

Writing Intensive Course Requirements Across the Nation
A Brief Compilation for the DU Core Committee
 Doug Hesse, University Writing Program, October 2006

Institution Name	Writing Assignments Required	Pages Required	Revision Requirement?
UC Santa Barbara		18-20 pages	Yes
Carnegie Mellon			Yes
Carleton College	3 or more		Yes
Case Western Reserve U.			Yes
Cornell U.	6-9	30 pages	Yes
Drexel U.		12-15	Yes
Duke U.			Yes
Emory U.			Yes
George Mason U.	2 or more	14	Yes
Grinnell College			Yes
Indiana U.			Yes
U. of Kentucky	2 or more	15	Yes
LaGuardia CC	Every week	Approx. 20	Yes
Longview Comm. College	2 or more	2500 word min.	Yes
U. of Miami			Yes
U. MI – Ann Arbor			Yes
U. MO – Columbia	2 or more	20	Yes
U. of New Mexico	4 or more	4000 word min.	Yes
Notre Dame		24	Yes
Pepperdine U.	4	20	Yes
U. of Pittsburgh	2 or more	25 or more	
U. Southern Cal	5	Approx. 25	Yes
Southern Methodist.	4-6	18-20 pages	Yes
Swarthmore College		20 or more	Yes
Syracuse U.	4 or more	4000 words min.	Yes
UT – Austin	3 or more	4000 words min.	Yes
Tulane U.	4 or more	5000 words min.	Yes
Vanderbilt U.	3 or more	15-20	
U. of Virginia	2 or more	4000 words min.	
Wake Forest College	2 or more	5000 words min.	Yes
Washington U.	3 or more	15-20	Yes
Washington State U.	2 or more		Yes
Youngstown U.		2500 words min.	Yes

Thumbnails of Writing Intensive Course Requirements

University of Arizona

Undergraduates are required to take one writing emphasis course, defined as “regular junior- or senior-level courses in an academic discipline in which at least half the grade awarded is determined by written work appropriate to the academic discipline.” Such courses are offered widely throughout the University system. A few examples are: “A ME 401 – Senior Aerospace Laboratory: Laboratory investigations involving aerodynamic, control, structural, and power systems.”; “AFAS 329 – Cultures and Societies of Africa: Introduction to African prehistory, social anthropology, ecology, religions, ancient and modern state formation, slavery, urbanization, and contemporary issues.”; and “CBA 596F – Cognitive Psychology: Investigation of research and ideas on a specialized topic within cognitive psychology, including the psychology of language, visual perception and memory, decision, and learning.”

Arizona State University

Arizona State doesn’t have a writing-intensive course requirement, nor do they seem to designate many writing-intensive courses, yet they promote [writing across the curriculum](#). Yet the Department of Religious Studies and the Department of Communication Studies both offer “writing-intensive courses” within their disciplines. Indeed, the Department of Religious Studies claims to “offer a greater percentage of writing-intensive courses than any other department on campus, and faculty are genuinely interested in the development of critical skills- how to read carefully, how to argue, how to assess different points of view.”

Boston University

“All Boston University students take Writing Program seminars to satisfy their school or college writing requirements. [Writing Seminars](#) (WR 100) and Writing and Research Seminars (WR 150) are offered in fields across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. WR 100 focuses upon primary works and satisfies the first writing requirement throughout Boston University; WR 150 adds a semester-long emphasis on library and internet research and satisfies the second writing requirement in CAS and other schools and colleges that have a two semester writing requirement.”

University of California – Los Angeles

UCLA’s online catalog makes mention of requirements for students to take writing-intensive courses, as indicated in their website below. Looking through course offerings in various disciplines yielded evidence of such courses, clearly labeled “[writing-intensive](#),” although these differed from the designation of “Writing I” and “Writing II” courses, which are required. It is the list “Writing II” courses which seems to indicate the method by which UCLA has implemented writing-intensive courses, since the titles and descriptions of these course seem most parallel to what other institutions call “writing-intensive courses.”

