WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES (WIC)

Student Learning Outcomes (must appear on syllabus and be assessed)

Students in Writing Intensive courses shall:

1. Develop and articulate content knowledge and critical thinking in the discipline through frequent practice of informal and formal writing.
2. Demonstrate knowledge/understanding of audience expectations, genres, and conventions appropriate to communicating in the discipline.
3. Demonstrate the ability to compose a document of at least 2000 words through multiple aspects of writing, including brainstorming, drafting, using sources appropriately, and revising comprehensively after receiving feedback on a draft.

Criteria for course approval and continuation

The guidelines below explain the five WIC criteria adopted by the OSU Faculty Senate as part of the Baccalaureate Core.

Criterion 1: Writing intensive courses shall use student writing as a significant approach to learning.

To meet this criterion, courses shall:

1. Give students regular and frequent opportunities to write, including both graded and ungraded writing;
2. Include at least one paper that addresses a controversial question and that asks students to integrate information from more than one source;
3. Require at least 5,000 words (including drafts, in-class writing, informal papers, and polished papers); 2,000 words of this total should be in polished papers which students have revised after receiving feedback and criticism;
4. Restrict enrollments to manageable size (ideally no more than 20 students).

Ungraded writing could include course journals; in-class writing focusing on a particular problem, concept, or reading; short (one page or less) summaries of readings; short lists of questions or answers to questions, and the like. Whatever their form, such short (and usually) unrevised assignments ask students to write about what they read and about what they hear in class. This writing could be simply recorded as turned in (or not), or it could be graded quickly on some sort of + (top quality), - (incomplete) scale. Graded writing could include academic essays, position papers, microthemes, responses to cases, and the like. Students should expect to revise graded writing based on feedback and criticism.

Criterion 2: Writing intensive courses shall base a significant part of the grade on evaluation of writing.

Grades for papers should form at least 30% of the overall grade, with at least 25% of the overall course grade based on evaluation of individually written papers. Collaborative writing projects are appropriate in WIC courses, but individually written papers which have been revised after feedback must also be a significant part of the grade. Writing intensive courses may also use various tests or quizzes which do not involve writing.
Criterion 3: Writing-intensive courses shall focus on content related to the major disciplines and be taught by faculty knowledgeable about that discipline.

A writing intensive course should be a course, or sequence of courses, in the discipline and integral to the degree program. The course should have a structured syllabus with disciplinary content and an enrollment of students who interact with each other and with their professor on a regular term schedule. Part of the learning in a WIC course occurs when students share, discuss, and respond to each others’ written work in the context of the common course content over a period of time. Writing intensive courses are not English courses or grammar and punctuation courses; they are discipline courses which use writing tasks to help students learn.

Criterion 4: Writing intensive courses shall discuss writing issues pertinent to that discipline, as such issues apply both academically and professionally.

In determining the course content for a writing intensive course, instructors should also include some discussion of how writing is used by graduate/professionals in that particular discipline. Thus a writing intensive course in engineering should include discussion of the writing done by working engineers, and discussion of what makes that writing effective or convincing. In some fields, this discussion might apply to the kinds of writing done in graduate school.

Criterion 5: Writing intensive courses shall be upper division.

The WIC requirement must total 3 or more credit hours. In the case of a department whose WIC requirement is satisfied by a series of courses, WIC credit will be awarded upon satisfactory completion of the entire sequence.

1. Ideally, WIC courses are restricted to 20 students. If anticipated enrollment is greater than the ideal maximum number of students, please explain how faculty will manage the work load.

Rationale

Beyond the writing skills and practice gained in WR I and WR II courses, students need to learn to write as members of the discipline or disciplines in which they have chosen to major. Writing Intensive courses, which are taken in the major, typically in the junior or senior year, introduce students to the genres, purposes, audiences, content, and conventions of writing in the major. Student writers gain experience with the resources used in their field and the formats and documentation style used to communicate knowledge. Through inquiry-based writing in the discipline, students gain understanding and knowledge of disciplinary goals and concepts. Students are encouraged to complete Writing I and Writing II requirements before enrolling in their WIC course.