

THE UNDERGRADUATE WRITING PROGRAM

Writing is more than simply a means of communication, and good writing is a skill that should be mastered by all students. Writing is also a means of thinking and learning, and as such it is an important tool that faculty can use as part of the learning process. In order to develop good writing in all students, Widener University has developed a university-wide writing program that consists of four parts:

FRESHMAN COMPOSITION COURSE

All students must complete the freshman composition course ENGL 101 Reading, Thinking, and Writing. Honors students instead complete ENGL 103 Freshman Honors English. All students are required to complete a 30-minute writing sample prior to placement in ENGL 101. Students who score below level 3 (on the NTE Scoring Guide, which ranges from 0 to 6) must complete ENGL 100 Fundamentals of English before they can take ENGL 101. Students whose placement in ENGL 101 is marginal may be required to take a four-contact-hour section of ENGL 101.

WRITING ENRICHED COURSES

In addition to ENGL 101, all students must complete at least four courses (preferably one per year) that are designated as writing enriched. Writing enriched courses have three or more writing assignments that include student editing and revision so that students learn to correct their writing errors. The multiple writing assignments, including revisions, total at least 25 pages. An emphasis on “writing to learn” assignments can be found in many of these courses. Writing enriched courses are specifically designated on the schedule of course offerings. Individual schools and certain majors within the College of Arts and Sciences may require specific courses to satisfy this requirement. These courses are designated in the detailed curriculum ladders that list the requirements for each school and major, and may total more than four. Any course taken to satisfy the writing enriched requirement may not be taken on a pass/no pass basis. Transfer courses do not count as writing enriched courses.

PERIODIC WRITING SAMPLE

Each school/college periodically uses a writing sample administered by the Writing Center to follow and document the writing progress of their students. Students who need to raise their level of writing have the opportunity to complete a personal writing instruction plan coordinated by the Writing Center. Alternatively, students with serious deficiencies also have the option to take an appropriate course that addresses the deficiencies.

The following table lists the semesters in which each school/college requires the writing sample administered by the Writing Center. The table also gives the minimum score students are expected to obtain without having to complete additional work.

| Semester | School/Major | Minimum Score |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Freshman Fall | Education | 3 |
| Sophomore Fall | Education, A&S, Nursing, Business | 4 |
| Sophomore Spring | Social Work, Engineering | 4 |
| Junior Fall | Education, A&S, Nursing, Business | 5 |
| Junior Spring | Social Work, Hospitality | 5 |

DEMONSTRATION OF LEVEL 5 WRITING COMPETENCY FOR GRADUATING SENIORS

Each school/college has the responsibility for assessing the writing level of graduating seniors. The following use the writing sample administered by the Writing Center to certify that graduating seniors have attained level 5 competency: Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Human Service Professions, and Hospitality Management. Level 5 competency will be demonstrated by students in the School of Nursing in NURS 452 The Nurse as a Professional, and level 5 competency will be demonstrated by students in the School of Engineering in the Senior Project, ENGR 401–402, or equivalent.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WRITING PROGRAM FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

Initial Writing Sample—Transfer students will complete the writing sample during the summer orientation for transfer students. Transfer students who do not come to the summer orientation will complete the writing sample during their first semester on campus. The writing sample is administered by the Writing Center.

Writing Enriched Courses—Transfer students may be required to take fewer than four writing enriched courses according to the following schedule:

| <i>A student transferring in as a:</i> | <i>Must complete:</i> |
|--|----------------------------|
| Freshman | 4 writing enriched courses |
| Sophomore | 3 writing enriched courses |
| Junior and beyond | 2 writing enriched courses |

Transfer students, depending on their major, may be required to take specific courses in order to complete their degree that are also designated writing enriched. Consequently, they may need to complete more than the minimum two or three writing enriched courses listed above.

For more information on the undergraduate writing program, students should check with their dean’s office.

PROGRAM SUPPORT—WRITING CENTER

The university maintains a Writing Center to assist students with writing assignments in any course. Professional tutors in the center work individually with students and coordinate their efforts with instructors. The center is equipped with a network of computers for students to use. Faculty encourage students to use the center from the first draft of an assignment through to the final revision. Call the center at 610-499-4332 for more information.

REGISTRATION FOR ADVANCED COURSES

Registration for all courses beyond those taken in the freshman year will be held before the end of the preceding semester. The university reserves the right to withdraw any course for which fewer than eight students register.

CREDIT FOR ACTIVITIES

Students who are members of the Widener University Wind Ensemble, Concert Choir, Gospel Choir, String Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Chorale, Theatre Widener, or Dome staff are eligible to receive academic credit for participation in these activities. To receive credit, students must participate in a given activity for a minimum of four consecutive semesters. A maximum of four credits in any one activity and a total of eight credits in all activities may be applied toward fulfillment of graduation requirements. These credits may be used only as free electives.

CREDIT BY EXAMINATION

It is not intended that each student attend Widener for eight regular semesters to earn the bachelor’s degree although this is the normal length of time prescribed for the average student. It is intended that the degree be awarded whenever equivalent mastery can be demonstrated with a minimum requirement of completion of 45 semester hours of study at the university, including the completion of a minimum of 50 percent of credits in the student’s major.

Theoretically, a well-read student can earn up to two years of credit in some fields via the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). Lesser amounts of credit can be earned in all fields. Those entering directly from high school can earn credit via the Advanced Placement (AP) program offered in many secondary schools today. Practicum courses exist that provide credit for supervised student work in community agencies, government, etc. The co-op (intern) program in business allows a student to work for a total of 12 months in industry while still satisfying all requirements for the degree within four years of attendance.