**Master of Environmental Sustainability Research Projects  
Briefing Package for environmental organizations**

**What is a Research Paper (RP)?**

* Research Papers (RP) often take the form of “knowledge” syntheses – e.g. reviews of the current state of knowledge on some scientific, economic, legal or public policy sustainable issue, but may also involve primary data gathering.
* RPs should pose – and attempt to answer - a well-defined research question, and exhibit extensive research and independent synthesis and analysis.
* RP students are encouraged to undertake projects in collaboration with external institutions.

**Timeline:**

* **Important Note:** External organizations must submit projects by **March** of every year for research projects that will be undertaken by the student in the following **winter/spring-summer term.**
* Students develop a proposal by the beginning of their second term (January),
* The actual research is conducted during the spring/summer term (May – July).
* Final RPs must be submitted by the end of August.

**Types of Research Papers:**

RPs may take a number of different forms, some of which are given below. Please note that this list is intended to be illustrative rather than comprehensive.

(1) A literature review (LR), in which the literature bearing on a particular *question* (or set thereof) is critically assessed and evaluated. In general, such papers should attempt to conform to “best practices” for systematic reviews to the extent that time and logistics permit. In LR, there is no “original” data collection from data sources, and no quantitative analysis.

(2) Meta-analysis (MA), in which literature bearing on a particular hypothesis (or set thereof) is gathered in a systematic fashion, data pertaining to effect sizes (or some such) are extracted, and there is quantitative analysis of these data to, for example, estimate (a) overall effect sizes; and/or (b) the effects of moderator variables. MAs should attempt to conform to best practices in meta-analysis to the extent that time and logistics permit.

(3) Empirical analysis (EA), in which data are gathered in a systematic fashion, and these data are either used to test a specific hypothesis (or hypotheses) or answer a well-posed question or to generate inferences inductively from the data.  EAs may involve analysis of quantitative or qualitative data, or a combination of the two.

(4) Environmental Policy Analysis (EPA), in which environmental/sustainability policies, regulations or laws are evaluated with respect to the effectiveness/efficiency/strengths and weaknesses of, for example, design, implementation or enforcement.

**Referencing the Student’s Research:**

It is expected that if the organization uses the student’s research in a published report, that the student’s work is cited and that both the student and the academic unit ([envirograd@uOttawa.ca](mailto:envirograd@uOttawa.ca)) are informed.

**Examples of past Research Papers:**Sara Jane O’Neil. “Cities for All People:An exploration of environmental justice and city sustainability planning.”  
  
Samantha Shulman.“Chemical Conditions Affecting Iron Oxides: Does the presence of phosphate within the structure of the iron oxides make them less reducible than synthetic pure ferrihydrite?”

**Contact Details:**

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**Master of Environmental Sustainability**

**Project Template**

**Email this form to:** [envirograd@uOttawa.ca](mailto:envirograd@uOttawa.ca)   
**Subject:** MES Project Submission – Your Organization’s Name

**Sponsoring Organization:**

Click here to enter text.

**Research Question or Title:**

Click here to enter text.

**Detailed project description:**Click here to enter text. **Tasks:**

Click here to enter text.  
  
  
**Deliverables**:

Click here to enter text.  
  
 **Anticipated Supervisor Contact Information** (name/title/contact details)**:**

Click here to enter text.

**Contact details of the person submitting the project description (if different from above)**:  
Click here to enter text.