

Guidelines for Faculty Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum Courses at AUS

Discipline-specific writing courses in the majors respond to the AUS mission to “educate lifelong learners who display mastery in the core competencies of their areas of specialization, and who communicate clearly, think critically and solve problems creatively.”

According to the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Annual Report, “when institutions provided students with extensive, intellectually challenging writing activities, the students engaged in more deep learning activities such as analysis, synthesis, integration of ideas from various sources, and grappled more with course ideas both in and out of the classroom” (National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (2008). *Promoting Engagement for All Students: The Imperative To Look Within*. Retrieved from http://nsse.iub.edu/NSSE_2008_Results/docs/withhold/NSSE2008_Results.pdf).

In addition, discipline-specific writing courses in the majors provide students an opportunity to develop their facility with the discourse of their chosen field. Written assignments help students to develop the communication skills to succeed in their profession and to aspire to its highest ranks.

To ensure students fully benefit from these discipline-specific writing courses, the following guidelines were developed in Fall 2012 by a faculty Writing Across the Curriculum Committee:

- 1) *Discipline-specific writing courses feature both **formal and informal** writing assignments that (a) reflect the kinds of writing common to the discipline and (b) support student acquisition and expression of course content*

Formal writing assignments generally refer to lengthier writing assignments that comprise research and analysis, although there may be discipline-related variances. **Drafting or revision** is an integral part of formal assignments (see guidelines for / suggestions on drafting below).

Informal writing assignments can refer to the following:

- Responses to textbook exercises; in-class writing
- Responses to essay / short-answer questions on exams or quizzes
- Student peer-review evaluations of drafts
- Research proposals, annotated bibliographies
- Observation notes, field notes, interview protocols and notes, surveys
- Reflective journals
- Summaries, reading responses, blogging, critiques
- Lab reports
- Explanation of proofs
- Outlines or “talking points” for presentations, oral presentations based on written work, PPT or other presentation slides
- Professional posters, brochures
- Other forms of writing that are discipline-specific

- 2) *In discipline-specific writing courses, writing assignments should constitute a significant amount of the course grade. The weight of all written assignments should be clearly articulated on the syllabus.*
- 3) *The students will benefit from written guidelines that are clearly articulated:*

The **syllabus** should contain an overview of the professor's goals and expectations for writing assignments and include all associated due dates (i.e., for formal assignments, there may be due dates for a proposal and early and final drafts). Also, explanations of the various written assessments should be linked to the Course Learning Outcomes.

In addition to the overview in the syllabus, students should be provided with **an assignment sheet**—particularly for formal writing assignments—that contains the following as applicable:

Explicit instructions on what the student is expected to do

Learning goals of the assignments

Formatting expectations

Target-audience discussion

Grading scheme and / or rubric (see sample “foundational rubric” attached)

Documentation / citation expectations

Library support details (see treatment below)

Writing Center support details (see treatment below)

Plans and dates for revision / drafting for formal or lengthier assignments; these can include any of the following:

- First / early draft(s) submitted to professor for feedback
- Class-based peer evaluations using the guidance of peer-evaluation questionnaire in advance of the due date of the project
- Required visits to the Writing Center (Writing Center report issued for full assignment credit).

Details on how to submit the final draft of the assignment to **SafeAssign**.

- 4) *Discipline-specific writing courses benefit from the support of the **AUS Library** and the **AUS Writing Center**.*

The AUS Library hosts the Library Liaison Program, in which librarians assigned to a specific department work with the faculty to help students gain fundamental library and research skills. A list of Librarian Liaisons and their associated departments are found at <http://library.aus.edu/faculty-resources/library-liaison-program/> With their designated library liaison, faculty members can arrange for the following writing support:

Meet with the liaison, who can offer suggestions for research-based projects and develop individual “Libguides”—a collection of useful sources and research tools in direct support of writing assignments and student research needs, featuring discipline-specific articles accessible via library databases

Bring classes to the library for hands-on instruction sessions in the Library’s electronic classroom.

Invite a librarian to come to the classroom to show students core library resources and search strategies.

The AUS Writing Center offers one-on-one writing conferences by appointment or on a drop-in basis to students from throughout the university. During conferences, students and peer tutors work together on various aspects of writing: thesis development, organization, outlining, paragraphing, sentence structure, wording, vocabulary and mechanics. The tutorials can help students brainstorm; organize their writing; review grammar, punctuation and mechanics in the context of their writing; or work on a draft critiqued by their instructors.

Professors are encouraged to make use of the Writing Center in the following ways:

Encourage your students to bring their assignments to the Writing Center (or require their attendance if you have deemed this visit part of the revision / drafting process).

Contact Writing Center director Maria Eleftheriou, meleftheriou@aus.edu, and send her the assignment sheets for your writing assignments. These are shared with Writing Center staff who, in turn, can support your assignment requirements and evaluation criteria, thus better assisting students from your course.

Include the following information in your syllabus and assignment sheets:

The AUS Writing Center offers one-on-one writing conferences by appointment or on a drop-in basis to students from throughout the university. During conferences, students and peer tutors work together on various aspects of writing: thesis development, organization, outlining, paragraphing, sentence structure, wording, vocabulary and mechanics. The tutorials can help students brainstorm; organize their writing; review grammar, punctuation and mechanics in the context of their writing; or work on a draft critiqued by their instructors.

The Writing Center's main location is in the Library on the ground floor. There is also a satellite location in the Business Building (SBM 176). The working hours at both locations are from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. For students who are not able to make it during the weekdays, the Writing Center offers online tutorials in the evenings and on the weekends.

Students can make appointments for a session with a tutor by visiting <https://aus.mywconline.com/> or simply dropping by the main location.

Students should remember to bring their assignment sheets to the Writing Center and answer "yes" when asked whether a session report should be sent to the professor.