# Writing Committee Annual Report, May 5, 2022

## Writing Committee Members

**Faculty Members**

Jessica Dougherty, Missoula College (2023) - Chair
Jeanie Castillo, English Language Institute (2023)
Kate Zoellner, Mansfield Library (2023)
William Rice, Forestry (2024)
Stephanie Reid, Teaching & Learning (2024)
Greg Peters, Applied Arts & Sciences (2024)
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**Student Members**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Representatives** (Ex-Officio)
Nathan Lindsay, Vice Provost
Shareen Grogan, Director, Writing & Public Speaking Center
Erin Wecker, Director of Composition and Faculty Member in English
Amy Ratto-Parks, UPWA Program Director – spring

**Responsibilities**

The primary responsibility of the Writing Committee is ongoing evaluation and assessment of General Education writing requirements.  The Writing Committee advocates for effective writing instruction, curriculum, and assessment; and reviews course proposals for the writing designation and transfer equivalency appeals for writing courses.  In addition, the Committee monitors the programs of the Writing Center, monitors the University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment, and collaborates with campus groups to provide faculty development workshops.

## Writing Course Review

* The following new Writing Courses were reviewed and given provisional approval. Three workgroups divided the forms to conduct the review of new courses and renewal of professional schools writing courses along with pending courses or assessment reports from last year’s rolling review of LIT, WRIT and Fine Arts Writing Courses. Several forms were not submitted; thus a second deadline of October 25th was provided for rolling review of general education and writing. A total of 26 writing forms were reviewed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Course  | Title | Form Type |
| COMX 486  | Health and Family Communication | Advanced |
| JRNL 370 | Beat Reporting | Advanced |
| JRNL 383 | Hollywood and the War Correspondent | Intermediate |
| PHL 400  | Advanced Writing in Philosophy | Advanced |
| PUBH 475  | Issues in Medical and Public Health Ethics | Advanced |

* The [Rolling Review summary](https://umt.box.com/s/uxy6otinzkbdwqjx87iu9a5xzxtms9n9) was presented to the Faculty Senate on March 17nd. Below is the ongoing status of forms. Four intermediate writing courses were removed because they are no longer offered.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2020-2021- CDWRIT/LIT/Fine Arts** | **Full approval** | **Provisional** | **Extension** |
| Intermediate | 11 | 4 |  |
| Advanced | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| **2021-2022** -CD**Professional Schools**  |  |  |  |
| Intermediate  | 2 | 4 |  |
| Advanced  | 6 | 12 | 1 |

* There is concern that faculty are not committed to revision. In order to make the review easier in terms of determining whether the course meets the page number requirements, a table will be added to the Coursedog form that has the following information:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assignment | Original pages | Graded/not graded | Revisionpages | Optional / required | Graded / Not Graded  |
| 1. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |  |  |

## Writing Review Issues

* The review subcommittees had difficulty reviewing the distributed models and had several follow-up communications to the proposers. The Committee needs to develop guidelines for distributed advanced writing requirements. It is unclear how students determine which combination of courses to take to ensure they get the correct percentage of writing. There is concern that the distributed model may send the message that writing is only important 30% of the time?
* The proposed 2 -credit advanced writing course in Philosophy required considerable follow-up correspondence. The department chair would like help in creating a framework for consistent assessment given the course will be offered by various instructors. The lead instructor or chair would be responsible for creating the assessment report.
* Professor Wecker communicated with Professor Ha and follow-up information was received for his courses and they were given provisional status.

## Intermediate Writing Course Appeals

* The Committee considered five [Intermediate Writing Course Appeals](https://umt.box.com/s/35kq9fiwnycnh8ax7aqdhxawlrup2n3t), two Advanced Writing Substitution requests and two Introductory Writing Appeal. Additional information was requested for several of the appeals, three are still pending. The others were approved. One of the appeals was received over the summer. Because of this, the committee agreed to have a subcommittee (3 member)s available to expedite reviews during the summer and updated the policy. The Committee is also considering additional edits to indicate whether the equivalencies should be given permanent status.

Policy Items

* The [advanced writing rubric](https://umt.box.com/s/v0us2woag2xa4c229oaahgzo3l2xp8fs) was approved on 9/27/21 and was sent in follow-up messages to help faculty understand the requirements. It will be posted to the website and linked to the rolling review deadline memo.
* The policies were [review](https://umt.box.com/s/7cpset4l4e12f2yq89q8063g83yxva5i)ed for consistency. The language in the Writing Course Guidelines will be updated to match the language in the Intermediate Writing Exemption Appeal Guidelines. Camie will make the updates to correct the inconsistencies. The Committee agreed that these are editorial changes and do not require review/approval by ASCRC and the Faculty Senate (9/13/21)
* The [Writing Appeal Procedure](https://umt.box.com/s/l9ef4fdanh2kcizz7l1fi5jhcd99cdtw) (was revised to include a review of introductory writing appeals as well as intermediate. Amy provided a [justification](https://umt.box.com/s/tj0mrvmfmknj9ja98czjww4dryvovq5j) for the revision. (10/25/21)
* The description of WRIT 201 was updated with the revised ACT Scores.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Banner Code** | **Description** | **095/101+** | **101** | **201** |
| A01 | English | 21 and below | 22-27 | 28+ |

* The [Catalog language](https://umt.box.com/s/zo1te63cben3moq2ala1hrrbh4yvznmn) was updated to include the learning outcomes in April.

