APPLIED RESEACH PROJECT

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETION

Students enrolled in the Integral Economic Development Programs are required to complete an Applied Research Project (ARP) prior to graduation. To meet this requirement, students must design an impact evaluation tool utilizing the integral approach. Students enrolled in the Integral Economic Development Management (IEDM) Program are required to design the evaluation, but are not required to implement the full evaluation. Students enrolled in the Integral Economic Development Policy (IEDP) Program are required to design and implement the full evaluation and complete a final report. Thus, their proposals should include a more detailed analysis of both data collection and methodology.

The steps for successful completion of the ARP are as follows:

ARP Proposal Approval	→	Evaluation Design and Implementation	→	ARP Good Standing	→	ARP Defense

I. ARP Proposal Approval

1. Approval of the Program to be Evaluated

Students must first seek approval of their projects from their assigned ARP Advisor. Once the Advisor has approved the program the student has selected for evaluation, a second approval is required by the Academic Committee. The Academic Committee is comprised of IEDM and IEDP faculty.

In addition, students must complete the Certification of Human Subject Research before beginning the ARP, and must provide certification to the Academic Committee prior to submitting their proposals for approval.

2. Preliminary Work on the ARP

If possible, and when appropriate, a preliminary field trip by a student to visit the program selected for evaluation is recommended. The field trip assists the student in developing a clearer understanding of the project and the type of evaluation methodology that would best fit the evaluated program.

Even if a trip is not possible or appropriate, students must be in direct contact with the organization chosen for evaluation. This is necessary to obtain information about the program's implementation and goals, and to access materials used as well as to the population being served. It is also necessary to determine whether or not it is possible to collect information on treatment baseline and post-evaluation data and/or treatment and control groups. To conduct a proper

econometric analysis, access to such data is a condition sine qua non. Thus, the impossibility of accessing any type of data would render the ARP invalid.

After the preliminary Advisor's approval of the potential project, students are expected to be in continuous communication with their Advisor regarding their proposal presentation progress and findings.

3. Schedule for Proposal Presentation to the Academic Committee

Full-time **IEDM** students must present the proposal at the end of the first academic semester, unless they are completing the degree in two years. In the latter case, they are required to present the proposal at the end of the first academic year.

Full-time **IEDP** students must present the proposal at the end of the second academic semester.

 Part-time students in either program must consult with their Advisor to determine the timeline for proposals.

Staff of the IEDM/IEDP Programs is responsible for the coordination of rooms and dates. The office will communicate to faculty and students required to present proposals.

4. Steps for Actual Presentation of the Proposal

Once preliminary information on the project to be evaluated has been collected, it must be presented for approval. The proposal has two components: a written document and an oral presentation.

Written Proposal

A written document must be submitted at least **two weeks** prior to the scheduled presentation of the proposal in the corresponding academic semester. This document should describe how a student intends to carry out the impact evaluation design (IEDM students) or carry out the evaluation design and implementation (IEDP students). The following aspects should be included in the proposal:

- Introduction
- Research Framework
- Program to Be Evaluated and Location
- Population Served by the Program and Potential Sample Size
- Literature Review
- Structure of the Evaluation
- Sample Design
- Data Collection Methods and Justification for Choosing Them
- Methodology Planned for Data Analysis
- Preliminary Bibliography
        Length: up to 15 pages

For data collection methods, students must use at least two methods, such as surveys and experiments, which allow for rigorous econometric analysis. Preliminary data collection, however, can include qualitative tools such as focus group, observations, and interviews.

Oral Presentation of the Proposal

Students are required to present their ARP proposals orally to the Academic Committee for approval. The student presents his or her proposal to the Committee for 10-15 minutes. A PowerPoint presentation should be used. A 20-minute Q&A session follows, in which Committee members ask questions of the student. Time permitting, audience members may also ask questions.

Upon finishing the presentations, the Chair of the program will communicate to each student whether her/his proposal is approved or not, and whether revisions are required. If a proposal presentation is not approved, the student must present again to secure such approval from the committee. Approval must be secured first in order to move to the next step.

Modified Proposal

Upon completing their presentations, students must meet their Advisors to discuss comments and requests received during their presentations by members of the Academic Committee. Afterwards, students with approved but review requested proposals must prepare a Modified Proposal including changes/additions agreed upon with their Advisor as requested by the Academic Committee. Once their Advisor approves the Modified Proposal, students can begin working on their projects as outlined in the approved proposal.

II.   Evaluation Design and Implementation

When appropriate, human subject research authorization should be secure before the initiation of the implementation of the project's evaluation. Previous to any collection of data, the completion of a research consent form by every human subject being evaluated and/or responsible party in the case of minors is required.

During the process of the evaluation design and implementation as well as of any data collection, students should work closely with their Advisors. Authorization of the responsible faculty for any given project is required for the application of any measurement tool on human subjects. Strict confidentiality and anonymity in any data collection process is essential at all times.

It is the responsibility of the student carrying out the research to keep in close communication with the faculty and seek the necessary approvals during the process of evaluation design and implementation. It is the responsibility of both the faculty assigned to the project and the respective students that all standard procedures and regulations regarding human subject research, when applicable, are respected and followed.

III.   ARP Good Standing

To remain engaged in a specific evaluation project, a student should at all times remain in ARP good standing. ARP good standing requires that a student fulfills his or her responsibilities of the project in which he or she is involved in a timely and professional manner.

Failure to comply with ARP good standing will result in immediate dismissal from the ARP project. It will be the sole responsibility of the student to identify a new project in order to fulfill the ARP requirement.

IV.   ARP Defense

After completion of the evaluation design (IEDM students) and implementation (IEDP students), an oral defense and satisfactory approval is required for graduation.

Oral defenses are typically scheduled twice a year, in December and in June. Students wishing to defend the proposal at a given time must obtain approval from their Advisors and apply to be included on the assigned defense date. Applications must be submitted to the IEDM/IEDP Chair by November 15th and May 30th, respectively.

Two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date for ARPs, students must submit the approved text for the ARP defense to the Academic Committee.

For *IEDM students*, the ARP should consist of the completed impact evaluation design for the program studied. Implementation instructions should also be included.

For *IEDP students*, the ARP should consist of the Final Report of the impact evaluation designed and implemented for the program studied.

A student presents his or her proposal to the Committee for 15-20 minutes. A PowerPoint presentation should be used. A 30-minute Q&A session follows, in which Committee members ask questions of the student. Time permitting, audience members may also ask questions.

Upon finishing the defenses, the Chair of the program will communicate to each student whether she/he successfully passed her/his defense or not, and whether revisions are required. A student failing to pass the oral defense must present again. A student can defend up to three times. Failure to successfully pass a defense for the third time will result in rejection of the ARP work, which is a requirement for graduation.

Corrections required by Committee members after the ARP defense should be incorporated into the ARP final project before being submitted to the Programs Chair's office. A signature of the Advisor (IEDM students) or both Advisor and the faculty responsible for the project (IEDP students), is required prior to submission. No diploma will be granted to students who have not successfully submitted their corrected and approved ARPs.

 The final submission deadlines for ARP projects are those set by the official Academic Calendar of the University for theses deposit for October, January, and May graduations, and can be found on the University website: http://enrollmentservices.cua.edu.