

Writing Across the Curriculum Semester Conversion

GOALS OF THE WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM PROGRAM

Wright State University's Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program has three goals:

- To help students grow as writers,
- To encourage students to use writing as a tool to discover and communicate ideas, and
- To introduce students to discipline-specific ways of writing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Wright State students will be able to produce writing that

- Demonstrates their understanding of course content,
- Is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task,
- Demonstrates the degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and
- Shows competency in standard edited American English.

RECOMMENDED GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

In addition to completing the writing requirement established in Element One (Communication) of the Wright State Core (the new General Education program), students must complete

- at least two designated integrated writing (IW) courses within the other elements of the Wright State Core and
- at least two designated IW courses in the major.

CHANGE OF DESIGNATION FROM WI TO IW

Courses in the program will be described as Integrated Writing (IW) courses rather than Writing Intensive. In IW courses, writing with guidance from the course instructor is an important component of the learning, but writing instruction may not be the main focus of the course. For this reason, members of the committee believe that the "integrated writing" designation is a more accurate representation of the goals of the program and of the approach to writing anticipated to be typical of the course.

DESCRIPTION OF IW COURSES

Courses should be designated as IW only when the learning outcomes of the course, typical mode of instruction, and class size are compatible with the IW outcomes identified above. IW courses should meet the following criteria:

- The ability to communicate effectively in writing is identified as an outcome of the course and the IW learning outcomes are listed on the syllabus.
- Criteria for evaluating writing are clearly articulated and provided to students.
- Students will receive response to their writing and have opportunities to use that response to improve their writing.
- Writing counts toward the course grade. Students should not be able to pass the course without completing the writing assignments.
- A significant amount of writing is required. Over the course of the semester, students should be expected to write informal texts, drafts, and graded drafts totaling approximately 2,000 words in IW Wright State Core courses and informal texts, drafts, and graded drafts totaling approximately 5,000 words in IW courses in the major. Disciplines for which word count seems an inadequate measure of student engagement in writing should propose an alternative that will meet the IW learning outcomes.
- Whenever resources permit, IW class enrollment should be limited to 25, the maximum size for literature discussion classes recommended by both the National Council of Teachers of English

and the Association of Departments of English. However, approval of proposed IW courses will not hinge on class size alone. Larger classes designated as IW should provide some means of giving timely, meaningful individual responses to student writing (e.g., through the use of trained graduate teaching assistants).

APPROVAL OF IW DESIGNATION

The IW designation for a course must be approved by the WAC Committee, a standing subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee. Because approval is limited to the IW designation, it can be built into the workflow course inventory and modification procedure at the point deemed most appropriate.

IW COURSE INVENTORY

There should be a stable inventory of IW courses in the Wright State Core and in the major. Courses identified as IW will be uniformly offered as IW. That is, all sections of IW courses should be IW whenever that course is offered, thus allowing students to plan reliably and simplifying departments' scheduling procedures.

IW GRADE

This WAC program eliminates the need for a separate grade for an IW component of a course. The ability to communicate effectively in writing is identified as a significant course outcome of all IW courses, writing is factored into the course grade in all IW courses, and there is a stable inventory of clearly designated IW courses so that no separate tracking is required. Therefore, there is no need for a separate grade for writing.

PREREQUISITE FOR IW COURSES IN THE MAJOR

The WAC program approved by the General Faculty and the Academic Council in 1995 included this stipulation: "Successful completion of Area One General Education writing courses (ENG 101 and 102) is a prerequisite for all Writing Intensive courses in the major." Working in conjunction with the Wright State Core Committee, the WAC Committee will develop an appropriate prerequisite for IW courses in the major.

TRANSFER, TRANSITION, AND RETURNING STUDENTS

Transfer Students—IW Requirements in Wright State Core

Transfer students can satisfy the IW requirements in the Wright State Core in the following ways:

- Transfer students who have completed the Ohio Transfer Module will be considered as having met the IW requirement in the Wright State Core.
- Transfer students who have completed the equivalent of the Wright State Core when they matriculate at Wright State will be considered as having met the IW requirement in the Wright State Core.
- Transfer students who have completed the equivalent of less than 50% (less than 19 semester hours) of the Wright State Core when they matriculate at Wright State must complete two IW courses in the Wright State Core.
- Transfer students who have completed the equivalent of 50-75% (19-28 semester hours) of the Wright State Core when they matriculate must complete one IW course within the Wright State Core.
- Transfer students who have already completed the equivalent of 75% or more of the Wright State Core may satisfy the IW requirement by completing one IW course in the Wright State Core or by preparing an acceptable portfolio that includes writing on demand or by completing an approved advanced writing course.

