



Academic Senate

22/AS/18/UWC/UEPC – Undergraduate Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Implementation Policy (revised)

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate of California State University, Stanislaus accepts the attached revision to 07/AS/07/UWC/UEPC -GWAR Implementation Policies; and be it further

RESOLVED: The attached Undergraduate Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Implementation Policy will become effective at the start of the 2019-20 Academic Year; and be it further

RESOLVED: The revised policy should be incorporated into the *Faculty Handbook* and that the appropriate changes required to reflect this policy be made to Writing Proficiency Screening Test (WPST) brochures, the WPST website, and the University Catalog, and further that copies of the revised policy and the attached FAQ be sent to all WP course instructors, department chairs, and staff academic advisors.

RATIONALE: The University Writing Committee (UWC) is charged with periodic review of the GWAR policies, and these recommended changes to policy help to clarify process and expectations. The revised policy maintains compliance with EO 665, which in part established the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement at the Baccalaureate level. The most marked change in the policy is the addition of a minimum word count for formal, professional or academic writing (WP Course, item 3). The addition of the word count helps to establish writing-based assignments as a core component of the course in order to obtain WP designation, and creates a more clear standard by which faculty can design courses and the UWC can review and approve courses for WP status. After reviewing policies at other campuses, the UWC identified the 2,500 word count as being toward the lower end of the range of listed word counts for similar courses. While many WP (and non-WP) courses already require higher word counts of formal writing, and are welcomed and supported in continuing to do so, this level appears to set a reasonable minimum expectation for courses across the disciplines, including those for which brevity and conciseness is encouraged.

The policy also indicates the timing of testing and score reporting, and removes language indicating that faculty are responsible for dis-enrolling students who have not passed the WPST. The policy revises the language with regard to disenrollment of undergraduate students who haven't passed the WPST, and removed specific language indicating that faculty are responsible for dis-enrolling students who have not passed the WPST.



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The UEPC shall be responsible for ensuring that an undergraduate GWAR procedural document will be developed by no later than May 2019 to address issues including administration of the WPST, processes for disenrollment, and means for student notification. This procedural document shall be reviewed periodically including each time the GWAR policy is reviewed.

Undergraduate Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Implementation Policy

WPST

1. The Writing Proficiency Screening Test (WPST) is administered a minimum of four times per year. The prompts for the WPST are designed and tested by the WPST Coordinator and university faculty, with the goal that every student should have the necessary background and experience to address the prompt.
2. The WPST should be taken as soon as possible after successful completion of the A3 course or as soon as transfer students have been admitted to the University (whichever comes first). To encourage this, each semester the WPST Coordinator contacts A3 instructors asking them to encourage their students to take the WPST as soon as possible. In addition, before registration opens for each test administration, the WPST Office sends email correspondence to transfer students, students who have completed their A3 course, and students who have previously failed the WPST urging them to take the test and informing them of registration dates and payment information.
3. The WPST Coordinator organizes WPST grading sessions shortly after each test administration. Each exam is graded holistically and independently by two trained readers referring to a four-point scoring guide that measures basic writing skills common to all disciplines. If the two readers' evaluations agree within one point, they are added to form a total score. If not, the exam is re-read by the chief reader who will resolve the discrepancy. All scores are final. The minimum passing score is seven.
4. WPST exam scores are posted to the student information system, and WPST status [WPST PASS/NO WPST] for each student appears on course rosters for WP courses. Although students may pre-enroll in a WP course without yet having passed the WPST, undergraduate students will be removed from the course if they have not received a passing score on the WPST before the first day of the semester in which the course is taken. Graduate, Credential, and postbaccalaureate students enrolled in a WP course are exempt from the WPST requirement.
5. To support exam integrity, passing exams will not be released to students. Failing exams can be released to students, provided they have gone through the test review process.



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6. Students who do not pass the WPST shall be informed that they should request a test review. Information about how to request a review is included on the failing score report students receive. During this appointment, an experienced faculty reader will review the test with the student and recommend individualized resources. Resources range from coursework to individual or walk-in tutoring sessions in the University Writing Center.

7. Students who fulfill GVAR while matriculated at another CSU campus may transfer GVAR credit to our campus. Such transfers are posted to the student information system and appear as WPST PASS on grade rosters for WP courses.

WP Courses

1. Courses must be approved by the University Writing Committee (UWC) before being granted WP status.

2. The initial certification and re-certifications of WP Courses are based on four criteria:

- a) They incorporate instruction about writing in academic disciplines or professional fields.
- b) They integrate writing with the rest of the course, both in content and in pedagogy.
- c) They provide meaningful assessment of and developmental feedback on writing.
- d) They offer instruction and warnings about plagiarism.

3. The University Writing Committee recognizes and respects the academic freedom of faculty. It also recognizes that instructors (and departments) will meet the goals of Writing Proficiency courses in a variety of ways and encourages creativity and imagination in meeting those goals. However, since the GVAR is a CSU requirement mandated by EO 665, a minimum of 2,500 words of formal, final professional or academic writing per individual student is expected. This word count does not include rough drafts of writing but rather final, edited pages of discipline-specific or academic text.

4. To be given WP designation, courses must be classified C-4 on the Course Proposal Form, with enrollment capped at 25 students because of the additional interaction with students and effort involved in teaching WP courses. Courses must list "Completion of the Writing Proficiency Screening Test with a passing score, or post-baccalaureate status" as a prerequisite.

5. Each WP Course is reviewed by the UWC the first time an instructor teaches the course and in five-year intervals thereafter.



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6. Courses not previously approved for WP credit cannot be used to satisfy GWAR, even on an independent or individual study basis. In the event of scheduling difficulties, and on a case-by-case basis, the UWC may approve petitions to award credit for WP courses taken as independent study. Such courses must be supervised by an experienced instructor of the course and adhere to the original approved WP course proposal.

7. The UWC monitors WP courses to assure compliance with the Undergraduate Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Implementation Policy

8. If a WP course proposal or offering seems to be out of compliance with established policies, before refusing certification or recertification, the UWC contacts the instructor(s) and department in an attempt to resolve the issue.

9. In the event that there are changes to GWAR on our campus, the UWC will inform Outreach and Academic Advising and other relevant parties to ensure that requirements are communicated correctly to students.

Approved by the Academic Senate on 11/13/18

Approved by President Ellen Junn on 01/10/19