## Other Business Items

* Jeanie presented the draft [Writing Moodle Shell.](https://moodle.umt.edu/course/view.php?id=52769)  Members were excited about the resource. The information is also relevant for faculty teaching face-to-face writing courses. It can be made available to anyone teaching a writing course. Outreach could start with department chairs and humanities faculty who need to submit forms for the next rolling review. It was suggested that a brief presentation be provided at next week’s Faculty Senate meeting. The shell will be revised overtime with additional materials.
* Chair Dougherty is working on a draft intermediate writing checklist for transfer evaluators. Input is still needed on guidelines for the distributed advanced writing framework. The hope is for some members to collaborate on a creating a training video over the summer.
* Chair Dougherty is working over the summer so is happy to collaborate on a training video which will include the idea around the writing curriculum, instructions on completing the form / assessment, and common mistakes. Jeanie noted that a video under 5 minutes is the best and is happy to help put the video in YouTube and post it to the Moodle Shell. Perhaps a few members could offer rolling review office hours that concurs with their normal office hours. The link to the Moodle Shell will be included on the deadline memo. A reminder message can be sent at the start of the semester about the rolling review and the resources.
* Chair Dougherty will also work on the distributed guidelines. She suggests a separate worksheet that shows how the distributed courses are working to meet the requirement and how the assessment provides evidence of attaining the learning outcomes. Members were asked to send any ideas.
* Amy and Greg agreed to review appeals over the summer with Chair Dougherty. The timely decision on appeals will be helpful for students to plan their schedules. .

## Communication Items:

* The Writing Center [annual report](https://umt.box.com/s/5zvaqi6tfbew81ds4zf8npp4k9skf1pr) was shared with the committee and Director Grogan provided an overview at the 9/13/21 meeting.
* The [UPWA Report](https://umt.box.com/s/l2y52n21w99cbu6il7ty3i0t91rkpkkp) was shared with the committee and Director Ratto-Parks provided highlights at the 9/13/21 meeting.
* There have been difficulties with the **data collected for UPWA**. The data reports are complicated given the various Banner tables and it doesn’t actually provide the necessary information for the analysis. Grades and writing quality are not related and don’t match the paper submissions. Often students take the intermediate writing course at another campus or are exempted because of IB or AP credit. The following UPWA Data Motion was approved 11/8/21.

*In an effort to streamline data communications and process, foster a more functional relationship with the data office, and be diligent with the management of student information, I move that we narrow the scope of the student demographic data collected by the data office to only those items which have proven fruitful in analysis over the past five years. In the past, we have collected data about the following list of 35 items:*

*College Major    I Hrs Attempt     I Hrs Earn             I GPA     T Hrs Attempt    T Hrs Earn            T GPA    O Hrs Attempt O Hrs Earn O GPA   Writ 101 Grde    Inter Writ Subj1 Inter Writ Crse1 Inter Writ Grde1               Inter Writ Subj2  Inter Writ Crse2  Inter Writ Grde2               Adv Writ Subj1  Adv Writ Crse1  Adv Writ Grde1 Adv Writ Subj2  Adv Writ Crse2  Adv Writ Grde2 Trans Coll            Trans Writ 101 Grd          AP Comp Credit       TOEFL    MUSWA               ACT Writ              ACT Comb Eng/Writ        SAT Essay             SAT Writing         First Gen              Gender Non-Citizen*

*I move that we narrow the scope to the following items****.***

*Writ 101 Grde    Inter Writ Subj1 Inter Writ Crse1 Inter Writ Grde1               Inter Writ Subj2 Inter Writ Crse2 Inter Writ Grde2               Adv Writ Subj1  Adv Writ Crse1  Adv Writ Grde1 Adv Writ Subj2  Adv Writ Crse2  Adv Writ Grde2   AP Comp   First Gen*

 Writing Symposium

* The 8th annual Fall Writing Symposium, *Working with Grammar*, was held on Friday, November 5, from 12-1:30 pm via Zoom. The goal of each annual symposium is to offer a continued and more practical application of an observation made during the spring writing workshop. This year, data from the 2021 spring University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment showed us that student writers could benefit from a stronger understanding of sentence mechanics.

The two explicit goals of this workshop were to re-frame and expand how we think about the concept of grammar and to offer practical teaching applications for the classroom. The beginning of the workshop asked participants to consider research about the relationship between thinking and writing in order to ask questions about when and where strict grammatical conventions are vital. The second half offered insights into teaching strategies that can position students for weak writing as well as effective strategies for supporting writing and creating classes where students are able to learn to help themselves.

