

Graduating Project Guide for Project Partners

What is the UBC Master of Food and Resource Economics?

The UBC Master of Food and Resource Economics (MFRE) is a unique one-year professional master's degree that integrates Economics, Business and Policy knowledge to analyze issues in the Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources and Environmental sector, with a strong emphasis on using data and quantitative analysis.

What is the MFRE Graduating Project?

The MFRE Graduating Project is a project led and completed by students for a Project Partner Organization (private companies, industry associations, non-profit, government, research university) from May to August 2023.

It is a 6-credit work experience course intended to provide our students with professional learning experience. At the same time, Project Partners gain access to students with analytical skills ready to take on and complete quality project deliverables.

Why Participate in a MFRE Graduating Project?

- **Win-win outcomes:** An opportunity for Project Partners to receive high quality deliverables, while providing valuable real-world experience to students.
- **Unique structure and targeted support:** Each MFRE student is supported by a UBC faculty member and MFRE staff with the expertise and skills in the food, agri-food, resources or environment sector, to help guide the student project.
- **Innovative thinking:** Access to UBC students with a fresh perspective to help you address an existing problem or research a new opportunity.
- **Mentorship:** A leadership opportunity to mentor or train young talent in your field of work.
- **Valuable network:** Potential year-to-year project collaboration, talent pool, or referrals for potential employees through the growing number of highly skilled alumni.

Student compensation is not required, but we encourage Project Partners to consider other forms of compensation such as honorariums, professional development opportunities, time and access to leadership, internal networking opportunities, product samples, or expense reimbursement.

What's Involved in a MFRE Graduating Project?

Developing a project with MFRE involves a personalized and collaborative process; it starts with an introductory meeting where we develop a project description based on your organization's needs.

Timeline	Your Part (Project Partner)	Our Part (UBC MFRE)
Dec 2022 to Feb 2023	Meet with Janelle Tan, MFRE Graduating Projects Manager, to discuss your project ideas and how they align with the scope of MFRE.	
March to April 2023		We allocate students to projects, based upon matching each student's interests, skills, and your project's requirements. We will also assign each student a UBC Faculty Supervisor and MFRE Staff Member to support them towards achieving the project deliverables.
Early May 2023	Participate in the project start-up meeting with the Student and their UBC Faculty Supervisor. Provide input to the project proposal (students develop a detailed project proposal that sets out the terms of reference for the Graduating Project).	Support students in project start-up by providing a series of professional development workshops.
Mid-May to August 2023	Communicate with the student regularly (every 1-2 weeks) to provide input, feedback, and/or guidance. Provide professional development opportunities to the student where possible.	Check-in with Project Partner once a month. Ongoing management of Graduating Projects, as required.
End of August 2023	Receive final project deliverables, and attend the student presentations and wrap-up event.	

Developing Your Project: Project Ideas

TIMELINE: Projects are developed from now to February. Projects are conducted from May to August.

PROJECT IDEAS AND STUDENTS' SKILLS: MFRE students can bring the following skills to your project. Projects can be developed based on 1 or 2 points below. Larger projects can be conducted by a team of 2-4 students.

Business – Data, Finance, Market Research:

- Develop financial statements and conduct financial analysis (e.g. create spreadsheets, data tables and charts for KPI and financial benchmarking)
- Analyze data and create reporting dashboards (e.g. financial, operations, sales)
- Conduct industry and competitive analysis to support business decisions (e.g. SWOT, trend analysis, life cycle analysis, competitive frameworks)
- Use data to identify consumer demand trends, support forecasting or cost-benefit analysis to assess new market or product opportunities
- Develop and/or analyze client-specific surveys and report results for decision making
- Manage and organize data and databases (e.g. clean data, develop standard report templates)
- Analyze supply chain processes (e.g. develop process maps, analyze inventory systems)
- Provide support to existing projects (internship approach), or others (discuss with Janelle)

Economics and Policy:

- Analyze sector-specific policy issues using data-driven analytics and theory
- Conduct risk and operations assessments using econometric and statistical techniques
- Code and compile data into reports or directories using programming tools (R, Python, Excel)
- Assess impact of environmental, trade or policy regulations using cost-benefit analyses, economic impact assessments, econometric modelling and forecasting
- Develop literature review for selected policy and industry areas
- Apply econometrics tools to cross-sectional and panel data and interpret results
- Appraise environment/climate change/carbon tax, market-based or other regulations
- Analyze commodity prices, identify trends and report results
- Organize, visually present and interpret data (e.g. infographics, tables, charts, graphs)
- Contribute to briefing documents (e.g. conduct research, content development)
- Provide support to existing projects (internship approach), or others (discuss with Janelle)

Additional Skills:

- **Data Analysis and Visualization Tools:** Excel, R, Python, Tableau, Stata, SQL
- **Language:** In addition to English, most MFRE students speak at least one other language (Spanish, Mandarin, French, Cantonese, etc.)

Summaries of Previous Graduating Projects: [2017 to 2022](#)

NEXT STEP

If you have a project idea or questions about the Graduating Project, please email Janelle Tan, Graduating Projects Manager at janelle.tan@ubc.ca.

A Word from Our Project Partners

"The insights and value to the report we received was exceptional and far exceeded expectations. The students were incredibly professional and skilled in their work. Both the MFRE staff and students made the processes seamless and very easy for us to support the project work. The quality from start to finish was tremendous. I would highly encourage anyone in the food & beverage space to take advantage of this great opportunity. Our team looks forward to future project with MFRE and their students."

COO, BC Food and Beverage
(MFRE Project Partner 2022)

"We've worked with countless UBC groups over the years and I think the MFRE program has been among the highest in quality in terms of the amount of effort students put in and how well organized and paced the course was. We could feel comfortable that our needs would be met as our input was encouraged every step of the way. I think we'll be able to make some real change in the world with the work these students have done."

Director, Food Stash Foundation
(MFRE Project Partner 2022)

"We have hired three candidates from the program so far, and each time it has been a great experience. We have had competent, motivated, creative and committed employees."

Assistant Director, Statistics Canada
(MFRE Project Partner 2019, 2021)

"We are always honored to be selected by the MFRE for a student project. All projects we have been a part of have immensely benefited our business and processes."

CEO, Lita's Mexican Foods
(MFRE Project Partner 2020, 2021, 2022)

"MFRE Projects have consistently delivered high value technical information, insight and reference literature to support business decisions in our organization."

CEO, Kindred Cultures Inc.
(MFRE Project Partner 2020, 2021, 2022)

"All aspects of the MFRE Graduating Projects were well managed from start to finish both through your office and with the MFRE student. I enjoyed supporting the student in his studies and I got some wonderful, useful deliverables in return, including two great assessment tools on complex topics."

General Manager, Horizon Grocery + Wellness
(MFRE Project Partner 2021)