

## From **SLS Graduate Handbook**

### **Scholarly Paper Guidelines (MA Plans B and C; Advanced Graduate Certificate)**

#### **What Is a Scholarly Paper?**

**Purpose:** The main purpose of the SP requirement is for the faculty to assess a student's ability to engage in scholarly writing that is beyond that normally required in a term paper. In order to do this evaluation, the Graduate Faculty requires each student to prepare one paper that is of sufficient quality to be submitted to a refereed journal. Thus, the standard set by the Graduate Faculty is papers that could be given serious consideration for publication by journal editors. In fact, a number of UH SLS SPs have been published later in one form or another.

**Content:** SPs can deal with any issue in the field of second language studies. There are two principal types of paper: empirical research exploring a significant issue in the field, and a conceptual or theoretical paper comprising an original literature review and discussion. Whatever topic or issue is chosen, it should be of some general importance, making a contribution to the field.

The following are general guidelines that can be used in preparing your scholarly paper.

#### **Steps to Follow**

##### **Research Report**

1. An introduction that includes a description of the phenomenon or issue investigated along with a review of relevant research and theory; the introduction should lead to a justification for the research along with a statement of hypotheses or research questions
2. A description of the methods used, and a justification for them; methods include subjects/participants, materials, data collection procedures, and analysis (e.g., statistical or inductive/qualitative analyses and procedures)
3. Presentation of the findings
4. A discussion of the findings, their significance and their relationship to other research findings and to theory

##### **Conceptual or Theoretical Paper**

1. Identify and define the main issues and/or variables to be discussed. Both theoretical and operational definitions (i.e., the way the issues/variables are identified and measured for research purposes) should be considered.
2. Review the main points of view and research studies pertaining to the issue under discussion; include critical comments of theoretical issues and of any relevant research
3. Attempt to reconcile, integrate or choose between alternative points of view or findings
4. Propose an original point of view or interpretation of the issues or research results. The final "statement" can be 1) an original theoretical point of view; 2) a new interpretation of old research findings; 3) new directions for research; 4) pedagogical implications; or 5) a combination of the preceding.

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**IRB Approval:** If human subjects/participants are involved in the SP work, exemption or approval must be obtained in advance of beginning data collection, from the **UH-Mānoa Office of Research Compliance** (<https://www.hawaii.edu/researchcompliance/>).

**Preparation and Consultation with Faculty:** There are several steps by which students typically plan and develop an SP.

1. First, the student should consult with her or his advisor or other faculty members about the topic of interest. Ideally, the student should begin this discussion in the second semester, and at the very latest in the semester prior to the expected graduation date.
2. One possibility is a paper extending the work done in one or several courses, perhaps with a replication of a pilot study, or an extended theoretical essay on a topic covered by earlier term papers. A second possibility is a thorough rewriting and editing of a paper that has been previously submitted as a term paper. Students should be aware that it is rare for a course term paper to be sufficiently rigorous to pass as an SP without substantial revisions. Students should expect several iterations of drafting and revision in the process of working on their scholarly papers.
3. The writing of an SP may be viewed as an independent exercise. However, a student typically approaches a SLS graduate faculty member to be the first reader. While it is common, it is not required that the student's academic advisor and the first reader be the same faculty member.
4. The role of the first reader is to serve as the primary guide throughout the process of producing the SP, from the formulation of issues and questions, through the development of appropriate design and/or procedures, where appropriate, development of data collection instruments, and up to and including the reading and commenting on various drafts of the paper.
5. The first reader and the student will also select the second reader.
6. Other faculty may also be recommended for consultation on appropriate points in the development of the SP. Faculty will not assist in the preparation of SPs by calculating statistics, however.
7. Students are encouraged to consult with one another at all stages of preparation—share ideas and drafts of the paper before submitting it. It is also advisable to consult recent SPs that have been published in SLS Papers.
8. Students may benefit from taking at least one research methods course appropriate to the nature of their study.

