

## **Writing-Intensive Courses: Description and Guidelines**

A writing-intensive course is one where writing (formal and informal) is an integral part of learning: that is, students in WIC write not only to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject matter (tests and research/term papers) but are engaged in informal, exploratory writing, writing that they use to push their thinking, to deepen their understanding of the subject matter, to explore questions they have about the subject matter.

In a WI course, the goal is to give students as many opportunities as possible to write (exploratory writing-to-learn using informal formats and writing-to-show-knowledge in formal assignments), to receive feedback from their peers and their instructors during the writing process, and to demonstrate how to write in a particular discipline, understanding the requirements regarding writing styles inherent in that discipline.

WOU students are required to take two WI courses for graduation. Ideally, they should have WIC in the major and the minor – courses where class size is kept to 25 at most. Additionally, these WI courses should be concentrated in the upper-division (300-400 level) offerings where the subject matter of each discipline is explored in more depth than in the LACC courses and where we can show students how to write in that discipline's style. WR 135 is designated as a pre-requisite for UD WI courses. Departments, then, need to develop and maintain upper-division WIC in the majors/minors they offer. The director of the Writing Center can provide assistance for departments and instructors who are developing WI courses. The Faculty Senate's Writing-Intensive Committee recommends the WIC label for courses, based on statements and syllabi submitted by individuals or departments, going through their curriculum committees.

Objectives of WI discipline-specific writing assignments over the course of a term should include:

- Students will show they can use writing to extend and deepen their learning about their discipline.
- Students will show they can use sources for formal writing to critically analyze, summarize, paraphrase, and incorporate ideas and quotations from their reading into their writing as required in the particular discipline.
- Students will show they can generate ideas for, draft, revise and edit their written work.
- Students will demonstrate skills in communicating the subject matter of their discipline through accurate word choice, varied and coherent sentence structure, and appropriate use of the conventions of standard written English.
- Students will organize information in their formal papers appropriately.
- Students will use the conventions of documentation within their discipline.

The following guidelines have been designated as the basis for WIC approval:

1. Students must have regular, frequent opportunities to write.
2. Students will use informal and formal writing to extend and deepen their learning of the subject and to make connections between subjects in the particular discipline. Specifically, the writing done should be not only formal writing to show/transmit knowledge (papers and tests), but also informal writing to explore, to think, and to learn. Informal writing could include journal writing, reading logs where students record their questions and answers, project logs where students record progress on a particular project, laboratory notes, field notes, preliminary drafts (given peer or instructor feedback but not graded), etc.

3. Student formal and informal writing for the term should total approximately 5000 words (equivalent to about 20 typed, double-spaced pages). Approximately 60% of the total writing should be formal, polished writing.
4. Students should have opportunities to have peer feedback for polished writing assignments, and/or instructors should intervene in the early stages of writing a paper through conferences or comments on drafts.
5. Discipline-specific writing instruction and course content instruction should be interdependent.
6. Instructors should teach writing issues that pertain to their specific discipline. The Campus Writing Center can provide support for students' general writing skills development.
7. At least 25% of the course grade should be based on the combined writing components.
8. Each course should have a maximum enrollment of 25 students.

## Writing-Intensive Designation Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dept. Prefix/Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Course title

### Part One: Department Information

Catalog course description:

- Curriculum requirements this course meets [check all that apply]:

LACC    Dept. Major    Ed. Major    Dept. Minor    BA    BS    BM

**OR**    Elective w/in major or minor

- Course Format:

Lecture    Lecture & Lab    Seminar    Practicum

Other (please specify)

- Course Frequency:

Each term    Each year    Alternate years

Other (please specify)

- Course Designation Desired:

WI every time offered (unless otherwise specified during scheduling)

One-time designation

Instructor designation (WI whenever offered by specific instructor/s only)

(List Instructor name/s)

## Part Two: Course Information

--> **Attach a copy of the proposed course syllabus.** \*\*\*If any of the items below are included on the syllabus, please indicate that here and label the syllabus with the numbers used below.\*\*\* If not, please answer below.

1. a. Types of INFORMAL writing [e.g., journals, lab or field notes, logs, ungraded drafts] required in the course and how they will be evaluated for course grade:  
  
b. Estimated # of pages of INFORMAL writing in course: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
c. Describe the learning outcomes expected from the required informal writing:
  
2. a. Types of FORMAL writing [e.g., essay tests, polished papers] required in the course:  
  
b. Estimated # of pages of FORMAL writing in course: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
c. Describe the learning outcomes expected from the required formal writing:
  
3. What percentage of the course grade is determined by the INFORMAL writing assignments? \_\_\_\_\_;  
by the FORMAL writing assignments? \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How will students receive instruction on discipline-specific writing practices as part of the course? Please indicate where and what discipline-specific writing practices are included.
  
5. What procedures are to be used in the course for students to receive help as they draft, revise, and edit their polished written work?

**Division Chairs Checklist:  
Evaluating transfer courses for granting “W” credit at WOU**

- Has the student completed a general petition formally requesting a “W” designation for a transfer course?
- Does the course meet transfer requirements for credit at WOU in an academic area within the purview of the division chair who is evaluating whether it meets WI standards?
- Did the student pass the course in question with a grade of “C” or better?
- Does the course qualify for transfer credit at WOU?
- Does the course fulfill a different function than WR 135? (WR 135 equivalents do not qualify for WI)
- Has the petitioning student provided the Chair any combination of **at least two** documents from the following list to support the claim that this transfer course should be counted toward meeting writing-intensive requirements for graduation at WOU?
  - Course syllabus from the course in question
  - Copy from college catalogue describing writing requirements
  - Graded copies of papers written to satisfy requirements of the course
  - Letter of support from the instructor of the course in question describing course content/methods
  - Letter from the chair of a program at WOU that offers courses in the same discipline as the transfer course in question, certifying that it is the functional equivalent of a course already approved for a “W” designation
  - Letter of support from a WOU instructor who has assigned and evaluated a writing sample from the student and is willing to certify the student’s competence to write at an upper-division level in that discipline.
- Does the course meet these standard requirements for a “W” course at WOU (is it in compliance with all WI requirements listed below)?
  - Requires both informal and formal writing components
  - Requires formal citation of sources in appropriate, discipline-specific format
  - Provides students with critical feedback on interim and final drafts
  - Evaluates student competence in conventions of standard, written English
  - Evaluates student competence for discipline-specific writing
  - Requires a substantial amount of writing (roughly equivalent to 20 typed pages)

If the division chair is satisfied that the correct answer for each the above questions is “yes”, then the Faculty Senate Committee on Writing Intensive Standards expects that the registrar will accept the division chair’s finding that the transfer course in question is the functional equivalent of a “W” course offered at WOU.

**Routing/signatures/approvals:**

Approval for:    \_\_\_Lower Division WI Credit        Number of Credits\_\_\_

                  \_\_\_Upper Division WI Credit        Number of Credits\_\_\_

(at least 3 of the 6 writing-intensive credits required for graduation must be upper division)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Division Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Division Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registrar’s Office representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Action Taken

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action