

Guidelines for the Writing Intensive (WI) General Education Course Requirement

I. General Principles

(Writing Board recommendations, stated as submitted to departments in the survey, Summer, 2004, and included in the Interim General Education Committee recommendation for inclusion of the WI requirement in the revised General Education program, as approved by the Faculty Senate, November, 2004)

Writing Intensive Courses

1. Engage students in writing as a skill for critical inquiry and/or scholarly research;
2. Require students to write frequently in and/or out of class;
3. Provide useful feedback to students regarding their writing;
4. Discuss the work students are doing as writers at various points during the term.

Writing Intensive courses may also fulfill major or General Education requirements, or serve as electives.

II. General Guidelines

Writing Intensive Courses should:

1. Require effective writing for critical inquiry and/or the presentation of scholarly research.
2. Require students to submit at least 3000-3750 words (12-15 standard pages) of graded finished written assignments. (In-class tests, drafts, un-graded journals, exercises, and similar informal assignments are considered supplemental.)
3. Provide opportunities for extensive feedback and/or revision, typically on two or more papers outside of class (if a single term paper is used, there must be an opportunity for a formal revision and feedback stage);
4. Evaluate students on the basis of effective writing as well as content.
5. Use class time to provide guidelines for written assignments and address effective writing in the academic discipline.
6. Include consideration of the ways in which the principle and practice of academic integrity apply to written assignment (consistent with UMBC's Academic Integrity Policy).
7. State in the syllabus the specific ways in which the course fulfills the WI requirement.

Since the types of effective writing assignments will vary among faculty and disciplines, a variety of forms may be appropriate. (See Appendix II below for samples of Writing Intensive course models from recent UMBC Writing Grant recipients.)

III. Implementation

1. Proposals: All courses proposed for WI designation must be submitted for approval to the General Education Committee, using a form which asks the department to address the provisions of the General Guidelines and to submit a course syllabus, including specific writing requirements.
2. Review: The General Education Committee shall periodically review approved courses to determine if they continue to meet WI General Guidelines (the suggested period for review is every three years). In cases where they do not, the department will have an opportunity to make the required changes; otherwise the course will no longer carry WI designation.

IV. Institutional Expectations and Support

1. The Writing Intensive requirement will necessitate participation from all academic departments. It is the expectation that every department will develop and provide one or more Writing Intensive-designated courses. The eventual goal should be for each department to provide sufficient opportunities for students to complete the WI requirement by taking courses within the major.
2. The Writing Intensive course requirement should be accompanied by appropriate institutional support for faculty. Such support would include the creation of a Faculty writing resource center, staffed as appropriate, to a) support faculty in the development and improvement of writing courses, b) provide appropriate resources to faculty for effective inclusion of writing through such means as sample syllabi, consultation, workshops, references (possibly including an effective web site with information on the writing program and links to useful resources), and c) provide guidance to the General Education Committee in matters related to writing requirements.
3. The Writing Intensive course requirement must be accompanied by strong leadership and support from UMBC faculty governance and the campus administration. Such leadership would include support from the Faculty Senate through the permanent General Education Committee and from the UMBC administration, including the President, Provost, and Academic Deans. Support would also include serious consideration of contribution to the General Education writing requirements among the factors in the distribution of instructional resources, faculty lines, and budget across the disciplines and among all academic departments.