

HSRP MS Program

Plan B Project

PubH 7894, MS Plan B Project

Purpose

The purpose of the Plan B Project is to have students demonstrate:

1. familiarity with the tools of research or scholarship in the field of health services research;
2. the ability to work independently;
3. the ability to effectively present the results of their investigation in written and oral form.

Preparation for the Plan B Project

Students must discuss their ideas for the Plan B Project with their academic advisor to ensure that their ideas for the project are compatible with the MS degree. Students who plan to use their internship as the basis for their Plan B project also need to discuss their plans with the organizational internship mentor, to ensure that the project does not infringe on the organization's confidentiality clauses and that it is consistent with the student's responsibilities in the internship. Students must also consult with their academic advisor

IRB Approval and Potential Time Constraints

Research projects that involve using human subjects, or data sets that contain information about people, are required to submit their research proposal to the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. IRB approval can be a lengthy process and students should contact the IRB office prior to beginning the research on their MS Plan B Projects to ensure that their planned project will be approved. The IRB website: www.irb.umn.edu contains information about the policies, procedures, and forms that are required. Students should consult with their advisors with their proposal before submitting it to the IRB for review.

MS Plan B Examining Committee and Final Oral Exam

The Graduate School requires MS students to convene an examining committee who will grade the Plan B Project and administer a final exam. The final exam consists of a presentation of the Plan B Project, followed by questions from the committee members. Your MS examining committee should be organized as soon as you have a topic identified. Committee members are an excellent resource for suggestions and assistance during the development of the Plan B project. The MS examining committee must have a minimum of 3 members with appointments in the Graduate School. Two committee members must have HSRP faculty appointments, one must have a Graduate School appointment outside of HSRP. Consult the faculty roster on the Graduate School website (www.grad.umn.edu) to determine if your committee members have eligible appointments. Students whose Plan B Project is based on their internship may include, if they chose, a fourth member from the sponsoring organization. This member will usually be the internship mentor, but could be anyone in the organization with familiarity and involvement with the project. This fourth member is welcome to serve on the committee and attend the final oral exam. No formal approval by the Graduate School is required for the additional member. The additional member will not be listed on Graduate School documents or sign-off on Graduate School forms.

For further information about examining committees, Graduate School faculty committee membership requirements, and faculty appointments, see the Graduate School web site at www.grad.umn.edu.

Registration and Grading of the Plan B Project

During the fall and spring of the second year of the MS program, students will register for 2 credits in each semester for the MS Plan B Project, PubH 7894. A total of 4 credits of Plan B Project registration is required for the MS degree in HSRP&A. A permission number is required. Students may obtain a permission number from their advisor and will register for the section of PubH 7894 that corresponds to their advisor. The grading basis for the Plan B project is S/N (pass/fail).

Two terms of registration are required for the Plan B Project, but a grade will not be entered until the final oral exam has been completed.

During the first term of registration (fall of the second year), no grade will be issued. Instead, a place-holder of “K” will appear on the transcript to indicate that the Plan B project is continuing into the next semester. Upon completion of the second term of Plan B Project registration, and completion of the Plan B project final oral exam, a grade of either S or N will be issued for both the fall and spring semester at the end of spring.

Submit Bound Copy of Plan B Project

Provide a bound final copy of your Plan B project to the HSRP&A coordinator. The paper should be bound with a Velo Bind Cover with a clear cover and black vinyl back. MS Plan B projects will be stored in the Division and will be available for review by others upon request.

Time Commitment For Plan B Project

The Plan B Project should represent a minimum of 120 hours effort.

Project Options

The purpose of the Plan B project is to give students the opportunity to demonstrate competence in health services research. The project is usually developed from the internship experience, but may also be a research project, or critical literature review project. Virtually any relevant topic may be considered. Possible topics include:

- Business plan
- Cost benefit analysis/cost effectiveness analysis
- Policy analysis
- Clinical trial
- Critical literature review and recommendations

Topic Selection

Students may select topics as a result of their MS program internship, prior experience, coursework, research study of a particular HSRP faculty member, or other meaningful and

relevant areas of interest. Students are encouraged to discuss ideas with their advisor and internship mentor.

