

**Introduction:**

The goal of implementing writing in the majors is to provide students with instruction in, and opportunities to practice, the kinds of writing most relevant to their field of study and future careers, and to have these experiences under the direction of faculty members who are experts in that major. Recognizing that no single plan will fit the needs of all departments, the University Writing Committee will review plans devised by departments to ensure that all plans satisfy the five principles identified below. Though not required, the Committee has also identified common practices that might serve to guide the development, implementation and assessment of programmatic plans. We ask that plans be presented in a format that makes sense to the department, that they provide a clear explanation of where the principles occur across the major, and that the assessment procedures be clearly connected to the kinds of writing outcomes the department articulates for its majors.

**Criteria for evaluating writing in the majors:**

The plan will:

1. Provide more than one opportunity for students to practice writing. While a program might want to designate a specific course or courses as “writing intensive,” it is equally possible to weave opportunities to write throughout the curriculum so that no one course or faculty member shoulders the burden of teaching writing to all majors. The Writing Committee does NOT expect that every class will contain significant writing experiences.
2. Provide opportunities for students to practice producing more than one kind of writing. Programs should identify the types of writing that are a) most useful to students during the major, b) necessary to advanced study in the major, or c) expected in the professions students with the major typically enter. The opportunities provided might include using print and electronic forms as appropriate. Examples of types of writing to consider include: letters, memos, formal reports, research articles, field reports, annotations, summaries, reading responses, interviews, essays of critical analysis, position statements, design plans, research or design posters, original video scripts, websites, etc.
3. Provide opportunities for students to write for different purposes and audiences. Programs are encouraged to consider the range of purposes and audiences that their students need to address and to include opportunities for students to practice writing. Examples of different purposes and audiences include: to learn, to think critically, to inquire, to provide useful feedback to other writers, to communicate with clients outside the classroom, to reflect, to take a stance, to develop an argument, to present disciplinary research for a lay audience or for experts in the field, etc.
4. Provide opportunities for students to revise their written work based on individual feedback from the instructor and from peers to improve both the content and form of their work. Revision can take many forms and occur at different points in the writing process. Programs are encouraged to consider the most appropriate ways to include feedback and revision opportunities that support both writing and other curricular objectives. For example, feedback on early assignments helps students revise their approach to later assignments of the same type, feedback from peer responders allows students to revise before the instructor sees the writing, feedback on component parts of a long assignment allows students to revise before submitting the compiled document, feedback on a draft allows students to revise to incorporate suggestions, feedback on finished work can encourage revisions that shift the audience or extend and deepen the project, etc.
5. Include an assessment plan that uses the data obtained to make decisions about what else needs to be done to enhance the writing experiences of students in the major. How programs assess their plan depends on what aspects of the student writing experience the faculty has decided to work on. Programs might select a specific issue to focus on such as: expanding types of writing, distributing writing over more courses, improving feedback and revision, incorporating extra-curricular writing components, improving peer responses, etc.

### Common Program-level Practices

- Identify the writing competencies expected of graduates of the major.
- Engage faculty members in developing a plan for providing opportunities for students to practice and produce multiple kinds of writing for different purposes and receive feedback that allows students to work on their writing in courses across the major.
- Identify and provide additional instruction to students whose writing is judged to be unacceptable in terms of standard written English.
- Assess the plan and use the data obtained to make decisions about what else needs to be done to enhance the writing experiences of students in the major.

### Common Course-level/Faculty-level Practices

- Develop writing assignments or activities appropriate to the level and content of the course using print and electronic forms appropriate for the major.
- Provide appropriate instruction in the features of writing necessary for the students to complete the writing assignments.
- Provide students with peer and individual feedback, including feedback for all students writing collaboratively as part of a group, ensuring that the feedback reflects the goals of the writing assignment.
- Provide opportunities for students to revise their work after receiving feedback.
- Identify and provide additional instruction (perhaps by referring the student to the writing center) for those students who do not produce reasonably fluent, standard written English.

### Common Student-level Practices

- Build on writing experiences from core courses to produce writing relevant to the major
- Be able to produce more than one kind of writing, for different purposes, using appropriate print and electronic forms.
- Be able to use feedback from the instructors and peers to revise writing to improve both content and form.
- Be able to produce writing that others will judge to be acceptable in terms of standard written English and that responds appropriately to the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, genre, format, material).
- Has strategies for working on writing, e.g. is able to use feedback from others to make decisions about revising a piece of writing, is able to shift to different audiences or formats, is able to manage technical issues like citation of sources, inclusion of visual materials, or proofreading, etc.