

MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING

**ACTION RESEARCH
PAPER
GUIDELINES**

**Department of Education
Wheaton College
Wheaton, Illinois**

May 2010

Action Research Paper Guidelines

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Introduction

The Department of Education is committed to providing an experience-oriented program set within the framework of a Christian liberal arts education which provides a broad background of knowledge, philosophies, and skills important for a person entering the teaching profession. The purpose of the program is to prepare students to serve as elementary, middle school, and secondary teachers and agents of change in the public and private schools. The intent of the department is to prepare students to integrate Christian values and implement ethical practices in the educational setting; develop a knowledge base within the field of education; understand the nature and development of the learner; develop competency in decision-making and problem-solving regarding educational matters; respect cultural diversity in the school and global community; become knowledgeable and responsive to the specific needs of at risk learners; and become liberally educated with specialization in a discipline.

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program is a graduate degree program available for students who wish to combine an undergraduate discipline-specific bachelor's degree with secondary or elementary teacher certification. In addition to specific Bible and theology, education, and content matter classes, all MAT students learn to integrate theory and practice through the completion of an action research paper as a culminating and integrative experience prior to the granting of the degree.

According to Gay (1996), "the purpose of action research is to solve practical problems through the application of the scientific method. It is concerned with a local problem and is conducted in a local setting. The primary goal of action research is the solution of a given problem, not contribution to science. Whether the research is conducted in one classroom or in many classrooms, the teacher is very much a part of the process" (p. 10). Action research papers may employ either a quantitative or qualitative methodology. The Department of Education and the Graduate School of Wheaton College require the completion of an action research project and paper to enable MAT graduates to function as thoughtful, reflective, active, and continually-learning agents of change in the schools.

General Time Lines for Completion of the Action Research Paper

1. The sixth year of the MAT program is the teaching induction year when the student is engaged full-time as a teacher/scholar. Students should register for EDUC 598 (Action Research Paper) and begin implementation of an action research project. **REGISTRATION SHOULD OCCUR THE FIRST SEMESTER AFTER COMPLETION OF COURSE WORK, TYPICALLY THE SUMMER AFTER THE FIFTH YEAR..**

2. ***STUDENTS SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENROLL IN EDUC 599 (ACTION RESEARCH CONTINUATION) AND PAY THE CONTINUATION FEE EACH SUBSEQUENT SEMESTER (FALL, SPRING, AND SUMMER) UNTIL THE ACTION RESEARCH PAPER IS COMPLETED.*** MAT students who are not involved in an educational setting by this time must petition to switch to EDUC 698 (Thesis) and pay tuition for the additional 2 hours. Each subsequent semester until the thesis is completed, students must enroll in EDUC 699 and pay the continuation fee.
3. When either the action research paper or the thesis is satisfactorily completed and all other requirements have been met, the MAT degree will be awarded.
4. Students have five (5) years from the time they take their first 500 level class to complete all requirements. Any requests for extensions must be submitted through the chair of the Department of Education to the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee.

Style

Unless special permission is granted by the Department of Education, all action research papers prepared to meet the requirements of the MAT degree will be prepared using the most current edition of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

Completion of the Action Research Paper

All MAT candidates should complete the following steps in the preparation of their action research projects and papers:

1. Select an advisor from among the graduate faculty in the Department of Education. Select a second reader from any department at Wheaton College. In the event that a student is not able to be present on Wheaton's campus during the completion of the process, his/her advisor will serve as the contact person and ensure that, as steps are completed by the student, all appropriate College actions are completed. **NO DATA COLLECTION MAY BEGIN UNTIL STEPS 2-6 ARE COMPLETED IN THEIR ENTIRITY. ANY DATA COLLECTED PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF THESE STEPS MUST BE DISCARDED.**
2. Prepare an action research paper proposal of approximately 5-7 pages (using the cover sheet in Appendix I) that contains the following elements:
 - a. An introduction which provides a broad overview of the field(s) under consideration for this study and the reason(s) why this is of interest to the researcher and the discipline of education;
 - b. A brief review of current research in this/these area(s) to provide enough depth to demonstrate the researcher's initial engagement in this area and enough support to demonstrate the viability of this research;
 - c. Specific statements of the research questions to be answered through this study;
 - d. A methodology section which outlines in detail the action to be taken including (1) the subjects to be studied; (2) the data to be collected; and (3) the processes to be utilized in the collection of the data.