University of California, Santa Barbara

The [Writing Program](#) at UCSB runs a three-course undergraduate writing program, with students taking two terms of a writing instruction course in their first year and a research course in their second. The program also offers support and workshops for graduate students to improve their teaching of writing in undergraduate classes. Writing classes at different levels have their own curricular [requirements](#), but this is a representative example:

“Readings and Subject Matter: Instructors should assign a variety of article-length readings ... the primary purpose of the readings is not for students to master the content of a given body of material, but

rather to stimulate the development of their writing, critical reading, and critical thinking skills in a range of academic disciplines. All Writing 1 sections will use a common handbook.”

“Writing Assignments: provide students with opportunities to practice and develop the kind of prose expected in the rest of their university course work ... Students should learn to identify and use various forms of evidence, including quotation, summary, and paraphrase... practice all phases of the writing process, from drafting to revising and editing. Instructors should regularly meet individually with students to monitor their writing progress.” Writing 1 students will write approximately **18-20 pages** (6,500 words) of prose, in a combination of both informal and formal writing assignments.

Carnegie Mellon (PA)

Seems to be only one required writing course, yet a well developed site exists to help faculty construct and create classes that utilize a [writing requirement](#).

Carleton College (MN)

Based on how students scored on the [self-placement writing](#) placement exam, they will be directed to enroll in a Writing Rich (WR) course either first term or sometime during their first year. Successfully completing a WR course fulfills the first part of the writing requirement. Part two involves submitting a portfolio of writing done at Carleton. Students entering with AP scores of 5 or IB scores of 7 on English language, or literature exams are not required to take a WR course but must submit the portfolio. For more details go to <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/writingprogram>. Carleton’s Writing-Rich Course [Guidelines](#) show a requirement of at least 3 writing assignments, with opportunity for revision.

Case Western (OH)

There are both ENGL courses (like their 150: Introduction to Expository Writing) and a grouping of SAGES (Seminar Approach to General Education and Scholarship) courses that all first-year students take. The [SAGES courses](#) are seminars that progress as the student progresses through the university (i.e. a FY course, a major-based SAGE, and a Senior-level SAGE). See The [Writing Program webpage](#) provides a further description and faculty-centered resources (including a Wiki) meant to help instructors from across the University teach the WI nature of the course.

Clemson University (SC)

The [Writing Program](#) provides writing information for the First Year Composition classes as well as the 29 degree programs across campus that require Business Writing or Technical Writing classes to be taken by students, these [Advanced Writing Program](#) classes follow up on the First Year Composition classes all students were required to take. Communication across the Curriculum is a program that takes the next step past writing. A current project is Teaching and Learning Creatively (an expansion of a previous project: Poetry Across the Curriculum) which encourages faculty to ask students to respond creatively to the content of their courses.

University of Colorado – Boulder

CU—Boulder requires one lower-division and one upper-division writing requirement for most undergraduates, satisfied by courses offered primarily through the [Program for Writing and Rhetoric](#) (formerly the University Writing Program). The lower-division requirement may be satisfied by taking a traditional composition course; an Independent Study with a writing emphasis; Introduction to Creative Nonfiction; or an “Affiliated First-Year Writing Course” offered through other areas. The upper-division requirement may be satisfied, again, through a traditional composition course or through writing-intensive courses on “Science and Society,” “Technical Communication and Design,” or “Writing on Business and

Society.” While these latter courses focus on specific disciplines (and in some cases are reserved for upper-level discipline-specific majors), they are taught by instructors associated with the Program for Writing and Rhetoric.

Colorado State University

This in-depth and extensive writing program [website](#), focusing on students, teachers, those who wish to work on their writing skills in an online and physical writing center, this CSU site seems to have it all. CSU offers combined [Service Learning and Writing Intensive](#) classes, as well as a helpful site for teachers designing writing assignments for [writing intensive classes](#), with a step by step list of designing the assignments, the focus of the assignments, four sample writing assignments from four different academic fields, and basic evaluative guidelines.

Columbia College, (SC)

The Tom and Anne [Pearce Communication Center](#) works towards its goal of increasing both written and oral communication in the college and community beyond. One of the steps towards this goal is the development and support of [Writing in the Disciplines](#). An interesting break down of writing across disciplines, and the writing objectives, sample assignments, and tips for faculty and students when it comes to writing in a non-traditional subject, such as [Math](#), Visual Arts, and Dance.

