

Eastern Mennonite University Writing Program Guidelines for Writing-Intensive Courses

The following assumptions, requirements, and criteria were developed by the writing committee and revised and approved by the General Education committee. These criteria are to be used by programs in the identification and development of courses they wish to have identified as WI (Writing-Intensive) courses.

Assumptions:

1. Good writing promotes success within and beyond the university experience.
2. Writing is a way of learning because writing teaches students to observe carefully, think critically and clearly, and express themselves effectively.
3. Writing in a variety of forms, including composing for audio or visual communication, is essential, with particular forms varying by discipline.
4. Learning to write well requires practice over time.
5. Writing is improved when expectations are clearly communicated – for instance, when the assignment is consistent with the cognitive level expected and when the criteria for judging quality are identified.
6. All faculty use a rubric to communicate student writing/composing. Model rubrics are provided as a resource; faculty are encouraged to create their own rubric for a particular assignment.
7. Writing improvement is dependent on feedback and student reflection.
8. All faculty use a writing standard/grid to assess student writing.
9. Students value writing when it is assigned frequently by all faculty and when it is clear that faculty value writing – for instance, when student work is read carefully, helpful and timely feedback is provided, and writing quality is considered in grading.
10. EMU faculty members are willing to improve their teaching skills in the area of writing.

EMU Core Writing Requirements:

- Students are required to complete College Writing or Advanced Writing or to satisfy requirements of same.
- Students who are on the 2025 Core are required to complete one Writing-Intensive course.

Criteria for a course to be identified as a WI course:

1. Enrollment is typically limited to 20 students.
2. Course builds on the information literacy component of the college writing courses, with assistance from the library staff. As an alternative to building on information literacy, the course may feature critical inquiry or creative crafts.
3. Course requirements incorporate creative, professional, or scholarly writing/composing assignments with analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation.
4. Course schedule incorporates the writing process. Course requirements include at least 10-12 pages (2,500-3,000 words) for lower-level courses and 12-15 pages (3,000-3,750 words) for upper-level courses of formal writing or a significant multimodal project

(audio/visual/video/text) with opportunities for feedback followed by revision. These requirements may be for a series of short projects or a longer project. At least one major project should be carried out in scaffolded stages.

5. Multimodal projects will be accessible by having a written script and brief text describing images or graphics. Such projects will go through a revision process that incorporates feedback. Faculty are encouraged to assign writing for students to reflect on their processes.
6. Professors will identify an assignment or choice of assignments for students to add to the Communication Showcase in their EMU portfolios, ideally one that demonstrates the culmination of their writing process. They will provide space and accountability for adding the work to the portfolio.

Process:

Departments should submit qualifying course syllabus to the Writing Program Director and EMU Core Director for review and approval.

General Education Curriculum Committee February 24, 2004; Revised March 2023 by Writing Committee; Revised January 2025 by Writing Committee and Approved by EMU Core Committee March 21, 2025.

Resources:

Feel free to adopt or adapt any of these rubrics for use in class.

- [Rubric for Undergraduate Writing Intensive courses](#) (2024)
- Rubric for [College Writing Research Paper](#) (2024)
- [UG Writing Rubric 2021](#)