



GRADUATE STUDENT TERMINAL PROJECT GUIDELINES

All graduate students seeking a Master of Science degree in nursing must successfully complete the following requirements according to the deadlines posted on the School of Nursing website. The components of a graduate project include:

- Preparation of a manuscript suitable for publication. While the manuscript must be of publishable quality, it does not need to be submitted or accepted for publication for the student to graduate. Prior to developing the content, the student must choose committee members to guide manuscript development and serve as reviewers. The manuscript will demonstrate the student's integration of theoretical and/or clinical knowledge and expertise. See Section I for detailed guidelines.
- Oral presentation of the manuscript using a Power Point presentation. Once the student has successfully completed the manuscript, the student will give an oral presentation of the manuscript at the SIUE School of Nursing Terminal Project Presentation Day. The Project Presentation Day is scheduled at the end of each semester approximately two weeks before commencement. See Section II for detailed guidelines.
- Participation in an exit interview with faculty members of the Terminal Project. The exit interview is scheduled in collaboration with the student's project committee members and should take place prior to the last week of the semester. See Section III for detailed guidelines.

I. Choosing Committee Members and Manuscript Development

A. Choosing the Project Committee Members

1. Students will select a project chair who is on faculty at the School of Nursing and who holds permanent graduate faculty status. Project chairs work closely with students in the development of manuscripts and serve as the main reviewers of the multiple manuscript drafts. Students are encouraged to select a project chair with advanced knowledge of, or who has conducted research on the topic the student has chosen. While project chairs do not have to be in the same specialization as the student, they should share similar interests. Students must select a project chair during the first year in the master's program to ensure sufficient time for project completion. The project chair should sign the pink Terminal Project card that the student obtains from the graduate secretary. This card must be on file by the end of the first year in the program. Because faculty members are typically on many committees, students are encouraged to contact their desired project chair early.

2. Students should also select a reader who will review the manuscript drafts and provide feedback. The reader must have permanent or temporary graduate faculty status. Choosing a reader with expertise in the topic is encouraged. The reader also signs the pink Terminal Project card.

B. Choosing a Manuscript Topic.

Students are encouraged to select a topic of interest to them that would add to the body of nursing knowledge within their specialty area. The final topic selected should be approved by both the project chair and the reader.

C. Selection of the Journal/Query Letter

With the assistance of project chairs and readers, students must select one journal for submission of the manuscript, using the journal's "author's guidelines" for manuscript preparation. In collaboration with the project chair, students should compose a query letter to the editor of the chosen journal if the manuscript is being submitted. See attached sample query letter.

D. Manuscript Deadlines

1. All deadlines for graduate project submissions are posted on the School of Nursing (SON) website (<http://www.siu.edu/nursing/>) under Current Students à Graduate Student Information. The student should discuss deadlines with the project chair and develop a schedule for submission of the required materials. Occasionally, faculty members' responsibilities take them off campus near the time of the posted deadlines. Therefore, it may be necessary for the student to submit the manuscript earlier than the posted deadlines. Failure to meet manuscript deadlines will delay graduation.
2. Students must be prepared to submit repeated manuscript drafts to the project chair and reader. The project chair will determine when the manuscript can be submitted to the reader. The final draft of the manuscript must be received by the project chair and reader by the posted deadlines or the student will be unable to graduate.

E. General Manuscript Guidelines

Manuscript topics should reflect an area of interest in the student's specialization and be approved by the project chair and reader. Types of manuscripts may include, but are not limited to: a concept analysis, a clinical topic, a policy analysis, a report of a small research/quality improvement project, or a manuscript on administration or teaching strategies. Whatever the topic, the manuscript should reflect the integration of knowledge from the graduate program through a thorough analysis and critique of the existing literature.

1. The format of the manuscript must follow the author's guidelines for the selected journal, especially editorial format and manuscript length.
2. Students should begin the outline for the manuscript and bring it to the Writing Center to obtain guidance prior to starting the actual writing (unless this requirement is waived by the project chair). The staff at the Writing Center will help students in all phases of the writing experience, I not proofread or edit the manuscript. Instead, Writing Center staff will assist students understand their weaknesses and build on their strengths so that the student can

produce a polished manuscript. Students who are off-campus can contact the Writing Center for assistance with distance learning; however, going to the Writing Center physically will most likely result in more direct assistance.

