

ECU's Writing Across the Curriculum Program Writing-Intensive Course Proposal

What Is “Writing Intensive” at ECU?

Courses that have been awarded the designation “writing intensive” are those which go beyond merely *assigning* a writing project or series of writing projects to students to test their knowledge of course content. Rather, a WI course provides students with opportunities to learn how to write in the genres, styles, and voices appropriate to the discipline of the course.

While any number of courses in a degree program/major/minor may require students to write in various ways – e.g., short, writing-to-learn activities; formal or informal reading responses; annotated bibliographies; essay exams – the WAC Committee reserves the title “Writing Intensive” to those courses which clearly demonstrate that students are working toward the following outcomes: Students will

- Use writing to investigate complex, relevant topics and address significant questions through engagement with and effective use of credible sources;
- Produce writing that reflects an awareness of context, purpose, and audience;
- Demonstrate that they understand writing as a process that can be made more effective through drafting and revision;
- Proofread and edit their own writing, avoiding grammatical and mechanical errors;
- Assess and explain the major choices that they make in their writing.

In order for a course to be considered “Writing Intensive,” faculty must demonstrate that the course engages students in all of these writing outcomes.

While Outcome Five may be unfamiliar to some faculty, research on learning transfer makes the compelling case that reflective-analytical/metacognitive activities increase the likelihood that students will be able to transfer knowledge and skills from one activity, project, or course to another. As such, the WAC Committee expects all WI courses to provide space for students to analyze/reflect on the choices they make as writers. The University Writing Program provides several examples of reflective writing assignments that faculty can use/adapt in their courses [INSERT WEBSITE]. The UWP staff are also happy to meet and provide feedback on your ideas as you prepare your WI course proposal.

Preparing Your WI Course Proposal

As you work on your course proposal for WI consideration, keep in mind that the members of the WAC Committee represent very different disciplines from across campus, and as such the committee holds no singular assumption about the “right” way to design a WI course. The committee is interested in seeing how your course, as you articulate it below, provides students a scaffold for reaching ECU's Writing Outcomes. As there is no one way for course projects/activities to meet these outcomes, it is likely that faculty will use a variety of writing activities in order to achieve the goals of a WI course. Your answers below should be written so that someone outside your discipline can understand the types/genres of writing you plan to assign and how those types/genres are intended to help students reach the outcomes. The University Writing Program provides several examples of course proposals for you to use as you create your proposal [INSERT WEBSITE]. The UWP staff are also happy to meet and provide feedback on your ideas as you prepare your WI course proposal.

What Documents Should I Send the WAC Committee for Review?

Because WI courses require faculty to provide significant feedback on student work-in-progress, the WAC Committee has established a course cap of 25 students per section for WI courses. Therefore, in addition to the completed form that makes up the rest of this document, faculty proposing a course should also include a letter of support from the unit administrator indicating that the unit understands the WI course cap and has the resources to meet that requirement.

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What Happens at the WAC Committee Discussion of My Course Proposal?

Once your proposal has been distributed to the WAC Committee, you will receive a notice that your packet has been given a time on the agenda for a future meeting of the WAC Committee. Ideally, you would show up at that meeting to discuss the proposal with the committee. The committee uses that time to better understand what writing looks like in the discipline that is proposing the course and how this course helps students to be more effective writers in that discipline. The committee may ask for revisions to the course proposal based on that conversation. Typically, the committee votes either to a) accept the proposal as is, b) to accept the proposal pending minor revisions that can be submitted to the chair of the committee and do not require full committee review a second time, or c) to return the proposal to the department for significant revision. Courses that require significant revision will come back to the WAC Committee at the next meeting for reconsideration.

How Does the WAC Committee Assess WI Courses?

Grading and evaluating student work is always the responsibility of the course instructor. Neither the WAC Committee nor the University Writing Program has any interest in second-guessing or questioning the way faculty assess the work of their students.

However, in order to ensure quality of the WAC program at ECU, the WAC Committee, in conjunction with the University Writing Program, has established several methods for assessing the effectiveness and the integrity of the program.

1. Each semester, faculty teaching WI courses are asked to send a copy of their syllabus (and a description of their writing assignments if those are not already detailed in the syllabus) to the University Writing Program. The UWP uses these documents to garner a yearly snapshot of how writing is being taught across campus and makes a report to the WAC Committee on its findings.
2. Based on an established rotation, available on the UWP website, departments/programs are asked every five years to review their WI course offerings and to provide a packet of materials to the WAC Committee which demonstrates that WI course syllabi have consistently included the Writing Outcomes and that writing assignments and teaching practices have worked to help students meet those outcomes. Extensive directions on how to prepare those assessment packets are available on the UWP website.
3. Upon review by the WAC Committee, if courses have not been taught as "writing intensive" and have not sought to meet the ECU Writing Outcomes, the relevant department chair will be notified that the WAC Committee may vote to remove the WI designation from the course at a future meeting.]Not sure what to do here ...]

What about Writing Intensive by Section (WI*)?

Because of the amount of confusion that WI* causes for students and advisors alike the WAC Committee no longer approves courses as "Writing Intensive by Section." Faculty/departments that propose a WI course should make all faculty aware that all sections of the course, if approved, would be Writing Intensive.

Is There Anywhere I Can Go for Help with Creating the Writing Components of My Course?

Absolutely. The staff of University Writing Program welcomes faculty at any time and is happy to work individually with faculty on proposals or on effective methods for integrating writing into a course. They can also help departments to think about what courses are best for the WI designation.

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Course Information

1. Course number: _____ Department: _____

2. Course name: _____

3. Faculty involved: _____ Email: _____

4. This course is for: Majors _____ Non-majors _____ Both _____

5. This proposal is for: An Existing Course _____ A New Course _____

6. How frequently is this course offered?

7. What is the average student enrollment across all sections?
(WI Courses are capped at 25 students per section.)

1. What types of documents (genres) will students write in this course (i.e., reports, memos, research papers, annotated bibliographies, etc.)? Include the expected or required number of pages for each assignment.

2. How are the writing assignments integrated into teaching & learning goals for the course?

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The following outcomes represent the ECU Writing Outcomes approved by the WAC Committee. Explain how the projects and activities in your proposed course help students to meet these outcomes.

- SLO 1 How will students use writing to investigate complex, relevant topics and address significant questions through engagement with and effective use of credible sources?
- SLO 2 How will students produce writing that reflects an awareness of context, purpose, and audience? If this is a WI course specific to majors, please explain how students will produce writing that reflects an awareness of context, purpose, and audience in written genres of their major disciplines and/or career fields.
- SLO 3 How will students demonstrate that they understand writing as a process that can be made more effective through drafting and revision?
- SLO 4 How will you help students proofread and edit their own writing, avoiding grammatical and mechanical errors?
- SLO 5 How will students assess and explain the major choices that they make in their writing?