

CHAPTER 17.

WAC EMERGENCE IN ENGLISH  
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
CONTEXTS: A TALE OF TWO  
JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES

Alex Way

University of Utah

*Abstract.* This chapter seeks to profile writing sequences at two Japanese universities and explores their potential for WAC. The universities—Kanazawa University (KU) and Akita International University (AIU)—are well-known, but the former is a large national university, while the latter is a small public university that is famous for its university-wide English immersion approach. Important to international WAC conversations are the role that English for academic purposes (EAP) curriculum and pedagogy play in academic writing instruction. English for academic purposes is an approach to English language acquisition that prepares students from EFL countries to operate successfully within primarily English-speaking universities. The first case study reveals that KU's EAP sequence provides few opportunities for developing WAC without major curricular changes. However, a recent study has demonstrated faculty support for WAC if it is tailored to the local context. The case study of AIU reveals WAC challenges due to the university's status as a small liberal arts institution with limited resources, but the unique English immersion structure of the university-at-large and the American-style writing sequence, have paved the way for pedagogies and student writing that align with WAC. A formal WAC infrastructure, however, would be difficult to implement.

Writing across the curriculum is primarily a US-focused initiative. However, there has been growing interest in WAC in international contexts (Hall & Horner, 2023; Martins, 2015; Zawacki & Cox, 2014). International WAC is understood as students learning content knowledge in another language, but it also entails domestic WAC pedagogy like notetaking, reflection writing, essay

writing, and journal writing, among others (Kwon, 2023; Martins, 2015). Important to international WAC conversations is the role that English for academic purposes (EAP) curriculum and pedagogy play in academic writing instruction. This chapter seeks to unveil the promises and potential barriers to WAC in Japan against the backdrop of growing internationalization, or *kokusaika*, in two unique higher education contexts.

In exploring WAC potential within Japan, this chapter profiles two universities and their writing sequences. The universities—Kanazawa University (KU) and Akita International University (AIU)—are well-known but differ in that the former is a large national research university that offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate degrees, while the latter is a small public liberal arts university with limited undergraduate offerings, but a famous university-wide English immersion approach. These two universities are compared to determine the extent to which disciplinary writing is taught in their different contexts, and their potential for future WAC endeavors.

National universities like KU are both overseen and funded by the central government, and they carry low tuition and high prestige—notably, most of the top ten ranked universities in Japan are national universities (Wadden & Hale, 2019). In comparison, public universities like AIU receive funding from local—i.e., prefectural and municipal—governments, and their tuition also tends to be cheap. Public institutions hold less prestige, but AIU is a notable exception. Driven by *kokusaika*, KU and AIU aim for their students to be able to learn and operate within academic English environments. EAP is a key component for how they intend to accomplish this goal.

EAP is an approach to English language acquisition that prepares students from English as a foreign language (EFL) countries to operate successfully within primarily English-speaking universities. It is also used to prepare students for English medium instruction (EMI). EAP and EMI have often been overlooked in rhetoric and writing studies, but they are crucial for understanding how universities around the world approach academic writing. In short, EAP is a pragmatic system for teaching English that seeks to teach students via different genres ranging from essays to emails. Rachel Ruegg and Clay Williams (2018) argue that “EAP programs prepare students with more than just proficiency in the English language; they prepare students with particular skills that are necessary to succeed in tertiary-level studies in English” (p. 3). On the other hand, Ernesto Macaro (2018) argues that EMI primarily focuses on teaching content in disciplines, rather than language learning. Ideally, EAP prepares students for EMI at both KU and AIU. However, it remains unclear the extent to which discipline-specific writing is taking place under an EAP umbrella at these universities.

WAC and EAP share commonalities, as Suresh Canagarajah (2002) points out. He notes that EAP has been

[helped] by the research and pedagogical approaches of ... Writing across the Curriculum ... [EAP instructors have developed] pedagogical approaches that facilitate communicative competence among their students in addressing the discourses of the academic community in general and disciplinary communities in particular. (p. 32)

EAP's aim of building students' competence in disciplinary communication seems like a potential way that Japanese writing programs could incorporate disciplinary writing. However, there are limits to how much discipline-specific writing instruction can be accomplished in an EFL context where language acquisition and study skills are also the goals. EAP also often takes on a remedial role, and it is often taught by instructors who are not subject experts (Wingate, 2018). Nevertheless, EAP holds potential for WAC, and this dynamic is worth exploring.

