



University Policy Statement

UPS 320.020

UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduate students shall demonstrate competence in writing skills at the upper division level as a requirement for the baccalaureate degree (EO 665). Students have opportunities to learn about and practice effective writing in courses certified as Writing-Intensive Courses (WICs) or Writing Complementary Courses (WCCs).

I. Designation and Characteristics of Writing-Intensive and Writing-Complementary Courses

- A. Each academic unit offering an undergraduate major shall specify that a single, 3-unit upper-division course shall be completed successfully to meet the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). Courses must be certified as WICs by the University Writing Proficiency Committee (UWPC) or must be a 3-unit course involving an assessment of writing following a sequence of at least 6 units of Writing-Complementary Courses (WCCs) that are also certified by the UWPC. Certification as a WIC lasts for eight consecutive academic years. Variable-unit thesis courses may satisfy the GWAR provided that the student completes an accumulated total of 3 units to fulfill this requirement.
- B. Academic units are encouraged to offer WICs that address disciplinary-specific writing that prepares undergraduate majors for their professions. WICs and WCCs may be offered by the major-granting academic unit or by another academic unit, making them support courses (see UPS 411.105 on support courses). No certified WIC or WCC may be designated in another academic unit without the approval of the unit offering the course. Academic units may designate an upper-division undergraduate thesis course (see UPS 400.020) as a WIC, after writing certification of the course is approved by the UWPC.
- C. Academic units should encourage or require students to satisfy the GWAR before they have earned 90 units of coursework counting toward their degree so they can apply their writing skills in subsequent coursework.
- D. WICs shall be described as such under each academic unit's requirements in the university catalog, in the course syllabus, and on a designated campus website. Academic units are also encouraged to publicize which recommended courses fulfill majors' GWAR on their websites and/or in advising materials.
- E. Writing competence shall be demonstrated in WICs by the students' ability to:
 - actively read texts or other materials using a variety of strategies (e.g., highlighting, annotating, visually organizing, identifying patterns);
 - effectively apply writing processes, including researching, drafting, and revising;
 - analyze, organize, synthesize, and express their own and others' data or ideas;
 - critically evaluate, incorporate, and cite source materials;
 - use disciplinary conventions appropriate for relevant audiences and purposes;

- meet the standards and/or content mastery established by an instructor's rubric or assessment standards;
 - apply ethical practices in writing (e.g., acknowledging bias, avoiding plagiarism, using technology in authorized ways, upholding academic integrity);
 - apply grammar, syntax, punctuation, style, and other editing conventions.
- F. In WICs, students shall individually write multiple papers or multiple drafts of a single paper that involve the organization and expression of complex data or ideas. Thesis courses shall require that students produce a substantial written original work based on individual research (see UPS 400.020). Assessment of the student's writing competence shall determine at least 60% of the final course grade.
- G. In consultation with Academic Programs and the UWPC, a series of Writing Complementary Courses totaling at least 6 units may be followed by a single 3-unit course involving assessment of writing to satisfy students' GVAR.

Writing competence shall be demonstrated in WCCs by the students' ability to:

- i. analyze, organize, synthesize, and express their own and other's data or ideas;
- ii. evaluate, incorporate and cite source materials;
- iii. use disciplinary conventions appropriate for relevant audiences and purposes;
- iv. apply ethical practices in writing (e.g., acknowledging bias, avoiding plagiarism, using technology in authorized ways, upholding academic integrity);
- v. apply grammar, syntax, punctuation, style, and other editing conventions.

In WCCs, students shall write multiple papers or multiple drafts of a single paper that involve the organization and expression of complex data or ideas. Such papers should be written individually or in groups, provided there is a mechanism to account for individuals' contributions to the work. WCCs shall include careful and timely evaluations of writing so that deficiencies are identified and suggestions for improvement are offered for improvement on subsequent writing in the course. Enrollment should be limited to a level that allows instructors to adequately perform these tasks. Assessment of the student's writing competence shall determine at least 20% of the final course grade.

- H. In WICs and WCCs, the instructor shall provide timely feedback that clearly articulates the course's writing expectations and enables students to improve their subsequent writing in the course.
- I. In WICs and WCCs, instructors' policies and expectations about students' use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) tools and other emergent technologies on writing assignments shall be explicitly addressed on the course syllabus and in instruction. Instructors are encouraged to explore technology tools in collaboration with students and to include guidance on how students can use these tools to protect and develop their critical thinking skills and their writing's specificity, accuracy, creativity, voice, and style.
- J. The University Writing Proficiency Committee encourages instructors of WICs and WCCs to recognize the diversity of written English. Assessment of student writing performance should take into account changing norms in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and style across disciplines, contexts, and audiences.
- K. The University Writing Proficiency Committee recognizes that writing collaboratively is an important skill. Faculty may permit students to write collaboratively in WICs and WCCs as a part of group projects, provided that students are given feedback on the final written product and have ample opportunities elsewhere in the course to demonstrate growth in individual writing skills.

