

Guidelines for Writing-Intensive Courses (Rev. May 2019) †

Hamilton College recognizes that the ability to write clearly and effectively is a core goal of a liberal arts education. Learning to write well is an on-going process that helps bind together our students' multi-disciplinary experience within the College's open curriculum. As a community of writers and writing teachers, Hamilton College faculty members know that good writers are persistent rewriters, and our efforts must engage student writers in a process of continual growth and maturation. The Writing-Intensive (WI) program is intended to assure that students engage in this process regularly and across the curriculum. The guiding principle of the WI program is that, in the context of learning disciplinary content, students will write often, receive feedback on composition, form, and content, and pursue substantive revision. Students and faculty should be engaged in a cycle of writing, feedback, and revision/rewriting throughout the semester.

In pursuit of this goal, the Faculty articulates the following Guidelines and Recommendations for WI courses.

Guidelines

1. Instructors will provide clear, extensive, and timely feedback on student writing. Feedback should include comments on structure, argument, grammar, and style as well as on content.
2. Students will have the opportunity to respond to feedback in a subsequent draft, paper, or other assignment.
3. Writing projects will be substantial and will be distributed across the semester.
4. Grades on written work will comprise a substantial part of the course grade.
5. Students will have the opportunity for individual or small-group writing conferences with the instructor.
6. Instructors will devote class time to discussing writing techniques and strategies specific to the level and content of the course.
7. Instructors will include on the syllabus a short statement describing how the course meets the above guidelines.

Courses are designated WI by application to the Committee on Academic Policy, including a rationale for such designation based on the Guidelines. If a department or program believes a course meets the spirit of the WI Program even though it does not meet all of the guidelines, the department or program may petition the CAP to designate the course as WI.

In order to aid the faculty in meeting these guidelines, WI courses will be capped at a maximum enrollment of eighteen students.

Recommendations for Writing-Intensive Courses (5/2012)

1. Require at least four separate writing assignments, or the equivalent, appropriate to course level and discipline.
2. Require students to hand in earlier papers or drafts to monitor their progress.
3. Require or strongly recommend at least one Writing Center appointment, especially in 100-level courses.
4. Ask students to summarize how they have responded to the critique of their work when submitting revisions.
5. Include, during in-class discussion of effective writing practices, general expectations for writing assignments; examples of weak and strong sentences, paragraphs, whole papers, and writing strategies; explanations of disciplinary conventions, and the nature of evidence and expected documentation style for the discipline.
6. Include some low-stakes or ungraded essays or other writing assignments in or out of class.
7. Include peer review of assignments.

Writing-Intensive Student Learning Outcomes (Rev. May 2019)

Students will refine their writing through a recursive process that involves drafting, revising, and receiving feedback from readers.

Students will substantiate and develop ideas through the analysis of evidence and the critical use of sources.

Students will employ appropriate rhetorical strategies and mechanical conventions for specific disciplines, audiences, genres, and media.

Students will properly incorporate, cite, and document sources.

†This document and its revisions were voted on by the faculty. Any changes to this document must be approved by a majority vote of the faculty. The latest revision was approved at the May 7th, 2019 faculty meeting.