



University Policy Statement

UPS 320.020

UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENTS

One of the University-wide Learning Goals is the ability to communicate clearly, effectively and persuasively, both orally and in writing (UPS 300.003). Students have opportunities to learn about and practice effective writing in courses certified as Upper-Division Writing Courses. The University Writing Proficiency Committee encourages instructors to recognize the diversity of written English. Assessment of student writing performance should take into account changing norms in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and style across disciplines, contexts, and audiences.

I. Undergraduate Upper-Division Writing Requirement

- A. Each academic unit offering an undergraduate major shall specify which upper-division course (or courses) shall meet the upper-division writing requirement (UDWR) of that major. These courses must have been UDWR-certified by the University Writing Proficiency Committee as meeting the standards of an “intensive writing course,” an upper-division undergraduate thesis course (see UPS 400.020), or a “complementary writing course.” Writing courses may be offered by the major-granting academic unit or by another academic unit, making them support courses (see UPS 411.105 on support courses). No writing courses may be designated in another academic unit without that unit’s approval. Courses UDWR-certified by the University Writing Proficiency Committee shall require students to demonstrate the ability to write at a college level consistent with the expectations for writing competence established in Executive Order 665 (EO 665).
- B. It is suggested the course(s) be taken no later than the student having earned 90 units of coursework that count toward their degree (EO 665).
- C. Courses that are UDWR-certified as writing-intensive or writing-complementary courses shall be described as such under each academic unit’s requirements in the university catalog and in the course syllabus.
- D. Academic units may specify either one “intensive writing course” (at least three units), which has writing instruction as its primary objective, an upper-division undergraduate thesis course (for a total of three units), or two or more “complementary writing courses” (a total of at least six units), which have writing instruction as their secondary objective (with the primary objective normally consisting of instruction in fields of knowledge pertaining to the major).
- E. Writing competence shall be demonstrated in intensive writing and thesis courses by the students’ ability to:
 - actively read texts or other materials using a variety of strategies (e.g., highlighting, annotating, visually organizing);

- effectively apply writing processes, including researching, drafting, and revising;
- analyze, organize, synthesize, and express their own and other's data or ideas;
- evaluate and incorporate source materials;
- use disciplinary conventions appropriate for relevant audiences and purposes;
- meet the standards and/or content mastery established by an instructor's rubric;
- apply grammar, syntax, punctuation, style, and other editing conventions.

In intensive writing courses, students shall individually write multiple papers or multiple drafts of a single paper that involve the organization and expression of complex data or ideas. Thesis courses shall require that students produce a substantial written original work based on individual research (see UPS 400.020). Intensive writing and thesis courses shall include careful and timely evaluations of writing so that deficiencies are identified and suggestions for improvement are offered on subsequent writing in the course. Assessment of the student's writing competence shall determine at least 60% of the final course grade.

The syllabi or policy documents of intensive writing and thesis courses shall describe how the course satisfies these intensive writing or thesis requirements.

F. Writing competence shall be demonstrated in complementary writing courses by the students' ability to:

- analyze, organize, synthesize, and express their own and other's data or ideas;
- evaluate, incorporate and cite source materials;
- use disciplinary conventions appropriate for relevant audiences and purposes;
- apply grammar, syntax, punctuation, style, and other editing conventions.

In complementary writing courses, students shall write multiple papers or multiple drafts of a single paper that involve the organization and expression of complex data or ideas. Such papers should be written individually. Complementary writing courses shall include careful and timely evaluations of writing so that deficiencies are identified and suggestions for improvement are offered for improvement on subsequent writing in the course. Enrollment should be limited to a level that allows instructors to adequately perform these tasks. Assessment of the student's writing competence shall determine at least 20% of the final course grade.

The syllabi of complementary writing courses shall make it clear how the above requirements are met.

G. Assessment of student writing performance should be used to inform decisions about class size in intensive and complementary writing courses. In order to maintain quality, every effort should be made to limit the enrollment. Best practice suggests class size of no more than 25 students in writing intensive classes.

H. The University Writing Proficiency Committee recognizes that writing collaboratively is an important skill. Faculty may permit students to write collaboratively in Upper Division Writing Courses as a part of group projects, provided that students are given feedback on the final written product and have ample opportunities elsewhere in the course to demonstrate growth in individual writing skills.

- I. To count toward the upper-division writing requirements of the major, intensive, thesis, and complementary writing courses shall be passed with a grade of “C” (2.0) or better.