Cornell University (NY)

According to Elliot Shapiro, Coordinator of Sophomore Seminars, “The First Year Writing Seminars have clear [guidelines](#) about the place of writing in each course they offer.” Each year the college produces a booklet called the *Indispensable Reference for Teachers of First Year Writing Seminars* which is given to each FWS instructor. Sophomore seminars, a new tier of writing-intensive seminars situated between First-Year Writing Seminars and junior- and senior-level Writing in the Majors courses, do not have guidelines governing how much writing is done in each class, or how writing is integrated into these classes. In upper level writing courses, they work with individual faculty members to help figure out how writing and learning will be integrated within each course.

Davidson College (NC)

First year students are the only students required to take writing, and have a composition requirement listed in Academic Requirements, and specified classes are termed [W courses](#). Each first-year student must pass a course that gives sustained attention to writing and discussion. The faculty has designated such courses as “W-courses.” Limited to 16 students, each W-course provides a small-group setting for focused study and critical discussion.

Drexel University (PA)

The [University Writing Program](#) home has several useful features, including Writing Intensive Courses, a summary for both students and faculty. As well, there is a writing intensive course creation kit, a step by step tool for faculty to set up a writing intensive class. The [faculty guide](#) includes a definition of what makes a course writing intensive: opportunities for drafting and review; assignments total 12-15 pages, including drafts; writing is viewed as learning tool; and students are given a grading rubric to help them meet teacher expectations.

Duke University (NC)

Duke requires that students take an “academic writing course” taught by interdisciplinary faculty in their first year, and two [Writing In the Disciplines](#) courses. The [University Bulletin](#) states, “All undergraduates are required to complete Writing 20: Academic Writing in the fall or spring of their first year at Duke. They are also required to take two writing-designated courses in the disciplines.” The various sections of Writing 20 are taught by an interdisciplinary faculty and focus on issues in the sciences, social sciences, or arts and humanities. While specific reading and writing assignments vary with the instructor, the aim of all sections is to introduce students to the practices of critical reading and writing that characterize university study. [Faculty guidelines](#) for Designing and Teaching an Effective WID course include making writing central to the work of the course.

Emory University (GA)

The goal of [writing-intensive courses](#) is to improve writing skills through writing regularly in a context where mentors in the various communities of discourse encourage, guide, and communicate to students high standards of writing through instruction and example. The goals of the course may be fulfilled by a combination of assignments that include short papers, a longer research paper, revisions, journals, and written exercises in class--all designed to achieve higher standards of writing. The course should combine frequent writing assignments and at least one rigorous writing project carried out over the course of the semester, with attention to revision.

George Mason University (VA)

The most visible component of [WAC](#) at George Mason is the writing-intensive requirement in the major and the advanced composition in the disciplines requirement. [The Writing Intensive](#) course requirement defines classes as 35 students or less, with the students writing 3,500 words divided between at least two assignments. Possibly the most useful site at this University is the [Guides in the Disciplines](#) page, which directs students and faculty to three different websites that show writing assignments and writing requirements in a number of different disciplines.

Georgetown University

Georgetown University’s [Writing Program](#) is a writing-within-the-disciplines program that [serves faculty](#) members, graduate students, and undergraduates who are interested in improving the teaching of writing. Beginning in Fall 2005, Georgetown students are required to take two courses: Humanities and Writing I (intensive-writing seminar with a cap of 20 students) and [Humanities and Writing II](#) (introduction to a humanities discipline with a writing component and capped at 35 students).

Grinnell College (IA)

Students are required to take an interdisciplinary “[First-Year Tutorial](#)” that includes an introduction to college-level writing, and establishes a relationship with one professor as there is a student cap of 12-13 students per tutorial. [Guidelines for Writing Intensive](#) courses include: regular writing, regular feedback and revision.

Harvard University (MA)

Harvard requires students to enroll in “[Expository Writing](#)” in their first year at the university, after taking a writing test in September, for freshmen who don’t pass the test, they must take Expos 10 before taking Expos 20, the one required course. As well, an elective course in composition enforces style and tightness of prose. The [Harvard Writing Project](#) helps faculty to create courses with a writing focus as

well as how to craft effective assignments. The Harvard [Study of Undergraduate Writing](#) studied undergraduate writing for four years, and has published articles and research based on that research.