This chapter begins by demonstrating the method used to collect information about the EAP programs at both KU and AIU. The following section contextualizes the creation and enhancement of EAP at KU and AIU through the government's push toward *kokusaika*. The chapter then transitions to the case study on KU's relatively recent adoption of EAP, including details of how the program has evolved throughout the years, and recent internal scholarship on its reception. KU's case study concludes by analyzing positive reception towards WAC at the university, as well as challenges of implementing WAC there. Next, the chapter transitions into a case study on the well-established EAP program at AIU. Particular attention is paid to the university's unique English immersion environment that positions it as a globally minded university. The chapter then moves into an analysis of AIU's writing program. It pays particular attention to AIU's similarities to an American university writing program. AIU's case study concludes by identifying traces of disciplinary writing that are already occurring in the university. The discussion section synthesizes the KU and AIU case studies and demonstrates how WAC emerges in these different contexts.

Results from the two case studies demonstrate that both KU and AIU are proactive in their attempts to prepare students for EMI in their university settings and beyond. These efforts are reflected in research by faculty on their EAP programs. In KU's context, EAP is currently insufficient in preparing students for disciplinary writing. However, the idea of WAC has gained acceptance at the university as long as it pays attention to local curricula and contexts, and instructors and students are allowed to draw on both their L1 and L2 linguistic resources. The case study on AIU demonstrates that the university's beating heart is EAP, and it has a

writing program in all but name. Students receive a substantial amount of writing instruction in a curriculum that mixes EAP with a writing program-infused WAC pedagogical approach. However, WAC on an infrastructural scale would be difficult to accomplish without increased enrollments and funding.

The following case studies on KU and AIU are based on a synthesis of existing scholarship written about these universities; materials such as syllabi and web pages that are publicly available from these universities; informal correspondence with faculty in both EAP programs; and the author's experience of working at KU.

## KOKUSAIKA IN JAPAN'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

While interest in English education has grown locally, top-down government initiatives have also sparked much activity in English education. Namely, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), which is a government ministry in charge of managing and regulating education in Japan, overhauled English education in Japan. The plan they formulated was called the "English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization," and it specifically targeted elementary and junior high school education. Within this context, the reform increased the number of English classes required for grades 3–5, hired more English-speaking assistant language teachers (ALTs) to assist with English classes while increasing their training, and emphasized external exams for testing K-12 English subject teachers' English abilities, among other changes. The proposal, which was decided in 2014, set up councils and frameworks for the education reform plan and began incremental implementation in 2018 and full implementation in 2020 to correspond with the Tokyo Olympics (MEXT, 2014), thereby marking a timely and symbolic motivation for improving students' English abilities.<sup>1</sup>

Top-down initiatives in English education also moved beyond K-12 when MEXT began a larger national move towards globalizing Japanese universities (MEXT, n.d.-a). KU and other selected universities have begun implementing English medium instruction (EMI) courses to improve students' English abilities.<sup>2</sup> EMI is an approach in which instructors use English in countries where the L1 is not English to teach academic subjects (Dearden, 2015). Universities hope these changes will provide students with opportunities to use English and engage in global leadership. Particularly noteworthy is that when KU applied for the Top Global University Project in 2013, 2.4 percent of undergraduate

1 The COVID-19 pandemic would soon make this motive into a moot point.

2 Important to note is that KU considers courses to be EMI "[if] 80% of a lesson is conducted in English and 80% of all the lessons consist of such lessons" (Brown et al., 2023, p. 48). Therefore, EMI courses can use less than 80 percent English during the span of the course.

courses and 3.9 percent of post-graduate courses were EMI. However, KU's TGUP application document planned for 50 percent of undergraduate courses and 100 percent of post-graduate courses to be EMI at the program's conclusion in 2023 (Brown et al., 2019, p. 19). Thus, KU demonstrated the enormity of their English ambitions to implement EMI across the curriculum.<sup>3</sup>

AIU, an already established EMI institute, has joined TGUP to transition from a domestic university into a world-class liberal arts college (MEXT, n.d.-b). Both AIU and KU are a part of TGUP Type B, the Global Traction Type, which aims for select Japanese universities to help “lead to the internationalization of Japanese higher education by leveraging their strength” (Shimmi & Yonezawa, 2015). However, AIU's aims are different from KU's. AIU's project, “Japan's World-Class Liberal Arts University,” has the following four aims in mind:

1. Promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education
2. Enrichment of world-standard curriculums
3. Facilitation of English education reform in Japan
4. Global benchmarking (MEXT, n.d.-b).

