**Position Papers in the Program in| International Studies**

Position papers are normally written in advance of a meeting in order to communicate a national, organizational, or personal position on a particular issue or set of issues. They emphasize both thoroughness and succinctness in equal measure, given that as many entities as will attend a particular meeting generate position papers. They differ from policy papers and white papers in that they do not seek to justify why a particular position is being advocated, but rather to communicate a country’s position/policy.

Another use for position papers is for agencies, politicians, and/or government departments to share their policy with constituents. Again, the emphasis is on succinctness and thoroughness.

At its core, each issue dealt with in a position paper has three main components, each one paragraph in length; these are complemented by an overview paragraph. Each seeks to emphasize the country’s engagement in and leadership related to the issue and essentially “justify” why other countries should heed a particular national position. The main three:

1. **History and Definition of the Issue**, including the key international agreements the country supported, leadership roles the country may have played, and important ongoing efforts in the international arena regarding the issue that are supported by the country.
2. **Current Efforts**, whether international, regional, or national that demonstrate a country’s engagement with the topic.
3. **Position and Future Direction**, featuring specific statements about what a country would like to see adopted regarding the issue.

The additional component:

1. **An introductory paragraph**, which comes first in the paper but is generally written last because it must include detail from the three main sections. The summary includes:
   1. **A list of the issues that will be covered in the paper**, in their order from the meeting agenda;
   2. **A list of the relevant IGOs of which the country is a member**, showing particular and relatively unique commitment to the issues listed previously;
   3. **A brief statement of commitment to finding common ground**.

Position papers in IS typically deal with 2-3 issues, all of which must fit onto a single page, front and back.

Some format/style notes:

Position papers in the Martin Institute and International Studies are written in Arial, 10 pt. font, with one inch margins on all four sides. The text should be fully justified with the exception of the header and section/issue titles and subtitles, which must be placed appropriately as per the example. There are also particular protocols regarding which portions are bolded, which are italicized, and which are both bolded and italicized (examples available upon request).