

Assessment of Majors/General Education Competency Template

Assessment of Writing Competency

Program/Department: Lang. and Lit

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Key Learning Outcomes: What should students be able to do AFTER completing this program? State learning outcomes simply and in measurable terms. Please limit the number of outcomes to five or fewer. If your department reports on General Education competency areas (writing, foreign language, quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning), please use this form to report on those areas in a separately generated document.

1. Students should organize their writing effectively.
2. Writing should have a unifying principle or idea.
3. Paragraphs should be well developed.
4. Sentences should be complete and grammatical with varied structures.
5. Word choice should be effective, and diction should be appropriate to the context.
6. Primary and secondary material should be integrated, and sources appropriately cited.

Please link learning outcomes to the College's Desired Accomplishments/Goals.

1.1	(skills necessary to continue to educate themselves)	All outcomes
1.2	(assume responsibility of citizenship)	All outcomes
1.7	(value honor and integrity)	Outcome 6
3.3	(strengthen the quality of K-12 education)	All outcomes

Through what courses/assignments will you ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn this? List key courses, capstones, internships, experiences, etc.

ENGL 101	Composition
ENGL 102	Composition
ENGL 103H	Honors Composition

Please list all tools used for assessing student achievement (CRTs, MFTs, capstones, exit interviews, external reviews, etc.).

1. All six outcomes are assessed at the beginning of students' first writing course and at the end of ENGL 102. These skills are assessed by using an in-class writing assignment for placement on the first day of their first writing class and by using the same essay on the final exam in ENGL 102. Currently, composition

- faculty use a holistic scoring guide. Beginning this year, faculty will also use the Writing Competency Rubric for each student. That will help identify not just students' overall writing competency, but also their skills in the various components of effective writing: the ability to choose a thesis; to organize an essay; to divide paragraphs up into reasonable and useful units which begin with effective topic sentences; and the ability to use grammatical, effective and appropriate language. Since these essays are written in class, without the possibility of using library or electronic resources, it will not be possible to use this measure to evaluate students' abilities to incorporate outside sources into their work and to document those sources appropriately. As such, the last criterion (sources/documentation) on the Writing Competency Rubric in evaluation of the writing competency will not be used at this time..
2. Composition faculty will also begin to use the Writing Competency Rubric in classes that students take to satisfy their general education requirement in literature. Since these courses are also designed to improve students' writing, students receive writing instruction and significant feedback on their writing in these courses. Faculty who teach these courses will fill out the Writing Competency Rubric for each student's final paper.
 3. The Writing Competency Rubric will also be used to evaluate students in their capstone courses or upper division writing intensive classes in the disciplines that do not have a capstone. There it will be used to assess student writing on the final paper or project.

How will you assess how well your students are learning? List standards/performance indicators, etc., taking care to provide quantifiable means (for example, all students should earn a minimum 50% on exit exam; 65 % should earn a minimum 70%; with a rubric, indicate the scale used, the levels of competence, what is identified as "competent," and what constitutes competence for each outcome measure, what percentage of students you would expect to see at each level, etc.). Be sure to spell out criteria.

1. The Holistic Scoring Guide, which rates students' writing on a scale of 1-6, will be used to evaluate an essay students write as part of their ENGL 102 exam. All students should receive at least a score of 3. At least 75% of students will achieve a 4 or higher; 30% will achieve a score of 5 or higher; 5% will achieve a score of 6.
2. The Writing Competency Rubric will be used to evaluate the same essay described in #1, above. In each category, students will achieve at least a 3; 40% will achieve a 4; 10% will achieve a 5.
3. The Writing Competency Rubric will also be used to evaluate the final paper in the general education literature course. All students will achieve at least a 3, 30% will achieve a 4, and 5% a 5. Numbers of students achieving the higher scores will be somewhat lower in this course, because the transfer students in these classes are often not as well-prepared as the students who come here as freshmen and take the UVa-Wise composition sequence.

How often, when, and under what circumstances will you gather the relevant data?

Data will be gathered each semester. Students will write the placement essay generally in the Fall semester. These will be evaluated with the Holistic Scoring Guide. In the Spring, students take ENGL 102, and their final exam essay will be evaluated by using both the Holistic Scoring Guide and the Writing Competency Rubric. (The ENGL 102 essays are evaluated blindly, since faculty generally know the students fairly well—even including their handwriting—by the end of the Spring semester.) Off-sequence students (those who take ENGL 101 in the Spring and ENGL 102 in the Fall, will also be evaluated using these same instruments.

Each semester, students who are taking a class that counts for the general education requirement in literature (courses numbered 300-326), will be evaluated by use of the Writing Competency rubric.

Each spring students who are enrolled in a capstone course or upper division writing intensive course in the disciplines with no capstone will be evaluated by using the Writing Competency rubric.

Summarize what has been learned about how well students are achieving desired outcomes.

Action Plan: What plans have you for the future based on the data gathered that will aim to improve student learning/achievement? Should students perform at less than the standard expected, what steps will the department take to improve their learning/performance? What steps does the department anticipate to improve the program otherwise?

In the event that the assessment reveals weakness in students' performance, the following steps will be taken:

- 1) Composition faculty will collect and analyze the data from both the composition course and the literature courses in order to determine which areas of writing competency are a problem and how they can adjust the curriculum in the composition course and literature course to provide more instruction and practice in the problem areas.
- 2) Composition faculty will analyze the rubrics collected in the capstones and provide a report to the Council of Chairs where any weaknesses will be discussed. Chairs will be asked to determine how their departments will strengthen writing instruction and practice and will provide a written report of their plans to the Provost. Determination of the effectiveness of their strategies will be based on the evaluation of writing in the capstone and will be monitored over time. The Provost will oversee this effort.

- 3) English faculty will advocate for a Writing Across the Curriculum program, to encourage faculty besides those who teach English to help students improve their writing skills.
- 4) Faculty will consider requiring transfer students to demonstrate writing competency at some reasonable level and require them to remediate their skills (perhaps by taking courses like Advanced Composition or Business and Professional Communication).

Comments

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