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San José State University
Academic Senate
Curriculum and Research Committee
December 4, 2023
Final Reading

AS 1862

Policy Recommendation
Amendment C to University Policy S19-3
University Writing: Writing Requirements/ Guidelines,
University Writing Committee

Amendment C: S19-3, University Policy, University Writing:
Requirements/Guidelines, University Writing Committee

Whereas: Per updated [CSU policy](#) on the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), GWAR is not required for graduate students by CSU; and

Whereas: Achieving satisfactory graduate-level proficiency in writing skill is essential for professional and leadership development in every discipline; and

Whereas: The requirement of writing proficiency varies across disciplines and the design of writing assessment may involve significant domain expertise; and

Whereas: Faculty in every program are deemed to be the experts in their field to decide the most suitable writing assessment for their disciplines by aligning with a set of guidelines developed by the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) and University Writing Committees (UWC) in consultation with Graduate Studies and Research (GS&R); and be it further

Resolved: That the following amendment to section 2 of S19-3 be adopted.

Approved: November 27, 2023

Vote: 11-0-0

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Present: Kourosh Amirkhani, Marc d'Alarcao, Megan Chang, Stefan Frazier, Heather Lattimer, Ellen Middaugh, Richard Mocariski, Scott Shaffer, Het Tikawala, Cristina Velarde, Hiu-Yung Wong

Absent: Marie Haverfield

Workload Impact: Departments who provide an alternative writing assessment to satisfy the writing requirements will need to devote resources to design and execute the assessment and evaluate its effectiveness. CGS, UWC, and GS&R will need to review the proposals. GVAR class numbers and sizes might change if many departments opt for providing an alternative writing assessment plan.

Financial Impact: The design and execution of some alternative writing assessments might require release time for the faculty-in-charge. GVAR class FTES might be reduced.

UNIVERSITY POLICY
University Writing: Requirements/Guidelines
University Writing Committee (UWC)
(from <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S19-3.pdf>)

1. Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), undergraduate level.
[unchanged]

2. Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), graduate level.

- a. Every department (or equivalent unit) responsible for a graduate degree program shall include a course that satisfies GWAR in the program requirements and overall units **unless they have an approved alternative writing assessment (section 2.d)**. If a student's GWAR is fulfilled as described in section 2.b, **and the mechanism of fulfillment reduces the number of units the student completes in the degree**, the required units shall be made up with a departmentally-approved course, so that the unit count for the program is identical regardless of a student's pathway for completion of the GWAR.
- b. Fulfillment of the GWAR shall be a requirement of classified graduate students as a condition necessary for advancement to candidacy for the award of the graduate degree. Master's and doctoral degree requirements may be considered separately. Fulfillment of the GWAR shall be established by:

- i. Satisfactory completion of a course approved by the College of Graduate Studies of at least three **graded** units in which a major written report is required. The course should be completed prior to advancement to candidacy; or
- ii. Approval by the **department and** College of Graduate Studies of a professional publication written in English for which the candidate was a primary author; or
- iii. Completion of a master's or doctoral program with a substantive writing requirement at an accredited university in which the primary language of instruction is English unless a department requires additional documentation of writing proficiency; or

- 111 iv. Satisfactory completion of an alternative writing assessment as
112 described in 2.d.
- 113 c. Courses proposed to satisfy the graduate-level GVAR must be approved by
114 the College of Graduate Studies. Courses will use guidelines developed by
115 the College of Graduate Studies in consultation with Graduate Studies and
116 Research and University Writing Committees. The College of Graduate
117 Studies shall review and recertify these courses at the time of the course's
118 home Department's Program Planning Process. Approved courses may be
119 recommended for withdrawal by the Dean of the College of Graduate
120 Studies if sufficiently high standards have not been maintained or the course
121 has otherwise become deficient. The University Writing Committee (UWC)
122 shall be consulted for advice at the request of the College of Graduate
123 Studies.
- 124 d. Departments with graduate programs may develop an alternative writing
125 assessment to satisfy the GVAR in place of an approved course. The
126 alternative writing assessment must be designed to ensure that every
127 student graduating with a graduate degree from the program has achieved
128 satisfactory graduate-level proficiency in writing according to disciplinary
129 standards, as determined by the evaluating department. Such alternative
130 writing assessments (e.g., series of assignments across courses, or a
131 portfolio developed over the course of the graduate program) must include a
132 mechanism to assess the student's writing proficiency and a process
133 whereby a student who does not meet the standard can work to meet the
134 standard. Alternative writing assessments will align with a set of guidelines
135 developed by the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) and the University
136 Writing Committee (UWC) in consultation with the Graduate Studies and
137 Research (GS&R). Proposals for an alternative writing assessment should
138 be submitted to CGS, who will seek review by the UWC before determining
139 whether to approve the proposal. Alternative writing assessments, once
140 approved, are reviewed and recertified at the time of the home department's
141 program planning process. Satisfactory completion of an alternative
142 assessment shall be reported to the Graduate Admissions and Program
143 Evaluations office for use as part of candidacy and graduation review.

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3. University Writing Committee (UWC) Charge and Membership [unchanged]