- e. Specific statements about how the data will provide answers to the research question previously written.
3. Submit for approval to the advisor and second reader.
4. After approval by the first and second readers, complete the materials required by the Wheaton College Institutional Review Board (see Appendix II for instructions).
5. Submit the approved proposal to the student's school district for approval.
6. File an approval form (Appendix III) with the Department of Education and the Registrar's Office. Once this form is approved, you may begin your Action Research project and data collection.
7. Complete your research and the Action Research Paper, maintaining close contact with the advisor. At a minimum, the student should contact his/her advisor monthly.
8. Submit the paper to the both the first and second readers. Both the first and the second readers must approve the paper in order to pass. **Generally students must submit several drafts of the paper before final approval by both readers is granted. Be certain to plan for several revisions of your paper as you work toward completion. Additionally, plan to allow your readers to have the paper for a minimum of 3 weeks each time it is submitted for feedback.**

Elements of the Action Research Paper

The final action research paper will be approximately 30-60 pages in length and include the following elements in the order listed:

1. Front flyleaf (blank page)
2. Title page (see Appendix IV)
3. Certification page (see Appendix V)
4. Disclaimer page (see Appendix VI)
5. Dedication page (optional)
6. Abstract
7. Table of contents
8. List of tables
9. List of figures or illustrations
10. Text, including the following components (components may be modified based on consultation with your first and second readers):
 - a. Extended literature review (approximately 10-20 pages)
 - b. Purpose
 - c. Method
 - d. Results
 - e. Conclusions
 - f. Discussion
11. References
12. Appendices

13. Back flyleaf (blank page)

Submission to the Dean's Office

After approval by both the advisor and the second reader, the action research paper, including the original certification page signed by both readers, is submitted to the Graduate Student Services Office (hereafter referred to as GSS). There is a necessary deadline for the submission of the final signed action research paper in order to permit all processes to take place preceding graduation. The student must allow **no less than six (6) weeks in advance of desired graduation date to complete processing. Please note the dates listed below:**

May graduation, Final copy due March 15
December graduation, Final copy due October 15
August graduation, Final copy due June 15

The GSS office will assign the final action research paper draft to the technical readers. The student must complete the Wheaton Graduate School Action Research Paper Technical Reader Tracking Sheet and Information form (Appendix VII) printed on *martian green* paper and submit it with the paper when the paper is submitted for technical reading. Copies of this form are available in the Education Department or you may use the one in this booklet.

The paper should be as error-free as possible before submission to the technical reader. It does need to be printed on cotton-content paper until it receives approval from the Director of Graduate Student Services. The technical reader will review the action research paper for grammatical, format, and style quality, note his/her corrections on the manuscript and return the paper to the GSS office.

The GSS office assumes financial responsibility for the technical reading process up to and including ten (10) hours for M.A.T. action research papers and fifteen (15) hours for all M.A. Thesis papers. Hours required over and above this amount of time will be charged to the student at the rate of \$17.50 per hour. A hold will be placed on the student account until the over-charge has been paid. Presenting a manuscript which has been carefully checked for the above-mentioned technical qualities will make it possible for the student's work to be processed within the hours allowed.

The student must supply a current address, telephone number, and email address where the student can be reached. Students residing outside of North America must designate a contact person in the United States who has agreed to complete the process for the student.

All steps of the submission process remain the student's responsibility even if the student leaves the Wheaton area.

The student will be notified when the technical reader has returned the action research paper to the GSS office. The student can then pick up the paper and incorporate any corrections of the technical reader. If the student is not in the Wheaton area, the Department of Education Office Manager will manage the mailing process.

When the corrections have been made, the student again submits the originally submitted paper copy and the final draft with the corrections from the technical reader to the GSS office. The technical reader will check the work to review the corrections that have been made. If changes are still necessary, the paper will be returned to the student to be submitted again. This process will be repeated until the technical reader determines the paper is technically correct.

When the paper is technically correct, it will be returned to the student. At this time the student should read and follow the instructions given at http://library.wheaton.edu/grad_students in order to fulfill the library requirement. Once all the required steps have been completed, the library will notify the Registrar and the GSS office.

Entering a course grade for the action research paper is the responsibility of the student's advisor. It should be done after final approval of the completed final draft. If not done, the Registrar's office will request same from the department.

Those grades received before Library requirements are met will be held by the Registrar until all final steps as outlined have been completed.

Appendix I

Action Research Paper Proposal Title Page

WHEATON COLLEGE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Department of Education

Action Research Paper Proposal

(Title of Action Research Paper)

Author's Name

APPROVED:

Paper Advisor

Date

Second Reader

Date

Appendix II

Completing the IRB Protocol

1. Go to www.IRBnet.org
2. Go through the New User Registration process and record your username and password
3. When registered, return to the homepage and log in
4. On the left side of the page, click “Create New Project”
5. Step 1 hints
 - a. When choosing the Library, keep the default (Wheaton College Institutional Review Board, Wheaton, IL).
 - b. When selecting a document, download the “IRB Protocol General Application” to your desktop and complete it. Notes for completion follow.
 - c. The NIH Training Certificate Number is the one you earned while in the Research class
 - d. Your proposal will not be a recurring protocol. Make the effective dates from the time you hope to start your research through the time you plan to complete the Action Research Paper.
 - e. Your funding source will be Personal Funds.
 - f. As you answer the questions on page 2, do not include your full proposal. You should prepare abbreviated answers (1-2 paragraphs) for the questions. Make certain that you include enough information for the IRB to understand your proposal and to make a decision regarding risks to human subjects. Be sure to attach any necessary appendices (e.g., surveys, permission forms).
6. Save the protocol and the appendices to your desktop and return to the IRB main page.
7. Step 2 hints
 - a. Attach the IRB form and appendices.
 - b. The Document Type is: Protocol
8. Once you have checked the document type, the program will take you back to the main page. On the left hand side, click “Share Package” and share your package with your two readers.
9. On the left hand side, click “Sign Package” and electronically sign your materials.
10. On the left hand side, click “Submit Package” and submit your materials to the Wheaton College Institutional Review Board.

