CRITERIA FOR COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM (WAC)
COURSES
Revised 28 February 2007

I. Philosophy:

Writing is a way to learn through the active synthesis of ideas. It is a way to create and communicate meaning through asking questions, connecting ideas, confronting theories with evidence, and drawing conclusions.

II. Goals:

A. To understand writing as a way to learn, a personal and intellectual process, and a tool of communication.

B. To develop the ability to think, argue, and write in a manner appropriate to a specific discipline.

III. Requirements:

A. Quantity – The total amount of writing in the course should be approximately 3500 to 5000 words.

B. Type – The writing may consist of a combination of formal and informal writing. Formal writing includes any of the following: reports, critical analysis, and short and long research papers. Informal writing encompasses any of the following writing-to-learn activities such as responses to course readings/lectures, and writing notebooks and journals. Writing in electronic environments may be acceptable for both formal and informal writing.

C. Process – Writing assignments must include provisions for feedback from the instructor and may include reviews from fellow students during the drafting process. Instructors should offer comments on student papers that are useful for later writing assignments and/or assist in revision. In addition, the course should provide opportunities for revision. Possible options for fulfilling the process requirement include, but are not limited to: peer review and draft workshops; instructor commentary on rough drafts of one or all papers in the course; graded shorter assignments that lead to or form part of a larger term paper; a required revision assignment; required proposals or conferences prior to major assignments.

For a course to be considered as writing-intensive, a course syllabus and a description of the writing assignments must be provided to the CoLA WAC committee. The committee recommends that class size be consistent with the goals of writing intensive courses and the procedures outlined above.

For courses with multiple sections and/or instructors, the department should submit a single generalized course syllabus that outlines the writing requirements indicative of a WAC approved course and suggests the kinds of assignments that might be used. It is understood that although individual instructors may teach the course somewhat differently, it is the responsibility of the department for ensuring that all sections of approved courses meet the course criteria as approved by the WAC committee. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the department to ensure that WAC designated courses continue to adhere to WAC criteria following their approval.