



UNM

SCHOOL of PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION

## SPA PROFESSIONAL PAPER/MASTER THESIS GUIDELINES

- It is expected that pro-papers will be written in American English and comply with the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (see [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)).
- Pro-papers will be double spaced with a 12-point typeface, single-sided with 1" margins on all sides, and left justified.
- It is suggested that pro-papers be around 7,500 words (approx. 30 pages) in length excluding cover page, table of contents, references, appendices and tables.
- Citations must include page number(s) when quoting directly or using figures/tables.
- Gender-neutral language should be used whenever appropriate.
- The pro-paper chair may approve minor variations in section or paper length and content, but students should not plan to vary from the present guidelines without specific direction from their chair.
- Rarely, the chair may determine that a significant exception to the guidelines is appropriate for a particular paper (e.g., non-APA format, foreign language). In that case, the chair will submit a petition for consideration by the SPA faculty.

### Headings

1. **Main section headings:** all-capital letters, centered, bolded, and one blank line before the text. Example: **INTRODUCTION**
2. **Second-level headings:** each word capitalized, flushed with the left margin, bolded, and one blank line before the heading. Example: **Public Administration**.
3. **Third-level headings:** each word capitalized, flushed with the left margin, bolded, italicized, period at the end, text follows immediately on the same line. Example: ***Public Administration.***

**COVER PAGE**

TITLE  
(5-6 blank spaces)

BY  
(4-5 blank spaces)

NAME  
(3-4 blank spaces)

Professional Paper  
(3-4 blank spaces)

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirement for the Degree of  
(2-3 blank space)

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
(1 blank space)

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
(5-6 blank spaces)

Semester, Year

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE	X
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FINDINGS	X
CONCLUSIONS	X
REFERENCES	X
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## **SECTIONS OF THE PRO-PAPER/MASTER THESIS**

### **1. Abstract (not to exceed 1 page)**

The abstract is a summary overview of the entire professional paper.

### **2. Introduction (up to 5 out of 30 pages)**

The introduction should describe concisely the issues addressed in the pro-paper and explain their significance. The introduction sets out the problem and the research questions.

### **3. Review of the Literature (up to 10 out of 30 pages, depending on the topic)**

The review of literature is a summary of what has been written on the subject focusing especially on prior research and writing that advances knowledge about the topic. It should describe contending theories and must be organized around theoretical concepts, schools of thought, or key concepts. The review of literature should discuss how the pro-paper subject and question relate to what is already known.

### **4. Methodology (up to 5 out of 30 pages, depending on the topic)**

For primary data, the methodology section should describe the research that is undertaken and how it answers the research question or tests a hypothesis. This includes such considerations as research design, sampling methods, instrumentation, methods used to test instruments for validity and reliability, data collection procedures, and rationale and techniques for analyzing data. The methods section must address ethical considerations, including protections for human subjects if applicable.

For secondary data, methodology should describe the appropriateness of data for the pro-paper subject by examining data collection procedures, sampling, and validity and reliability of methods used. It must state how secondary data will be analyzed.

### **5. Findings (up to 5 out of 30 pages)**

Findings should outline results obtained through the analysis clearly and systematically, as well as presenting information displayed in tables.

### **6. Conclusions (up to 5 out of 30 pages)**

Conclusions should specify the study's conclusions that are directly supported by results reported in the pro-paper, compare and discuss these results in relation to the studies cited in the review of literature, and outline the limitations of the study. Recommendations should specify implications for future research, practice and policy-making.

## **7. References**

The references should include only those works actually cited within the text; all works cited in the text should be in the references and all works in the references should be cited in the text. It is not a bibliography and should not include everything consulted or read.

References must follow current APA citation style (Reference: Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, current edition, [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)).

## **8. Appendices**

Questionnaires or other instruments that are used and discussed in the text, charts, tables or graphs that come from other works and which are discussed in the text, any other matter which is not part of the pro-paper author's description of literature, procedures, or results but to which extensive reference is made, should be placed in a separate appendix. Each appendix should be given its own letter and listed in the table of contents.

## **9. Tables**

Material for display of results and findings by the pro-paper author including tables, charts, graphs and the like should be placed in the tables section and given a separate number and listed in the table of contents. Tables must be prepared according to customary conventions with placement of variables on the correct axes.