Appendix III

**WHEATON COLLEGE GRADUATE SCHOOL
APPROVAL FOR ACTION RESEARCH PAPER REGISTRATION**

Please file this complete form in the Registrar's Office when registering for an action research paper.

Record No.	Last Name	First	Middle	Department
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I verify that the student's action research paper proposal has been read and approved by the Department of Education.

Advisor

Date

Department Chair

Date

Copy 1 to Registrar's Office
Copy 2 to Student

WHEATON COLLEGE GRADUATE SCHOOL

**THE TITLE OF YOUR ACTION RESEARCH
PAPER IN BLOCK LETTERS**

**AN ACTION RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

by

YOUR NAME

WHEATON, ILLINOIS

(MONTH AND YEAR)

APPENDIX V

Certification Page (Top margin one inch)

Title
(2 inches below the top margin)

by
(center of the page)

Left margin 1-1/2 inches

Right margin 1 inch

Approved:

Signature of advisor

Date

Signature of second reader

Date

Appendix VI

Disclaimer Statement Page

Disclaimer

the views expressed in this action research paper are those of the student and do not necessarily express the views of the Wheaton College Graduate School or the Department of Education

APPENDIX VII

ACTION RESEARCH PAPER TECHNICAL READER INFORMATION AND TRACKING SHEET

Graduate Action Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations are submitted to the Graduate Student Services Office for technical reading *after* the first and second academic readers have indicated their approval of the paper by signing the **Certification Page**. The Certification Page must be submitted with the paper for technical reading.

There is a necessary deadline for the submission of the final, signed paper in order to permit all processes to take place preceding graduation. The student must allow ***no less than six (6) weeks in advance of desired graduation date to complete processing.***

The Graduate Student Services office will assign the final paper draft to the technical readers.

The student must complete the Tracking Sheet on the reverse side of this information sheet and submit it with the paper when the paper is submitted for technical reading. Students residing outside of North America must designate a contact person in the United States who has agreed to complete the process for the student.

The Technical Reader: The technical reader will review the thesis for grammatical, format, and style quality, note his/her corrections on the manuscript and return to the GSS office. *The paper should be as error-free as possible before submission to the technical reader.*

Completion of Submission Process: All steps of the submission process remains the student's responsibility even if the student leaves the Wheaton area. Students residing outside of the Wheaton area are responsible to provide pre-addressed, postage paid mailing envelopes for the return of the paper after it has been read by the technical reader.

Cost of Technical Reading: The GSS office assumes financial responsibility for the technical reading process up to and including ten (10) hours per paper. Hours required over and above this amount of time will be charged to the student at the rate of \$17.50 per hour. Presenting a manuscript which has been carefully checked for the above mentioned technical qualities will make it possible for the student's work to be processed within the ten (10) hours allowed. Costs are subject to change.

Final Corrections and Submission

The student will be notified when the technical reader has returned the paper to the GSS office. The student can then pick up the paper and incorporate any corrections of the technical reader.

When the corrections have been made, the student again submits the originally submitted paper copy and the final draft with the corrections from the technical reader, to the GSS office. It will be returned to the technical reader to review the corrections that have been made. This process will be repeated until the technical reader determines the thesis is technically correct. When the paper is technically correct it will be returned to the student.

The paper is now ready to be submitted to Buswell Library. The student should follow the instructions found at http://library.wheaton.edu/grad_students. Written notification will be sent from the Library to both the Registrar's and GSS Offices indicating that obligations have been met. The Registrar will note the records to this effect for purposes of graduation eligibility and transcript release.

Entering a course grade for the paper is the responsibility of the academic first reader. It should be done after final approval of the completed final draft. If not done, the Registrar's office will request same from the department.

Those grades received before Library requirements are met will be held by the Registrar until all final steps as outlined have been completed.

I have read the above information and understand my responsibilities for the Technical Reading stage of my graduate paper. _____

NAME

DATE

**WHEATON GRADUATE SCHOOL
ACTION RESEARCH PAPER/THESIS/DISSERTATION
TECHNICAL READER TRACKING SHEET AND INFORMATION**

Student Contact Information:

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: (home) _____

(work) _____

Style Manual and Edition: _____

Style Manual Deviations: _____

Students residing outside of the Wheaton area are responsible to provide pre-addressed, postage paid mailing envelopes for the return of the paper after it has been read by the technical reader.

Students residing outside of North America must designate a contact person in the United States who has agreed to manage the technical reading process for the student.

Contact Person Information:

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

Date In	Date Out	# Hours

Thesis 6/15/03