Guidelines for the AOC Scholarly Project Final Written Report

Overview

The Scholarly Project (SP) final report should be a succinct document in the style of a scientific journal article. The report should demonstrate substantive scholarly effort and reflect an assimilation of knowledge, originality in the choice of investigative questions or hypotheses, and provide pertinent background information. It should delineate the methodology and present the findings/results. The Discussion section should provide interpretation of the findings, discussion of their significance, study limitations, and implications for future study. It is expected that the SP final report will be prepared with input from the student’s faculty Mentor. The deadline for receipt of the final report is the last day (typically a Friday) of the student’s final 2-month SP block period.

Organization

The required organization and content of the final report should be as follows:

A. Title page, include:
   - project title
   - student name
   - faculty mentor(s) name and institutional affiliation
   - other collaborators (clearly identified as “non-mentor collaborators”) and institutional affiliation

B. Abstract (250 words strict maximum), include:
   - background summary
   - methods
   - results
   - conclusions

C. Introduction, include:
   - brief summary of previously published work in this area with citations
   - rationale for doing this project
   - hypothesis

D. Methods, include:
   - experimental methods used in the project (If details of a method are previously published, provide just the citation along with any modifications of the published methodology and the rationale for those modifications.)

E. Results, include:
   - a brief description of your findings
   - figures, tables, and other illustrative material (Figures, tables, and other illustrative material must be clearly numbered and cited in the text where appropriate, and must have accompanying captions and/or legends. They should be inserted as separate pages within the text, positioned as close as possible to where they are first cited in the text.)
F. Discussion, include:
   • interpretation of the findings
   • how the findings compare and contrast with previously published work in the area
   • a scholarly and balanced discussion of obstacles encountered, limitations, impact and clinical applicability of the work
   • ideas about future directions that should be taken to extend the work

G. Acknowledgements, include:
   • individuals who contributed in any way
   • institution(s) where work was done
   • funding sources, if any

H. References, include:
   • bibliography (Should generally not exceed 25 references and all references must be numbered and cited sequentially in the text where appropriate.)

I. Knowledge and Skills Learned, include:
   • a brief paragraph summarizing the knowledge areas and skills gained through the performance of the Scholarly Project

J. Signature of the Student's SP Faculty Mentor

Format

Only sections C, D, E, and F (excluding figures and tables) count toward the 15-page/5000-word maximum page/word limit for the SP report. The remaining sections do not.

The SP report must be formatted as follows:
   • Maximum Length: 15 pages, typed, single-sided (approximately 5,000 words)
   • Font: Arial
   • Font Size: 11-12
   • Line Spacing: 1.5
   • There should be up to 25 numbered references that are sequentially cited in the text in the order in which they appear, using superscripts where appropriate.
   • There can be as many figures and tables as are deemed appropriate.
   • Appendix material can be attached, e.g., example of survey instrument, more granular data, photographs, etc. The Appendix must not contain critical information that is required to be in the body of the report as described above. It is not meant to be a way of extending the maximum length of essential report content. Students who have prepared manuscripts for publication relevant to their SP can summarize and appropriately reference them within the SP report and then append the manuscript(s) draft(s).

It is anticipated that the SP final report will be prepared with input from the student’s faculty Mentor. The final report must be signed by the Mentor before submission.
**Timing of Writing the SP Report**

It is essential that students do not wait until the last weeks of the final SP block to begin to write their reports. In practically all cases, large parts of the SP report can be written in a penultimate draft form even as the project is in progress. For example, the Introduction can be written early during the first SP block period. The same is often the case for the Methods. Even the Results, with whatever figures and tables are to be included, can be prepared in draft form as the project progresses.

**Submission of the SP Report**

The SP report must be submitted no later than 5 PM on the last day of the second SP block. Students who anticipate they will need an extension should request one by writing to the AOC Program Director as far in advance as possible of the deadline. Extensions are granted only for the most extenuating circumstances of an urgent nature, such as illness or family emergency.

**Assessment of the SP Report**

The SP report will be assessed by at least two faculty members: the Leader of the student’s primary AOC (or his/her designee) and one of the AOC Pathway Leaders or Director. It will be assessed by the faculty reviewers based on the following criteria:

1. **Originality** (novelty, creativity, or logical extension of previously published work);
2. **Scholarship** (evidence of in depth background research, clarity of interpretation of results, scientific objectivity, sound exposition of weaknesses, problems, and future direction(s);
3. **Rigor** (strength of experimental design and methods, rigor of analysis of results);
4. **Clarity of Presentation** (well organized, lucid, well explained rationale, proof-read, adherence to format as described and to conventions of scientific/medical writing style, effective use (if any) of figures, tables, and/or images.

The SP report should contain each of the elements described in each of the sections labeled A-J above. Appendix material should be considered “supplementary” and while it will be reviewed, it is not required.