Summary of Master's Paper Options

Master's Paper Options								
Practicum	**Concentration**	**Advanced Study**	**Advanced Study with Concentration**	**MA/MS**	**MA/ MBA (3-month internship)**	**MA/ MBA**	**WGS Joint Degree**	**COEX**
SID consultant's report	SID consultant's report	SID research paper	SID consultant's report	SID consultant's report	SID consultant's report	SID research paper	SID research paper	Managed by COEX
SID research paper (with approval of academic advisor)	SID research paper (with approval of academic advisor)		SID research paper (with approval of academic advisor)	SID research paper	SID research paper			
				MS paper				

MA Paper Options 1 and 2

Option 1—Guidelines for the Consultant's Report

Purpose: To produce a consultant's report on the challenges faced by the student's practicum organization, and develop recommendations based on their findings and analysis.

Overview of Guidelines: Students will develop a report that could be used by their practicum organization, although they will submit it to SID. The report will be based on their practicum assignment or what they have learned during their work with the practicum organization.

The paper identifies the development problem or problems the organization tries to address and how its programs or projects could be improved. Students will write the report as if they were external consultants hired to provide professional advice to the practicum organization.

This option is for students who have completed a practicum and must be based on their practicum experience.

Recommended length of the consultant's report: 4,000–5,000 words, *excluding* cover page, front matter and bibliography.

Structure of MA/SID Consultant's Report:

- **Front Material**
  - Title Page
  - Acknowledgements
  - Table of contents
  - List of acronyms and abbreviations
  - List of tables and figures

- **Executive summary** (target: 250 words)
  The executive summary summarizes the main challenges faced by the organization and the student's recommendations for improved performance and outcomes in one or more of the organization's programs or projects.

- **Introduction** (target: 250 words)
  This section introduces the goals, aims and purpose of the student's paper. It provides background information on their practicum organization as a whole. Students should address the following topics related to their practicum organization:

  - Mission and values
  - History
  - Governance and management structure
  - Finances and funding sources
  - Stakeholder involvement
  - Approach to development work (e.g. participatory methods, social entrepreneurship)

- **Development Problem** (target: 750–1,000 words)
  This section focuses on the development problem addressed in the program or project that the student has selected. How is the development problem framed? What information is used? Based

on the student's reading about the topic, does the program or project incorporate the most up-to-date and effective approaches to the development problem it addresses? Are any significant factors omitted (e.g. lack of a gender focus; too little attention to environmental factors; failure to address systemic discrimination and social exclusion)? Students should read a minimum of **6-8 sources,** including scholarly and organizational publications and materials, to answer these questions.

- **Programmatic Strategies** (target: 1,250–1,500 words)
  This section describes and analyzes the program or project the student has worked on during their practicum. The questions below are intended as a guide for their analysis. Students do not have to answer them one by one, but they should consider these aspects of programmatic strategy. They should draw on frameworks they have learned in SID, such as planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, project management and ethics and gender as they apply to the program or project they are analyzing.

  o *Design, Implementation, Management and Evaluation*
    - Did the program or project fit the scope of the development issue addressed?
    - What systems were in place to ensure effective management and evaluation?
    - Did the program or project consider ethical implications? For example, was it gender-sensitive?

  o *Decision-Making*
    - Did the organization have a comparative advantage in carrying out this work? Why or why not?
    - What development frameworks were applied (e.g. human rights based approach; positive youth development; gender and development)?
    - Were reporting processes in place to ensure transparency and credibility? If so, to whom were they directed?

  o *Budget and Finance*
    - How is the organization as a whole funded? Does it have challenges in securing sustainable and adequate levels of funding?
    - Were the program or project funds managed efficiently?
    - Did the allocation of funds match actual needs and costs?

- **Program or Project Impact** (target: 750–1,000 words)
  This section focuses on the impact of the specific program or project that the student is analyzing. Students should address these questions:

  o Did the program or project achieve its stated goals?
  o Based on their assessment, is the program or project effective, sustainable and ethical?
  o What is the impact of the program or project relative to the overall situation of the individuals most affected by the problem?
  o Can the program or project be scaled up to achieve a greater impact?
  o Were the intended beneficiaries empowered as a result of the program or project studied?

- **Conclusions & Recommendations** (target: 750–1,000 words)
  This section presents the student's final interpretation of, and recommendations for, both the organization and the specific program or project that the student has studied. Students should consider the following questions:

  - Based on the findings and evidence that the student presents, what conclusions do they draw about the relative strengths or weaknesses of the organization as a whole and of the program or project that they studied?
  - If the student were actually writing this consultant's report for the chair of the organization's board of directors, the organization's funders, its executive director, or its program or project managers (choose whichever applies), what recommendations would they make?

- **References**
  This section lists the sources used for the student's paper. Information obtained from academic and polity literature and organizational documents, reports, websites etc. should be cited accurately both in the text and in the reference section of the report. Only sources cited in the report should be referenced in this section.

  All citations should be in the APA format: Use Zotero or EndNote to keep track of and format citations.

- **Appendices** (if applicable)
  This section includes additional information, as needed.

