
Procedure **Writing Course Guidelines**

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References: [FAQs](#)
Approved by: ASCRC and Faculty Senate

I. Overview

The ability to write effectively is fundamental to a liberal arts education, essential to academic inquiry, and important for student success in academic, professional, and civic endeavors. Composition and writing courses at The University of Montana (UM) help students become adept at writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. Effective writing both strengthens and is strengthened by an understanding of critical thinking and information literacy. Students should learn to use writing as a means of finding, synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating information, retaining course material, and using that information and material in order to form and express coherent thoughts and arguments.

Writing Requirements for Graduation

To fulfill the writing requirements at UM and to demonstrate writing proficiency, students should satisfy the following three requirements in order:

- 1. Introductory College Writing**
- 2. Intermediate College Writing**
- 3. Advanced College Writing**

A. Introductory College Writing Course

The Composition Program seeks to advance the University's mission to pursue academic excellence in the context of writing instruction. Introductory College Writing Courses facilitate students' achievements in exploring and enacting rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, writing and research processes; and knowledge of conventions. Writing is a powerful means of purposeful inquiry, communication, and action in the classroom and in the world. (For current information, see the [English Composition](#).)

B. Intermediate College Writing Course

These courses use informal and formal writing to enhance writing skills and promote critical thinking in content areas. Information literacy is integrated into all general education courses approved for Group I: English Writing Skills. Students are strongly encouraged to complete Introductory College Writing, unless exempted, prior to taking An Intermediate College Writing Course.

C. Advanced College Writing Requirement by the Major

This writing requirement typically focuses on the student's major area of study. For this reason, faculty members within specific disciplines should develop courses or expectations *based on the conventions for research, analysis, and writing in their field*.

The Advanced College Writing requirement can be fulfilled using the following options:

- One Advanced College Writing course (numbered 300-400), with a grade of C- or better defined by the department and approved by the ASCRC Writing Committee, or
- An Advanced College Writing expectation defined by the department and approved by the ASCRC Writing Committee

Types of Acceptable Writing Tasks

Writing tasks may include formal and informal, graded and ungraded, and in-class or out-of-class exercises. The range of possible writing tasks includes journal entries, case studies, blogs, e-portfolios, hypertext, lab reports, free writing, annotated bibliography, essay, analyses, proposals, abstracts, reviews, field notes, electronic postings, research papers, or proofs. For more ideas, contact the [Writing and Public Speaking Center](#).

II. Guidelines

Writing requirements establish a logical progression of development as students move through the college curriculum. Therefore, intermediate and advanced college writing courses have different outcomes. The courses are reviewed and approved by the Writing Subcommittee and Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee (ASCRC). Proposals for all writing courses and expectations should specifically address how they will achieve the learning outcomes. Faculty who propose writing courses or are assigned to teach departmental courses are encouraged to seek guidance from the Mansfield Library, the Writing Center, and other campus resources. Specifically, collaboration with library faculty is encouraged for addressing information literacy. Departments will determine the criteria for graders, if used.

A. Intermediate College Writing Courses

Students should complete the Intermediate College Writing course after completing Introductory College Writing and prior to fulfilling the Advanced College Writing requirement specified by their majors. Upon completing the Intermediate College Writing course, students should understand writing as a means to practice academic inquiry and demonstrate the ability to formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing.

1. Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the Intermediate College Writing course, the student should be able to demonstrate the following Learning Outcomes:

- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts

- Formulate and express written opinions and ideas that are developed, logical, and organized
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

2. Requirements for Intermediate College Writing Courses*

Instructors must:

- Limit enrollment to 25 students per instructor or grader
- Identify Intermediate College Writing course outcomes in the syllabus
- Provide students with detailed written instructions, including criteria for evaluation, for all formal writing assignments
- Provide adequate instruction and require students to write frequently for specified audiences, purposes, and genres whether
 - Formal or informal
 - Graded or ungraded
 - In-class or out-of-class
- Provide feedback on students' writing and require students to revise and resubmit at least one formal writing assignment
- Require each student individually to compose at least 16 total pages of writing for assessment over the course of the semester. At least ten (10) of these 16 pages should be new, previously unsubmitted content rather than revised work
- Base a significant portion (at least 50% of a 3 credit course or equivalent hours) of the course grade on student performance on writing assignments
- Incorporate information literacy into learning outcomes, instruction, and assignments

* Proposals requesting approval for writing courses that do not meet the requirements should include justifications for these changes that address how learning outcomes will still be achieved.

B. Advanced College Writing Requirement

The Advanced College Writing requirement is defined by the student's major and may be met by either a course or an expectation as articulated by the program. Upon completing the Advanced College Writing requirement, students should be more active, confident, and effective contributors to a body of knowledge and should understand the ethical dimensions of inquiry.

1. Learning Outcomes

Upon fulfilling the Advanced College Writing requirement, the student should be able to demonstrate the following Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and pursue sophisticated questions for academic inquiry
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources
- Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate

- Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline
- Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work
- Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation that are appropriate to the discipline
- Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy

2. Requirements for Advanced College Writing Courses*

Instructors must:

- Limit enrollment to 25 students per instructor or grader
- Identify Advanced College Writing course outcomes in the syllabus
- Provide students with detailed written instructions, including criteria for evaluation, for all formal writing assignments
- Provide students with tools and strategies for effective writing and editing in the major
- Require students to write frequently for specified audiences, purposes, and genres **whether**
 - Formal or informal
 - Graded or ungraded
 - In-class or out-of-class
- Provide feedback on students' writing and require students to revise and resubmit at least one formal writing assignment
- Require each student to individually compose at least 20 pages of writing for assessment over the course of the semester. At least thirteen of these 20 pages should be new, previously unsubmitted content rather than revised work
- Base a significant portion (at least 50% of a 3 credit course or equivalent hours) of the course grade on student performance on written assignments
- Incorporate information literacy into learning outcomes, instruction, and assignments

3. Requirements for Advanced College Writing Requirement not fulfilled by a Course**

- This approach to fulfilling the Advanced College Writing requirement should be designed to support the same learning outcomes as those described for Advanced College Writing Courses.

* Proposals requesting approval for Advanced College Writing that do not meet the requirements should include justifications for these changes that address how learning outcomes will still be achieved.

** Proposals requesting approval for advanced college writing that are not fulfilled by a course or combination of courses must clearly articulate how the learning outcomes will still be achieved.