Professional Report or Thesis: Developing Your Abstract

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1. Reminder of the process and deadlines
2. The 10-step program
3. Working with “Readers”
4. Preparing for a PR or a Thesis
5. Writing an abstract
6. ACTIVITY

soa.utexas.edu/programs/community-and-regional-planning/mscrp-program/thesis-professional-report-guidelines
REMINDER OF THE PROCESS AND DEADLINES
Students must meet all these requirements to receive full consideration for CRP scholarship funding, including travel funding for the APA conference.

FALL SEMESTER YEAR 1
1. Meet with your assigned Faculty Mentor (September)
2. Attend PR/Thesis Workshop 1 (September-October)
3. Develop your PR/Thesis idea
4. Meet with your Mentor and relevant faculty (November)

SPRING SEMESTER YEAR 1
5. Attend PR/Thesis Workshop 2 (February)
6. Submit your PR/Thesis abstract (March 13 by midnight)
7. Matching and meeting your reader (March-April)
8. IRB application and travel authorization (March-April)
9. Attend PR/Thesis Workshop 3 (April)
10. Submit PR/Thesis preliminary proposal (Date TBD with your reader)

SUMMER: CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH
Students must meet all these requirements to receive full consideration for CRP scholarship funding, including travel funding for the APA conference.

**FALL SEMESTER YEAR 1**
1. Meet with your assigned Faculty Mentor (September)
2. Attend PR/Thesis Workshop 1 (September - October)
3. Develop your PR/Thesis idea
4. Meet with your Mentor and relevant faculty (November)

**SPRING SEMESTER YEAR 1**
5. Attend PR/Thesis Workshop 2 (February)
6. Submit your PR/Thesis *abstract* (March 13 by midnight)
7. Matching and meeting your reader (March-April)
8. IRB application and travel authorization (March-April)
9. Attend PR/Thesis Workshop 3 (April)
10. Submit PR/Thesis *preliminary proposal* (Date TBD with your reader)

**SUMMER: CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH**
PR/Thesis Schedule

Students must meet all these requirements to receive full consideration for CRP scholarship funding, including travel funding for the APA conference.

Fall Semester Year 2

1. Keep meeting with your First and Second Reader (September)
2. Attend fourth PR/thesis workshop (September-October)
3. Submit your PR/Thesis final proposal (October)
4. Submit at least one chapter of your PR/thesis to your First Reader (By last day of class)

(Note: Thesis students attend Research Design in Fall)

Spring Semester Year 2

5. Submit your complete PR/Thesis draft to your First and Second Reader (April; ask your readers what their deadline is)
6. Submit your final PR/Thesis to the Graduate School (Last day of class).
Remember The 10-step Program!
THE 10 STEPS TO AN AWESOME PR

1. Submit your abstract
2. Get matched
3. Submit your preliminary proposal to your readers
4. Apply for IRB approval

SUMMER BREAK!

5. Conduct your research
6. Submit your final proposal
7. Register for PR class in the spring
8. Process and analyze your data
9. Outline your PR or Thesis
10. Write…and revise
WORKING WITH YOUR READERS
GUEST SPEAKERS
1. **Before your first meeting**

- Before your first meeting with your reader, think through what your goals are for your degree program and your PR.
- Think about how your PR can help you reach those goals.
- Think about what your needs are in terms of mentorship (how directed, how often you want to meet, what you need the most help with, etc.)
- If you want, don’t hesitate to share specific concerns you have that might hinder your progress with the PR, make it difficult to meet, etc.
2. Establishing a Good Working Relationship

- Respect their time and communicate clearly about your availability.
- Make appointments early and confirm them with emails.
- Share materials ahead of time.
- Set clear expectations for each meeting, maybe prepare an agenda to bring to the meeting.
- Before you leave the meeting, make sure you understand when your next deliverable is due.
- Don’t be afraid to ask clarifying questions, it is a dialogue!
3. **Staying on track**

- Set up a timeline together that provides support for pursuing your PR/Thesis.
- Make sure your timeline is realistic!
- Stick with your timeline...and adjust as needed!
- In your meetings with your reader, take stock of where you are in the process to make sure you are on track...it’s important to step back from the writing process.

[https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/graduate-mentoring/advising-and-mentoring-resources-students/guide-m](https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/graduate-mentoring/advising-and-mentoring-resources-students/guide-m)
4. Developing a PR you are proud of!

- Ask your reader **specific** questions to help you improve your PR. For example, ask questions about:
  - the specific topic, issue or place you are/want to research
  - theoretical framework
  - literature to read
  - research methods
  - analysis methods

https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/graduate-advising-and-mentoring/advising-and-mentoring-resources-students/guide-m
PREPARING FOR A PR OR A THESIS
Consider the purpose of the project **for you!**

What are **topics or questions** that you are passionate about?

Are there **debates or arguments** that you really care about?

Are there **places** (cities, neighborhoods, street corners, parks) and/or **cases** that you are particularly interested in?

Are there **research and/or analysis methods** you really like? (Pedestrian observations, interviewing, GIS, statistical analysis, etc.)
Option 1: Planning research project

Option 2: Client-based project

Option 3: Plan evaluation

See the PR/thesis website!

WRITING YOUR ABSTRACT
Writing your Abstract

The abstract is a 150-250-word description of the topic, why it’s important, and how you want to study it.

By the way ...

250 words is really short!!

(Roughly half a single-spaced Word page.)

Really!
WRITING YOUR ABSTRACT

1. Describe the broader planning debate/issue/concern that you wish to engage with (just a couple of sentences).

(Research suggests that the focus on creative industries prompts gentrification, some argue that New Urbanism promotes walkability but might reduce diversity, etc.)
2. Describe the specific case AND place that you want to investigate, explaining why this case AND place might illuminate this broader debate/issue/concern in planning. (Just a few sentences).
3. Your tentative research question(s).
4. What methods you might want to use.
1. Describe the broader planning debate/issue/concern that you wish to engage with (just a couple of sentences).

2. Describe the specific case AND place that you want to investigate, explaining why this case AND place might illuminate this broader debate/issue/concern in planning.

3. Your tentative research question(s).

4. What methods you might want to use.
You can think of a PR or a Thesis as a confluence of:

- A planning issue
- A case and a place
- Research and analysis methods
WRITING YOUR ABSTRACT... A CHEESY GRAPHIC

Issue

Case/Place

Methods

Your PR (or Thesis)!
YOUR TURN!