The event included 11 participants from Pharmacy Practice, Missoula College, Art, the UM Entertainment Management Program, the Writing Center, and English, though others reached out to request the details and information from the event. Following the event, all teachers of Intermediate Writing received a PDF copy of the slides from the event (which were revised to add context).

* Committee members provided feedback on the UPWA survey question and helped to test it in Submittable. The final survey is appended. (11/22/21 and 12/6/21)
* Students are having course search difficulty finding WRIT 101 plus because of how it is displayed on the phone ap. It is in the schedule as WRIT 101 Plus (4cr). However the plus doesn’t show on the phone ap. (1/31/22)
* Given ongoing safety concerns for COVID-19, a mini UPWA Workshop was held after graduation structed similar to last year. Participants will be given the rubric and norming materials prior to the workshop and will receive a gift card for participation.
* Additional offerings of online advanced writing courses are needed because they serve students who move and only have a few courses remaining to complete their degree. The Writing Committee consider how it might encourage more offerings and developed an advanced writing course template in Moodle that can be personalized.
* **Professor Isho Tama-Sweet, Co-Chair of the General Education Ad Hoc Committee** joined the Committee on (DATE) to get feedback on the draft model under consideration. He summarized the efforts of GEAHC. The committee is charged with revising general education so it is connected in a meaningful way for students. The GEAHC is leaning towards shifting to a semi core model that includes a few courses that all students take and then pathways organized around the GLI themes to focus their perspective choices. If students take four courses in a pathway then they could earn a certificate.

The GEAHC is struggling to reduce general education credits and simplify the program without cutting content. One area where this could occur is for intermediate writing to also fulfill a category. The question of whether composition courses would be appropriate for a pathway was discussed. The Writing Committee wants to ensure that UM’s writing program remains scaffolded. Composition courses (WRIT 101, Introductory College Writing) encourages students to discover, explore and be curious. It attempts to teach students to develop rhetorical savvy. Some of the prompts could be appropriate for the GLI themes, however many students fulfill the requirement with dual credit, AP, IB, or an equivalent course from another institution. It is impossible to ensure students have a similar curriculum in the courses. There are a lot of complicating factors. Missoula College also teaches a WRIT 101 plus course that provides remedial instruction for college credit. Missoula College students don’t necessarily complete UM’s general education program.

Although advanced writing is currently considered a general education requirement, it is intended to be taken in the students major and include discipline specific writing such as offered in many capstone experiences. The Writing Committee would prefer that the advanced writing still be visible in general education to emphasize its importance. There will be many opportunities for feedback. The GEAHC co-chairs are going to the colleges with the draft and ask that faculty engage in the process to help gather buy in from campus. Members were encouraged to attend their college sessions.

Professor Wecker worked at Boston College while it implemented a thematic inter-disciplinary experience for students and is happy to share her materials with the GEAHC.

* **Associate Registrar Troy Morgan, Director of Student Athletic Support Services Jennifer Zellmer-Cuaresma**, and **Transfer Advisor Violet Hopkins** met with the Writing Committee to discuss ways to make the transfer process easier for students.

Troy clarified that there are two problems. Students taking two different courses and two different universities that are both articulated as WRIT 101 and the NCAA issue of students not allowed to count multiple versions of the same course. Currently students have to appeal to have a transfer course count as intermediate writing. The Admissions Office are operating under the assumption that they are not allowed to evaluate intermediate writing courses. The Committee can update this rule and create a checklist for evaluators. Admissions just needs a tool to evaluate correctly. If evaluators are uncomfortable with a course they can send it to the Writing Committee to review. There should be a check list for developmental courses as well. UM’s WRIT 101 includes a research / information literacy component. If it is clear that a student is retaking the course to improve their grade than the first course should not count.

Many campuses have a WRIT 101 sequence. However, the learning outcomes can be divided in many ways, so the issue is complicated. There are situations where transfer students do not have courses that meet the learning outcomes for Introductory Writing. UM’s three- part sequence represent different styles of writing that are not overlapping. Should students have to take Introductory Writing if they can demonstrate proficiency? Senior appeals are typically approved by the University Appeals Committee. Faculty on the Appeals Committee may not understand the differentiation. Professor Wecker is happy to meet with them. The requirements should be fleshed out better to ensure the integrity of the writing program.

Many Intermediate Writing courses have WRIT 101 as a prerequisite. If students are placed into WRIT 201 then they do not have to take WRIT 101. The issue needs to be made clearer for students and advisors.

### Appendix - Fall 21’ UPWA Survey Questions

**I received feedback from my instructor on my writing submission.**

True

False

**How many times did you revise this paper?**

Once

Twice

More than two times

I did not revise in response to my instructor’s feedback

**I used library resources (e.g., electronic database, library website, librarian assistance) for this writing.**

True

False

**I worked with the Writing and Public Speaking Center to support my writing.**

True

False

**Revision is an important part of the writing process for me.**

True

False

Something in between

**When I turn in writing, my ideas are more important than my spelling.**

True

False

Something in between

**The subject of my writing submission is connected to my major or is a topic of personal interest.**

True

False

Something in between

**This writing submission is stronger than my writing from earlier in the semester.**

True

False

Something in between