Transfer Students—IW Requirements in the Major

All transfer students must satisfy the IW requirement in the major either by completing two IW courses at Wright State or by completing an independent writing project or independent reading course as described below.

Transition and Returning Students—IW Requirements in Wright State Core

Transition and returning students can satisfy the IW requirements in the Wright State Core in the following ways:

- Transition and returning students who have completed the General Education requirements in effect when they matriculated will be considered as having met the IW requirement in the Wright State Core.
- Transition and returning students who have completed three or more WI courses in the current General Education program will be considered to have completed the IW requirement for the Wright State Core.
- Students who have completed two WI courses in the current General Education program must complete at least one IW course in the Wright State Core.
- Students who have completed one WI course in the current General Education program must complete at least two IW courses in the Wright State Core.

Returning, transfer, transition, or other students who cannot successfully complete two IW courses in the Wright State Core (excluding the Wright State Core writing requirement) may satisfy the IW requirement in any of the following ways:

- pass one IW course in the Wright State Core and earn a grade of C or better in an approved advanced writing course.
- pass one IW course in the Wright State Core and prepare an acceptable portfolio that includes writing on demand.
- earn a grade of C or better in an approved advanced writing course and prepare an acceptable portfolio that includes writing on demand.
- complete an additional IW course in the major beyond the two required IW courses in the major.

The above options are limited to meeting the IW requirement for the Wright State Core.

Transition and Returning Students—IW Requirements in the Major

All students must complete at least two courses designated either WI (quarter courses) or IW (semester courses) in the major. Any combination of WI and IW courses will satisfy this requirement. Returning, transfer, transition, or other students who cannot successfully complete two IW or WI courses in the major may satisfy this requirement by completing an independent writing project within the program or by taking a designated IW independent reading course. Each department will designate the appropriate course needed to complete the requirement. Students may use an independent writing project or designated IW independent reading course to fulfill only one of the two-course requirement. This option is limited to fulfilling the IW requirement in the major. Whenever changes to the curriculum result in a redistribution of IW courses in the major, departments should ensure that the individual advising plans for transition students address the IW requirement in the major.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

Assessment of the WAC program will be integrated into existing assessment efforts at the university:

- The WAC Committee will work with academic departments to address the student WAC learning outcomes as part of their annual assessment.
- The WAC Committee will work with the Wright State Core Committee to integrate the student WAC learning outcomes into WSC assessment activities.

- The WAC Committee will work with the Undergraduate Academic Program Review Committee to include the student WAC learning outcomes as part of the Academic Program Review procedure.
- The WAC Committee will continue to solicit feedback from faculty (e.g., via annual survey of faculty teaching WI courses) and students (e.g., via annual assessment of GE outcomes administered each spring).
- Following the third year of semester implementation (AY 2014-15), Faculty Senate should call for a review of the program, with particular emphasis on the findings of departmental and Wright State Core assessment activities.

AN ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION FOR ONGOING RESEARCH

In the process of developing this proposal, the members of the committee researched nationally recognized writing programs at a number of schools (the University of Denver, UC Davis, Washington State, Indiana University, North Carolina State, and others). Program descriptions at these schools suggested a high degree of integration among the various constituents of their writing programs—including the writing course(s) required of all students, advanced courses for writing in the disciplines, the WAC program, the writing center, and sometimes faculty development offices.

Committee members believe that such integration would be extremely helpful in achieving the goals of the WAC program. At the same time, we recognize that a recommendation for what might well be significant changes is outside the scope of the present committee's charge; moreover, it would require longer than the time allotted for converting the WAC program to carry out additional research and to engage in substantial discussions with potential stakeholders. Therefore, the committee recommends the appointment of a group charged to investigate ways of achieving greater integration of the writing programs at Wright State and to report its findings and any recommendations to the appropriate university-level body. Should such a group be appointed, its efforts should be coordinated with the assessment activities recommended above.