U of Illinois – Chicago

There is a standard two course comp sequence, but most majors require a “writing in the disciplines” course. For example, PHIL 403 a Metaphysics class apart from considering some of the central topics in metaphysics, students will “devote class time not only to discussing the philosophical issues, but to exercise aimed at developing the ability to express philosophical insights effectively in writing... this class will be writing intensive.”

Indiana University–Bloomington

As part of their Fundamental Skills Requirements, students must complete their English Composition requirement by taking one composition class, where a student may test out with high scores [e.g., SAT (670+), ACT (32+), AP scores (4+)], in addition to one “intensive writing” course. These intensive writing classes are normally above the 200 level, held in small sections, and include a series of written assignments evaluated with close attention to organization and expression as well as to substance and argument. Graded revision of assignments is a requirement of all intensive writing courses.

University of Iowa

While Iowa seems to have supported writing-intensive initiatives within a variety of specific disciplines (i.e., the colleges of engineering and business, specifically), there is no evidence of any requirement for writing-intensive course across disciplines. There seems to be much collaboration between the Center for Teaching (with workshops for teachers) and professors in various disciplines about how best to implement writing in their courses. Within the business school, a writing center exists and works in conjunction with the College of Business, which has created its own, self-generated list of writing intensive courses.

University of Kentucky

[The Writing Initiative](#) assists students and faculty with the new Writing Requirement, which was recently changed to include writing for students beyond their first year. Rather than taking ENG 101 and 102 in the first year, students take ENG 104, a 4 credit course, as their first-year writing requirement, followed by a writing-intensive course taken at the sophomore level or above (30+ earned hours). The Writing Initiative also offers the following [guidelines](#) for professors teaching writing-intensive courses in their disciplines: students must produce 15 pages of single-author writing, all stemming from assignments of 4+ pages. Each paper must go through a draft, review, and revision process, which may include peer review. Also, each student must receive a grade of C or better on every paper in the course in order to pass.

LaGuardia Community College (CUNY)

[Writing in the Disciplines](#): LaGuardia views writing as a discipline specific activity, and wants to emphasize that writing, as well as thinking and learning, varies by the discipline studied. LaGuardia defines a writing intensive class to have some writing every week, a mixture of discipline specific formal writing and informal writing, one or more assignments will be substantial staged assignments of 10-12 pages, students receive feedback on their writing from the instructor, have the opportunity to revise, and have opportunities for peer response. Writing grades account for at least 20% of final course grade, and writing intensive classes are limited to 25.

Longview Community College (MO)

[Writing Intensive](#) courses at Longview Community follow a basic guideline including: a combination of informal and formal writing assignments, producing a minimum of 2,500 words per semester, allow for revision of the papers after conferences with the professor and a group of peer reviewers, and taught at a 28:1 student to faculty ratio. Faculty members are urged to only teach two writing intensive classes per semester, and written assignments are a major component of the course, accounting for approximately 35-40% of the final grade. As well, students are required to complete English 101 before they can enroll in a writing intensive class.

University of Miami (FL)

Every student must complete five writing-oriented (W) courses beyond ENG 105 and 106. Students are required to write at least 4000 words in each W course. Writing assignments will be graded on both content and style. All literature and foreign language literature courses receive writing credit. Transfer students must satisfy at least three (3) courses of the [writing requirement](#) at the University of Miami. These Writing Intensive course requirements are described further in an [internal document](#), which state WI courses “will include multiple assignments, revision, or a multi-stage project, as well as writing instruction... Writing will be evaluated for proficiency in exposition, narrative, argumentation, and analysis (appropriate to different course levels and discursive contexts), as well as for general proficiency in formal writing strategies, including the control of citation form, and of standard grammar, diction, punctuation, and spelling.”

University of Michigan–Ann Arbor

University of Michigan students must fulfill two [writing requirements](#) to receive their undergraduate degree; the first is a First-[Year Writing Requirement](#) and the second, [Upper Level Writing requirement](#). [Writing assignments](#) in the upper level writing requirement should be closely related to course content, include writing on a variety of levels with at least half polished after revision and review. While the university acknowledges that students must practice writing by writing extensively, they leave the paper length requirements to the instructor as paper length and requirements vary by discipline

University of Missouri-Columbia

Writing requirements at the University of Missouri-Columbia include a one semester, first-year composition course, and two Writing Intensive courses from the [Campus Writing Program](#). One WI course may be taken in any discipline; the other must be an upper-division WI course in the major. The Campus Writing Board reviews and approves courses as writing-intensive. Departments, not the Campus Writing Board, determine which WI courses may count as "upper-division courses in the major.”

