

Guidelines for Master's Research Project (STAT 798) (Elective Option for MS in Statistical Science Degree)

A master's research project should be closely related to the student's general academic objectives and should contribute to the student's understanding of statistical methodology and theory.

Work on the project is done under the guidance of a faculty advisor, who is a member of the graduate faculty with a full-time appointment in the Department of Statistics. The project may be carried out at Mason or, if appropriate, at nearby facilities. For example, students may pursue a project at their place of employment on topics of interest to their employer, provided the project meets the standards of the university.

A student choosing to complete a master's research project must submit a written project report which will be graded by the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor makes the final decision on the student's grade.

Completion of Master's Research Project

Completion of a master's research project involves a four-step process.

- 1) Identify a project topic and faculty advisor.
- 2) Prepare a project proposal and obtain approval from the MS in Statistical Science program director.
- 3) Perform the associated research and write the project report.
- 4) Submit a written project report for evaluation and grading by the faculty advisor.

A student may not enroll in STAT 798 (Master's Research Project) until he/she have completed Steps 1 and 2.

Step 1: Identify a project topic and faculty advisor.

It is the student's responsibility to identify a project and a faculty advisor to supervise it. When choosing a project, the student should take into consideration his/her background and interests, ability to handle the proposed project, accessibility of needed materials, and probable significance of the project. If a student does not have a specific project topic but decides to do a master's research project, then the student may want to first identify a faculty advisor who can assist in identifying a project.

Step 2: Prepare a project proposal and obtain approval from the MS in Statistical Science program director.

A (written) project proposal is developed in consultation with the faculty advisor. An acceptable project proposal should include the following:

- A clear, detailed description of the research problem or hypothesis to be addressed.
- An explanation of the reasons for choosing the topic and how it relates to the student's statistical education.
- A discussion of the methods to be employed and/or a description (usually including graphics) of the data to be employed.
- A discussion of the expected outcomes of the research.

When the faculty advisor determines that the proposal is sufficient, the student submits it to the MS in Statistical Science program director for approval. Proposals containing grammatical errors or poor writing will not be approved.

Action Item: The student must complete the **Master's Research Project Proposal Approval** form available from the Department of Statistics. For final approval and processing, the form, along with a copy of the proposal, must be delivered to the Department of Statistics Administrative Office. **A student may not enroll in STAT 798 (Master's Research) until the proposal is approved by the MS in Statistical Science program director.**

Step 3: Perform the associated research and write the project report.

After the proposal has been submitted and approved, the student may enroll in STAT 798 (Master's Research Project) at the beginning of the next semester.

Registration for STAT 798

The student must have been officially admitted to the MS in Statistical Science program before registering for STAT 798.

The student should obtain a copy of the "Individualized Section Form" (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/IS.pdf>), fill it out, obtain all necessary signatures, and deliver to the Registrar's office. The instructor for the course is the faculty advisor.

Content of Project Report

The content of the written project report is the responsibility of the student, who should rely on frequent input and direction from the faculty advisor. All questions concerning the content of the written report and its organization should be resolved with the student's faculty advisor.

The written project must be of high quality as reflected in the clarity of the writing, the cogency of the argument, and the thoroughness of the research.

Action Item: The student must submit the completed Individualized Section Form to the Registrar's office by the last day to add for the semester.

Step 4: Submit written project report for evaluation and grading by the faculty advisor.

The written report must be submitted to the faculty advisor no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to the last day of classes for the term.

Upon receipt of the written report from the student, the faculty advisor reviews the report and notifies the student of any required changes. The student must make any necessary changes and submit the revised report to the faculty advisor no later than noon on the final scheduled day of final exams. (Note: Dates are based on Session C for the summer term.) The faculty advisor reviews the revised report and submits the final grade.

Grading of STAT 799

The written project report is graded by the faculty advisor using the regular graduate grading scale. However, at the faculty advisor's discretion, if a student fails to submit the written report or fails to submit a revised report by the deadline, a grade of IP can be given until work is complete; at that time, the IP grade is updated by the Registrar's Office to reflect the final A-F grade.

Action Items:

- The student submits the written report to the faculty advisor no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to the last day of classes for the term.
- The faculty advisor reviews the report and notifies student of any required changes.
- The student submits the revised report to the faculty advisor no later than noon on the final scheduled day of final exams.
- The faculty advisor submits the course grade for STAT 798 via Patriot Web.



Department of Statistics
Volgenau School of Engineering
Nguyen Engineering Building, Room 1705
4400 University Drive, MS 4A7
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444

Office: 703-993-3645 / Fax: 703-993-1700 / E-mail: statistics@gmu.edu

Master's Research Project Proposal Approval Form

It is the student's responsibility to complete this form, obtain the faculty advisor's signature, attach this completed form to a copy of the project proposal, and submit the form and proposal to the MS in Statistical Science program director for final approval.

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

G#: _____

E-mail: _____

Proposed Project Title: _____

Faculty Advisor: _____

Semester/Year: _____

Approvals:

Faculty Advisor: _____

Program Director, MS in Statistical Science: _____