

Guidelines for the FFC Writing-Intensive Requirement

Rationale for the Writing-Intensive (W) Requirement

Graduates should have the ability to articulate and support an argument clearly and coherently in writing. The incorporation of a writing-intensive course in addition to FIYS and Senior Studies (and in addition to CWR 100, for those students assigned to that course) emphasizes the importance of expository or argumentative writing, and provides the opportunity to build upon writing skills learned in other courses. Courses designated as writing intensive provide specific instruction in writing.

Learning Goal for the Writing-Intensive (W) Requirement

Courses tagged as satisfying the Writing-Intensive Course requirement must fulfill the learning goal of the course:

1. Upon successful completion of the writing-intensive requirement, students should be able to articulate a written argument clearly and support it coherently.

Criteria for Writing-Intensive Designation

1. The course must meet a minimum limit of pages/words of formal writing assigned in the semester (a minimum of 18-20 pages or 5000-6000 words).
 - a. Writing should be required at regular intervals throughout the term; i.e. a seminar with a single 20-page paper due at the end of the semester would not fulfill this requirement.
2. At least 50% of the course grade must be based on formal written work.
3. The instructor must provide writing-focused feedback on formal writing assignments.
 - a. This might include the following (among other possible options):
 - i. Written feedback on papers/assignments that addresses structure and strategy as well as content
 - ii. Required drafting or revision of papers, focusing on organization and style as well as content
 - iii. Individual meetings with students to discuss both the writing and the content of drafts/papers
4. The course must include formal classroom instruction in writing. This might include the following (among other possible options):
 - a. Modeling certain writing techniques/elements of papers in class
 - b. Discussion and dissection of the writing style of scholarly authors whose work is read for the class
 - c. Writing assignments for the course are designed to build upon one another, asking students to learn and then practice skills as they carry out increasingly sophisticated forms of written analysis
 - d. Writing assignments for the course fall into a variety of genres appropriate to the discipline, asking students to practice writing with different goals or for different audiences

- e. Modeling techniques to achieve specific writing outcomes, such as: editing for vague pronouns, passive constructions, or wordiness; strengthening thesis statements; creating outlines; developing effective annotation strategies
- f. Incorporating group work or peer review focused on writing.

Guidelines for FFC Designation: Writing-Intensive (W)

Writing-Intensive (W) tags are requested through either the New Course Proposal (NCP) process or the Course Change Request (CCR) process, both of which are governed by the Curricular Policies Committee (CPC). Both the NCP and CCR forms ask faculty to respond to the following prompts:

1. Will at least 50% of the course grade be based upon formal written work?
 - a. Reminder: Senior Studies courses cannot be designated as satisfying the Writing-Intensive designation.
2. Will the course assign a minimum of 18-20 pages/5000-6000 words of formal writing?
3. Describe how the instructor will provide writing-focused feedback on formal writing assignments.
4. Describe how the instructor will provide formal classroom instruction in writing.

Once approved by CPC, the course will begin carrying the new W tag in the following academic year because the College Catalog can only be updated annually (e.g., if approved by CPC 2021-2022, the new tag will become active for 2022-2023).

In rare situations, a Course Change Request (CCR) can lead to a “tag transition issue” where a course is being taught with new tags in mind, but the new tags won’t actually take effect until the following academic year. In such cases, a student who prefers that their records reflect the new (not-yet-official) tags can submit an individual appeal to the Academic Appeals Board (AAB) for this exception.

Assessment of the FFC Writing-Intensive (W) Requirement

In the year prior to assessment of the W requirement, the Assessment Committee will ask faculty to identify an assignment from late in the semester in which students would be able to demonstrate that students had met the learning goals for the W requirement and to send the prompt for that assignment to the committee.

At the end of the term, each faculty member will be prompted to send the assignments of three students drawn randomly from their class roster and stored by the Assessment Committee for future blind review.

In the year when the W requirement is assessed, the Assessment Committee will conduct a blind review of the stored W assignments using a standardized assessment rubric based on the W learning goals (see sample rubric below).

Sample Assessment Committee Rubric

Writing samples will be assessed on four categories—each category on a three-point scale:

1. **Function:** genre and purpose for writing includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).
2. **Argument:** content coherently arranged with analysis of appropriate depth and logically developed.
3. **Support:** use of sources and evidence.
4. **Clarity:** control of syntax, mechanics, voice, and style.