AIU intended to use its funding from TGUP to do things like transition their dormitories from living spaces into learning spaces by way of grouping dormitories by subject (aim 1), as well as benchmarking their initiatives against those from liberal arts universities around the world (aim 4). AIU's TGUP activities therefore demonstrate how an already well-established EMI university can augment its *kokusaika* efforts through government funding to become more globalized.

Top Global University institutions are also providing more study abroad programs for Japanese students and culture exchange programs for non-Japanese students, as well as both English only and English and Japanese bilingual language degree programs (Kwon, 2023). These efforts aim to attract more international students and faculty members. The plan adheres to Western conventions in a Western education environment in that it emphasizes active learning while encouraging students to produce knowledge in English (Kwon, 2023). Considering Japan's environment of increasing investment in international higher education, the next section of this chapter will focus on the case of KU.

## CASE STUDY 1: KU

KU is a large national university located in Ishikawa Prefecture on the west coast

<sup>3</sup> Brown et al. (2019) point out that another TGUP university, Tokyo University which has long been considered the top university in Japan, aimed for only 10 percent of undergraduate and 25 percent of graduate courses to be EMI.

of Japan. The university traces its roots back to 1862 when it was established as a vaccination center. It officially became KU in 1949, but it experienced major changes throughout its existence—notably, the campus was relocated from Kanazawa Castle in the downtown area to the nearby green hills of Kakuma in 1995 to accommodate the university’s expansion (Kanazawa University, 2013).

In 2024, admissions records identify roughly 10,787 students, which translates to 8,216 undergraduates and 2,571 graduate students, including masters and PhD students, and those seeking professional degrees or a special degree in nursing education (Kanazawa University, 2025). KU offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees across a wide range of subjects in engineering and the sciences, medical and health sciences, humanities, and social sciences. KU has been ranked as the #19 university in Japan by *Times Higher Education*, which demonstrates its prestige<sup>4</sup> (Times Higher Education, 2025). The university has therefore drawn the attention of not only domestic students, but also students around the globe.

As mentioned in the previous section, a major part of KU’s plan to become a top global university involves implementing EMI in various undergraduate and graduate courses at the university. The EAP department was developed to prepare students for this large expansion of EMI class offerings at KU.

## EAP AND WRITING INSTRUCTION AT KU

Writing instruction at KU takes place under the EAP umbrella of EMI. EAP is a school of English as a second or other language (ESOL) that focuses on preparing students to write in academic settings in English speaking contexts. EAP programs often focus on the four skills of speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

KU’s EAP program was implemented by the Division of Foreign Language Education within the Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 2016. It is a compulsory subject of general education. The EAP program requests that instructors in the program use English as the language of instruction. It also encourages students (primarily Japanese L1) to use English when speaking with each other to give them practice in the language. However, Japanese may be used to support individual students who are struggling with the content, or for important announcements. Japanese may also be used when students are working together on tasks. Although the goal is EMI, students are not necessarily required to use English all the time.

The EAP program includes a four-course sequence that emphasizes the four skills. Because KU operates on a quarter system, each class lasts only eight weeks,

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<sup>4</sup> The *Times Higher Education* list includes 271 universities.

therefore, two classes take place consecutively in the time of one semester. The sequence from the 2024 academic year consists of the following:

- **EAP I** – Writing paragraphs. Students learn to organize their writing logically in a paragraph form, and by the end of the course, write a stand-alone paragraph.
- **EAP II** – Writing summaries. Students learn to write summaries of readings on academic topics/social issues and evaluate the summaries of others.
- **EAP III** – Delivering presentations. Students learn presentation skills and deliver their own presentations based on source materials.
- **EAP IV** – Writing essays. Students learn to write a short academic essay with reference to sources (Oyabu et al., 2024).

In addition to the short description provided above, each course includes learning outcomes on things like engaging with the writing process, collaborating with peers to complete work, and analyzing or producing texts, among other outcomes.

EAP classes consist of up to 30 students, and between 60–90 sections are taught depending on the quarter. The syllabus, rubric, readings, worksheets, and other education materials, are all developed centrally by the EAP Course Management Committee for use by instructors. This is done to make instructors' classroom preparation more efficient so that they can devote more time to giving feedback to students and to ensure consistency across different sections of each course. Importantly, grades awarded across course sections should be comparable (Oyabu et al., 2024).

