

Research Paper Courses: Structure and Procedures

Overview

Research Paper (RP) 1 and 2 are part of the formal credit-based coursework of the Doctoral Programs at CEPT University. It is mandatory for doctoral students to complete Research papers 1 and 2 and clear their credits to progress to the next stage of their academic journey. Writing these papers will help the doctoral students to pilot their research ideas and methods before they commit to their specific research area.

The research paper courses combine individualized subject/topic-specific learning closely aligned with two seminar courses delivered in the first and second semesters. Each student will be mentored by their 'subject guides.' At the same time, the course tutor in the aligned seminar courses will monitor the progress of each student's research work throughout the semester. Research Paper Courses would also help a student to understand and assume the responsibility for an independent research project. This will include developing the scope of research, expected outcomes, and planning activities in the specified duration (i.e., each Semester).

The Research Paper courses have the following two equally essential aims:

1. It allows students to broaden and deepen their knowledge in a specific subject area of their choice by engaging/collaborating with a learned scholar (subject guide) in the chosen field of study. Usually, the research focus area is expected to be either the same or very close to the planned PhD dissertation topic.
2. Learn and develop essential research skills and expertise necessary for PhD dissertation-related research and write-up. This know-how will be produced by engaging in practical research-related activities, including:
 - Critical evaluation of the current state of the art in the subject to identify research gaps.
 - Formulating research questions; developing research hypotheses.
 - Determining the appropriate research approach/methods to address the research question(s).
 - Conducting the research; data collection, and analysis
 - Dissemination of research findings; oral and written communication.

The following two courses (each 14-week duration) have been designed to align with Research Paper 1 and 2 closely. These are expected to provide students with detailed and regular guidance on the planning of the research activity, determining the research approach, and dissemination of research outcomes:

- 1. Research Paper Development-1 : Research Evaluation and Critical Thinking – Monsoon Semester**
- 2. Research Paper Development-2 : Research Practice and Communication – Spring Semester**

Role of the student and structure of the study

Developing the research area: Each student will be requested to propose their area of research and develop a specific topic in discussion with the Doctoral Program Chair in their respective Faculty. Ideally, this topic should closely relate to the student's expected PhD dissertation topic. The topics of both Research Papers must be very closely related. Ideally, Research Paper 1 forms the basis for follow on research for Research Paper 2 (see next section below for more details).

RP Application: The final topic and planned research activity will be mutually agreed upon between the student and the subject guide/supervisor assigned for the RP. The student should submit a RP application signed by the guide to the Doctoral Office for final approval before the beginning of each semester. The application should include details of the research topic, including the research questions, proposed methods, a summary of planned activities, expected results or outcomes, and planned dissemination activity (e.g., oral presentations, conference talks, journal publications, etc.).

Planning the research activities and supporting courses: The student will be required to develop a detailed project plan for Research Papers. This includes an overview of the proposed research (i.e., topic and research approach) and planned activities over the 14 weeks. The planning should include expected outcomes and deliverables (detailed in the next section). This plan would form the basis of periodic meetings and discussions with subject guides/supervisors as well as progress reviews during the parallel, supporting courses: Research Paper Development-1 (Monsoon Semester) and Research Paper Development-2 (Spring Semester).

Course Content, Outcomes, and Deliverable

The final deliverable for both Research Paper Courses will be a written submission of the outcome of the research activity in the form of a research paper of 5,000-10,000 words. The following is the recommended structure for each Research Paper:

Research Paper 1 (8 credits)

Content

For this research paper, the primary focus should be a critical literature review of the subject area of the topic as well as comprehension of the key theoretical concepts that underpin or inform the research approach. It has to include an element of a critical evaluation of the research method and system of published research: so not just a thorough comprehension of the content (results, findings, etc.) but also an evaluation of the efficacy or appropriateness of the methodology (concerning the theoretical framework or ontological standpoint).

Learning Outcomes

The student is expected to develop a broad understanding of the domain of interest and also build an awareness of the different critical arguments, academic positions, key concepts, ontological framework and

associated research methodologies, and the most recent developments in research interest.

Students will improve their ability to engage with academic texts critically: evaluate and analyze the content to draw inferences which should include identifying research gaps that, in turn, can be the basis for postulating research questions (i.e., hypothesis).

Deliverable

A final paper is primarily a critical literature review that includes clearly stated research gaps in the field of study to situate the student's research positions. Ideally, the research gaps enable the formulation of ideas or claims that can be addressed in the Research Paper 2 course. **Recommended word limit for the final essay: 5,000 - 10,000 words.**

Further, the guide and the student are encouraged to develop the RP output into a formal publication such as a journal article, a working paper, or an op-ed piece.

Research Paper 2 (8 credits)

Content

For this, the focus would be on research that should include an element of primary data collection and an application of appropriate methods. Ideally, the research focus will be informed by or determined by the literature review and critical evaluation carried out for Research Paper 1: This has to be a specific research topic to address identified research gap (or at least incorporate some learning From RP1 to their analysis and synthesis for RP2). This is an opportunity for a student to engage in primary research: determining a research approach that is appropriate for the research question being addressed; designing and planning a research study; primary data gathering, collecting, and evaluating secondary data or sources of information; the process of analysis and synthesis, based on which formulating an argument or point of view; and oral and written communication of research findings. This RP should be a stepping-stone for progressing to doctoral research work.

Learning Outcomes

During this course, students will learn about formulating research questions and determine an appropriate research approach/method to address the question(s). Develop their practical research and analytical skills. They will gain expertise in research methodologies and formulating an argument concerning a theoretical or conceptual framework. They will enhance their oral and written communication skills.

Deliverable

A final paper is primarily a research report (ideally of a sufficiently good enough quality to be submitted as a conference paper). **Recommended word limit for the final essay: 7,000 - 10,000 words.**

Further, the guide and the student are encouraged to develop the RP output into a formal publication such as a journal article, a working paper, or an op-ed piece.

Evaluation and Grading

This will be in two parts: a draft of the paper/essay to be submitted and presented at the mid-term review (week 9); the final paper to be submitted and presented at the last review at the end of the Semester. Both stage reviews will involve invited reviewers.

The essay is finally submitted to Doctoral Office, with the approval and grading of the guide/supervisor will incorporate feedback received during the reviews.

Supervisor 70% - internal		Invited Reviewer(s) 30% - external	
Assignment	Weightage	Assignment	Weightage
Mid-term review	30%	Mid-term review	15%
Final review & paper	40%	Final review	15%
Total Weightage	70%	Total Weightage	30%

Role of the Subject Guide

The responsibilities of the RP guide/supervisor primarily include advising and supervising the step-by-step development of the defined research project and its respective execution as an independently conducted study. All such studies are aimed as building blocks toward the final doctoral dissertation of the student. This will include helping the student with reference literature, guidance for developing conceptual and analytical frameworks in the subject/field and structuring academic and intellectual arguments, and finally, evaluating subsequent drafts of the paper.

The suggested contact time is about 1.5 hours per week. The guide/supervisor is required to oversee the student's regular, continuous, and cumulative progress during the study through the semester. These meetings can be organized on a mutually agreed-upon schedule between the student and the guide/supervisor. Notes of these meetings shall be noted by the student in a research development journal as a way of recording the progress of the paper.

The guide/supervisor will submit the final marks (as per distribution and schedule attached) at mid-term and end of the semester to the Doctoral Office. The guide/supervisor needs to appraise the Doctoral Program Chair/Doctoral Office regarding the progress, focus, and development of the said study, as well as the student, especially in case of any concerns regarding a student's expected work, progress, and research development of the said project.