



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS POLICY MANUAL

Division of Academic Affairs

Approved By: Academic Senate
February 6, 2018

Policy Number: SP 17-05

Effective Date: Fall 2018

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Course Policy on Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)

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PURPOSE:

Chancellor's Office Executive Order (EO) 1100 mandates that a maximum of three upper division courses may be required as part of General Education and that these courses must include three units each within areas B, C, and D. EO 1100 conflicts with CSUCI's current Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), which consists of three Upper Division Interdisciplinary General Education (UDIGE) courses that are writing intensive (as described in Academic Senate Policy 11-07). As UDIGE courses are now disallowed with regard to GE, SP 11-07 is no longer a viable way for students to meet the writing assessment requirement. The purpose of this policy is to replace SP 11-07 with a new policy that supports faculty in designing experiences that prepare students to obtain the necessary skills and practice to write effectively within their disciplines.

BACKGROUND:

Requirements in the Executive Order

GWAR is a system-wide requirement that derives from Executive Order 665 and applies to both graduate and undergraduate writing. This policy addresses only the undergraduate (baccalaureate level) requirement. EO 665 allows each campus to decide how it will meet the requirement, noting that, "Measures may be developed which best fit individual campus needs." The EO also states that "Certification of writing competence shall be made available to students as they enter the junior year (60 units)." However, in recent conversations, the Chancellor's Office (CO) has indicated a flexibility to allow GWAR to be completed senior year. Therefore, this policy recommends junior year for completion but does not require it.

Short Term Conflicts

CSUCI will request that the Chancellor's Office suspend GWAR as a campus graduation requirement until Catalog Year 2020-21, as a way to limit bottlenecks to graduation for current students and incoming transfers while the new GWAR policy is enacted. This request is appended at the end of this GWAR policy. The time delay will also give programs additional time to develop, modify, or identify a GWAR course and assess its impact on the major units. In the event that the CO does not allow us to suspend GWAR, Academic Senate Policy 11-07 will remain in effect until Catalog Year 2020-21, with courses designated by the numbering that indicates former UDIGE and writing intensive status. Given that current offerings of formerly UDIGE courses (330-349; 430-449) are in flux as part of the process



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of converting to EO 1100, this latter option is the least desirable and may pose additional bottlenecks for students and programs.

Designing GWAR Courses

This policy places responsibility for GWAR coursework within programs, who know best how to prepare students for the kinds of writing subsequently experienced in the major and within related career fields and graduate opportunities. Depending on the program, writing courses may focus within the discipline, within a cluster of disciplines, or in interdisciplinary contexts.

Approval and Assessment of GWAR Courses

The GWAR requirement (EO 665) states that, “Certification of graduation writing proficiency is an all-campus responsibility.” Therefore, approval and assessment should include as broad a campus involvement as possible.

It is anticipated that new or revised GWAR courses would be approved by the Curriculum Committee in consultation as necessary with the Director of the Writing and Multiliteracy Center, the Director of Composition, and/or other individuals with equivalent expertise in writing instruction and assessment.

This policy embeds assessment of a program’s GWAR course(s) as part of the regular Program Review process and recommends that programs consult with the Faculty Development Advisory Committee for faculty support in preparing to teach writing intensive courses.

Accountability:

- Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee;
- CSUCI Provost to make GWAR waiver request from Chancellor’s Office.
- EO 665 mandates that “Certification of graduation writing proficiency is an all-campus responsibility.”

Applicability:

GWAR Graduation exemption requested for CI students who take catalog years prior to 2020-21 and who are graduating after Summer 2018. New GWAR policy applies to CI students who take catalog years beginning in 2020-21.

Terms & Definitions:

Writing intensive is defined to mean that *students experience substantive engagement with writing*



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through at least two assignments in which support is offered throughout the writing process, including during generation of material, organization of content, drafting, and revising.

Explicit instruction in writing is defined as direct instruction in writing choices, expectations, or processes; feedback on one's writing produced so far, or modeling of novice or expert writing in the target genre.

Writing processes refers to an iterative process by which students generate material, organize ideas, draft ideas into emerging text, solicit feedback, revise text, and produce new draft(s). Processes may occur in any order.

Genres of academic writing refer to specific types of writing common in academic disciplines, usually with expectations that include a specific style, intended audience, purpose, and content. Some examples include a marketing plan, literature review, analytical essay, white paper, journal article, grant proposal, or case study.

Catalog Year (CY) refers to the version of the University Catalog to which a student's degree requirements correspond (see Academic Senate Policy 08-07). The year of a student's University Catalog establishes a binding contract between the University and the student; it explains the regulations, policies, and degree requirements to which the student is held.

POLICY Text:

Beginning Catalog Year 2020-21, students shall meet the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement by passing a GWAR-approved course with a grade of C- or better. Programs shall identify as part of their major catalog copy, one GWAR-approved, writing-intensive course as a major requirement. This course may be taught by the major or a discipline outside the major.

Process for Developing a GWAR-Approved Course

1. Programs have several options for identifying their GWAR-approved course: they may
 - a. Submit an already writing intensive course for GWAR designation;
 - b. Collaborate with similar majors to develop a writing intensive course that can serve mutual disciplines (Example: ENGL/SOC 305 Writing in the Social Sciences);
 - c. Select a GWAR-approved course to use in their major;
 - d. Redesign a program course to meet the GWAR criteria, below, or



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- e. Offer students the option to select one course from a list of GWAR-approved courses offered in or outside of the major.
2. Courses shall be approved by the Curriculum Committee in consultation as necessary with the Faculty Director of the Writing and Multiliteracy Center, the Director of Composition, and/or other individuals with equivalent expertise in writing instruction and assessment.