## RECEPTION TO THE EAP CURRICULUM

Internal research has been conducted on KU's EAP program by faculty to gauge how well the program is preparing students for EMI. In a survey of EMI instructors' assessment of students' needs, English input skills such as listening to lectures, reading articles and books, watching videos, and taking notes were considered students' strong suits. However, output skills involving writing essays, engaging in discussions, writing summaries, and finding sources were considered weak areas (Brown et al., 2019). Similarly, in a survey of students' perceptions about EAP and EMI at KU, the students responded that EMI instructors emphasized input skills such as listening to lectures and note taking, while paying less attention to output skills like engaging in discussions, writing reports, and giving presentations, thus demonstrating that output was perceived "as a relatively minor part of these courses" (Brown et al., 2021, p. 31). Students were split evenly on whether EAP courses were helpful (33% no, 32% yes, 35%

not sure). While students felt EAP courses supported their English development as a whole, they felt EAP program should do more to prepare students for the technical terms/specialized language that EMI coursework requires (Brown et al., 2021). EAP courses are general courses, however, so it would have been impossible to provide this change. Instead, the EAP department has since integrated a new academic vocabulary learning program into their curriculum as a helpful step (Hammond, 2024).

One scholar (Morikawa, 2024) has likened the use of EMI at KU to an English only-approach that is pedagogically ineffective. However, as stated, the EAP program does not have an English only policy. In fact, internal research by Kana Oyabu et al. (2024) acknowledge the support that translanguaging approaches to teaching receive—for instance, in valuing linguistic backgrounds. At the same time, they acknowledge the governmental and institutional pressures to conduct courses mostly in English. For instance, The High School Curriculum Guidelines, which were announced in 2018 put more emphasis on classes in English and calls for teachers to use English and students to use English amongst themselves during activities. Dale Brown et al. (2023) in their research on KU as a translanguaging space echo the need for the students' L1 to be used in the classroom. They critique the idea of English only in EMI as unrealistic and counterproductive, and further point out how the EMI and EAP at KU is already a translanguaging space in many ways. EAP courses are not 100 percent English, and conversely, none of the Japanese classes are 100 percent Japanese. EMI applies to the instruction occurring in class (Brown et al. (2023). However, while this research recognizes translanguaging in the classroom as an inherent reality, there are no specific policies to codify translanguaging approaches to teaching. Monica Kwon (2023) suggests that “[translanguaging] approaches may play a role in [the] junction of medium of instruction content knowledge in degree-based programs in Japan” (pp. 199–200). Building off of this idea, she suggests instructors should acknowledge that knowledge should be formed in the first language, in addition to the second language (2023, p. 200). Using the first language in certain collaborative and writing tasks can also be more efficient. Tomoaki Morikawa (2024), Kwon (2023), and Brown et al. (2023) all agree that both the L1 and L2 should be used for learning English effectively.

Not all models of EMI require English to be used to such a large extent, and one alternative is EMEMUS. The framework of EMEMUS (English-medium education in multilingual university settings) by Emma Dafouz and Ute Smit (2020) places more of an emphasis on education, thereby allowing for more research agendas, pedagogies, and education types. The “multilingual” portion of the acronym is also important because it represents the linguistic context (Dafouz & Smit, 2020). They analyzed EMI universities from around the world

and identified a variety of institutional approaches that tailor their instruction to local needs, thus demonstrating that EMI programs need not be a one size fits all approach. For instance, the University of Basque Country provides a trilingual model (Basque, Spanish, and English) (Dafouz & Smit, 2020). All KU courses contain a mixture of English and Japanese due to natural language practice, but perhaps the use of the L1 in EAP courses can be codified or encouraged in policies like the University of Basque Country. The lack of formal documentation addressing the role of the L1 in EAP classrooms has perhaps led to KU instructors believing the EAP classroom is an English only space. Relevant to these conversations is the need to teach disciplinary writing in addition to rethinking EMI.

