

# M.S. Statistics Writing Project Guidelines

Updated March, 2019

- ***Why are we required to do this?*** The goal of the writing project is really to **write!** Delving into a topic or project in order to gain enough context to write about is also an important part of this degree requirement, but the end goal of a written work should be kept within view. This is not a master's thesis, but just a chance to make sure our students practice and demonstrate their scientific writing ability before graduating with a master's degree. The project can also serve as an example of your work to share with future employers.
- ***How should I choose a topic?*** Choose something *you* are interested in. You do not have to choose a topic from your advisor's research interests (though you are welcome to). This project is for you. The project can be an extension based on a class project, can be based on a consulting project or other interdisciplinary work, or can simply be out-of-class research into a topic you are interested in.
- ***How many pages should it be?*** Most are between 20 and 50 pages (double-spaced), but there is technically no minimum or maximum, as long as it has the approval of your writing project advisor. We are after quality, not quantity, and a reasonable length is very dependent on the specific project.
- ***How should I prepare the presentation?*** You will only have about 5 minutes to present an overview of your project and then a chance to present a digital poster and get feedback more than a month before the final document is due. Therefore, you will not be able to go through everything you did or are going to do in the oral presentation. Think about focusing on a couple of things you think will be particularly interesting or useful to your fellow graduate students (the main audience). Your presentation should be professional and informative and can discuss the work that is remaining to do. Hopefully the poster session will allow the audience to dig deeper into your work and provide useful feedback on what will be included in your final writing project.
- ***Steps and time line:***
  1. Fill out your program of study in your second semester (you can change it later). You will take 2 credits of STAT 575 for the writing project. At least one credit is typically taken during your last semester.
  2. Decide on a topic as soon as possible and a writing project advisor (does not have to be the chair of your graduate committee, though typically is and you should update your committee to reflect this).
  3. Start working on it as soon as possible. The summer is a great time to make some progress without the added stress and time constraints of classes.
  4. Presentations of projects are in March before spring break (usually the semester you finish the project and graduate). First year students should be sure to attend

the presentations of current students to gain information about what is expected. Presentations should be professional and informative and should be modeled after what you would give at a conference. Your writing project advisor should see your presentation at least one week ahead of time.

5. The written project must be turned in by the end of finals week the semester you are graduating. Both a paper copy and pdf should be submitted to your writing project advisor and the STAT 575 supervisor. There is an official coversheet to be signed and you should use the template provided.

- **DEADLINES:**

1. **End of September:** Submit a proposal for your writing project and planned advisor for the project for review and feedback by the statistics faculty.
2. **By December 15:** Have constructed a time-line (plan) with your advisor for the project
3. **Mid-March:** Presentation - Speed oral and digital poster (Draft of presentation should be to advisor 1 week before you present)
4. **April 15:** Draft of writing project to advisor
5. **Friday of Finals week:** Last day for final draft to advisor, earlier dates may be defined by your advisor