- L. To count toward fulfilling the GVAR, a WIC shall be passed with a grade of “C” (2.0) or better.
- M. In WICs and WCCs, the syllabus or policy document shall describe how the course satisfies the requirements above.
- N. Assessment of student writing performance should be used to inform decisions about class size in WICs. In order to maintain quality, every effort should be made to limit the enrollment. Best practice suggests class size of no more than 25 students.

II. Certification and Approval Process of Writing-Intensive and Writing Complementary Courses

- A. The Office of Academic Programs or a unit designated by the Provost, shall keep a record of all certified WICs and WCCs for each academic unit. After eight consecutive academic years, Writing-Intensive and Writing Complementary certification for a course shall expire. At least two years in advance of expiration, the Office of Academic Programs or a unit designated by the Provost, in consultation with the UWPC chair, shall notify the academic unit that the course shall be submitted for recertification using the online curriculum system.
- B. The academic unit’s curriculum committee and chair shall approve proposals for writing certification in the online curriculum system before the proposal is reviewed by the University Writing Proficiency Committee. All submissions for writing certification or recertification shall include a sample syllabus compliant with UPS 300.004 or policy document compliant with UPS 400.020 (for thesis courses), a representative writing assignment prompt, and a rubric or set of assessment standards for one writing assignment. To facilitate the review process, the proposer should use a highlighting tool to call attention to relevant sections of submitted course materials that address how the course satisfies the requirements for writing certification (i.e., Section I.E-IJ. above).
- C. An academic unit proposing a new course for which writing certification is sought for the first time shall indicate on the New Course Proposal form that Writing-Intensive or Writing Complementary certification is requested and concurrently submit a proposal for writing certification using the appropriate form in the online curriculum system.
- D. For courses that are already a part of the university curriculum, an academic unit seeking writing certification for the first time or seeking writing recertification shall submit a proposal for writing certification using the appropriate form in the online curriculum system.
- E. An academic unit intending to decertify a course that previously was designated a WIC or WCC shall submit a proposal for decertification using the appropriate form in the online curriculum system.
- F. Academic units shall submit a program change using the appropriate form in the online curriculum system whenever WICs or WCCs are newly certified or decertified.
- G. The UWPC shall inform both the academic unit and the Office of Academic Programs of its decision to certify, recertify, or decertify a course through the online curriculum system.
- H. A course that is denied Writing-Intensive or Writing-Complementary recertification will be allowed a grace period of three semesters to revise and resubmit for writing certification. If the course has been denied writing recertification or has been decertified, it shall no longer be specified as a WIC or WCC but may continue to be offered as a regular course.

III. Student Petitions and Approval Process

- A. Certification of graduation writing competence shall be transferable from one CSU campus to another. The UWPC has the responsibility to review student petitions to consider equivalent upper-division courses that were taken at colleges and universities other than a CSU and that meet the criteria of Writing-Intensive certification. Courses that met the GVAR at other CSUs will also meet the GVAR at CSUF. In consultation with advisors or other representatives from their major academic unit, students shall complete and submit a University petition form available from the Office of the Registrar.
- B. Student petitions shall be accompanied by evidence that the course aligns with the characteristics of WICs (see Section I.E above) and that the student has earned a grade of “C” or better in the course. This evidence may be demonstrated in the syllabus, sample assignment prompts, and/or sample writing from the course and the student’s transcript.
- C. The decision of the University Writing Proficiency Committee will be transmitted to the Office of the Registrar, which will communicate with the petitioning student and arrange for the course’s inclusion in the student’s Titan Degree Audit as meeting the GVAR if approved.
- D. Petitions will be handled at the discretion of the Chair of the University Writing Proficiency Committee or their designee during the summer.
- E. Students shall receive credit for having met the GVAR within their major upon completion of the academic unit-specific WIC or WCC sequence of courses with a grade of “C” or higher, as long as the course was certified as Writing-Intensive by the University Writing Proficiency Committee at the time the student was enrolled, independent of the student’s catalog year.
- F. Students need to fulfill the GVAR only once. In the event that a student changes majors or chooses a double major, the student is not obligated to take a second course fulfilling the GVAR unless the course is required to fulfill major degree requirements. Any other circumstances not covered by the above policies will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the University Writing Proficiency Committee.

Source: University Writing Proficiency Committee

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