



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY

Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement

Policy #: SP 11-07

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Applicability: All CSU Channel Islands Faculty

Purpose: To establish a policy on the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) that contributes to a campus culture of evidence-based assessment.

I. Background:

Since 1977, every campus in the CSU has been subject to the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement or GWAR. While almost all campuses use a common exam to place incoming students (the English Placement Test), GWAR certification is designed by individual campuses. Executive Order 665 mandates this certification:

“Certification of graduation writing proficiency is an all-campus responsibility. Certification may rely on evidence of writing ability as demonstrated in written coursework, essay examinations, or other measures of student writing competence. Measures may be developed which best fit individual campus needs. EO 665, page 4, www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-665.pdf, accessed 11/22/11)

On most CSU campuses, this requirement is met either by passing a test or successfully completing one or more writing courses. On some campuses, if students fail the test, a course is the remedy; on other campuses, failing students repeat the test until they pass or (in rare cases) are granted a waiver. In either case, there is an assessment mechanism: a test score or course grade on file.

The CSU system issued a number of recommendations for the assessment of GWAR in the report, *A Review of the CSU Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) in 2002*, http://www.calstate.edu/AcadAff/GWAR_review_2002.shtml written by the CSU GWAR Review Committee in August 2003. Two of these recommendations are provided:

Recommendation #1: Each campus should implement measures to ensure consistency and common standards in faculty evaluations of written documents produced in courses through which students can achieve GWAR certification.



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY

Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement

Recommendation #8: Each campus should involve CSU faculty from all disciplines in GVAR processes such as reading essays, teaching GVAR courses, providing opportunities for students to improve their writing, and serving on GVAR committees.

II. History of the GVAR at CSU Channel Islands:

SP 02-22 "Policy on GVAR for AY 2002-04" established how the GVAR would be satisfied on the CI campus. Based on the title of this policy, it is widely agreed that this policy "sunsetted" at the end of AY 2003-04. It states:

"The GVAR will be satisfied through the completion of 9 units of UDIGE courses, which are writing intensive"

As part of the WASC review process, a subcommittee on the GVAR was formed in 2003-04 that resulted in a report from Anne Kellenberger and Bob Mayberry. In Sept 2005, a GVAR Task Force was formed by Dean Ashish Vaidya with membership consisting of Bob Mayberry, Cindy Wyels, Mary Adler, Paul Rivera, Debi Hoffman, George Morton, and John Guelcher. A memo on the findings of this task force was sent to the Curriculum Committee and to Dean Vaidya in March 2006. In the subsequent semester (Sept. 2006), the Academic Senate considered SP 06-01, entitled "Update to GVAR" and voted to postpone further discussion until Spring 2007, when the Curriculum Committee was to return with revisions to the policy. No revisions were returned to the Senate in Spring 2007 or in subsequent years and CI has operated with SP 02-22 being the effective policy for implementation of the GVAR.

The current catalog language states:

"The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement will be satisfied through the completion of 9 units of Upper-Division Interdisciplinary General Education courses, which are writing intensive."

III. Policy:

The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement will be satisfied through the completion of 9 units of Upper-Division Interdisciplinary General Education (UDIGE) courses, which are writing intensive, with a grade of "C" or better.

Each UDIGE course must include a student learning outcome that specifically addresses writing, such as the General Education written communication outcome, "Write effectively in various forms" (SP 06-06). Student evidence of accomplishment towards the written communication learning outcome may be used in University-wide assessment efforts.



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY

Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement

No single writing assignment could ever demonstrate the breadth of GVAR learning outcomes and, as a result, instructors are encouraged to consider requiring more than one writing assignment including revisions leading to a final draft of a paper.

Students will be notified of the writing intensive nature of UDIGE courses at CI through the insertion of the below phrase in the catalog and in the Schedule of Classes immediately preceding the listing of UDIGE courses.

All upper division, interdisciplinary courses will include substantive written work.