F. Manuscript Drafts

1. The initial manuscript draft should be submitted to the project chair one year prior to the expected date of graduation. Students should allow faculty a 2 to 3 week turn around time on all drafts. Submission of the manuscript to the reader is negotiated at the beginning of the process with the project chair and the reader.
2. Students use the feedback received from the project chair and reader to revise the manuscript.

G. Final Manuscript

1. Students may submit the manuscript to the editor of the selected journal at the discretion and approval of the project chair.
2. Three copies of the final manuscript should be provided by the student, one to the project chair, one to the reader, and a file copy to the graduate program secretary.
3. The student should provide the committee members with the final draft of the manuscript by April 1, July 1, or November 1, depending upon the semester of graduation, to be eligible for graduation.

H. Academic Integrity.

The School of Nursing's Graduate Program policy on academic integrity will be followed. Please refer to the School of Nursing Graduate Program Student Handbook located at <http://www.siue.edu/nursing/currentstudents/graduate/index.shtml>.

I. Student/Faculty Authorship

The student will retain the rights to be the first author on the submitted manuscript. If the project chair and/or reader had minimal input into the writing and editing of the document, the student should be the sole author. If the project chair and/or reader provided original writing and/or new material within the manuscript, then the faculty member(s) may be listed as the second author(s). Editing of the manuscript by the faculty member does not qualify for joint-authorship.

II. Oral Presentation of the Terminal Project

A. Project chairs approve student participation in the Terminal Project Presentation Day.

B. The following information should be emailed to the SON Graduate Program Secretary according to deadlines posted on the School of Nursing website:

1. The **Terminal Project Abstract Form** (included at the end of this document). This form includes the student's name, graduate program specialization, the names of project chair and the reader, and the manuscript **abstract**. The abstract form is electronically submitted at least two weeks prior to the Terminal Project Presentation Day.

2. The student's **Power Point presentation** of the graduate project (see below). The power point presentation must be approved by the project chair and should be submitted electronically at least one week prior to the Terminal Project Presentation Day.

C. Preparation of the Power Point Presentation

1. The presentation should be developed in collaboration with the project chair.
2. The final set of slides should be approved by the project chair.
3. The presentation is limited to 15 minutes, with five minutes for questions and answers. Power point presentations usually contain 15-20 slides.

D. Presentation Day

1. The computer and projector for the presentation will be supplied. The student's presentation will be loaded onto a computer by a SON representative.
2. The student's attire should be business professional.
3. The student may provide optional handouts for the audience.
4. Students are encouraged to invite family, friends, and colleagues.
5. Students may give a brief acknowledgement during the presentation to their mentors, faculty, family, and colleagues who supported them as they attained their degree(s).

III. Exit Interview

1. The exit interview should be scheduled during the final semester prior to graduation. The student is responsible for collaborating with the project chair and reader to determine an acceptable date for the interview.
2. When a final date is determined, the project chair will notify the Graduate Program Secretary of the desired date and time, and the secretary will prepare the appropriate paperwork for the session.
3. The purposes of the Final Exit Interview are:
 - a. To discuss the student's experiences and growth throughout the program and to offer suggestions for program improvement.
 - b. To allow faculty and the student to complete the exit evaluations forms and sign the appropriate paperwork. Students who fail to complete and return the exit evaluation forms will not be able to graduate on planned date. The exit evaluation forms should be completed by the student to the graduate program secretary immediately following the Final Exit Interview.

IV. Helpful Tips for Writing the Manuscript

A. Form.

1. Format - margins, spacing, abbreviations, pagination, footnotes, quotations, and other details should be consistent with APA (latest edition) or the format of the journal to which the student chooses to submit. References should be appropriate, accurate, and written in correct APA format.
2. Grammar - appropriate professional terminology, complete sentence structure, congruent verb tenses, proper punctuation, correct spelling, and clarity.
3. Idea Development - the degree of discussion devoted to the specific sections of the manuscript is appropriate (e.g., introduction, review of the literature, discussion, conclusion).
4. Organization - the manuscript flows logically from the introduction to the summary. Subheadings must be used. A summary must be included, and the internal organization of the manuscript must be consistent with sections as listed.
5. Appearance – typed double-spaced, with appropriate cover page, reference list, and any appendices.

