

Composition Program Handbook

2016-2017



**State University of New York
NEW PALTZ**

The Composition Program Handbook

2016-2017

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
NEW PALTZ

Department of English

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Composition Program Handbook

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SUNY NEW PALTZ DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION PROGRAM “TOP 10” POLICY LIST

Composing texts involves complicated processes of analyzing a situation, thinking critically about options, and stylistically creating and revising material in the proper format. Because of the importance and complexity of writing for academic, business, and personal settings, SUNY New Paltz requires two distinct writing courses that ALL students must complete—Composition I (ENG 160) and Composition II (ENG 180) or its course equivalent Honors English II (ENG 206). Students placed into Composition I upon matriculation at SUNY - New Paltz must begin the course sequence in their first semester, and complete all required Composition courses within their first year. Students placed into Composition II or Honors English II must complete the course within the first year of matriculation at SUNY New Paltz. The first course teaches more general stylistic, mechanical, rhetorical, and analytical skills while the second teaches more advanced argument and research skills. Students eligible for Honors English II are interested in literature and writing.

Please use this guide to be sure you meet your Composition I and II requirements.

1. Composition I and Composition II are taken in a two-semester sequence upon matriculation to complete the General Education III (GEIII) requirement. If, **FOR ANY REASON**, the Composition courses are taken out of sequence, this does not provide exemption status for Composition I. Both courses cover specific writing techniques and skills and are not redundant syllabi. CLEP scores must be received before the student matriculates; AP and IB scores must be received within the first week of classes of the semester that the student matriculates.
2. No student may take more than one Composition course at a time to satisfy the Composition requirement.
3. No student may withdraw from Composition for any reason.
4. Attending the library session as assigned is mandatory to comply with the GEIII Information Literacy Component for Composition I and II. If a student is absent from the library session, he or she must make arrangements to make up the session.
5. Any student with a disability should notify his or her instructor as early in the semester as possible so proper arrangements can be made to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
6. An attendance requirement is in effect in all Composition courses: in a course which meets twice per week the total absences allowed for any reason are three; in a course which meets three times per week, the total absences allowed are five. Three late arrivals constitute an absence.
7. A student must prepare and submit a passing portfolio at the end of Composition I in order to move on to Composition II. A student who has exceeded the number of absences permitted, who has not completed all the work required, or who has not earned a passing grade (D or better) prior to the final exam may not submit a portfolio.
8. Some students with weak writing skills may need more than one semester to pass Composition I or II. If a student fails Composition I or II because his or her writing is too weak to pass (but is not failing due to excessive absence or inability to complete at least 60% of the assignments) a Repeat (“R”) grade may be granted. An “R” grade will not affect a student’s cumulative average, jeopardize tenure at the college, or endanger financial aid. An “R” grade requires the student to repeat the course the following semester. The student then is assigned the grade earned in the repeated class.
9. In some cases, students who submit Composition I portfolios will be given a provisional pass. This grade means that the student must immediately enroll in a Composition II Supplemental Writing Workshop (SWW). If a student elects NOT to enroll in an SWW section of Composition II, the student will receive an “R” and must repeat Composition I. Conversely, those students who demonstrate particularly sophisticated writing skills may be recommended to enroll in General Honors English II if they wish.
10. Statement on Academic Integrity: “Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their academic work. Cheating, forgery, and plagiarism are serious offences, and students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action” (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 33).
Plagiarism is the unacknowledged (intentional or unintentional) use of summary, paraphrase, direct quotation, language, statistics, or ideas from articles or other information sources, including the Internet. Cases of plagiarism must be reported to the Department of English Chair and the Academic Dean.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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**SUNY NEW PALTZ DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COMPOSITION PROGRAM "TOP 10"
TRANSFER AND ACCREDITATION LIST SUNY NEW PALTZ
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

Under specific circumstances, you may qualify for Composition exemption or transfer credit.

Composition I:

1. Transfer students who have taken a Composition course at another college may submit their transcripts to Transfer Advising for consideration. These must be received at the mid-point of the first semester the student matriculates (please check for specific deadline date with Transfer Advising).
2. If a student receives a score of 3 (Composition II), 4 or 5 (Honors English II) on either the Language or Literature AP exams, he or she may receive Composition I exemption. Transfer Advising must receive the official transcript within the first week of the semester that the student matriculates for the student to register for Composition II.
3. If a student receives a score of 70 or above on the CLEP exam (the **College Composition Exam** only, **NOT** the Composition Modular Exam), he or she may be exempt from Composition I. CLEP scores must be received prior to matriculation.
4. If a student earns a 5 or higher in English through the International Baccalaureate Program he or she may be exempt from Composition I. IB scores must be received prior to matriculation.
5. If a student earns high school grades and scores on the SAT that meet the standards listed in the Composition Placement Rubric ("A" in English, 640 SAT written, 640 SAT verbal, 85%+ NYS Regents) he or she may be exempt from Composition I.
6. Students who, after a significant time, are returning to college may submit a portfolio of work that must include samples of expository, argument, and informational essays. This material may include professional writing (i.e., work that the returning student may have completed in the workplace). One essay must have at least three sources cited in MLA format.