### **EXPLORING WAC RECEPTION AT KU**

Recent research taking place at KU explored faculty opinions about EMI and potentially developing WAC within KU. Former EAP curriculum committee member Monica Kwon (2023) interviewed engineering department faculty about their thoughts on implementing WAC on campus. Some declined the idea of teaching engineering in only English because, among other reasons, they felt they did not have the appropriate competence to teach in all English. Others felt that EMI might only benefit non-Japanese students who are familiar with English literacy skills. Still others felt that it is better to learn concepts in one's mother tongue before moving onto another language. Despite the skepticism around EMI, study participants acknowledged that they must read and produce engineering research in English. And in the end, they voiced support for a WAC approach that used both English and Japanese, although it was unclear what form this might take (Kwon, 2023).

From the studies conducted by KU faculty, it becomes clear that EAP programs and WAC are not unpopular in themselves, but EMI policies can generate controversy. In the end, EAP programs and WAC should be localized. Kwon (2023) argues that to do so, we should take students' L1 into account and the skills required in the discipline they're entering. In localizing writing programs or teaching EAP in an EFL context, it is important to understand local context, as well as why and how we manage these programs. To be clear, EAP is not the only program that provides courses to build students' academic literacy or English competence. Other departments provide English courses for second-year students that extend beyond the EAP program's four-course sequence for first-year students. Additionally, English academic literacy courses have started to be offered as electives beginning in 2024. Considering the results of needs assessments EAP faculty have conducted at KU, preparation for writing and learning in the disciplines is also needed. An approach like academic literacies across the

curriculum (Wingate, 2018), which gets inspiration from WAC, could provide a model for how to combine discipline-specific learning with EAP. It furthermore calls for collaboration between EAP specialists and subject lecturers to make this disciplinary learning happen (Wingate, 2018). Tailoring WAC in this way would make great sense.

English for academic purposes at KU is a relatively recent development. The program is a general education requirement, and the sequence of EAP courses builds up basic skills in writing, such as paragraph writing. The EAP program's short writing sequence provides insufficient time for teaching disciplinary writing. However, research indicates there is support for WAC if the L1 and L2 can be used for instruction. A translingual approach to teaching disciplinary writing, or perhaps an Academic Literacies Across the Curriculum or EMEMUS approach may provide opportunities to think about localizing WAC for KU.

## CASE STUDY 2: AIU

AIU is a prestigious four-year liberal arts public university located in the rural Akita prefecture. The university's roots are transnational. Born out of trade summit meetings in the mid-1980's, the university was established as Minnesota State University – Akita in 1990. Minnesota and Akita Prefecture aimed for MSU – Akita to produce globally-minded students. Japanese students were to study English and general courses at the Japan campus, then complete major courses at one of the MSU campuses in Minnesota (“Minnesota College”). American students were to spend at least one semester in Akita and take International Studies or Japan Area Studies courses. The university hoped that 175–200 American students and 750 Japanese students would enroll, but enrollments lagged far behind these goals. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) were losing a substantial amount of money on each student, so its continued operation became unfeasible.<sup>5</sup> Negotiations began for phasing out the university by 2001 (Anderson, 1999). In the late 1990's and early 2000's, various councils and committees were formed to establish a new university at the campus, and in 2003, MEXT accepted the establishment of AIU. The university was formerly inaugurated in 2004 (Akita International University, n.d.-e).

Despite AIU's relative youth, its reputation is exceptional. As of 2025, AIU was ranked #10 in *Times Higher Education's* Japanese university rankings (Times Higher Education, 2025)—thus, it is the only public university ranked as a top 20 university in Japan. AIU is also one of few Japanese universities where all credits

<sup>5</sup> Reporting by *The Japan Times* reveals that during Japan's economic bubble in the 1980s, there were over 40 American-style universities in Japan, but that number dwindled to only four, including MSU – Akita, in 1997 (1997).

earned are taught via English. The student body is also small—as of September 1, 2024, AIU recorded 790 students (Akita International University, n.d.-a).

AIU is the only university in Japan that requires students to spend an entire year abroad. The university has partnerships with 208 universities from around the world that allow for cross-credit student exchange (Akita International University, n.d.-f). Roughly one quarter of the undergraduates studying at AIU are international exchange students, and half of the teaching faculty at AIU are not Japanese. Furthermore, most Japanese faculty received their postgraduate degrees abroad (Ruegg & Williams, 2018) and thus have significant international experience.

