
Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement

(Policy adopted by the Senate, December 5, 1978;
Revised February 4, 2003, April 2004, September 2008)

Proficiency in Writing

San Diego State University students shall demonstrate proficiency in writing skills as a requirement for graduation. Such skills shall incorporate basic rules of good writing, subject to the argument, format, logical development, demonstration of evidence, and style appropriate to various disciplines. Furthermore, departments and schools should insist upon effective expression in their courses and should stress the need for improving substandard writing.

Certification of Writing Proficiency: All students shall take the Writing Placement Assessment in the semester in which they achieve 60 units or, for students who transfer to SDSU with 60 or more units, in their first semester at SDSU, to determine their ability to write clearly and logically.

1. Students demonstrating writing proficiency on the Writing Placement Assessment shall meet the Certification of the graduation writing assessment requirement, unless their majors, schools, or colleges require satisfactory completion of an upper division writing course. (If such a course is required, demonstrating competency on the Writing Placement Assessment shall serve as the prerequisite.) Completion of the course with a minimum grade of C or Cr shall be certification of proficiency for the student.
2. Students demonstrating basic writing competency on the Writing Placement Assessment shall enroll in an upper division writing course. Completion of an approved writing course with a minimum grade of C or Cr shall mean the student has met the certification of the graduation writing assessment requirement.
3. Students unable to demonstrate basic writing competence on the Upper Division Writing Assessment shall complete an approved basic writing course with a minimum grade of C or Cr before enrolling in an upper division writing course. Completion of an approved upper division course with a minimum grade of C or Cr shall mean the student has met the certification of the graduation writing assessment requirement.

Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Procedures

Student Learning Outcomes and Guidelines for “W” Courses Fulfilling the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement

1. In order to prepare students to write in and for a specific discipline, they will practice writing that includes the following components:
 - a. Disciplinary means of argumentation and exposition.
 - b. Disciplinary ways of reasoning, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating.
 - c. Disciplinary formats, genres, and conventions.
 - d. Disciplinary vocabulary and prose style.
2. In addition, students will
 - Write with an awareness of general or specific audiences outside of their major disciplines (for example, ability to convey information or perspectives relevant to a discipline or to an audience beyond it).
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation-purpose, context, and audience.
 - Apply writing processes effectively (i.e., research, prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing).
 - Actively read texts using a variety of reading strategies such as annotation, visual organizers, questioning, and discussion.
 - Produce a minimum of 2,000 words of writing per credit unit.

Students in “W” courses who are still working to master standard written English will find help and support for their particular needs in these classes.

The University Writing Committee (Dean of Undergraduate Studies, chair) wishes to support departments in their creation or adaptation of writing courses and will be offering both general advisory sessions and ongoing assistance on a consultative basis.

Existing Courses: Departments must submit the writing requirement proposal with college approval to Curriculum Services for university-wide processing.

New Courses: The same course template will be completed and the appropriate proposal type for a writing course must be selected in the cover sheet. New course proposals follow the regular university curriculum process. All writing course proposals are submitted for consideration to the University Writing Committee after approval at the college level and review by the academic deans.

Whenever possible, departments should use course numbers already established in other departments to designate an upper division writing course. The "W" suffix should be used for all such courses.

Basic Prerequisite Statement for All Upper Division "W" Courses

Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a C or higher in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 7 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking. **Proof of completion of prerequisite required:** Test score or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.