

**SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY  
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE  
SAN JOSÉ, CA 95192**

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

**Rescinds:** [S94-7](#), [S95-5](#), and [F15-6](#)

**Legislative History:**

At its meeting of March 25, 2018, the Academic Senate approved the following policy recommendation presented by Senator White for the Curriculum and Research Committee. This policy recommendation changes the name, membership and charge of the current Writing Requirements Committee. On August 23, 2019, President Mary A. Papazian approved University Policy S19-3.

On May 4, 2020, President Mary A. Papazian approved Amendment A to University Policy S19-3. Amendment A modifies the membership of the University Writing Committee.

Resolved: That [S94-7](#), [S95-5](#), and [F15-6](#) be rescinded and replaced with the following, effective immediately, and be it further

Resolved: That graduate students admitted for Fall 2020 and after will be held to the requirements stipulated in Section 2, and be it further

Resolved: That the currently titled “Writing Requirements Committee” be renamed “University Writing Committee.”

*Rationale: Writing requirements and guidelines at the university level are currently contained in three policies: S95-5, F15-6 (an amendment to the previous), and S94-7 (for graduate-level writing), as well as in the [Guidelines for General Education \(GE\), American Institutions \(AI\), and the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement as per S14-5](#). In addition, SJSU is obligated to abide by CSU policies, specifically [Executive Order 665](#).*

*This policy proposal encapsulates requirements and guidelines in all of the above-mentioned except GE courses. A single policy is more easily accessible and digestible to the campus community. For this purpose,*

*prior policy is kept largely intact. However, after extensive review by the current Writing Requirements Committee about its own charge and membership, some changes have been made. In brief:*

- *New name for the committee: University Writing Committee (UWC).*
- *New committee status: reporting directly to the Senate Curriculum & Research Committee, rather than the Board of General Studies (Sec. 3.b.1).*
- *Committee membership updated to include the Writing Center Director and Coordinator of Multilingual Writing Support Services (Sec. 3.b.1).*
- *Committee mission: Formerly a body charged largely with 100W course certification and re-certification via BOGS, the UWC will now be an overseeing / consultative / advisory committee, in keeping with its actual practice in recent years (Sec. 3.a.i).*

*Undergraduate-level writing requirements (Sec. 1) are mostly the same (with minor changes to office titles, etc.) as in S95-5, except for the section charging Board of General Studies with approval of courses (Sec. 1.c.ii). Graduate-level writing requirements (Sec. 2) have changed from S94-7 as outlined below.*

***Student success orientation:*** *the above-described modifications to the UWC committee charge partially de-centralize the responsibilities for teaching writing, allowing departments and colleges to make their own pedagogical decisions around that teaching. This move is grounded in the principle that the personnel actually doing the teaching are better equipped to assess and serve their students and therefore better able to help students succeed. Modifications to the graduate-level requirements help to ensure more writing support for graduate students in their disciplines.*

*An earlier draft of this proposal was passed unanimously by the Writing Requirements Committee on October 5, 2018 for referral to the Senate. The Writing Requirements and Organization and Governance committees have been consulted throughout the entire process.*

Approved: March 18, 2019

Vote: 9-0-1

Present: Thalia Anagnos, Marc d'Alarcao, David Emmert, Cynthia Fernandez-Rios, Susana Khavul, Cara Maffini, Winifred Schultz-Krohn Pam Stacks, Lynne Trulio, Brandon White

Absent: Anand Ramasubramanian, Gwendolyn Mok

Workload Impact: There will be an increase in workload for the College of Graduate Studies as it develops guidelines for GWAR at the graduate level.

Financial Impact: None anticipated

**UNIVERSITY POLICY**  
**University Writing: Requirements/Guidelines**

## **University Writing Committee (UWC)**

### **1. Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), undergraduate level.**

- a. Demonstration of competence in written communication shall be a requirement for graduation with any bachelor's degree. Competence shall be demonstrated by satisfaction of the university requirement for Written Communication II (Area Z). Students shall satisfy the Written Communication II requirement either by passing a course approved as provided below in (c), or, if permitted by the requirements of their major, by passing at the designated level the Writing Skills Test (WST) provided for below in (d), or by satisfying the CSU Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) prior to matriculation at San José State University. Completion of General Education lower-division requirements for written communication and passage of the WST shall be prerequisites for taking the Written Communication II course.
- b. Normally, students shall satisfy the Area Z requirement as soon as possible after completion of 60 units. The Provost or designee shall take appropriate measures to assure that students satisfy the requirement before completion of 90 units. In exercising this authority, the Provost or designee may allow satisfaction of the requirement after completion of 90 units if s/he finds that curricular patterns and requirements in particular majors justify the postponement and also give adequate assurance that the requirement will be duly satisfied.
- c. Courses fulfilling Area Z:
  - i. Every department (or equivalent unit) responsible for an undergraduate degree program shall either offer an upper-division writing workshop (Written Communication II) course for its majors or designate for its majors, by agreement with that department, such a course offered by another department. College deans shall coordinate department offerings to assure that students will be accommodated. The primary responsibility for offering such courses is that of the major department and college. A department shall not designate a course in another college without notice to and consent of both college deans.
  - ii. Courses satisfying the Written Communication II requirement are submitted for approval to the Board of General Studies in the same

manner as all other GE and SJSU Studies courses. For approval, the Board must be satisfied that the proposed course will require substantial appropriate writing, that a high standard for successful completion of the course will be maintained and that the course complies with all other applicable criteria. The Board shall periodically review all approved courses and may recommend withdrawal if, in the Board's judgment, sufficiently high standards have not been maintained or the course has otherwise become deficient. The University Writing Committee (UWC) shall be consulted for advice at the Board's request.

