

**Writing Assessment Reporting Format
for George Mason Departments
(Internal Use ONLY)**

The Mason general education goal for writing is to “develop ability to use written communication as a way of thinking and of discovering ideas and meanings as well as expressing them.” To ensure development of writing competence Mason requires English 100/101 (freshman composition), English 302 (advanced writing in the disciplines), a Writing Intensive course in the major, and the new general education upper-division synthesis course. The synthesis course component “requires students to demonstrate advanced skills in oral and written communication before a faculty panel.” All of these requirements are supported by the Writing Across the Curriculum program.

Part I: Departmental Writing Requirements

1. Describe writing requirements in the major, including a) Writing Intensive (WI) course(s) and b) courses in the major that require significant writing (if applicable).

All courses in the nursing major require some form of written assignment. Faculty are encouraged to use informal writing in class, as a teaching strategy and many do so.

A writing portfolio is used throughout the college. It is introduced in NURS 333 for traditional nursing students and in NURS 334 for LPN-BSN and RN-BSN students. Faculty are encouraged to allow students to write drafts of their papers and students frequently have this opportunity with either peer or faculty feedback.

In NURS 333 students write a collaborative paper on a nursing leader. In NURS 342 they have their first experience writing a personal narrative. In NURS 441, a community health clinical course, students do a health promotion research paper, a written community assessment and written clinical journals.

In the Health Science major, HSCI 295 offers two opportunities for the students to write: a required diet analysis and a written evaluation. Students may earn extra credit by writing a critique of a current nutrition article.

All students in CNHS take NURS 465/HSCI 465 which is a capstone and writing intensive course. In this course students complete a “Best Works” portfolio. Some of the contents of the portfolio are completed during the course, while others are chosen by the students from all of the written work they have produced throughout the program. Within the course they complete a clear statement of goals, a reflective essay, a table of contents and a position or argument paper. Students are required to do drafts for this written work. Some of the drafts are peer reviewed, while other are reviewed and eventually graded by the faculty.

2. As applicable, identify writing standards/requirements reported to external/professional accrediting bodies (e.g., ABET, AACSB).

The nursing program is pre-accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The program can select their own outcomes. One of the college's selected outcomes is communication, of which writing is a component. We develop the writing standards. At present we are using standards developed in a faculty writing workshop conducted by faculty in the English Department. The program is also accredited by National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission.

Part II: Departmental Writing Assessment

1. Briefly describe the process that was used to assess student writing as well as the process for identifying faculty readers. Include the number of faculty readers and the number of papers reviewed.

Faculty who teach NURS 465 (the writing intensive course) randomly selected 30 percent of their class portfolios. The portfolios are graded as a class assignment. Three papers for each student are selected from the portfolios: a reflective essay explaining why they chose the articles in their portfolio, a position or argument paper and an experiential narrative. Some faculty readers (5) participated in one of two holistic scoring workshops. A total of 8 faculty participated in assessing 153 papers from 51 students. Faculty worked in pairs and assessed the same writing sample independently. If they could not agree on the overall score for each student, a third reader read the sample. Faculty who had not attended an assessment workshop and were new to the process were paired with a more experienced colleague. The rubric defines the score as strong, satisfactory and needs improvement. For the purpose of this report strong and satisfactory are recorded as satisfactory and needs improvement as unsatisfactory. Each group of 3 papers took 30 minutes to read.

2. Specify the course(s) from which the papers were collected and attach a copy of the assignment(s) that was used to generate student writing samples. Course(s): NURS/HSCI 465 Assignment(s) attached X (check) (Samples from portfolios)

Reflective essay Experiential Narrative
Position paper

3. Attach a copy of the scoring rubric that was used for the assessment of student writing.

The description under each criteria has a dot in front of it if it applies to that writing sample. Each type of paper has its own scoring sheet.

4. Attach one sample of a satisfactory student paper and one sample of an unsatisfactory paper derived from the writing assessment.

Checklist: X Copy of student writing assignments.
 X Copy of scoring rubric. (3)
 X Student writing samples – two papers one representing satisfactory and one representing unsatisfactory writing.

Part III: Findings

1. Based on the rubric, summarize findings on student writing strengths and weaknesses.

Students demonstrated strength in writing in a clear, strong voice for a particular audience. Their greatest weakness was in mechanics and grammar. This may be result of the high percentage of English as a Second Language students. The problems related to professional content had more to do with the mechanics of the APA format than professional knowledge.

2. Indicate the number and percent of student writing samples that fall in each of the satisfactory and unsatisfactory categories for each writing criteria.

Example of writing criteria:

Criteria for Student Writing	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory	
	#	%	#	%
PURPOSE: (Thesis is clearly stated, Purpose is clear or obvious, Main purpose achieved overall)	<u>45</u>	<u>88%</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12%</u>
ORGANIZATION: (Main points, coherent and integrated, Look is professional, Organization good overall)	<u>46</u>	<u>90%</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>10%</u>
PROFESSIONAL CONTENT: (Appropriate use of professional source (relevant, recent, high quality), Appropriate use of professional vocabulary, Appropriate use of quotes, Evidence of growth as a professional)	<u>44</u>	<u>86%</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>14%</u>
PERSONA/VOICE: (Strong clear voice that is appropriate for purpose and audience)	<u>49</u>	<u>96%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4%</u>
MECHANICS AND GRAMMAR: (Uses correct mechanics, Uses correct grammar)	<u>39</u>	<u>76%</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>24%</u>
CRITICAL THINKING: (Thoughtful with strong evidence of critical analysis, Strong evidence of synthesis across multiple sources, Strong evidence of meaningful reflection, Evidence of appropriate ethical standards)	<u>46</u>	<u>90%</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>10%</u>

3. Indicate the number and percent of student papers read that were judged to be “Satisfactory” and “Unsatisfactory”.

Portfolios = 3 writing samples read (51 portfolios read).

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Number	47	4
Percent	92%	8%

4. Include findings for your department from the Mason “Graduating Senior Survey.” University, college and program results are available on the Office of Institutional Assessment website <http://assessment.gmu.edu/cmte/writing/index.html> under the “Results and Publications” section. Contact Ruth Green (rgreen1@gmu.edu) for help or question. (see attached)

OPTIONAL:

- Finding from the “Faculty Survey on Student Writing.” (Departmental results are available for departments that had a 40% or higher faculty response rate.) (see attached)
- External feedback on student writing (e.g., advisory committees or employers)

Part IV: Recommendations

1. Describe steps that will be taken to improve student writing based on your assessment findings.

1. Criteria for Evaluating Student Writing will be submitted to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the Program Evaluation Committee for approval so that it can be incorporated in all writing assignments in the nursing and health science curriculum.
2. Results of the writing assessment will be shared with the faculty.
3. Faculty will be encouraged to refer students the Writing Center.
4. A handout will be developed to assist students to use APA format in their writing.

2. Describe changes to improve the assessment of student writing.

1. Category entitled “Strong Evidence of Maturation of Writer” will be deleted as there are not enough early samples of student work.
2. Grading categories will be changed to Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.
3. A line for the faculty reviewers name will be added.
4. Additional faculty will participate in holistic scoring workshops.