

Draft Guidelines for Writing-Intensive Courses

(11/14)

Students are required to complete four course sections designated as “W - Writing-Intensive” (some transfer students will complete fewer than four); at least one “W” section must be completed after the student has completed 60 credits. “W” sections, at all course levels, create class environments that provide students with opportunities to use writing as an essential tool for learning course material and for engaging in the academic and professional discipline specific conversations. Online and hybrid sections are not necessarily writing-intensive. The post-60 credit section should be a 300- or above-level course within the student’s major.

Guidelines for departments/programs

Departments/programs will:

- Establish the minimum amount and types of writing required in that discipline’s “W” sections, which may differ as appropriate to the course level (i.e., general education, introductory, advanced-major, etc.).
- Establish and maintain minimum standards of acceptable student writing required to earn passing grades in “W” sections, as appropriate to the course level.
- Limit the class size of “W” sections to 22 students.

Guidelines for instructors

Instructors will:

- *Infuse writing*
 - Writing and discussion of writing (including opportunities for students to reflect on their processes and progress as writers) should occur throughout the semester.
 - Student learning outcomes for “W” sections should be included in the syllabus.

For ideas on designing a writing-intensive course section, see:

<http://www.lehman.edu/academics/wac/designing-enhanced-course.php>

For models of writing-intensive guidelines in upper-division courses (from a variety of disciplines), see: <http://www.lehman.edu/academics/wac/designing-enhanced-course.php>

- *Model writing*
 - Instructors should provide models of writing and address the purposes and key features of writing.
 - Instructors should discuss the nature and uses of evidence and citation.
 - Instructors should explore with students the rhetorical strategies employed in assigned readings and link these to student writing assignments.

- *Assign writing*
 - Instructors should assign informal (“low-stakes”) writing, which may or may not be graded, to identify where students need additional instruction or support.
 - Instructors should assign formal writing that attends to audience, genre and media of the discipline/profession.
 - Major formal writing assignments should be scaffolded, providing opportunities for idea development, multiple drafts, and revisions.

For informal writing ideas, see:

<http://www.lehman.edu/academics/wac/promote-engagement-participation.php>

For tips on creating effective assignments, see:

<http://www.lehman.edu/academics/wac/effective-writing-assignments.php>

- *Support writing*
 - Assignments should be distributed in writing that makes explicit expectations and assessment criteria.
 - Written feedback on early drafts to support the revision of student writing should be provided.
 - Patterns of error evident across groups of students and specific to individual students should be addressed.

For ideas on supporting student revision, see:

<http://www.lehman.edu/academics/wac/student-revisions.php>

For tips on addressing surface errors in students’ writing, see:

<http://www.lehman.edu/academics/wac/surface-error.php>

The following student learning outcomes are central to writing-intensive course sections and should appear in syllabi of “W” sections:

Students in writing-intensive course sections will:

- Understand, summarize, synthesize, and critique course material using informal and formal writing.
- Employ writing as an essential tool for learning course material.
- Formulate and support a central argument or claim in their formal writing assignments, effectively integrating and organizing evidence to support their claims.
- Practice writing for different purposes, audiences, and in various media.
- Compose multiple drafts to revise and improve writing.
- Apply feedback from faculty and/or peers during the revision process.
- Follow the writing conventions of the discipline and its related professions.
- Cite sources according to the preferred style guidelines of a particular discipline.
- Follow the conventions of English grammar and mechanics in their writing.

For further pedagogical recommendations, additional readings, and upcoming workshops or individual consultations, contact the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) coordinators.

<http://www.lehman.edu/academics/wac/index.php>