

**Appendix  
1A.**

**Mini-grant declaration of need:** The University has an identified need for strengthening faculty’s capacity to teach writing and assist students to improve their writing. The assessment data collected since 2011 have provided an indication that our senior-level students’ writing is not at the standards expected by program faculty (see Table 1). For the programs that were assessed for writing quality measures in AY2011, 8 out of the 10 found over 25% of the writing artifacts were below standards. In addition, the “writing intensive” courses—such as the Signature Courses offered within the General Education Program—have not been uniformly implemented or defined. In AY2011, members of the General Education Committee assessed random samples of course syllabi and determined that there was uneven evidence provided for meeting the standards for “writing intensive” (see Table 2).

**TABLE 1**  
*AY2011-2012 Quality of Writing / Assessment Artifacts: Collected Essays; Random Sample*

Program/College	% Below Standards / Applied Rubrics
PSY	40%
PHL	50% (Note: N=2)
ENG	33% (Note: N=3)
BIO	42%
HIS	32%
ASBA	8% (*42% Approaching)
BSBA	45%
BS EDU	37%
CLL Whole College	26%
GV Whole College	10%

**TABLE 2**  
*AY2011-2012 Writing Intensive in Signature Courses / Assessment Artifacts: Signature Course Syllabi; Random Sample*

	N=	N=	N=	N=	N=	N=
Evidence of writing intensive Meet/Exceed standards	83	100	100	67	40	60

## **1B. Guidelines and Recommendations for Writing Intensive Courses at Gwynedd Mercy University**

Writing Intensive courses fulfill the following minimum requirements:

The writing assignments will constitute a substantial and clearly understood component of the final course grade. Assignments should be structured and sequenced in such a way as to help students improve their writing. Instructors in writing intensive courses should not just assign writing; they should help students succeed with and learn from that writing

- Students should be provided with at least one opportunity for the revision of an assignment; the draft and revision may count as two discrete writing assignments. Exceptions will be allowed for instructors who instead choose to use a sequence of repeated assignments.
- Clear guidelines will be given to students for assessment purposes.
- Feedback will be provided on writing assignments.
- Some class time will be devoted to preparing students to complete writing assignments. Some options include:
  - Discussion of assignments and evaluation criteria
  - Analysis and discussions of sample student papers
  - Discussion of writing in progress, using examples of successful work from students
  - Peer group activities that prepare students to write a particular paper, such as sharing and discussion of plans, outlines, strategies, theses, drafts
  - Discussion or presentations of students' research in progress

- Instruction about how to write a particular type of paper or about solving a common writing problem
- Formal, graded assignments and informal, ungraded writing will count toward a cumulative amount of submitted written work totaling **approximately 20 pages/10,000 words.**

Recommendations for writing-intensive courses:

1. Writing intensive courses should limit enrollment to 16 or fewer students per instructor. [An instructor can admit up to two additional students].
2. The course syllabus should explain the writing intensive nature of the course and should contain a schedule for writing assignments and revisions.
3. Students should receive detailed written instructions for each writing assignment.
4. Assignments should follow a logical sequence which allows time for preparation and reflection and should match the learning goals for the course. Among the many options: assignment can move from more basic to more sophisticated kinds of thinking about the course material; assignment can move from clearly defined problems toward more ill-defined problems for students to solve; assignments can move from familiar to new perspectives on course material; assignments can give students repeated practice that builds particular thinking and writing skills; complex assignments can be sequenced-students write proposals for research, write drafts, receive feedback on drafts, and then revise their papers.
5. Courses should include some informal, ungraded writing (such as journals, free writing, reading logs, questions, proposals, response papers, etc.), in order to encourage regular practice with writing, to help students reflect on and synthesize

course material, and to provide opportunities for students to discover promising ideas for formal papers. Such ungraded writing can be calculated into the goal of 20 pages.

6. Instructors should strongly encourage students to seek assistance with their writing through the Academic Resource Center.
7. Instructors should require the use of a style guide appropriate to the discipline.