

Writing Intensive Courses

(Flag designation for any General Education, major, minor, or elective course, except Gateway Colloquium)

Flag Description: Courses given this designation offer students instruction and practice in writing, typically within a specific disciplinary context. Writing Intensive courses teach the conventions of writing within a specific discipline or for a specific purpose, focus attention on writing as a process, and encourage students to use writing as a tool for discovery and learning. Enrollment caps should be consistent with the goal of providing opportunities for intensive work with student writing.

Proposed Flag Description:

Courses given this designation offer students instruction and practice in writing. WI courses encourage students to use writing as a tool for discovery and learning and to become aware that writing is a process. WI courses teach disciplinary conventions of writing or teach students how to write for specific audiences and for specific purposes. WI courses also provide opportunities for students to enrich their writing with research and/or imagination. *Enrollment caps should be consistent with the goal of providing opportunities for intensive work with student writing.*

Students must take two “Writing Intensive” courses. One of these courses must be taken in the major, and one of the courses must be completed by the end of the sophomore year. Students who have more than one major must take a “Writing Intensive” course in each major.

<p style="text-align: center;">Current Flag Goals</p> <p>In keeping with the overall goals of the General Education program, in particular the goals of developing students' capacities for expressing and communicating ideas in writing, using writing as a means of discovery and understanding, and developing students' capacities for critical thinking, intellectual independence, and imagination, courses given this designation seek to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Proposed Flag Goals</p> <p>In keeping with the overall goals of the General Education program, in particular the goals of developing students' capacities for expressing and communicating ideas in writing, using writing as a means of discovery and understanding, and developing students' capacities for critical thinking, intellectual independence, and imagination, courses given this designation seek to develop students' abilities:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Current Flag Criteria</p> <p>To achieve these goals, courses given this designation incorporate the following criteria, by means appropriate to the course goals and content.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Proposed Flag Criteria</p> <p>No change.</p>
<p>Current</p> <p>1. give students significant practice in writing;</p>	<p>Current</p> <p>1. Students should produce a minimum of 15-20 typed, double-spaced pages per semester, including drafts. This writing may take a variety of forms, depending on the discipline and/or purpose of the course, such as formal papers, informal journal entries, mathematical proofs, short philosophical arguments, a long research paper, etc.</p>

<p>Proposed</p> <p>1. to write persuasively or to argue effectively, using evidence that supports the writer’s purpose;</p>	<p>Proposed</p> <p>1. Offer explicit instruction in writing arguments or persuasive genres or in genres and formats appropriate to a specific discipline or to a specific audience.</p>
<p>Current</p> <p>2. focus on writing as a process, with opportunities for revision;</p> <p>Proposed</p> <p>2. to position their voices within a public, disciplinary, or scholarly dialogue;</p>	<p>Current</p> <p>2. Regardless of the type of writing produced, the writing process must be ongoing throughout the semester. Students should begin writing assignments early, periodically turn in drafts, and have opportunities for revision in response to written and/or oral critiques.</p> <p>Proposed</p> <p>2. Give students instruction or practice in anticipating and responding to the needs of an audience or in integrating their own ideas with those of others.</p>
<p>Current</p> <p>3. enable students to understand that writing varies according to purpose and audience;</p> <p>Proposed</p> <p>3. to revise their texts to shape the content, language, and structure in ways that engage the audience and support the project’s purpose</p>	<p>Current</p> <p>3. Courses should give explicit instruction in writing in accordance with the conventions of a discipline or the requirements of a specific purpose and audience.</p> <p>Proposed</p> <p>3. Assign 25 pages of writing, including both low stakes assignments (i.e., informal writing or writing-to-learn activities, journals, reading responses, exercises) and high stakes assignments (i.e., polished and revised writing that might include formal essays, research papers, or other genres significant to the discipline or to course objectives). These courses must also provide students <i>periodically</i> with feedback on their drafts from the instructor and with opportunities to revise their texts.</p>
<p>Current</p> <p>4. give students opportunities to use writing as a tool for invention and discovery.</p> <p>Proposed</p> <p>4. to find, evaluate, and synthesize information from electronic and print sources, if appropriate to the course objectives, and to use it ethically</p>	<p>Current</p> <p>4. Courses should encourage learning through writing using methods such as directed free-writing, reading journals, summaries or syntheses of readings, class list-servs, etc.</p> <p>Proposed</p> <p>4. Give students instruction and practice in acquiring information fluency skills within a discipline if appropriate to the course objectives.</p>

Rationale

The current language for writing-intensive courses dates back to the last general education reorganization, which instituted this requirement. Since the category was completely new to the faculty, the language, as faculty who attended the discussion of this category pointed out, does not resemble the language of the other categories. The flag goals were written to an audience of faculty who had not taught much writing before and who were squeamish about the prospect of doing so. The language was designed to encourage faculty to embrace the requirement rather than to articulate the goals we have for our students' learning.

The Writing Committee consulted Curriculum Council's excellent reports (both the raw transcription and the final recommendation), and we made use of the substantial work the Writing Program has done on composing a map of values, on writing a rubric, and on assessing papers. We sent drafts of this proposal to all faculty members who teach writing-intensive courses, and we presented it as well to the faculty who attended the discussion of this flag. Our goal for the new language is to make transparent and explicit all the hard work our faculty has done on writing pedagogy and writing assessment in the last three years. We also hope to articulate the faculty's values and goals to our students as well.