



The University of Georgia

University Council
Athens, Georgia 30602

February 5, 2010

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2009-2010

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Public Health – Dr. Phaedra S. Corso

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Veterinary Medicine - Dr. K. Paige Carmichael

Graduate School - Dr. Malcolm R. Adams

Undergraduate Student Representative – Cameron Secord

Graduate Student Representative – Lauren King

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal for a W-Suffix (Writing Intensive) will be an agenda item for the February 12, 2010, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

David E. Shipley, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

cc: Professor Jere W. Morehead
Dr. Laura D. Jolly



The University of Georgia

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

February 3, 2010

David Shipley
Chair, University Curriculum Committee
The University of Georgia
c/o Office of Curriculum Systems
116 Franklin House

Dear Professor Shipley:

The Writing Board is asking the University Curriculum Committee to consider the creation of a "W" suffix to identify writing intensive courses across the university curriculum.

Attached is a proposal explaining the rationale for creating this suffix, the criteria for designating courses as writing intensive, and a procedure for approving courses for the suffix.

Thank you for bringing this proposal before the committee.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Davis, Ph.D.
Coordinator of the Writing Certificate Program
University Writing Board
Department of English
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W (Writing Intensive) Suffix Proposal for the University Curriculum Committee

In its 2007 report for the Vice President of Instruction, the University of Georgia Task Force on Writing noted:

“A central part of any writing initiative is to make more writing intensive courses available to students...The 2005 Undergraduate Task Force recommended that all undergraduates take two upper-division writing-intensive courses before graduation. Until the university has in place a screening process to identify particular courses as writing intensive, that recommendation cannot be implemented.”

While several of the Task Force’s recommendations designed to increase writing instruction on campus have been implemented, including the creation of a Writing Certificate Program, there remains no procedure for identifying writing intensive courses. Assigning a “W” suffix to writing intensive courses would have several benefits for students, faculty, and administration. The designation would be reported on students’ transcripts, providing evidence of a writing intensive course of study. The W suffix would aid students pursuing the Writing Certificate in making course selections, and would enable the Coordinator of the Writing Certificate Program to more effectively identify courses that would count toward program credit. Transcripts would also give a more complete picture of the academic rigor of a student’s coursework with a notation that would identify writing intensive courses. A W designation would give faculty clearer guidelines about the quantity and quality of writing instruction that are necessary for a course to be considered writing intensive. It also would allow for inventory and tracking of courses, and for recognizing faculty and students participating in writing intensive work. Finally, a W designation would enable the university to more accurately document progress toward increasing and supporting writing instruction on campus.

W Suffix: Defining Writing Intensive

Writing intensive courses will exhibit considerable variation across disciplines in terms of the types of writing assigned, but all make writing important to the thinking of the course, give students opportunities to write in low stakes and high stakes situations, and engage students in conversations about writing. For a course to be designated as writing intensive, the following principles must be reflected in the course design:

- 1. Writing is an ongoing activity throughout the course and is part of the process of learning content.**

The course includes substantial and ongoing writing assignments that a) relate clearly to course learning; b) teach the communication values of a discipline—for example, its practices of argument, evidence, credibility, and format; and c) prepare students for further writing in their academic work, in graduate school, and in professional life.

- 2. Writing assignments take a variety of forms appropriate to the course and the discipline.**

Written assignments may be formal and count for a considerable portion of the grade for the course (high stakes), or informal and less important in the grading schema (low

stakes). A course that is designated as writing intensive should include both high and low stakes writing assignments done both in and out of class, resulting in a significant and diverse body of written work (the equivalent of 6000 words or 25 pages of formal and informal writing distributed over the course of the semester).

3. **Students learn to write effectively by having opportunities to receive feedback from their instructors and peers in order to revise their writing as it progresses through a series of stages.**

Writing assignments are broken into segments that teach the process of effective writing in a field and involve students in the composing process. Faculty and teaching assistants are closely involved in student writing, and opportunities for feedback and substantive revision are offered.

4. **Writing intensive classes with a one-hour lab co-requisite (optional).**

In order to reflect and reward the extensive amount of work that both students and faculty do in a writing intensive course, departments may design writing lab courses (to be offered either face-to-face or as e-courses) that can be added on to existing courses in order to provide an additional fourth credit hour. These add-on course components can be used for individual conferencing, peer review, revising and editing, and exercises to develop writing skills.

The approval process for a W designated course will follow the model established by the Office of Service-Learning for the S suffix:

1. The faculty member or Department Course Initiator enters a new course or course change proposal in CAPA.
2. Proposals are reviewed at department level and sent to college/school for approval.
3. Course proposals with a W designation are sent to the Writing Board for review.
4. Courses are approved by the Board and sent on to the UCC, or returned to the course initiator for revision and resubmission.