To determine whether you are prepared for the Upper-Division Writing Exam (UDWE) carefully review the following questions and answers.

What is the UDWE?

Passing the Upper-Division Writing Exam is one of two ways that students can pass California State University’s Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). The GWAR is a system-wide mandate; it is impossible to waive or modify this requirement. The GWAR cannot be fulfilled by a class or test taken outside the CSU system, nor can it be satisfied by taking a course at a CSU campus at which the student has not matriculated. The UDWE requires students to answer two questions through a timed essay response. Students have one hour to complete each essay. Consult the two sample questions at the end of this document to see the kinds of writing demanded by the UDWE. The other way to pass the GWAR is to take and pass a course with a “W” designation.

When should I take the UDWE?

Students should satisfy the GWAR within two semesters after completing 60 units and passing the first-year writing requirement (GE Area A-2). It is the responsibility of each student to satisfy this requirement in a timely fashion. Students who wait until their final semesters of study often find that they are unable to graduate when they had planned to because they have failed to satisfy the requirement. If you wait until your senior year to satisfy this requirement, your graduation could be delayed. Any undergraduate student who has completed either English 5A/5B or English 10 with a C or higher and have completed 60 units.

How can I prepare to take the UDWE?

You can prepare for the exam by studying the following sample questions, and allowing yourself the opportunity to answer the questions in writing within the given time constraints. You might also revisit what you learned in first-year writing about organizing ideas, summarizing ideas, incorporating evidence, creating a solid purpose, and editing your writing. Any advice you receive from a counselor may prove helpful in determining whether you should take the UDWE; however, such advice is no guarantee that you will perform well on the UDWE.

In addition, study workshops are offered throughout the year that you can sign up for at...

Registerblast.com/csufresno-bulldog/Exam/List

How many attempts do I have to take the exam?

Students may take the exam a maximum of 2 times. Unsatisfactory points within two attempts will require you to successfully complete a “W” course before graduation.

Note: The higher score of the two attempts will be assumed. However only scores of 10 or above, along with a P for pass is considered satisfactory. All other scores will be considered unsatisfactory.
Where can I find study material for the exam?
Study material is available on our department website under the “UDWE” tab.
   Fresnostate.edu/academics/bulldogtestingcenter
In addition, more study information can be found in the Canvas UDWE Development Course.

How long is the exam?
The UDWE is composed of two 60 minute essays, and one voluntary 10 minute break.

How do I register for the UDWE?
Testers who are ready register may do so at...
   Registerblast.com/csufresno-bulldog/Exam/List

Do I have to schedule my exam a certain time in advance?
Exam appointment dates, and times are found on our website. If you are unable to test on these specific dates/times please contact our department, and our staff will assist you further.
   Phone 559-278-2229, or Email testcenters@csufresno.edu

How much is the UDWE?
The UDWE cost $33.50 paid through Register Blast.

How do I get my 1 unit of credit?
Undergraduates may receive 1 unit of credit (English 100W) for passing this exam. The unit of credit is not automatic, but may be requested by the candidate on the day of the test.

What is the passing core for the UDWE?
A score of 10 or higher, along with a P for pass is considered satisfactory.

When and where can I find my score?
Scores are made available on a rolling schedule typically within 1-6 weeks.
   • Log onto your MyFresnoState portal and click on the following tabs under “My Menu”:
      »» Student Self Services »» Student Center »» Academic Records and Registration »» Academic Info
   • If you passed the exam you should receive a score of 10, 11, or 12 along with a P for pass.
   • If your scores are not available please consider the report time of 1 to 6 weeks for scores to post.

What if I don’t pass the UDWE?
Students who do not pass the UDWE are able to take the exam a second time. Students who fail the UDWE a second time must enroll in an approved “W” course to fulfill the requirement.

I didn’t pass, but is it possible to be told what was wrong so I can study from it?
Yes it is possible, please contact the English department for more information. 559-278-2553

If I’ve already scheduled to take my exam, but something came up can I reschedule?
Please consider when you reserve a seat for the UDWE you may be taking the place of another tester that may have needed that spot. However the BTC understands that unforeseen circumstances occur. You may reschedule through BTC staff up to 24 hours before your appointment without additional cost.
If I have received good grades on my college essays and/or done well on previous times writing exams, will I pass the UDWE?

Past performance on writing assignments and essay exams is no guarantee that a student will perform well on the UDWE. The criteria for passing the UDWE are designed specifically to measure upper-division writing competence.

How will my essay be scored?

A scoring guide is made available at our website under the “UDWE” tab on our department website...

Each of the two essays students write for the UDWE is read by at least two different faculty readers who assess the essay in what is called a “blind” reading. That is, after extensive on-site discussion of sample essays and the application of the scoring guide to these essays, two different faculty readers review and assess each response. Faculty readers assess each essay according to specific criteria and without access to the other readers’ scores. Readers consider each essay holistically (that is, in such a manner that no single aspect of the essay unduly outweighs other aspects of the writing) in light of how well the student demonstrates the following writing skills:

- The writer understands the prompt and thoughtfully and thoroughly responds to it.
- The writer demonstrates a clear sense of purpose and maintains a strong focus.
- The writer organizes his or her ideas effectively, providing a useful introduction and a conclusion, as well as effective paragraphs and transitions.
- The writer supports his or her claims with specific details and appropriate examples.
- The writer composes a persuasive, logical, and fully developed essay response.
- The writing is generally free of mechanical errors and reveals a clear grasp of proper sentence structure and a mature writing style.

Each faculty reader will score the essay as demonstrating the features of upper-division writing competence. In light of the above-mentioned criteria, each essay is determined to be Competent, demonstrating Developing Competence, or Incompetent. For students to pass the UDWE, at least two faculty readers must assess the writing as Competent, and no faculty reader should assess any one of the essays as Incompetent.

Is my score final?

Yes. Unfortunately students are unable to contest a score. Students either pass or fail the UDWE. All assessments are final and are not subject to appeal. A question leader assigned to supervise the reading will consider and resolve any scoring discrepancies before the scores are calculated and submitted to the Bulldog Testing Center.

When may I retake my exam for a second attempt?

Students may take the exam a maximum of 2 times. It is recommended by the BTC and English departments to wait 30 days before reattempting the exam. Study materials are available on our department website under the “UDWE” tab. Additional Study materials can be found on Canvas. UDWE workshops are also available throughout the semester.

FresnoState.edu/academics/bulldogtestingcenter
Registerblast.com/csufresno-bulldog/Exam/List