II. UDWR Certification and Approval Process

- A. An academic unit proposing a new course for which UDWR certification (intensive, complementary, thesis) is sought for the first time shall indicate on the New Course Proposal form that UDWR certification is requested and concurrently submit a proposal for UDWR certification using the appropriate form in the online curriculum system.
- B. For courses that are already a part of the university curriculum, an academic unit seeking UDWR certification (intensive, complementary, thesis) for the first time or seeking UDWR recertification shall submit a proposal for UDWR certification using the appropriate form in the online curriculum system.
- C. All submissions for UDWR certification or recertification shall include a sample syllabus compliant with UPS 300.004 or policy document compliant with UPS 400.020 (for thesis courses), a representative writing assignment prompt, and a rubric or set of assessment standards for one writing assignment. The academic unit curriculum committee and chair shall approve proposals for UDWR certification or recertification before the proposal is reviewed by the University Writing Proficiency Committee for final approval, revision, or rejection.
- D. The Office of Academic Programs shall keep a record of all UDWR-certified intensive, thesis, and complementary writing courses that are specified by academic units as meeting the writing requirement of their majors. After eight consecutive academic years, UDWR certification for a course shall expire, and the Office of Academic Programs shall notify the academic unit that the course shall be submitted to the University Writing Proficiency Committee for UDWR recertification using the online curriculum system. This submission shall include a sample syllabus compliant with UPS 300.004 or policy document compliant with UPS 400.020 (for thesis courses), a representative writing assignment prompt, and a rubric or set of assessment standards for one writing assignment. The proposal shall indicate whether the course is an intensive, thesis, or complementary writing course. The University Writing Proficiency Committee may recertify or not recertify the writing course and shall inform both the academic unit and the Office of Academic Programs of its decision.
- E. A course that is denied UDWR recertification will be allowed a grace period of three semesters (for an intensive writing or thesis course) or two semesters (for a complementary writing course) to revise and resubmit for UDWR certification. If the course has been denied UDWR recertification, it shall no longer be specified as a writing course but may continue to be offered as a regular course.

III. Graduate Writing Requirement

Graduate students must demonstrate writing skills that meet or surpass undergraduate proficiencies appropriate to the discipline. Each academic unit offering a graduate degree shall select the means by which their graduate students demonstrate writing ability consistent with the standards listed below and subject to confirmation by the Office of Graduate Studies. Academic units may, at their discretion, establish additional writing requirements for their graduate students.

- A. Prior to the awarding of a graduate degree, every student shall be required to demonstrate writing ability that is commensurate with the standards of the unit responsible for the

student's academic work and that meets or exceeds the level required for the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) certification for the baccalaureate degree (EO 665).

- B. This GWAR requirement may be met in any of the following ways. Each academic unit selects the method or methods by which their graduate students demonstrate writing ability, subject to confirmation by the Office of Graduate Studies.
1. By having passed the upper-division baccalaureate writing requirement at any CSU campus.
 2. By having passed with a grade of "C" (2.0) or better an upper-division writing course at another university equivalent to a course that meets the CSUF baccalaureate requirement. Equivalence must be certified by the academic unit responsible for the student's academic work and by the Office of Graduate Studies.
 3. By passing with a grade of "C" (2.0) or better an upper-division course approved by the University Writing Proficiency Committee as meeting the baccalaureate requirement; or an advanced, graduate-level course or courses certified by the University Graduate Education Committee as exceeding the baccalaureate writing requirement and approved by the academic unit responsible for the student's academic work.
 4. By scoring a minimum of 4.0 on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) Writing Assessment Test, a minimum of 4.0 on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) Analytical Writing Assessment, or by passing a standardized writing proficiency exam, such as the Examination in Writing Proficiency (EWP), as approved by the Office of Graduate Studies and as established by an academic unit as meeting their writing requirement.
 5. By completing a written thesis, dissertation, or other written project that serves as the approved culminating experience for the student's graduate program. Requirements for format and language should be specific to the discipline as determined by the academic unit.

IV. Student Petitions and Approval Process

- A. The University Writing Proficiency Committee has the responsibility to certify upper-division equivalences to the upper-division baccalaureate writing requirement from other colleges and universities outside the CSU system initiated by a student's major academic unit. Academic units will submit a University petition form available from the Registration and Records Office.
- B. Petitions must indicate whether the course that the student is requesting consideration of would be characterized as a single intensive writing course or one of the two or more complementary writing courses. Student petitions must be accompanied by evidence of equivalence including:
- course syllabus;
 - sample writing or writing prompt from the course;
 - and evidence of a grade of "C" or better for the course.
- C. The decision of the University Writing Proficiency Committee will be transmitted to the petitioning academic unit and the Registration and Records Office for inclusion in the student's Titan Degree Audit.

- D. Petitions will be handled at the discretion of the Chair of the University Writing Proficiency Committee or their designee during the summer.

V. Special Cases

- A. Students shall receive credit for having met the UDWR within their major upon completion of the academic unit-specific upper-division writing course(s) with a grade of “C” or higher, as long as the course(s) was UDWR-certified by the University Writing Proficiency Committee at the time the student was enrolled, independent of the student’s catalog year.
- B. In the event that a student changes major or chooses a double major, the major academic unit(s) shall determine whether to provide an exception for approved upper-division writing course work completed by the student with a grade of “C” or higher in another academic unit. The requirement for a writing intensive or thesis course (3 units) or at least two complementary writing courses (at least 6 units) still applies.
- C. Completion of another CSU’s upper-division baccalaureate writing requirement with a grade of “C” or higher shall be transferrable to CSUF (EO 665).

Source: University Writing Proficiency Committee

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