Composition II:

7. Composition II emphasizes academic argument and research and is not redundant with Composition I. Unless a student has completed the Composition I and II sequence from an accredited college, only under exceptional circumstances may exemption be granted from Composition II.
8. If a student has successfully received exemption for the Composition I requirement and has not successfully passed a Composition II course (either Composition II is not offered at the prior institution of study or the student has not passed a course comparable to SUNY New Paltz's Composition II), the student must complete Composition II within the first year of study. An exemption for Composition I does not indicate an exemption for Composition II.
9. If a transfer student thinks he or she may have passed a course that meets Composition II objectives the student must submit, **before the end of the first week of classes**, the following to the Composition Program:
 - a. Syllabus for the course in question;
 - b. Transcript from original college that notes the grade for the course in question;
 - c. Portfolio of work (often 20-25 pages) completed for the writing course comparable to Composition II that includes a properly documented research paper (typically 10-15 pages minimum) and three other academic essays from the course in question.
 - d. If appropriate, the Composition Program will ask each student seeking exemption to write a timed essay in our office.

Notes:

10. Any student denied exemption is required to register for the appropriate level of Composition as soon as possible. Completion of the Composition sequence is mandatory to graduate.
11. All students who matriculate at SUNY New Paltz must complete Composition I and Composition II in order to complete the General Education III requirement for Composition. Composition I and Composition II are taken in a two-semester sequence. If, **FOR ANY REASON**, the Composition courses are taken out of sequence, this does not provide exemption status for Composition I.

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PART ONE:

THE ESSENTIALS

Composition Program Curricular Objectives

Overall, courses offered by the Composition Program assist students in developing the capacities to think critically and to expand their depth of knowledge in order to become lifelong learners as well as productive citizens and members of their society.

In particular, students who complete courses in Composition should be able to:

- Write well-developed, well-organized personal, academic, and professional essays in different rhetorical situations (i.e., for different purposes, occasions, and audiences) using a variety of rhetorical modes (e.g., description, narration, exposition, and particularly argument and interpretation).
- Understand and practice composing processes (i.e., gathering, shaping, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading) and be able to transfer these skills to effectively read and critique their own writing as well as that of others.
- Use critical thinking and reasoning skills to analyze, to infer, to synthesize, to interpret, and to evaluate effectively, including information, arguments (i.e., premise, deductive and inductive reasoning, forms of appeal, and forms of evidence), and literary works as well as to argue effectively (i.e., to develop a position, reasons, evidence, and warrants) when presenting information or analyzing and interpreting texts.
- Conduct and document research (i.e., develop a research topic and search strategy; use general or specialized databases; use Internet search engines; locate, retrieve, and evaluate information sources; organize, synthesize, and evaluate information; construct a bibliography; cite information sources used in-text for summary, paraphrase, direct quotation, and ideas; and follow guidelines for academic integrity governing use of primary and secondary sources).
- Use oral presentation skills (i.e., to present expressive, informative, or persuasive speeches) and critique the oral discourse of members of diverse learning communities.
- Continue to develop writing, critical thinking, critical reading, research, documentation, and speaking skills in discipline-specific classes beyond Composition classes (e.g., in a writing-intensive course in their selected majors).
- Remain conversant in developing texts, technologies, composing strategies (including those requiring computer skills), and standards recognized in the field of Rhetoric and Composition Studies.
- Initiate reading, writing, and speaking experiences independent of course work (e.g., read self-selected works for pleasure, intellectual enrichment, or critical investigation and examination; attend, perform, or participate in public forums, such as poetry or fiction reading or a research conference; or submit writing to campus or professional publications).

Composition Program Overview

COMPOSITION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Composition Program consists of Composition I and II, Composition I and II SWW, Composition I and II ESL/SWW, and General Honors English II courses.

Students are required to complete Composition I and II: this is a college requirement for graduation and holds for all majors; other English courses will not substitute for them. Students who earn a score of 3 or better on an Advanced Placement in English Exam may be exempted from Composition I. Those with a 4 or 5 are then placed in General Honors English II, if possible.

Students must take their Composition courses in a two-step sequence: first, Composition I; second, Composition II. Composition I stresses the composing process, emphasizes reflection about writing itself, and moves from expressive to expository and persuasive writing; i.e., from writing for self to writing to inform and influence others. The course concentrates on writing modes, genres, and situations; it also considers forms of writing required in courses across the disciplines. Composition II stresses the development of critical and analytic thinking and is devoted to a discussion of research and argumentation, focusing on the discourse around a specific topic. Both Composition I and Composition II include critical analysis of texts.

Supplemental Writing Workshop

Students who score levels 1-2 on the placement scale for Composition will be required to enroll in specially designated sections of Composition I entitled Composition I-Supplemental Writing Workshops (SWW). Students placed into these sections **must** take these sections. A companion course will be offered in the second semester, and students who are successful in the first will be urged to continue their requirements in Composition II SWW. (This curricular initiative is the result of a collaboration of the Educational Opportunity Program, The Office of Student Resources and Academic Support, the Haggerty English Language Program, and the English Department.) These sections will be composed of the regular class sessions, a one-hour non-credit supplemental writing workshop, and required tutoring. Through these supplemental forms of instruction and tutorial assistance students will gain the skills needed to succeed in the course. Composition I and II SWW courses count as regular first-year Composition courses.

