

Curriculum Committee Guidelines for the Writing Requirement

Catalog description of the Writing Requirement

Writing Requirement

Students fulfill the writing requirement by completing a foundation requirement and a requirement in the major.

Foundation requirement in expository writing: Students are required to complete successfully one designated expository writing course by the end of the sophomore year. Students placed in EN103 Writing Seminar I must complete this prerequisite course by the end of the first year. Designated writing courses offered by the English Department (EN105, 105H, or 110) and in various disciplines can be taken to fulfill the expository writing requirement. Skidmore's writing program includes tutorial help at the Writing Center.

Writing requirement in the major: During the 2006–07 academic year, the Skidmore Faculty approved a proposal that enhances the writing requirement for any student in the Class of 2012 and beyond. This second component is to be determined by each department or program and will provide students with opportunities to learn and practice the particular conventions of writing within their discipline. Departments and programs will determine the exact nature of the requirement, which must be approved by the Curriculum Committee. The specifics will be outlined in the description of the major and communicated to students at the point when the major declaration is made.

Student learning goals

- **Foundation requirement in expository writing:** The foundation component of the Writing Requirement, which students typically fulfill with either EN105 or a 100-level Writing Intensive (WI) course, is meant to immerse students in the process of writing informed by critical reading and careful reasoning. Special attention is given to developing ideas, writing from sources, organizing material, and revising drafts. Additional emphasis is on grammar, style, and formal conventions of writing. Students lacking adequate preparation or experience in expository writing will continue to be placed in EN 103: Writing Seminar I. EN 103 does not fulfill the foundation requirement.
- **Writing requirement in the major:** The pedagogical rationale for a second component to the Writing Requirement determined by each department or program is to provide students with opportunities to learn and practice the particular conventions of writing within their discipline. Departments and programs are encouraged to consider the benefits of a requirement that uses a developmental approach that will enable students to improve their writing incrementally. *Departments and programs will determine the exact nature of the second component of the writing requirement in a particular major.* Departments and programs are encouraged to develop creative alternatives, which might include:
 - One or more Writing-Enhanced (WE) courses approved by the department or program (see appendix for WE guidelines)
 - One or more Writing-Intensive (WI) courses (see appendix for WI guidelines)

- 1-credit add-ons to existing courses
- A capstone experience
- A portfolio
- Writing courses taught in another department or program (with approval of the appropriate department chair or program director)

The above list is offered as a series of examples and is not meant to exhaust the possibilities. Departments and programs may also want to identify strong student writers for peer tutoring in the major and provide peer tutors with discipline-specific training either in the department or through the Writing Center.

College Curriculum Committee will look for the following:

- Catalog copy that identifies the particular writing goals for students majoring in the discipline
- Description of a writing requirement within the major that seeks to achieve these goals for all students
- Proposals for WI or WE courses at the 100-, 200-, or 300-level that will be delivered regularly, if appropriate to the plan for the major (see appendix WI and WE guidelines).
- Proposals for course revisions, if appropriate to the plan for the major
- A description of the resource implications (if any) for delivering the new requirement in the major
- A description of the process for assessing how students learn writing in the major

Note that students may not double count a foundation course in expository writing as fulfilling the writing requirement in the major. When developing a writing requirement in the major, a department or program may not require students to take a specific course to fulfill the foundation requirement.

Procedures

Departments and programs should submit the Curriculum Committee forms when requesting a change in the major or when proposing a new course or a substantial change to an existing course. All proposals for a change in the major must include a Catalog description of the major writing requirement. All course proposals must include a proposed syllabus for each course that is part of the writing requirement in the major. As with any curriculum proposal, the Associate Dean of the Faculty and the Curriculum Committee will review the resource implications of the writing requirement.

The Curriculum Committee expects all proposals for writing requirements in each major to be submitted by December 15, 2009. This due date ensures that the Class of 2012 will be notified of the writing requirement by the time they are expected to declare a major at the end of the second year of study at Skidmore. If departments and programs plan to phase in the requirement, the proposal should include specifics regarding implementation.

From the Committee on Educational Policies and Programs motion on a new Writing Program (approved 3/30/07); approved by Curriculum Committee (11/10/08)

Appendix

Writing Intensive (WI) and Writing Enhanced (WE) course guidelines

When proposing to designate new or existing courses as writing courses, faculty must indicate whether the course meets the guidelines for WI or WE course.

- The **Writing Intensive** Guidelines are as follows:
 - 1) each week or at least bi-weekly, students should **write drafts and revisions**, over the course of the semester producing several finished works (essays, summaries, research papers, reports and so forth). The length of the papers may vary as appropriate to the discipline and the instructor's intentions, but the general expectation is that completed papers will total twenty-five or more pages of formal writing. Faculty might also choose to use journal-writing and other less structured writing exercises to augment the process of developing formal papers;
 - 2) a writing-intensive course must include, at a number of points during the semester, classroom **activities which examine the writing process**. These normally include generating ideas and principles of organization; gathering and documenting information; determining an appropriate audience and voice; structuring the paper as a whole; revising; peer critiquing; attending to questions of grammar, syntax, and word usage;
 - 3) writing-intensive courses should introduce students to the **revision process** and provide them with the opportunity to revise. The process of revision must be an integral part of the writing assignments and instruction. Whether revision is built into the assignment or done as an additional graded paper will be a matter for each instructor to decide.
- The **Writing Enhanced** Guidelines are as follows:
 - 1) students should have **repeated writing experiences** of one-, two, and/or three-five page writing assignments throughout the course. The length of the papers may vary as appropriate to the discipline and the instructor's intentions, with a suggested total of 10-20 pages for the semester. This writing can take a variety of forms (e.g., lab reports, essays, research papers, response papers, journals, etc.). These assignments may be in addition to longer writing assignments (particularly final projects).
 - 2) students should receive **feedback** from the faculty on these assignments – in writing and/or in small group or one-on-one tutorials; faculty may choose to employ peer critiques of student writing as well. *The intention of feedback is to help students practice, develop, or build upon their writing skills throughout the course;*
 - 3) students should have the **opportunity to revise** some of their writing. The faculty can choose to play an active role in the revision process, or, alternatively, the faculty could require the students to take their written work to the Writing Center, revise and then submit to the faculty the first and final drafts of their work. Faculty may also want to consider using peer critiques or use peer tutors identified by the department or program.