[Writing-intensive courses](#) “require at least 5,000 words of writing, and give students ample opportunity to revise their work to improve their performance. WI courses should have a 20:1 student faculty ration, and have multiple assignments, complex enough to require substantive revision, and assignments should total at least 2000 words (8 pages). Writing for the entire course should total at least 5000 words (20 pages). There are a number of [benefits of Writing Intensive courses](#) as the assignments are designed to teach course content and to assess students’ learning, giving faculty the chance to focus on content, concepts and quality of argument while students take responsibility for surface features such as grammar and syntax.

National University

While writing requirements are vague, upon registration, students are asked to purchase *The Little Brown Essential Handbook for Writers* (Harper-Collins, Pub). This book serves as the official National University writing guide and reference text, and it is used by instructors from all disciplines as a reference for their students. In addition the [Writing Across the Curriculum](#) program promotes writing at National University.

University of New Mexico

The First Year Composition Sequence ENGL 101 and ENGL 102 are critical points of entry into academic, civic, and professional literacies, producing 8000 words in each. This [Writing Across the Communities](#) is focused on bridging cultural gaps along with writing gaps within the UNM community: “In three semester-long conversations with stakeholders within the English department, across the university system, and among New Mexico communities, we intend to build our knowledge about the language and discourse backgrounds students bring to UNM. Each series will culminate in a daylong conference featuring a keynote speaker from another university, during which we reflect on what we've learned and make decisions about how best to provide writing instruction that will increase student success in negotiating academic and professional literacy,” also [sample syllabi](#) are provided.

North Carolina State University

With respect to writing and speaking, the general education requirements at NC State have two components. The first component requires students to take one semester of a composition and rhetoric course in their first year and one semester of one of the following courses before graduation: advanced writing, public speaking, or foreign language. The Campus [Writing and Speaking program](#) is a direct response to NC State's commitment to improve its graduates' writing and speaking abilities and incorporating writing and speaking into the classroom as powerful tools for teaching and learning in all curricula. There are [discipline-specific](#) aims for each department's responsibility of teaching writing intensive classes, as each department is held accountable for its students' writing and speaking. Specifically, that accountability takes the form of outcomes-based assessment: each department should evaluate the ability of its majors to write and speak competently in the discipline according to department-specific writing and speaking outcomes.

Northwestern University, (IL)

To demonstrate their [writing proficiency](#), undergraduates must take two writing classes as Freshmen. In addition, all students are welcome to enroll in an expository writing course at any time if they wish to increase their skill and confidence in writing, and prepare themselves better for more challenging writing projects in their majors. The [Writing Program](#) offers three levels of expository writing: English 105, 205, and 305. Additional [cross-discipline](#) classes offer team taught classes, like English 106, [Engineering Design and Communication](#) (EDC), which is taught by one writing program faculty member and one Engineering professor. Since its creation in 1997, EDC has become a requirement for every Engineering student, as it enforces the value of writing and communication in the Engineering world.

Notre Dame

According to the [University Writing Program](#) all students must complete one three credit course called First Year Composition as well as one [University Seminar](#), which are designed similar to DU's First Year Seminars, but with set writing goals. Specific [criteria](#) for University Seminars is established, including a design to foster intense interaction between First-year students and faculty in small settings, with about 18 students per class, and include a minimum of 24 pages and at least one rewrite of a corrected paper.

University of Oregon

The university requires all students to complete two [composition classes](#), and the [Center for Teaching Writing](#) promotes implementing more courses in [Writing in the Disciplines](#), and works with the [Teaching Effectiveness Program](#) to incorporate a WID emphasis, mostly through teacher workshops led by the

CTW. In addition, there is an effective application for a writing workshop that might ALSO be a useful way of [surveying writing assignments](#).