  - Terms of reference
  - Tools (e.g., questionnaires, surveys)
  - Glossary of terms
  - Graphs, charts, tables, maps

<u>**Option 2—Guidelines for the Research Paper**</u>

Purpose: To study a particular development problem in depth by analyzing its historical, political and cultural context, how it is treated in social science and development literature and how the problem can be addressed through various policy instruments and programmatic strategies. (Dual degree students will integrate concepts from both programs into their paper.)

Recommended length for Option 2: 8,000–10,000 words, excluding cover sheet, table of contents, abstract, acknowledgments, and acronyms and abbreviations

The following sections should be included in the paper in this order:

- **Cover Sheet with Title**. The cover sheet will indicate the paper option that the student has selected

- **Table of Contents** with page numbers.

- **Abstract** (target: 250 words)
  Students should summarize the substance of the whole paper by introducing the development problem or issue, the type of paper they have selected, the methodology they employed, their discussion of the problem, and their main recommendations and conclusions.

- **Acknowledgements**
  Students must acknowledge anyone who helped with the editing of the paper. They also have the opportunity to express thanks, appreciation or gratitude for particular individuals who provided support to them or to their paper.

- **Acronyms and abbreviations.**
  A table should list all the acronyms in alphabetical order (e.g., United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], World Health Organization [WHO])). Spell out each acronym or abbreviation the first time it is used, followed by the acronym or abbreviation in parenthesis.

- **Introduction** (target length: 500–750 words)
  This section introduces the topic of the student's paper. The introduction states the development problem that the student will analyze, comments on the importance of the problem, and presents the main questions covered in the study. It provides the critical background information, such as historical and geographic contexts, and whatever other information is essential for the reader to understand the significance of the student's topic. The introduction also lays out the organizational structure of the paper, describing the sections that follow.

- **Sources and Methods** (target length: 500–750 words)
  Students should summarize the type of sources they used to collect information for the study. Examples include secondary data of all types, including policy briefs, organizations' annual reports, scholarly articles and books, census reports and databases. Students should also explain the criteria they used to select the evidence (e.g., publications in the last 10 years that appeared in refereed journals). If applicable, students should discuss the quantitative variables they used, where they found the data, dates for the data used and how it was collected. They should also mention sources and information gained through their professional experience on the topic, course work and practicum experience.

  Students should write about the types of methods they used to identify or generate relevant information for their study. They may rely on qualitative or quantitative methods, or a mixed

methods approach. They should explain why the methods they have selected are the best approach to analyzing the development problem as they have framed it in their paper.

(Note that primary research involving human subjects may require special authorization by the Internal Review Board commonly known as "IRB" and is therefore not generally permitted.)

- **Literature Review** (target length: 1,500–2,000 words)
  The literature review generally covers a minimum of 12 sources, at least half of which are peer-reviewed books or articles from academic scholarship. (The typical expectation is that students will have collected a minimum of 16 sources total for the entire paper, including Internet sources, public media, government reports, policy briefs, and multilateral instruments such as human rights frameworks.

  Students will refer to these sources, throughout the paper starting with the introduction, but at least 12 sources should be treated in the literature review. The literature review presents what scholars, researchers, practitioners and policy analysts say about the topic of their paper and how they debate both the framing of the problem and solutions to it. Cluster the opinions of the authors into schools of thought about the topic rather than summarizing the ideas or conclusions of each author. For a good primer on how to write literature reviews see the following resource: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/.

- **Discussion** (target length: 4,000–4,500 words)
  This is the major section of the paper. Students provide their own analysis of the problem as it relates to conceptual frameworks discussed in the literature review. They can use their experiential learning but highlight their particular insights and contributions. They should discuss why their findings are important and any interesting results they found that were different from what they expected or what is known on this topic. Students should propose further lines of research based on their findings. For example, if they find there is no downward accountability to recipients of development aid in a certain country due to factors such as conflict or corruption, then they can draw out the implications of that finding for development study and practice.

- **Findings and Recommendations** (target length: 750–1,000 words)
  Based on their findings, students should present specific recommendations they have for addressing the problem studied. This could include additional research or specific practices, programs or projects or broader policy changes. They should discuss the necessary conditions for these recommendations to be implemented.

- **Conclusion** (target length: 500–750 words)
  Students should summarize the overall analysis, findings, and recommendations. They can reflect on the gaps they found in investigating their development problem and what would be required in the future to address it. After investigating their problem in depth, students should provide a final assessment of its significance for sustainable development in general.

- **Appendices**

- **References**—References should be in APA style. For an excellent guide to APA style, see https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Formatting for the Master's Paper (for all options)

- The recommended length for the consultant's report is 4,000–5,000 words, excluding cover page, front matter and bibliography. The paper should be single-spaced.

- The recommended length for the research paper is 8,000–10,000 words, excluding cover page, table of contents, abstract, acknowledgements, acronyms, references and appendices. The paper should be single-spaced.

- Use 12-point font Times New Roman

- Use 1-inch margins on each side.

- References should be in the APA style. For an excellent resource on APA style, see this link: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

- Students are encouraged to use visual presentations of data that could include tables, figures, charts, maps and graphs. Make sure that each table or figure has a number and title and is integrated into the text. Students can also present testimonies from the field, (which are not formal research interviews,) and add them as boxes within the general narrative. **Figures, charts, etc., are included in the total page count.**