- d. Writing Skills Test (WST):
  - i. If permitted by the requirements of a major, the Writing Skills Test referred to above in (a) may also serve as a waiver examination for Written Communication II. The UWC shall designate the score on the WST necessary to satisfy the Written Communication II requirement.
  - ii. The specific form and content of the WST and the minimum passing score shall be as approved by the Curriculum and Research Committee on the recommendation of the UWC.
  - iii. The WST shall be administered by the Testing Office at least twice a semester and once each summer. Students taking the WST shall pay a fee sufficient to cover the costs of providing, administering, and grading the test.
  - iv. The Provost or designee shall appoint a faculty member recommended by the UWC as Writing Skills Test Coordinator. The duties of the Coordinator shall include appointment and training of faculty or other readers for the essays.

## **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. If a student's GWAR is fulfilled as described in section 2.b, 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 GVAR shall be established by:

- i. Satisfactory completion of a course approved by the College of Graduate Studies of at least three units in which a major written report is required. The course should be completed prior to advancement to candidacy; or
  - ii. Approval by the 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.
- c. Courses proposed to satisfy the graduate-level GVAR must be approved by the College of Graduate Studies. Courses will use guidelines developed by the College of Graduate Studies in consultation with Graduate Studies and Research and University Writing Committees. The College of Graduate Studies shall review and recertify these courses at the time of the course's home Department's Program Planning Process. Approved courses may be recommended for withdrawal by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies if sufficiently high standards have not been maintained or the course has otherwise become deficient. The University Writing Committee (UWC) shall be consulted for advice at the request of the College of Graduate Studies.

### **3. University Writing Committee (UWC) Charge and Membership**

- a. Charge: The charge of the UWC shall be to develop and support writing instruction at SJSU. To do this, the UWC shall study and support the teaching of writing at all levels, all across the curriculum. The UWC shall be a resource for the teaching and learning of writing all across campus, in support of student writers' university careers from beginning to end.

Members of the UWC serve a vital role as representatives of their colleges and departments. UWC members shall communicate with faculty members in their home colleges and departments, keeping them informed of the activities of the UWC; act as conduits between their colleges and

departments and the UWC, helping the committee understand the various (and varied) needs of departments and programs on campus; and help develop policies and programs to address these needs.

The UWC may sponsor workshops and training programs for instructors of approved courses and shall use these and other appropriate means to provide guidance on the uniformity of composition standards throughout the University

The UWC will be consulted as necessary for the following:

- assessment of the writing core competency
- writing as part of the Directed Self-Placement program
- writing in General Education and GVAR courses, especially Areas A2, A3, and R; and writing in capstone and other courses as part of a student's degree program

b. Committee membership:

i. The University Writing Committee shall be a university committee reporting to the Curriculum & Research Committee and be composed of the following members:

- College dean (EXO; UWC Chair; Appointed by the Provost)
- SJSU Writing Programs Administrator (WPA) (EXO)
- SJSU Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Director (EXO)
- Writing Center director (EXO)
- Coordinator of Multilingual Writing Support Services (EXO)
- Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education or designee (EXO)
- Director of Testing (EXO; non voting)
- Dean, College of Graduate Studies or designee (EXO)
- 2 faculty, Humanities & the Arts, with one from the Department of Linguistics and Language Development
- 1 Faculty, College of Business
- 1 Faculty, College of Education
- 1 Faculty, College of Engineering
- 1 Member, General Unit
- 1 Faculty, College of Health and Human Sciences
- 1 Faculty, College of Humanities & Arts
- 1 Faculty, College of Science
- 1 Faculty, College of Social Science
- 1 Faculty, University Library

- 2 students, one undergraduate that has satisfied University Written Communication II, one graduate student that has satisfied graduate writing requirements.
- ii. Recruitment and appointment of members. Faculty members will serve a 3-year term with the possibility of renewable for one additional 3-year term if selected. Student members will serve a renewable 1-year term. Recruitment to serve on the UWC will be done through the normal Committee on Committees process for the seats designated for faculty members and students. When there are multiple applications for a seat, the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate will select individuals to serve. In considering potential UWC members, attention should focus on the person's experience including that they have taught an undergraduate writing course. At least two faculty must have experience teaching a writing course either at the masters or doctoral level.
- iii. Interim appointments. When a seat will be vacant for no more than 1 semester (e.g., sabbatical) an interim appointment can be made following normal Committee on Committee processes. Any seat that will be vacant for a year or more will require a replacement for the remainder of the term associated with that seat.
- iv. Replacing members. If a member is absent from three regularly scheduled committee meetings in an academic year, the chair of the UWC may request that the Associate Vice Chair of the Senate initiate action to recruit a replacement. If a member repeatedly does not perform assigned committee duties, the chair of the UWC may request that the Associate Vice Chair of the Senate initiate action to recruit a replacement.