Pepperdine University (CA)

Students must take a writing intensive course as one of their major courses, and Pepperdine has detailed [instructions for faculty](#) members when designing a WI class, yet does not include specific page counts or numbers of papers due. Much like Carleton College, Pepperdine has a “[Junior Writing Portfolio](#),” where students, after acquiring 60 unites of credit, submit a portfolio for evaluation by the JWP Committee (consisting of faculty members from across the disciplines). Each portfolio must include a cover letter, 4 papers from classes consisting of at least 20 pages, a [Record of Portfolio Submission form](#), detailing the name of the instructor and the class for which the paper was written, and the date the paper was submitted for grading.

Philadelphia University

Philadelphia University has both writing-specific and writing-intensive course [requirements](#), as students develop writing and thinking skills by taking two writing-specific and at least four writing-intensive courses between the freshmen and senior years. Guidelines for the [writing-intensive courses](#) do not stipulate page requirements, but do require professors to “devote class time, at least occasionally” to explicit writing instruction, to have students produce multiple drafts of a paper, and to weight students’ grade at least 30-40% towards students’ written work.

University of Pittsburgh

Undergraduates in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh are required to take at least three [Writing-Intensive \(W\)](#) courses, English Composition 0200 (Seminar in Composition) or its equivalent; one W course offered within the student's departmental major; one W course of the student's choice. In each of these courses, students are asked to write regularly; they receive substantive comments and suggestions for improvement; and they have the opportunity to revise at least one of their assignments. [Guidelines](#) for W-courses include writing 25 pages per term and instructors are encouraged to set aside regular class time for peer workshops and writing instruction.

Plymouth State University (NH)

Like the University of Denver, students must take a First Year Seminar and the next semester take a composition class, however students must then take a [writing class](#) in their major, only courses designated WRIT meet this requirement. The “[Writing Across the Curriculum](#) (WAC) programs promote the use of writing to learn across disciplines, helping departments create their WRIT classes, giving aid to writing faculty with [writing rubrics](#) and sample assignments.

Rice University (TX)

At orientation students take a [composition exam](#), to fail the exam places them in remedial composition classes, but otherwise undergraduate students are required to take 4 writing intensive classes, which do not seem to be defined universally.

Another writing opportunity is the Cain Project in Engineering and Professional Communication, which is a [writing/speaking program](#) with a dedicated mission in the school of engineering. The program seeks to insure that engineering students are “equipped with skills for articulate, persuasive communication, both written and oral.” The Project also provides workshops and tutorials for faculty and graduate instructors to ensure that they are able to teach written and spoken argumentation in engineering courses. The project also provides “support” for numerous engineering courses, working with students on their presentations and posters.

University of San Diego

In addition to one traditional [composition course](#) at the lower level, undergraduates must complete one upper-division writing course or show proficiency by passing an upper-level writing examination. Writing-intensive courses are designated by “W” in the course catalog. At the lower-division level, instead of completing the 3-unit English course titled “Composition and Literature” they must pass an examination in composition. The course will emphasize instruction and practice in composition in response to complex literary texts. Current writing-intensive courses are offered in Sociology, Marketing, Biology, and other disciplines.

University of Southern California

USC’s general education program requires at least two courses in composition, Freshmen take Writing and Critical Reasoning, [Writing 140](#), which is taken in tandem with another general education class, [Social Issues](#), as the two are linked together. Students can choose from a variety of [course descriptions](#) for the linked class, with the goal at the conclusion of the class of producing an essay of 5-6 pages defending an argument. Later during the Student’s junior year, they take an advanced writing course, [Writing 340](#), where students will write a total of 30-40 pages.

Southern Methodist University (TX)

Students must take a 3-course [writing sequence](#) of FYW: ENGL 1033, 1301, 1302. Students can test out of ENGL 1301 with a AP score of 4, and test out of both ENGL 1301 and 1302 with a AP score of 5. The 1301 and 1302 classes each have 4-6 formal essay assignments, for a total of 18-20 pages. The only reference to a writing intensive class is in their [course proposal guidelines](#), which state, that where appropriate, a class must include writing intensive assignments.

SUNY-Albany

Students are required to take two writing intensive classes to satisfy the general education requirement. The first writing class must be taken during the first two years, and the second in the student’s chosen discipline, as an upper level class. Learning objectives for writing intensive classes include producing coherent texts within common college-level written forms; demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts; research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details.

