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UW Tacoma Policy for W-Course Designation

UW Tacoma faculty are committed to encouraging the development of writing skills, including formal W courses, as well as other types and levels of writing across the curriculum. To ensure that students take classes that have more intensive levels of writing, students are required to take one course designated as C (composition) and two courses designated as W (writing) to complete their bachelor's degrees.

To be designated as a W course, the course must include:

1.   Out-of-class writing assignments in appropriate discipline-specific genres that account for 30% or more of the final grade, including either:
        A.   At least two shorter (3-5 pages each) writing projects, OR
        B.   One longer writing project that includes developmental feedback during the term, such as instructor-supported pre-writing, drafting, peer review.

2.   Student rewriting of at least some portion of their writing. A revision process is important in order for students to reflect on writing feedback.

3.   Feedback on writing from the faculty member for out-of-class writing projects. Writing feedback should be limited to 2 or 3 areas for improvement (research shows this strategy to be most effective for improving student skills).

4.   Some class time dedicated to building writing skills needed for success in projects, for example, critical analysis skills appropriate to the subject matter, knowledge of genre conventions of the project, research skills as needed, standard conventions for paragraphing, etc.

5.   Occasional, brief, in-class, ungraded writing to promote critical thinking, fluency, and increased retention of subject matter. Examples of such writing may include responses to questions posed in class or summaries of key ideas from a discussion.

Not all courses that include writing assignments qualify as W courses. Only those meeting the criteria above should be so designated. The faculty of each program or school should ensure that sufficient W courses are offered each year to allow students to meet W course requirements.