Coursework at AIU is international in focus and the curriculum is divided into three categories: Global Studies Program, Global Business Program, and Global Connectivity Program (Akita International University, n.d.-b). All students have to live in the dorms their first year and interestingly, Japanese students are paired with international students as roommates (Ruegg & Williams, 2018). Also worth noting is the fact that AIU's admissions process requires a significant amount of testing compared to American counterparts. The AIU admissions process consists of 16 possible tests, depending on the student's status (domestic, international, transfer, etc.). General students, for instance, can choose among Schedule A, B, or C. Schedule A consists of six subjects including geography, mathematics, English, and others that are part of the Japan Common Test for University Admissions, Japan's standardized test organization. Students who take this route will also take additional Japanese and English tests which are administered by AIU. Schedule B consists of English and two other subjects, in addition to tests administered by AIU. And Schedule C consists of only one subject, English, which is administered by the Common Test, and an English essay test administered by AIU (Akita International University (n.d.-a)). The picture that arises here is an internationally focused university that effectively turns Japan's EFL situation into an ESL one while at the same time having a high barrier to entrance.

### **AIU'S WRITING PROGRAM**

AIU's writing sequence contains elements that resemble a North American writing program. It offers similar courses; EMI; and an ESL context, as opposed to an EFL one. The course sequence, curriculum, and genres students write within also overlap with the American university writing programs. Similar to KU, EAP courses share a common curriculum and the major writing assignments (and their writing requirements) are also the same. This practice ensures equity of workload (Williams & Bennett, 2024).

AIU offers EAP courses that cover content similar to KU's. For instance, AIU has an EAP 1 course which focuses on paragraph writing skills, an EAP 2 course which focuses on multi-paragraph essays, and an EAP 3 course which focuses on various formats of full essays. During their time in each of these courses, students also receive instruction in listening and speaking, reading, writing, and computer training. Lower-level students may also receive instruction in TOEFL preparation (Williams & Bennett, 2024). Figure 17.1 demonstrates how students progress through the writing program.

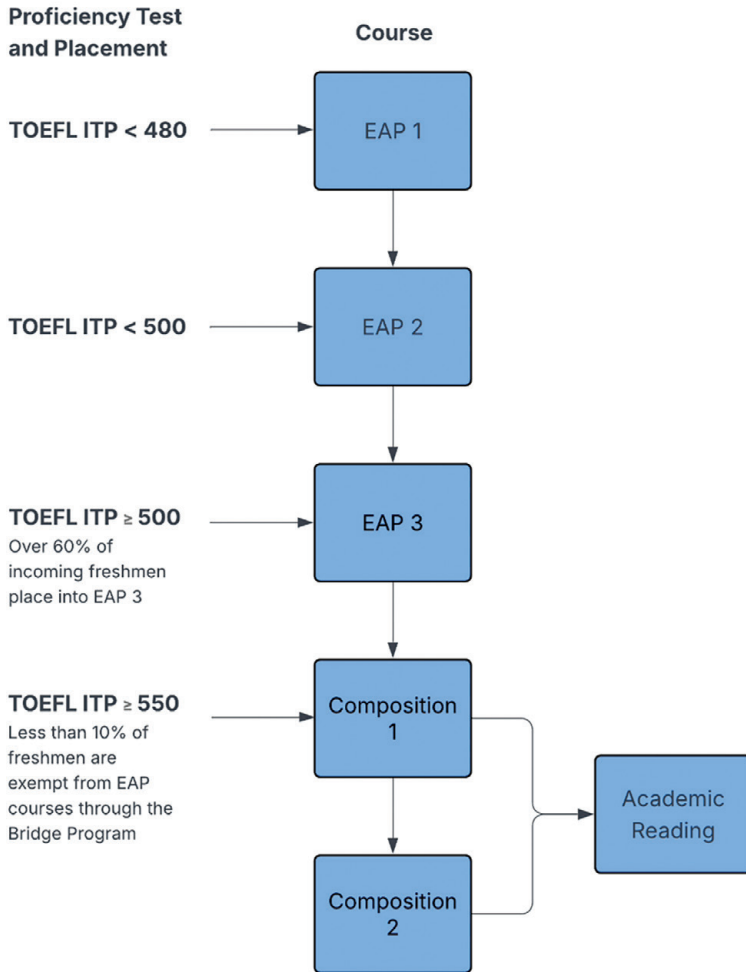


Figure 17.1. AIU writing curriculum flowchart (adapted from Ruegg & Williams, 2018; Williams & Bennett, 2024).