The [upper level writing intensive](#) classes emphasize using writing as a means of sharpening critical thinking in and understanding of a subject. To qualify for a writing intensive class, it must meet each of the following objectives: produce a substantial body of finished work of 20 pages or more; provide an opportunity for students to receive assistance in writing process; provide opportunity for revision; and the professor must respond to student writing.

Swarthmore College (PA)

Currently in the middle of changing their writing requirements, starting with the class of 2008, students must take 3 writing classes to graduate, and two of those classes must be in different divisions. There is a [full list of writing courses](#) (indicated with a “W”) across disciplines that fulfill this writing requirement. The Provost of the College sent out a [memo for all faculty](#) defining the elements of a Writing course, including: multiple writing assignments totaling at least 20 pages of analytic writing; focus explicitly on expository writing, in addition to field-specific substance; use of peer reviews and editing by class members, faculty-student conferences, in class exercises, and opportunities to revise, rewrite, and resubmit papers; a section cap of only 15 students per class.

Syracuse University (NY)

All undergraduates are required to take a series of [three writing classes](#), the first being a general writing composition course. Students are required to take a [Writing-Intensive course](#) as a prerequisite to taking WRT 205 in their fourth semester. Writing-intensive courses must include a minimum of four writing assignments, including drafts, totaling at least 4,000 words; at least two writing assignments must be out-of-class papers or drafts and revisions; class size limited to 25 students.

University of Texas-Austin

Students take Rhetoric and Writing 306 and English 316K, and then individual departments have additional requirements. For example, the College of Architecture requires an additional two courses, with a “substantial writing component.” The [Substantial Writing Component](#) requirement helps students improve their ability to formulate ideas in writing; ability to write across disciplines; critical thinking skills; understanding of course content. The Austin program emphasizes using [“low-stakes”](#) writing assignments in the writing-intensive classes, along with in-class review and instruction to build up students’ critical reading and thinking skills without the grade pressures of “high-stakes” assignments such as research papers, etc. Students are expected to produce 16 pages of writing per semester.

Tulane University (LA)

After completing either a first year seminar or English 101, students must take one approved writing intensive class to graduate. A writing intensive class requires at least 20 pages of writing in one or more papers, the rewriting of at least 10 pages in response to criticisms and comments by the instructor. The rewritten work may be one paper of 10 pages or more or two papers of 5 pages or more each. Students are encouraged, but not required, to satisfy the writing-intensive requirement with a course in their major. A large number of classes fulfill the [WI requirement](#), however students can also [petition](#) to have another course meet their writing intensive requirement.

Vanderbilt University (TN)

After completing a First-Year Writing Seminar, students are required to take two “W” classes, one at the 100 level and one at the 200. The English Composition class offered in the freshman year may be tested out of with high scores, but regardless of high AP or IB scores students must complete the 100 level “W” class before the end of the student’s fourth semester. The [second 200-level “W” course](#) is usually offered in the student’s discipline and must be completed prior to graduation. For more information, the [student handbook](#), pages 12-14 provide more detailed writing requirements.

University of Virginia

After completing general first year writing requirements, students are required to complete a [“Second Writing Requirement.”](#) This second writing requirement must be completed before the end of the student’s sixth semester at the university. A course must have at least two writing assignments in English totaling 4,000 words (20 pages) or more and a student/faculty ratio no greater than 30/1 to qualify as a Second Writing Requirement course.

Wake Forest (NC)

First year [academic writing](#) includes two required seminars, a first year seminar and a writing seminar. While there are movements to incorporate more writing intensive classes throughout the university, very little appears on the website at this point.

Washington University (MO)

Writing intensive courses are defined as one course taken in the junior or senior year that has been designated as writing-intensive (WI). Usually [WI courses](#) are taken as part of the major, but can be taken in any discipline. A grade of C+ or better is required to complete this course. The [course requirements](#) for WI change, but it is recommended that the course has at least three papers, with revision, and at least 50% of the grade should be based on written work.