B. Resources.

1. Journal Articles - students may be asked to provide a copy of each journal article, book chapter, or electronic document cited in the manuscript. These copies will **not** be returned to the student.
2. Diversity of Resources - a variety of pertinent scholarly nursing, psychiatric, allied health, and other literature must be included. For some topics, health industry trade magazines may be appropriate resources (e.g., “Hospitals and Healthcare Networks”). For a policy analysis manuscript, lay literature, such as newspapers and weekly news magazines may be appropriate resources since the latest legislative information may not appear in the professional literature for three to six months because of publication lags. Personal interviews must be noted as to the qualifications of the person(s) interviewed and must be appropriate and experts on the topics. Interviewees and/or references must be recognized by faculty as acceptable.
3. Internet References - internet references are kept to a minimum and if used, come from a scholarly (as appropriate) and reputable source (e.g., government agencies such as the CDC or NIH, professional nursing organizations, internet journals). Personal webpages and product websites (e.g., drug companies, equipment vendors) are not appropriate.
4. Current – refrain from using literature over five years old unless it is a “classic,” original work upon which other concepts or theories are based (e.g., Nightingale’s “Notes on Nursing”) or if writing on an historical topic.
5. Adequacy – Approximately 20 to 30 references are recommended for the graduate project. An excessive number of references (40-50) is not acceptable for a manuscript that usually does not exceed 12-17 pages. Journal guidelines may provide more specific guidelines for the number of references allowed.

C. Content.

1. Title – should be clear, concise, and descriptive;
2. Abstract – should be specific, representative of the manuscript, and in the correct format.
3. Introduction - defines specific topic precisely enough to allow in-depth coverage, explains rationale for selecting the topic (including its applicability to nursing), and delineates subjects areas to be discussed in the manuscript.
4. Review of the Literature.
 - a. Citations should be less than five years old, except when citing classics or historical information. Students should provide precise information pertinent to subject area under discussion. The literature review should provide enough background information to adequately describe the topic under discussion. Review includes enough data and discusses a full and sufficient variety of view-points to validate the conclusion. Current literature from nursing and related fields must be included. Tables and figures compliment the text, as appropriate.
 - b. Inclusion and discussion of relevant research as it pertains to the topic. The student is expected to place an emphasis on articles that report on evidence-based practice. The synthesis and interpretation of research is accurate.
 - c. Direct quotations will be used sparingly.
5. Discussion.
 - a. Presents a clear, concise analysis of the problem as it relates to nursing by synthesizing clinical experiences, personal experiences, didactic content, etc.
 - b. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the topic under discussion by realistically identifying implications for action related to client, self, nursing, and other professionals. Identifies strategies for change, professional issues involved, and strategies to address the issues.
6. Conclusion - presents a concise and accurate condensation of relevant elements from both resource data and discussion segments of the manuscript. Itemized major suggestion, changes, and recommendations from the rationale for the manuscript and as inferred by the body of the manuscript.

D. Originality.

The information should be current and useful to the reader with material presented in a creative manner.

07/24/07 Ad Hoc Committee, Graduate Terminal Project

09/24/07 Graduate Curriculum Committee

10/1/07 Faculty Council

2/8/08 Faculty Council (journal submission changes)

TERMINAL PROJECT SAMPLE QUERY LETTER

May be sent as an email or as an attachment to an email to the editor

Check the journal's online information to ensure that the correct name of the editor is used.

Date

Editor name

Editor, Name of Journal

Address

(Include the above information only if query letter is sent as an attachment to an email.)

Dear Dr.XXXX or Ms./Mr. XXXX:

I am preparing a manuscript for that may be appropriate for publication in (journal name). The title of the manuscript is (title). This manuscript (brief description of the content to be covered). I believe that this will be an important manuscript for (target audience, e.g., educators, managers or nurse practitioners) because (why will this publication be important).

I have attached a preliminary abstract of the manuscript for your review. *(only should be 3-5 sentences since the manuscript is not completely written)* I look forward to your reply and would appreciate any suggestions or guidance you can offer.

Sincerely,

Student name

Home address

Telephone number

Email address

TERMINAL PROJECT ABSTRACT FORM

Student Name _____ **Specialization** _____

Manuscript Title: _____

Project Chair _____

Reader _____

Abstract: (100 words)