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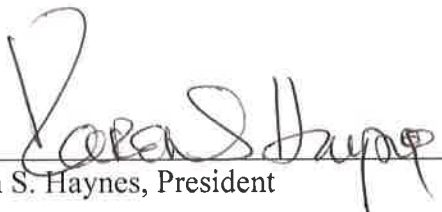
Effective Date: 7/18/2016

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**Definition:** This policy outlines the procedures for assessing master's student writing proficiency and the criteria for each CSUSM master's program to determine that a master's student has met the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement: Graduate Level (GWARGL).

**Authority:** Academic Affairs

**Scope:** The purpose of this policy is to fulfill the California State University (CSU) Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement: Graduate Level for master's students.

  
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Karen S. Haynes, President

July 18, 2016  
Approval Date

  
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Graham Oberem, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs

July 8, 2016  
Approval Date

Revised: 7/18/2016 (Formerly Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement)  
Implemented: 09/30/2008

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**Effective Date:** 7/13/2016

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## **POLICY**

Students enrolled in master's programs at California State University must fulfill the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement: Graduate Level (GWARGL) as described in the Procedure below prior to advancement to candidacy.

## **PROCEDURE**

- I. This Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement: Graduate Level (GWARGL) applies to graduate students enrolled in master's programs.
- II. The writing requirement must be completed before a graduate student advances to candidacy. A student may satisfy the GWARGL in one of two ways:
  - an acceptable standardized test score, such as the Analytical Writing subtest of the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) or the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE)
  - a paper(s) that receive(s) a passing score as described in Point 5 below.
- III. The College/Department/Program from which the student will receive the graduate degree determines the manner by which a student satisfies or does not satisfy the GWARGL.
- IV. The College/Department/Program from which the student will receive the graduate degree determines the passing score on standardized tests.
- V. If a student is satisfying the graduate writing requirement through a submission of a paper(s), the student's writing should demonstrate graduate level skills in:
  - style and format
  - mechanics
  - content and organization
  - integration and critical analysis.
- VI. The paper(s) will be scored using a rubric (1 - 4) in each of four areas (See Appendix A.): "I. Style and Format", "II. Mechanics", "III. Content and Organization", and "IV. Integration and Critical Analysis". The minimal acceptable combined score from all of the four (I-IV) sections is 10 points, with no scores of "1" on any section, resulting in a minimum of a 2.5 average for all sections. A master's program may establish a higher minimum average score for passing.
- VII. Each master's program will have a remediation protocol for admitted graduate students who do not satisfy the GWARGL on their first attempt. Each master's program will specify the maximum number of attempts that students may be allowed to satisfy the GWARGL.

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- VIII. Each master's program will file its respective GWARGL and remediation protocol with the Office of Graduate Studies and Research (OGSR). Each master's program will provide the OGSR with annual aggregate student GWARGL performance data.

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**Appendix A: Rubric Used to Evaluate Student Submissions to Satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement: Graduate Level (GWARGL)**

**I. STYLE AND FORMAT**

- 4: In addition to meeting the requirement for a "3," the paper consistently models the language and conventions used in the scholarly/ professional literature appropriate to the student's discipline. The manuscript would meet the guidelines for submission for publication in a peer reviewed journal in the student's field of study.
- 3: While there may be minor errors, conventions for style and format are used consistently throughout the paper. Demonstrates thoroughness and competence in documenting sources; the reader would have little difficulty referring back to cited sources. Style and format contribute to the comprehensibility of the paper. Suitably models the discipline's overall scholarly style.
- 2: The style and format are broadly followed, but inconsistencies are apparent. There is selection of less suitable sources (non-peer reviewed literature, web information). Weak transitions and apparent logic gaps occur between topics being addressed. The style may be difficult to follow so as to detract from the comprehensibility of the manuscript.
- 1: While some discipline-specific conventions are followed, others are not. Paper lacks consistency of style and/or format. It may be unclear which references are direct quotes and which are paraphrased. Based on the information provided, the reader would have some difficulty referring back to cited sources. Significant revisions would contribute to the comprehensibility of the paper.

**II. MECHANICS**

- 4: In addition to meeting the requirements for a "3," the paper is essentially error-free in terms of mechanics. Writing flows smoothly from one idea to another. Transitions effectively establish a sound scholarly argument and aid the reader in following the writer's logic.
- 3: While there may be minor errors, the paper follows normal conventions of spelling and grammar throughout. Errors do not significantly interfere with topic comprehensibility. Transitions and organizational structures, such as subheadings, are effectively used which help the reader move from one point to another.

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- 2: Grammatical conventions are generally used, but inconsistency and/or errors in their use result in weak, but still apparent, connections between topics in the formulation of the argument. There is poor or improper use of headings and related features to keep the reader on track within the topic. Effective discipline-specific vocabulary is used.
- 1: Frequent errors in spelling, grammar (such as subject/verb agreements and tense), sentence structure, and/or other writing conventions make reading difficult and interfere with comprehensibility. There is some confusion in the proper use of discipline-specific terms. Writing does not flow smoothly from point to point; appropriate transitions are lacking.

### **III. CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION**

- 4: In addition to meeting the requirements for a "3," excels in the organization and representation of ideas related to the topic. Raises important issues or ideas which may not have been represented in the literature cited. Would serve as a good basis for further research on the topic.
- 3: Follows all requirements for the paper. Topic is carefully focused. Clearly outlines the major points related to the topic; ideas are logically arranged to present a sound scholarly argument. Paper is interesting and holds the reader's attention. Does a credible job summarizing related literature. General ideas are expanded upon in a logical manner thereby extending the significance of the work presented beyond a re-statement of known ideas.
- 2: Ideas presented closely follow conventional concepts with little expansion and development of new directions. Certain logical connections or inclusion of specific topics related to the student's area of study may be omitted. Ideas and concepts are generally satisfactorily presented although lapses in logic and organization are apparent. The reader is suitably introduced to the topic being presented such that the relationship to the student's area of study is obvious.
- 1: The paper is logically and thematically coherent, but is lacking in substantial ways. The content may be poorly focused or the scholarly argument weak or poorly conceived. Major ideas related to the content may be ignored or inadequately explored. Overall, the content and organization needs significant revision to represent a critical analysis of the topic.

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#### **IV. INTEGRATION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

- 4: In addition to meeting the requirement of a "3," the document presents the current state of knowledge for the topic being addressed utilizing a diversity of opinions. These various, and possibly conflicting, opinions are presented in a balanced manner and seamlessly woven together to illustrate a complete grasp of the literature across multiple research approaches utilizing appropriate national and international peer-reviewed journals. Essential findings of multiple sources are accurately and concisely paraphrased, analyzed, and integrated. Original sources are clearly identified and correctly cited in both the body of the text and the reference section. Organizationally, smooth and effective transitions between topics lead the reader through an orderly discussion of the topic being addressed. The gaps in current knowledge are clearly identified and significant directions and approaches that fill these gaps are identified.
- 3: There are inconsistencies in the organization and logic of the presentation, but still clear analysis of the presented materials. While synthesis of all aspects of the topic may show varying degrees of development, the overall consistency, thoroughness, and analysis result in a well-crafted document.
- 2: Identification of key topics or uncertainties in the field may be incomplete. New concepts resulting from a synthetic presentation of ideas is poorly developed or lacking. Complex topics and related concepts are awkwardly presented and linkages among topics may be unclear.
- 1: Weakness is evident in the coverage of the field and analysis resulting in incorrect or poorly developed synthesis of results. Analysis is limited to categorizing and summarizing topics. The resulting manuscript degrades the comprehensibility of the document and the identification of knowledge gaps.