Washington State University

[Writing-in-the-Major \[M\]](#) courses at Washington State University are designed to provide students “significant writing experiences” within their majors. Two [M] courses, to be taken after students have turned in their WSU Writing Portfolios (e.g., after 60 semester hours), are required of majors and are devoted to instruction in the discipline; the writing tasks focus on the discourse of that discipline. The [M] courses are typically small; are listed at the 300 and 400 level, to be taken in the junior and senior years when students are better versed in disciplinary knowledge bases and discourses. The writing requirements for [M] courses must include writing throughout the semester, a minimum of two papers, and opportunity for response and revision.

Youngstown University

After completing two freshman writing courses, students are also required to take two writing intensive courses, one which must be an upper-division course. [WI courses](#) must require a minimum of 2,500 words, have no more than 25 students enrolled in each section, and should allocate at least 30% of the course grade to writing assignments. These WI course should prepare students to write for specific purposes and audiences; include instruction on the writing process; employ a “learning to write” approach in addition to a “writing to learn” approach; teach students to use writing as a means of critical inquiry within a discipline; use revision and editing.

Appendix A:

Townsend, Martha A. "Writing Intensive Courses and WAC." *WAC for the New Millenium*. Ed. Susan H. McLeod et al. Urbana: NCTE, 2001. 233-258.

Farris, Christine, and Raymond Smith. "Writing-Intensive Courses: Tools for Curricular Change." *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Guide to Developing Programs*. Ed. Susan H. McLeod and Margot Soven. Newbury Park: Sage, 1992. 71-86.

***Townsend cites Farris and Smith's comprehensive list of features that most institutions define for writing intensive courses:

1. Class size or instructor/student ratio. Usually no more than 15-25
2. Who teaches? Faculty, not TAs
3. Required number of papers or words. (i.e. 5000 words, 2000 of which must be polished)
4. Revision. Guidelines for feedback & revision process quantity
5. How writing will affect final grade. Ranges provided, 70% good, 20% to low,
6. Types of assignments. Spread throughout term, to meet certain purposes (Summary, analysis, source integration, etc.)
7. Assignment-related instruction and evaluation of papers. Guidelines on teaching techniques for response, collaboration, minimal marking, rubrics, etc.
8. Support services. Guidelines/suggestions on consulting w/ WAC staff, sending students to Writing Center, etc.

Both articles and the collections they are in provide interesting suggestions for implementing WI courses, promoting faculty involvement, and the like.

Chapman, David W. "WAC and the First-Year Writing Course: Selling Ourselves Short." Paper presented at the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication. Phoenix, Arizona. March 12-15, 1997.

As of '97 at Cornell, Freshman writing seminars taught from disciplinary perspectives requires at least six and no more than fourteen formal writing assignments, at least two of which must be "seriously rewritten." Ample, regular classroom time devoted to student writing and at least two individual conferences per term. Reading assignments limited to 75 pages per week to keep focus on writing. (5)

Jeske, Jeff. "Troubleshooting the 'W' Course." 1993

Guilford College, North Carolina:

"Main 'W' features which instructors pledge by written contract to include in their courses: 1) a process approach to writing, culminating in a minimum of 15 pages of polished final prose, 2) the use of informal writing as a pedagogical tool, 3) a writing text to support the 'W' component, and 4) peer editing." (3)

Appendix B:

US News and World Report Criteria for WID programs

The criteria for selecting outstanding Writing in the Disciplines programs is listed at this website: http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankacadprogs_brief.php

In short, the people selecting the best schools were college presidents, chief academic officers, deans of students, and deans of admissions from over 1,300 schools. These administrators nominated up to 10 institutions that they saw as stellar examples. This leads me to believe that the programs that these administrators selected were likely the result of a very individualized criteria, such as peer knowledge of other institutions and the visibility of program. Also, if a program is list in WID, it's also frequently listed for the other categories (First-year experiences, Internships/Co-ops, Senior capstone, Undergraduate research/Creative projects, etc) so it's likely that that the administrator saw the school as a good example of program development overall. Also, the schools are listed alphabetically, not in ranked order.

I also spoke on the phone with Bob Morse, Director of Data Research at U.S. News & World Report, to clarify my interpretation and to see if I could elicit any additional information. He said that they sent out 4200 surveys and received a 58% response rate. These surveys listed all schools; he said he did not narrow the possible choices down at all. Interestingly, to get on the list you only had to receive 7 votes or more.