Depending on a given student's TOEFL scores, they can place into the program at the EAP 1 level (TOEFL score of lower than 480), EAP 2 level (TOEFL score ranging from 480 to 500), EAP 3 level (TOEFL score greater than or equal to 500), or they can go straight into the first year curriculum bridge program if their TOEFL score is greater than or equal to 550 and they have studied in an EMI context for a minimum of three years (Williams & Bennett, 2024). Students will also need to conduct an interview with a faculty member for their placement.

All students, besides bridge students, must take a freshman orientation course called CCS100 Orientation. EAP 1 and EAP 2 are intermediate and upper intermediate level, respectively, so students must also take a TOEFL class in order to improve their test scores if they are placed in either of these courses. The bridge students take computer literacy instead of the orientation course. Over 60 percent of students place into EAP 3 (the advanced courses), and in a typical year, 10 percent of students are placed into the bridge program, therefore skipping EAP altogether (Ruegg & Williams, 2018). This sequence demonstrates that the typical beginning point for an AIU student (EAP 3) is the endpoint for a student at KU.

After EAP is finished, students will enter the foundation courses, which includes two courses—Composition 1 and Composition 2—that teach skills equivalent to an English composition course in the United States. One other compulsory course, academic reading, is usually taken concurrently with Composition 1, although some students enroll concurrently with Composition 2. Ruegg and Williams (2018) reveal that the three to five-semester writing curriculum focuses on the writing process with topics like self-review, logic, critical thinking, in-text citations, and others. While the first two levels of EAP (intermediate and upper intermediate) focus on students incorporating their own knowledge and opinions into their writing, EAP III and the composition courses move more towards secondary and primary research. Most students place into EAP 3; therefore, the average student will take three writing courses, and this usually occurs in their first year and a half at AIU. Therefore, AIU students start the writing sequence at a more advanced writing level than KU students, and they stay in writing courses for a longer period of time.

The syllabi from AIU's composition courses demonstrate the skills students will be expected to incorporate in their writing, and how these skills overlap with American composition courses. For instance, in Composition 1 students learn rhetorical knowledge such as audience awareness, voice, and tone, in addition to incorporating outside sources, APA referencing, evaluating and analyzing issues, and other skills associated with English-based writing courses. Students are also expected to conduct peer review, write responses to texts, and draft multi-draft academic essays ranging from 1,000–1,500 words (Akita International

University, n.d.-c). Composition 2 builds on Composition 1's course emphases. Students in this course are supposed to understand the difference between primary and secondary research, how to synthesize sources, how to utilize secondary research, and how to conduct primary research, among other skills. Students are also expected to write multiple papers, including a scaffolded multi-draft primary research paper that is 3,500 words and draws upon at least 10 secondary sources. Furthermore, students produce genres such as reflections, synthesis papers, abstracts, literature reviews (Akita International University, n.d.-d). The aims of Composition 1 and 2 overlap significantly with American writing courses that emphasize primary and secondary research, responding to research, peer review, evaluating sources, and citing correctly, among others. WAC pedagogies are more likely to flourish in these conditions.

### AIU'S WAC POTENTIAL

AIU has not published the same internal research on its writing program as KU's EAP program, so it is difficult to understand how the students have received it. Additionally, external research on faculty reception to the idea of WAC at the university hasn't been conducted. However, faculty at the university have been very productive in publishing on EAP pedagogy and AIU's writing program.<sup>6</sup> This scholarship demonstrates not only the success of the writing program, but also the disciplinary writing that is happening at AIU.

While AIU has a writing program that shares much in common with U.S. institutions and a rigorous EAP/composition curriculum that emphasizes composing in various rhetorical modes, a full-blown WAC program at an infra-structural level at AIU seems unrealistic. As a small public university, limited funding and fewer degree programs make WAC initiatives unrealistic.

However, there are green shoots of WAC in the writing program in terms of pedagogies. For one, an academic reading across disciplines course is required at the university. The university also publishes its own free digital textbook called *Readings for Academic Writing* (RAW) which includes examples of professional level writing in various rhetorical modes (critical analysis, argumentative synthesis, empirical research papers, and many others) written by faculty themselves. The introduction emphasizes that these writings come from faculty across various departments and that it "offers an opportunity for students to become familiar with some key concepts and ideas from the disciplines they will be studying in the near future" (Bennett, 2022, p. ii). The book explains that AIU's new Applied International Liberal Arts (AILA) curriculum attempts to bridge disciplines and

