

ADVANCED WRITTEN & ORAL COMMUNICATION

Foundation Document Criteria for General Education Certification

Approved by the Advanced Writing Committee June 2018

Requirement Purpose

The BYU Mission Statement and the Aims of a BYU Education identify the ability to communicate effectively as a primary skill that students should acquire in a broad university education. Writing forms the foundation of both a method of learning and a way to communicate that learning. Effective writing requires students to “engage successfully in logical reasoning, critical analysis, moral discrimination, creative imagination, and independent thought” (Aims).

The advanced written and oral communication requirement builds on first-year writing by introducing students to discipline-specific writing. In courses that fulfill this requirement, students learn to write and present for multiple audiences, including specific disciplinary, professional, or public audiences. They learn the rigor of disciplinary writing, reading, and research and refine their skills of written and oral expression.

Learning Outcomes

1. **Disciplinary Writing.** Students will demonstrate rhetorical knowledge by writing clearly; focusing on a well-defined purpose; using conventions of format and structure fitting the discourse community; arguing appropriately; and adopting a voice, tone, and level of formality suited to specialized academic, professional, or public audiences. Students will produce, among other assignments, a substantive single-authored research paper, and they will show rhetorical flexibility by writing at least once for a general audience.
2. **Academic Research.** Students will use appropriate research tools and processes, including library research. Students will identify and evaluate sources, retrieve and evaluate data, take notes, and follow conventions of quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. They will cite sources properly and demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues related to research, including how to avoid plagiarism.
3. **Writing Processes.** Students will prewrite, draft, revise, edit, and proofread. The course should support these skills with instruction in some of the following processes: collecting data, finding and synthesizing evidence, and creating sound arguments; organizing the material for a paper; writing successive drafts of the same paper; writing collaboratively; peer reviewing; revising; improving style; editing grammar, usage, and punctuation; and using conventional formats. These processes will reflect practice of inquiry within the appropriate discourse community.
4. **Oral Communication.** Students will effectively give a formal oral presentation that requires public speaking skills, presentation media, and a prepared message. Students will

focus on a topic, adapt it to the understanding of a particular audience, organize the main points coherently and support them with adequate detail, and deliver a message effectively using appropriate visuals. The delivery could occur in a poster conference, an in-class presentation, as part of an undergraduate research conference or professional conference, or as part of a public presentation.

5. **Knowledge of Conventions.** Students will understand the genres, forms, styles, and documentation conventions of writing for their discourse community. They will also gain skills in editing, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Course Characteristics

1. **Writing as a Primary Emphasis.** This primary emphasis manifests itself in several ways:
 - a. direct instruction in writing concepts and processes (An advanced writing course differs from a writing-intensive course, which may not have writing instruction as a primary emphasis.)
 - b. substantial polished writing (typically several assignments with 25 or more total pages)
 - c. feedback from the instructor using clearly articulated criteria on work in progress and on final drafts
2. **Course Sequencing.** The AWOC requirement may be distributed over more than one course. Our university research shows the most effective advanced writing courses are taught within departments and consist of a sophomore writing class in the major followed by a capstone writing course the senior year. A department also may combine a research course with a seminar course with the AWOC requirements spread throughout both courses.
3. **Course Size.** According to the National Council for Teachers of English and other researchers, the optimal size for a writing class is 20 students per section (Horning 2007). Courses receiving AWOC credit should be no larger than 30 students. Departments who distribute this requirement over a sequence can mitigate a relatively large class in one part of the sequence by ensuring that students have smaller classes in another part. For example, a relatively large research class can be balanced with a small seminar class (fewer than 30 students). TAs will be adequately trained and closely supervised by faculty to help with comments on smaller assignments, but faculty should comment on and grade the substantive research paper.
4. **Frequency.** To enhance writing pedagogy, writing classes should meet regularly either as an entire class or in conference with the teacher.
5. **Teacher Qualifications.** Teachers of AWOC should themselves be effective writers. In addition, because writing pedagogy is not typically part of the academic training of most college faculty, AWOC teachers must be qualified to teach writing through one of the following:
 - a. recent experience teaching advanced written and oral communication
 - b. an approved internship with an experienced teacher
 - c. an approved seminar on methods of teaching writing

Courses receiving AWOC credit should be taught by faculty with appropriate graduate degrees, or graduate students who have both taken a graduate course on teaching writing and interned with an experienced advanced writing teacher.

Reference

Horning, Alice. "The Definitive Article on Class Size." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 31, no. 1-2, 2007, pp.11-34