Project Ethics

Students are expected to abide by the University's Student Conduct Code in completing their Plan B Project. Particularly important is the issue of plagiarism. Please see the University's Student Conduct policy at www.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/studentconduct.pdf

Students who conduct research using human subjects, or use data from human subjects, are required to comply with IRB regulations and may be required to obtain approval for their project. Consult with your Academic Advisor whether you need to obtain approval for your Plan B Project from the University's Research Subjects' Protection Program, (via IRB). Procedures and application materials are available from their office in D528 Mayo, MMC 820. Depending on the nature and methodology of your project, you may be able to file for exemption from the Committee review. For further information call 612-626-5654, or see <http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects/index.html>

Compliance with regulations under HIPAA is also required. For information about HIPAA, see <http://www.irb.umn.edu/topics/hipaa/>

Project Format and Style

Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and normally 30-40 pages in length including references. Tables, charts and conceptual models can be used to illustrate and summarize information.

For reference and guidance on style, the following style manuals are suggested:

American Medical Association, American Medical Association Manual of Style. 9th ed. Chicago, IL: American Medical Association, 1998.

American Psychological Association, Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. 5th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001.

Examples of Formats for Projects

INTERNSHIP BASED PROJECT

HSRP MS students who are placed in an internship may base their Plan B Project on their internship experience. The project could address topics of current relevance to the organization or the field of health services research, which may include program evaluation, organizational objectives, community needs assessment, and assessment of current practices or policies, data systems, screening methods, etc.

Objectives:

- To determine the student's ability to develop or evaluate program plans and priorities.
- To demonstrate the student's ability to plan and organize a body of technical information into a cohesive and acceptable report format.

- To demonstrate the student's ability for assessing the relevance of the findings of the project and translating this knowledge into policy and programmatic implications.

Components:

- Title and Approval Page
- Abstract - not to exceed 250 words
- Acknowledgments
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
 - a. Statement and development of problem, including its significance to health services research
 - b. Conceptual model or theoretical framework (if appropriate)
 - c. Statement of purpose
- Literature Review and Analysis
- Methodology
 - a. Study design
 - b. Description of data base/population and sample selection procedures including nature of response and non-response, as appropriate
 - c. Analytic technique used - quantitative, qualitative, as appropriate
- Results
- Discussion
 - a. Description of how findings confirm/depart from those of others
 - b. Strengths and weaknesses of study
 - c. Implications for public health administration
 - d. Conclusion
- References
- Appendices (include copies of instruments, surveys, records used)

CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW PROJECT

This option gives students the opportunity to perform a comprehensive, integrative review of the published literature in a specific area that is relevant to health services research.

Objectives:

- To demonstrate the student's ability to initiate and successfully complete a comprehensive review of the literature in an area of health services research.
- To demonstrate the student's ability to critically and systemically evaluate the scientific, programmatic, or practice and policy implications of a literature review to the selected health services research content area.
- To demonstrate the student's ability to recognize gaps in existing knowledge as well as those areas that need further clarification.
- To demonstrate the student's ability to assess the relevance of the existing literature as it pertains to the practice of health services research.

Components:

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- Acknowledgments
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
 - a. Statement and development of problem, including its significance to health services research
 - b. Conceptual model or theoretical framework (if appropriate)
 - c. Statement of purpose
- Methodology
 - a. Method used to collect articles
 - b. Criteria for including or excluding articles in review
 - c. Criteria for assessing articles
- Integrative Literature Review and Analysis
- Discussion
 - a. Summary of trends in the literature
 - b. Strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in literature including
 - 1. Measurement of concepts (including validity and reliability)
 - 2. Populations and data sources
 - 3. Study designs
 - 4. Analyses and data presentation techniques and their adequacy
 - 5. Appropriateness of conclusions
 - c. Implications for health services research
 - d. Conclusion
- References
- Appendices

RESEARCH PROJECT

This option is available for students who would like to apply research skills and analyze data (either primary or secondary). This project focuses on pertinent questions or issues relating to health services research.

Objectives:

- To demonstrate the student's ability to conduct research using scientific methods.
- To demonstrate the student's ability to organize a body of information into a cohesive and acceptable analytic format.
- To demonstrate the student's ability for assessing the relevance of the findings of the project and translating this knowledge into future research, policy, and programmatic implications.

Components:

- Title and Approval Page
- Abstract - not to exceed 250 words
- Acknowledgments

- Table of Contents
- Introduction
 - a. Statement and development of problem, including its significance to health services research
 - b. Conceptual model or theoretical framework (if appropriate)
 - c. Statement of purpose
- Literature Review and Analysis
- Methodology
 - a. Study design
 - b. Description of data base/population and sample selection procedures including nature of response and non-response, as appropriate
 - c. Analytic technique used - quantitative, qualitative, as appropriate
- Results
- Discussion
 - a. Description of how findings confirm/depart from those of others
 - b. Strengths and weaknesses of study
 - c. Implications for health services research
 - d. Conclusion
- References
- Appendices (include copies of instruments, surveys, records used)