

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 3, 2013
To: Department Chairs
From: Will Polik, Academic Affairs Board
Courtney Werner, Director of College Writing
Subject: Department Writing Requirement

In spring 2013 the College adopted a policy on writing instruction for the General Education curriculum and each major. As part of this policy, each Department will develop writing requirements for their major(s) and submit a report to their Divisional Dean. The purpose of this packet is to assist with the preparation and submission of this report.

Hope College's writing instruction policy requires all majors to include instruction in their respective disciplines. Each Department will determine how this requirement is met in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Writing instruction must take place in one or more designated courses.
2. The following criteria will be used, except where effective discipline-specific writing necessitates a different approach:
 - The course will involve writing multiple drafts.
 - The course instructor will explicitly discuss the features of strong writing.
 - The course instructor will provide feedback on the quality of student writing.
 - Each course will involve a designated minimum of writing to be determined by the Department.
 - Papers in final form will be graded on not only content but also quality of writing.
3. There will be annual assessment of whether students are achieving each major's stated writing outcomes.

Each Department has been given the responsibility to develop its own implementation of writing instruction for its major(s). To this end, Departments are being asked to submit a **Writing Instruction Inventory by January 25, 2014**. This inventory will allow Departments reflect on efforts already taking place and where additional writing instruction might be needed. Departments will then submit a **Writing Instruction Report by April 15, 2014**. The report will list the writing instruction courses in for each major, describe how these courses meet the above criteria, and outline a plan to assess the effectiveness of writing instruction.

To assist in the preparation of these documents, suggested templates are attached. If you have questions about either of these reports or the development of an effective writing instruction plan, you are encouraged to consult with the Director of College Writing (Courtney Werner, x7122, werner@hope.edu). Reports are to be submitted to your Divisional Dean.

Thank you for your efforts to insure that all Hope graduates are able to write effectively in many contexts, especially in their major discipline.

Writing Instruction Inventory Instructions

In the table on the preceding page, list all courses in your department that include instruction in effective writing. For each course, indicate whether (1) multiple drafts are involved, (2) explicit instruction on effective writing is provided, (3) feedback on quality of writing is given, (4) the total amount of pages assigned, and (5) whether final papers are graded for both content and writing quality. See the Hope College policy on writing instruction and/or consult the Director of College Writing (Courtney Werner, x7122, werner@hope.edu) as needed.

In deciding which columns to check off for which courses, considering these examples:

Drafts: There are many ways to get students writing multiple drafts. Drafting might include students handing in one or more drafts to instructors, TAs, peers (in peer review), or the Center for Writing and Research (CWR) for feedback.

Instruction: Discussions of effective writing should be discipline specific. Such discussions might include instruction on genre-specific features, tones, uses of evidence, sentence structure, discussions about or based on the College's *Expectations of Effective Academic Writing*, etc.

Feedback: Instructors frequently give students feedback on the quality of their writing in many forms, including but not limited to marginal or end-note comments on one or more drafts, comments about any features of writing explicitly discussed in the class, and discussions of how effective writing strengthens content. Sometimes, feedback comes on written work, via email, on Moodle, or in one-on-one conferences.

Amount: The total amount of writing assigned within a course depends on what types of writing students are required to do and the typical features and length of such assignments across the discipline or subfield.

Grading: Grades for students' written assignments are based on both content and the quality of writing.

Submit the completed inventory to your Divisional Dean by January 25, 2014.

Writing Instruction Report (due April 15, 2014 to Divisional Dean)

Department: _____

Chair: _____

Describe your Department's writing requirement plan for majors using the following structure. One paragraph per section that address some or all of the suggested questions will suffice. See the Hope College Policy on Writing Instruction and/or consult the Director of College Writing (Courtney Werner, x7122, werner@hope.edu) as needed.

I. Writing Instruction Courses

- In what courses will writing instruction take place?
- How does writing contribute to the goals of these courses and the major(s)?
- Will these courses need to be modified or capped to meet the goals?
- Does the Department need further resources for these classes?

II. Writing Instruction Criteria

- Describe how the above courses meet the writing instruction policy criteria.
- Are any writing instruction policy criteria not being met, or has the department developed alternate discipline-specific criteria?
- What is the department-designated minimum amount of written pages in each writing course?
- Are additional department-specific criteria addressed in these courses?

III. Writing Assessment Plan

- State the Department's writing goals for students who graduate with a major from the Department.
- What materials will the Department use to assess student writing? For example, Departments often use materials such as writing portfolios, capstone papers, SALT evaluations, exit essays, exit surveys, faculty summaries of writing projects, and/or faculty perceived outcomes of student writing.
- If samples of student work are used, describe how the sample will be chosen, who will collect the sample, and who will lead assessment of the materials.
- Will students be included in the assessment process (self-reflection, self-reporting)?
- What is the Department's plan for closing the assessment loop? Specifically, how will the assessment results lead to changes, if necessary, in writing instruction?
- What resources (both internal and external to the Department) will be needed to accomplish the objectives of this assessment plan?
- Are there any potential hurdles that the Department may face when implementing this assessment plan?

Submit the completed report to your Divisional Dean by April 15, 2014.