6 This includes Ruegg and Williams' edited collection, *Teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Japan* (2018), which features all chapters written by AIU faculty.

requires students in Composition II “to design and carry out an interdisciplinary primary research project that incorporates learning from two additional courses they are also taking” (Bennett, 2022, p. iv). Students are also encouraged to branch out beyond APA style (the standard style they learn) to use the style that is appropriate for their disciplines, thus providing more opportunities to write within various disciplines (Bennett, 2022, p. v.). AIU is very much involved in exposing students to writing in various disciplines, and it connects this interdisciplinary idea to students working across and beyond borders in the future.<sup>7</sup>

The introduction to the textbook furthermore highlights interdisciplinary research students have produced. Their work covers sustainability studies, feminism, gender studies, psychology, STEM, and macroeconomics. These writings are found in the appendix and often have an author profile where the student reflects on writing their essays in the given discipline/from the disciplinary lens. Students sometimes address disciplinarity within the essay itself, such as the essay titled “Closing the Gender Gap in STEM Fields in Japan.”

The case of AIU demonstrates that the school aligns well with WAC. The institution has built an English immersion environment from the beginning, which includes a mandated one-year study abroad and dorm experience with international students. The course sequence begins at an advanced level for most students, and it includes a thorough sequence, so the students will have ample time to develop their writing abilities. Faculty are also comfortable with WAC pedagogies, as their curriculum and publications indicate, despite the lack of a formal WAC program in the university.

## DISCUSSION

KU and AIU both aim to produce globally minded professionals through their EAP curriculums which both serve EMI. However, while EAP is more of an add-on for KU, it has been integrated into AIU’s approach from its founding. KU has implemented EAP in its first-year general education sequence to develop students’ English abilities for EMI, but English education continues in different degrees and departments beyond EAP. It is unclear how much of this additional coursework focuses on English instruction (and English writing instruction in particular), as opposed to content courses taking place in English because there are so many undergraduate and graduate programs at the university. On the other hand, the English writing curriculum is the “beating heart” of AIU. These compulsory courses provide much more preparation for the EMI content courses after the sequence has finished.

<sup>7</sup> RAW is also an example of localizing English writing instruction, such as content and teaching focus, for a specific Japanese EFL student audience (Williams & Bennett, 2024).

Internal research on the needs of students in KU's EAP program, as well as WAC research give credence to the idea that Japanese should be used to teach content knowledge in EAP. Of course, Japanese is used as a medium of instruction in various academic programs outside of the EAP program. In terms of perceptions of WAC, faculty are receptive to the WAC movement as long as no strict EMI requirements are attached. A translingual approach has been forwarded to implement WAC. However, while there are no plans to establish a WAC program, efforts are being made to better prepare students to take EMI courses in their disciplines as the addition of the academic vocabulary learning program to the curriculum demonstrates.

AIU, on the other hand, ensures that all courses are EMI. Students enter the university with a desire to learn English, and most begin at the advanced level of EAP. After EAP III, all students continue to write in Composition I and Composition II—courses that resemble their Comp I and Comp II cousins in the United States. For instance, these composition courses focus on primary and secondary research, as well as writing within various rhetorical modes, or genres, just like some institutions in the USA. While the size and funding of AIU raises doubts about the viability of a WAC program on the infrastructural level, the new Applied International Liberal Arts (AILA) curriculum ensures that students get practice writing within, as well as reflecting on, the disciplines. The proof of this disciplinary work can be seen in AIU's in-house textbook on academic writing.

## CONCLUSION

Two universities in Japan—KU and AIU—were compared for their approaches to teaching writing and potential for WAC initiatives. These universities both rely on a primarily English approach to EAP to prepare their students for EMI. Students at KU would prefer more preparation via the compulsory EAP program to be able to operate successfully in their disciplinary EMI contexts. EAP faculty are aware of the issue and have recently developed a standardized vocabulary learning program to better equip students for operating in English academic settings. The EAP program is constantly evolving, so more changes will occur to help prepare students (Oyabu et al., 2024). However, students likely need significantly more preparation if the university expects 50 percent of their undergraduate courses to be EMI. The idea of WAC enjoys support among faculty at the university as long as the bilingual resources of students and instructors can be negotiated going forward. On the other hand, AIU has had a burgeoning EAP program from its inception, and pedagogies that align with WAC are being deployed in the university. However, a WAC infrastructure at the university would be highly unlikely.

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