

Supporting Area Requirement and Forms

The goal of the Supporting Area project (SAP) is to provide breadth to the student's training, within a new content domain and/or with new research methodology to which they would not normally be exposed in their primary lab. In addition, it provides students with an opportunity to work closely with a faculty mentor other than their primary advisor, so as to gain experience with a different mentoring style, and to provide an opportunity to cultivate a relationship with another person who could later provide a detailed letter of recommendation for grant or job applications.

The Supporting Area Committee is composed of two faculty members who will monitor and advise on completion of the SAP. One of the two committee members must be a tenure-related current Psychology faculty member. Because the goals of the SAP include gaining experience working directly with another mentor, and learning new content or new methods that students would normally not be exposed to in their primary lab, the chair of the Supporting Area Committee must be different from the student's primary advisor (who is usually the chair of the FYP, Major Preliminary Examination and Dissertation Committees). If the chair of the SAP committee is from outside Psychology, they must be UO tenure-related in their home department. It is recommended that, during the SAP, the student regularly interacts with their SAP mentor(s), which may include attending lab meetings or area meetings related to the SAP.

Specific requirements:

The choice of a specific project should be discussed with the student's primary advisor and the intended supporting area chair. There are many different scenarios that fulfill the SAP requirement, and the student may choose one that works for them. The primary goal is to work with a second mentor to learn a new content domain and/or a new method that the student would normally not be able to learn in their primary lab. The following examples would all be acceptable scenarios:

- a student whose primary research examines the relationship between familial interactions and mental health risk takes the SAP as an opportunity to learn about the role of testosterone in social hierarchy, with no plans to link the two topics together
- a student whose primary area is decision making completes an SAP in the area of emotional development, with the ultimate goal of developing a novel research program on decision making in emotional context during adolescence
- a student whose primary lab studies the effect of mother's depression on child's development completes a SAP in a cognitive lab that uses EEG, with the goal to ultimately test the utility of EEG in studying depression
- a student whose primary interest is in empathic perceptions uses the SAP to develop a course entitled The Philosophy of Consciousness under the guidance of a faculty member in Philosophy.
- a student whose primary interest is in the neural mechanisms of sensory processing arranges for an internship at a technology company, in a project that explores ways to overcome difficulty in reading text on the real-world background presented in an augmented-reality display.

Students are encouraged to complete one or two courses related to their project, including possibly an independent readings course when a course is not otherwise available. However, there is no formal course requirement for the SAP.

As a part of their SAP proposal, students should describe the project they intend to complete and how it will extend their expertise beyond what they would normally learn in their primary lab. The proposal should also indicate what will be the final “product” demonstrating the completion of SAP. Importantly, SAP proposals must be submitted to the GEC *before* work on the project has begun – failure to submit a proposal may mean that the student’s efforts on the project are wasted if it is later determined that the project does not meet the goals of the requirement.

In general, students may choose any one of the following to satisfy the SAP requirement:

- (1) Design and execute an empirical project that is overseen by the supporting area committee and prepare a manuscript that describes the completed work.
- (2) Prepare an NIH or NSF-style research proposal that provides a detailed research plan on a topic that is approved by the supporting area committee. Specific page limits associated with NIH or NSF grants are less important than a rigorous treatment of the relevant theoretical and empirical issues. The proposal must include the relevant background, clearly motivating the proposed studies, as well as a project proposal with detailed methods and predictions. Two-page fellowship-style grant applications would not satisfy the SAP requirement.
- (3) Write an in-depth review of the literature surrounding the chosen topic, with length and theoretical breadth similar to that which would be required for publication in a typical review-oriented APA journal (e.g., *Psychological Bulletin*).
- (4) Prepare a detailed teaching portfolio that includes all the materials needed to teach a class (syllabus and lecture materials such as Powerpoint slides and exams) on a topic directly related to the topic of the supporting area. This portfolio should represent the original work of the student. Lecture material that was not created by the student can be used, but those materials should be explicitly identified to the SAP committee, who will judge whether the student’s contribution is substantial enough to fulfill the requirement. The department will try to provide some opportunities for students to potentially teach proposed courses that are both excellent and that fulfill the department’s teaching mission.
- (5) Present a talk or poster about the SAP at a conference, with the student as presenting author. If the student has submitted their SAP to one or more outside conferences and it was not accepted, but they have reached the end of their third year, they can satisfy the presentation requirement by presenting their project as a poster or talk during the UO Graduate School’s Graduate Student Research Forum in their fourth year. As long as the student has made the poster or written the presentation (and the student’s committee members have seen and signed off on one of these products), the student will not be considered “behind” on requirements if s/he is just waiting for the actual conference (or Grad Forum) to happen. However, the presentation at an actual conference or Grad Forum must be made before the SAP requirement will be considered fully complete.
- (6) Besides the five options described above, it is possible for the SAP to take other forms, as long as the goals of the requirement (as described above) are met. For example, the student could participate in an internship outside of academia, or play a major role in

developing public policy. As with the other SAP options, the project should result in some concrete “product” (e.g., manuscript, presentation, or policy document) that can be used to evaluate the value of the SAP.

Deadline:

To stay on track with the requirements, students should start planning for their SAP as soon as they complete their FYP in the Fall of their second year. The student should also discuss these plans with their Advising Committee during their second year winter advising meeting.

Students may choose whether they wish to propose and complete their SAP or their Prelims first, although it is expected that students will usually be working on both requirements in parallel. Some students may want to complete their Prelims first because, for example, they have a clear idea for follow up studies for their FYP that they want to write up for a fellowship grant application. Other students may want to learn a new method not common in their primary lab, completing the SAP first with the goal to then use that method in their future work.

If the student wishes to focus on the SAP first, it must be proposed by the end of the spring term of the student’s second year, and completed by the end of the spring term of their third year. For students completing their Prelims first, the SAP proposal is due by the fall term of the student’s third year, with completion of the project by Oct. 15 of the fourth year.

For clinical students, the Supporting Area Requirement must be completed before applying for internship. Clinical faculty will not recommend a student for internship if this requirement has not been fulfilled. Upon completion, the student must submit a completion form, signed by the committee and the GEC chair, to the graduate secretary.

Supporting Area Proposal

Student's Name:		Major Area:	
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Student has met with his/her Supporting Area Committee, and together they propose that the requirement be met the following way (add additional pages if needed):

1. Optional Courses (list proposed courses, terms they will be taken, and instructors):
a)
b)

2. Assignment (see handbook description for choices):

3. Please describe how the above is distinct from your major area of study:

Supporting Area Committee Print Faculty Names	Faculty Signatures
Chair,	

Advising Committee Chair (Signature required):

Date: _____

GEC Approval _____

Date: _____

