

**General Education
Writing Requirements
Approved by Academic Senate on April 23, 2012**

I. Goals of the General Education Writing Requirement

- A. To improve students' competence in writing clearly and communicating effectively.
- B. To enhance learning subject matter through writing.
- C. To encourage students, through writing, to take increasingly greater responsibility for their own learning and to engage in disciplined, independent thinking about complex subjects.
- D. To give students an opportunity to write using the methodology and style appropriate to in the discipline.
- E. To impress upon students the advantage and power they gain from developing a strong competence in writing, in their education and in their future careers.

II. Writing Guidelines

A. General Guidelines

- 1. Every General Education course requires a minimum amount of original writing by students (except for Quantitative Reasoning courses (Area B4). Faculty (or faculty trained Graduate Teaching Associates) will provide meaningful feedback so that students may improve their writing abilities during the course (See section IV C for clarification and examples).
- 2. The intent of the requirement is to insure that a significant writing component to which faculty have responded in a meaningful fashion will be integrated into the scheduled assignments.
- 3. The content of these assignments must rigorously explore subject matter of the course and apply a writing style appropriate to the discipline.
- 4. Writing assignments and instructor response to student writing should stress the conventions and expectations of writing in the academic setting as well as in the business and professional world, including attention to audience and purpose, discipline-specific conventions of style and organization, and mastery of standard grammar and mechanics.
- 5. Note: Class notes taken during the course of the semester cannot be used to satisfy this requirement.

- B. Lower Division (Areas A,B,C,D,E):
Every lower division General Education course requires a minimum of 1,000 words of original writing by students not including revisions. One writing assignment must be a minimum of 500 words in length, and receive meaningful feedback from the faculty (or faculty trained Graduate Teaching Associates), such that feedback may be used to improve future student work (see section IV C for clarification and examples).
- C. Upper Division (Areas IB, IC, ID, MI):
Every upper division General Education course requires a minimum of 2,000 words of original writing by students not including revisions. One writing assignment must be a minimum of 1000 words in length and receive meaningful feedback from the faculty (or faculty trained Graduate Teaching Associates) , such that feedback may be used to improve future student work (see section IV C for clarification and examples) .

III. Clarifications

- A. The total requirement could be satisfied by a single assignment provided there is feedback from the instructor and an opportunity for students to revise and resubmit.
- B. Some examples of writing assignments that would satisfy the writing requirement are:
- a. An academic essay.
 - b. Written answers to complex essay questions on an exam.
 - c. An analysis of a complex issue (e.g., economic, ethical, environmental, political).
 - d. A written report (e.g.) of an experiment, observation, interview).
 - e. A review or critique (e.g., of art, performance, a social trend).
 - f. Journal entries (not class notes), provided that they meet the other requirements.
- C. Some examples of writing assignments that would not satisfy the writing requirement include:
- a. Class notes
 - b. Online chat sessions
 - c. Any other similar writing

IV. Strategies for Assisting Faculty in the Use of Writing Assignments in General Education Courses

- A. An instructor who judges that a student needs more help in the mechanics of writing than the instructor is able/willing to provide should take the following steps:
- a. Notify the students early of deficiencies in their writing skills, and stress that doing well in the course will require that the student get assistance.

- b. Inform the student of the offices on campus that provide writing instruction. (See Section V.)

B. Constructing writing assignments

1. Construct assignments that give students a glimpse of how that discipline can engage a well-educated person and citizen, whether or not that person decides to enter that discipline as a career.
2. Writing assignments should contain a complete description of the components, methodology, and goals of the assignment, as well as the criteria/standards against which they shall be evaluated.
4. Long before the end of the semester, faculty (or faculty trained Graduate Teaching Assistants) should comment on and return to students initial writing assignments or drafts of assignments to insure that students will have the opportunity to improve their writing abilities during the course. Such assignments should allow faculty (or faculty trained Graduate Teaching Associates) to assess whether feedback has been effective.

C. Evaluating writing assignments

Some feedback should focus on accuracy, completeness, and clarity of expression. Feedback on organization, style, grammar, and mechanical aspects of composition is also appropriate. Detailed rubrics may be used for evaluation and meaningful feedback (examples of rubrics may be found on the IRAP website). Positive reinforcement should also be included for work well done.

V. Sources of Additional Help

A. For students who need help in basic writing:

1. The Writing Center, Education 184, Ext. 8-0334. Early enrollment typically is required.
2. Learning Center, Basement Henry Madden Library, Ext. 8-3052.

B. For faculty:

1. Technology Innovations in Learning, and Teaching (TILT) – <http://www.csufresno.edu/tilt/>
2. Center for the Scholarly Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CSALT_ - <https://www.csufresno.edu/salt/>