Enrollment limitations and timing

1. Opportunity to complete GWAR shall be made available to students as they enter the junior year (60 units). It is recommended that students complete the requirement before the senior year (90 units).
2. GWAR courses shall be offered by majors at least once per year to allow students to graduate in a timely manner and to repeat courses as needed for credit.
3. Programs may list their GWAR-approved course as a prerequisite to a senior year course that is writing intensive, such as Capstone.
4. Programs may restrict enrollment in a GWAR course to their majors unless it is used by another program or by general education (GE), by using the prerequisite "Restricted to [Program] Majors only or by consent of instructor."
5. A GWAR course that is a major requirement shall be allowed to double count for both the graduation requirement and major requirement. A GWAR course may also be approved by the GE committee and count for upper division GE in areas B, C, or D.

Criteria for GWAR Courses

In order to meet the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement, courses shall be writing intensive and include explicit writing instruction. All approved courses shall meet the following six criteria:

1. **Benchmark enrollment** shall be limited to 20-25 students in order to provide opportunity for students to write frequently and receive feedback on their writing. Programs may structure a larger lecture class focused in disciplinary content (40-60 students) with smaller sections of 20-25 students each, focused on writing in that discipline (all taught by the same instructor to ensure consistency).
2. **Title and/or description** of the course should make clear for students that this course has a substantial focus on writing (examples of titles include: Interdisciplinary Writing; Writing in the Social Sciences; The Historian's Craft; Interdisciplinary Research and Writing in Chicana/o Studies). Courses must be taught in English.



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3. **Course outcomes and content** shall include reference to expectations for written work as well as explicit instruction and feedback/revision in one or more genres of academic writing (see Best Practices for Writing Intensive Courses, Exhibit A, for more specifics). Some examples of these outcomes include:
 - a. Write effectively in various forms;
 - b. Apply feedback during revision opportunities to improve the text;
 - c. Identify expectations within the genre by analyzing models from student and/or professional writing examples;
 - d. Develop knowledge and understanding of the form, content, context and effectiveness of written communication.
4. **Course grade** shall be at least 50% based on written assignments and/or take-home essay exams (e.g., exams designed to allow for revision), with a minimum of two substantial writing assignments, which are evaluated for both content and quality of writing. Page length of assignments shall be appropriate to the conventions of the discipline(s). The remaining 50% of the course grade may be based on other criteria, including disciplinary content.
5. **Staffing.** In submitting a course for GWAR approval, programs agree to staff the course with faculty members who have expertise in teaching writing, as evidenced by one or more of the following: attendance at a GWAR-focused workshop; collaboration with a faculty member with disciplinary expertise in writing instruction; participation in faculty development activities focused on writing instruction; years of experience teaching the courses that become GWAR-approved; participation in a CI online interactive video on teaching writing, or the equivalent.
6. **Supplemental support.** Programs may consider recommending supplemental supports for students, such as:
 - a. Request embedded multiliteracy tutors from the Writing and Multiliteracy Center (WMC);
 - b. Provide students with option to enroll in linked one-unit writing support courses for students who struggle with basic writing mechanics (ENGL 299, Editing Studio I; or ENGL 399, Editing Studio II);
 - c. Sequence writing more intentionally throughout the program via increased writing expectations in sophomore year or other courses in the major.



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Assessment of GWAR Courses

As part of the regular Program Review process (Academic Senate Policy 06-13), programs shall include, at minimum, a) assessment of the writing outcome(s) of their GWAR course(s); and b) whether the course(s) continue(s) to fulfill the GWAR criteria as indicated in this policy.

Programs are recommended to consult with the Faculty Development Advisory Committee and/or the Faculty Director for the Writing and Multiliteracy Center as needed to request support for faculty who are teaching writing intensive courses.

Process for Students Who Do Not Pass GWAR Courses

Students who complete a GWAR course with a D+, D, D-, WU, or F shall have opportunity to retake the course according to the Forgiveness of Previously Earned Grade Policy (SP 12-02).

Process for Students Who Change Majors or Transfer After Completing GWAR

1. Students who change majors having already satisfied the GWAR requirement shall have their graduation competency met. However, they must still meet all major requirements.
2. Per EO 665, students who transfer from another CSU campus into CSUCI having already met the GWAR requirement shall have their graduation competency met. However, they must still meet all major requirements.

Chancellor's Office Short-Term Waiver Request Until Catalog Year 2020-21

CSUCI requests that the Chancellor's Office waive GWAR as a graduation requirement for CSUCI students who take catalog years prior to 2020-21 and who are graduating after Summer 2018. This will limit bottlenecks to graduation for incoming juniors who will fall under EO 1100 as well as native students who will continue with prior catalogs. The waiver will also provide time for programs to select and design courses to modify majors and go through the campus approval process. If the waiver request is not approved, Academic Senate Policy 11-07 will remain in effect until CY 20-21 with courses designated by numbering that indicates former UDIGE (330-349; 430-449) and writing intensive status. This option is less desirable because it would pose additional barriers for students toward graduation.

EXHIBITS:

Best Practices for Teaching Writing Intensive Courses
Best Practices for Assessing Writing Intensive Courses
EO 665