**Style and Format:** Each paper should follow APA format. Journals that may be considered for the appropriate level of content include, but are not limited to, *Applied Language Learning*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Applied Psycholinguistics*, *ELT Journal*, *Foreign Language Annals*, *IRAL*, *Language Learning*, *Language Teaching Research*, *Language Testing*, *The Modern Language Journal*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *The Reading Matrix*, *RELC Journal*, *Second Language Research*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, and *TESOL Quarterly*. The paper should be between 20 to 30 pages (5,000 to 7,500 words), excluding footnotes, references, appendices, tables and figures, etc., along with a 200-word (approximate) abstract.

All papers must be written in accurate, academic English. All writers, regardless of their language backgrounds, should have their SP drafts and final versions carefully proofread in advance of submitting them to faculty.

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**Joint Authorship:** Joint authorship of an SP by two students is permitted. All SP authors file an attestation as to the authorship of the paper. In cases of joint authorship, each student must attest to an equal contribution to the paper. Students wishing to submit co-authored papers must receive permission from the Graduate Chair. Evaluators will take double authorship into account in judging the overall quality of the submission.

**Submission:** The version of an SP that is to be officially read and given an evaluation should be submitted to the two SP readers for final approval. This may be done at any time in the academic year. However, certain dates have been established to ensure that papers which are sufficiently well prepared may be read by the faculty and evaluated positively in time for a recommendation for graduation, that is, prior to deadlines set by the Graduate Division during a particular semester.

Semester of Graduation	Final Version Submitted to Readers	Final Submission of PDF file to Graduate Chair* (grdchr@hawaii.edu)
Fall	November 1	November 15
Spring	April 1	April 15
Summer	By agreement with readers	July 1

*\*Due dates that fall on weekends and holidays are automatically rolled to the following business day.*

These deadlines allow SP readers two weeks to read and comment on the submission, and one week for the student to complete a fully revised final copy. Students are responsible for submitting the final copy of the SP to the Graduate Chair. This copy will then be kept in the department files. Students should be aware that faculty are not officially on duty during the summer sessions and, hence, are normally not available to read SPs. Thus, SP submissions during the summer are to be negotiated with both the first and second readers.

**Evaluation of Papers:** Each final SP will receive a grade of Acceptable or Unacceptable. For exceptionally well-done papers, the grade of Acceptable with Honors may be given. Readers' comments may make specific recommendations that the student can use in rewriting the paper. Or, the readers may determine that the paper should not be rewritten, and that another paper on a different topic must be submitted.

The members of the Graduate Faculty have approved the following criteria by which SPs will be evaluated. In writing SPs, students are advised to keep them in mind.

1. Significance of the problem
  1. Is the topic or issue significant to the field?
  2. Does the treatment of the material demonstrate this significance?
2. Scholarship and objectivity
  1. Are all relevant sources and information reviewed?
  2. Are sources and materials used accurately and effectively?
  3. Are interpretations of theoretical perspectives and research findings appropriately critical, accurate, and cogent?

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4. In the case of research reports, are research methods and data analyses and procedures appropriate and accurate?
3. Clarity of presentation
  1. Are the issues, points of view, findings and conclusions presented clearly?
  2. Is the overall organization of the paper appropriate and effective?
  3. Is the paper well written and readable?
4. Insight and perspective
  1. Does the paper take an original approach?
  2. Does the student demonstrate original insights into the topic or material discussed in the paper?
  3. Do the conclusions, implications, or outcomes of the paper make an original contribution to the field?
  4. Does the paper acknowledge its own limitations?
  5. Are future directions for the field stemming from the study indicated?

### Directions to Students:

1. Send your scholarly paper to your SP Advisor.
2. Your SP Advisor will advise you concerning subsequent steps (i.e., revisions and submission to the second reader).
3. When both readers have approved the paper, submit a PDF file of the paper to the Graduate Chair (grdchr@hawaii.edu).\*
4. Confirm with the readers that they have sent a grade to the Graduate Chair.

\*Note: The notification of degree completion to the Graduate Division will not be done until after the receipt of your final PDF file.

### Directions to Readers:

1. Provide a grade for the scholarly paper to the student via email.
2. Notify the Graduate Chair of the grade (using the Google Form sent out each semester).