the relevant theory/theories, which will be especially important if the thesis will be primarily theoretical research

Applications should be concise and to-the-point, not exceeding seven typewritten, double-spaced pages. The MURP Director will consult the student’s proposed thesis chair and other faculty members as needed. Applicants for the thesis option will be informed of the department’s decision within a month of the application. Students who are approved to pursue the thesis option will follow the plan outlined below (see page 2). Students not approved to pursue the thesis option must complete either the professional report or practicum.

**Thesis Procedures – How to Complete the Thesis Requirements**

**MURP students approved for the thesis capstone option** should enroll in four units of UPPP 299 with their thesis advisor in each of the Fall and Winter quarters. These eight UPPP 299 thesis units will not limit the student’s ability to count four additional (optional) non-thesis UPPP 299 elective units towards MURP degree requirements.

**A MURP thesis must be completed in accordance with UC Irvine Academic Senate rules for the master’s degree thesis, which specify the size and composition of the thesis committee.** Following UC Irvine Academic Senate requirements and adapting to the MURP degree timeline, MURP thesis students should:

* **Officially form a thesis committee** of three faculty members through graduate division. This step requires obtaining signatures from the thesis advisor (“chair”) and two additional faculty members. The chair of the thesis committee must hold a primary or joint (without salary) academic senate appointment in the department.
* **Defend a thesis proposal** (approximately 20-30 pages) before the thesis committee of three faculty members, including the thesis chair, in the Fall quarter of their 2nd year in the MURP program.
* **Complete the thesis.** The student completes the research and writes the thesis under the primary direction of the thesis committee chair. Approval of the thesis by the committee of three faculty members is necessary in order to graduate. The thesis should be approved in time to graduate by the end of the second year of the MURP program.