Composition I and II ESL/SWW courses are designed for students whose native language is other than English. Composition I and II ESL/SWW courses count as regular first-year Composition courses. These courses are designed for students still making a transition from their native language to English. Some students who have weak writing and language backgrounds, however, may need more than one semester to pass the course; they will be able to receive an "R" grade and repeat the course (without hurting their GPA) the following term.

Students interested in literature who have demonstrated expertise in writing on the departmental placement examination are placed into General Honors English; students also may enter the General Honors English sequence by referral. The curriculum of the General Honors English sequence is quite different from Composition I and II. The courses focus on analysis and in-depth discussion of literary texts while requiring a substantive amount of writing.

CATALOG DESCRIPTIONS

ENG160 COMPOSITION I (3)

Training in critical reading, the process of composing, academic forms of writing, and computer literacy. Movement from expressive to expository writing. Papers assigned to develop particular writing techniques. A first-semester English course.

ENG180 COMPOSITION II (3)

Training in critical reading and academic writing, particularly research, critical analysis, and argumentation. Oral presentation and library component. Papers assigned to develop academic writing skills, including the research essay. Prerequisites: ENG160

ENG206 GENERAL HONORS ENGLISH II (3)

A writing course based on thematically related readings in literature, the arts, and sciences. Designed for intellectually curious and industrious students who have demonstrated writing proficiency. May be substituted for Composition II. Prerequisites: PI OR PC ENG160 OR ENG205

ENG207 INTERMEDIATE COMPOSITION (3)

Designed to prepare students for college writing assignments in various disciplines. Offers opportunities to enhance critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. (This course is primarily a Composition II equivalent-course designed for transfer students with some writing experience.)

Composition I

Composition I develops students' abilities to write grammatical and coherent sentences and to develop ideas fully and in an organized fashion. The course will develop students' abilities to produce distinctive pieces of writing based upon individual thinking and experience. It also will stress and lead students through the composing process as they develop better understanding of their own writing processes. This orientation requires that students write and revise. Revision skills are stressed as students practice different writing strategies in successive drafts. This process also includes discussion of selected readings and written responses to them. Students completing the course will be capable of producing expressive, expository, and argumentative writing as well as other papers reflecting a variety of approaches to thinking and writing. In short, all Composition I classes concentrate on the development of critical thinking and reading, the process of writing, and forms of academic prose to promote effective communication skills.

Composition I Course Objectives

By semester's end, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Write well in different rhetorical situations and modes, i.e., for different purposes, occasions, and audiences.
2. Understand and reflect on key concepts about writing and rhetoric (style, exigence, voice, invention, etc.).
3. Craft well-developed, well-organized, clear, and grammatical sentences, paragraphs, and essays.
4. Think and write as college students (reflecting, observing, explaining, comparing, summarizing, synthesizing, analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting).
5. Approach writing as a process (planning, shaping, drafting, revising, and editing).
6. Critique one's own writing and the writing of others through reflection on important concepts and issues in composition studies.

7. Evaluate sources of information using criteria such as currency, authority, objectivity, accuracy, specificity, and relevance.
8. Use information ethically and legally.
9. Develop oral presentation skills.
10. Develop computer and library information literacy skills.

Composition I Writing Requirements and Suggested Grade Distribution

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| • Four take-home essays of approximately 750-1000 words each | 60% (or more) |
| • An in-class timed essay | 5% |
| • Quizzes and informal writing exercises | 10% |
| • Reader-response journal | 10% |
| • Oral component | 5% |
| • Class participation and attendance | 5% |
| • Participation in library skills workshop | 5% |
| • Final-exit essay/in-class timed essay | P/F |
| • Portfolio | P/F |

Course Exiting Requirements

In order to fulfill the GEIII Composition requirement students must earn a course grade of D or better and are required to submit portfolios of their work for review by Composition Program faculty. Each portfolio includes a **required** final-exit essay, which must be prepared on Common Final Exam Day as scheduled by the university.

No student passes Composition I without submitting a satisfactory portfolio. To be eligible to submit portfolios, students must demonstrate competency in grammar and usage through an editing exercise. No student who has exceeded the number of absences permitted in the course, or who has not completed all the work required in the course, or who has not earned a passing grade (D or better) as of the day of the final-exit assessment will be allowed to submit a portfolio.

Portfolios are graded as passing if they are deemed a level 4 on the placement and proficiency scale (see Appendix A, *Composition Program Handbook*, “Placement and Proficiency Standards,” including rubric, p. 44). Portfolios that do not contain the required work (see below) are not graded. Students whose portfolios receive a failing grade receive a Repeat (R) grade and must repeat the course. There are no additional procedures of appeal.

Students who are not eligible to submit a final portfolio and who are not failing the course or earning a D- because of poor work, excessive absence, or inability to complete the requirements also may be assigned an “R” instead of a D- or F, if the instructor chooses to do so; i.e., the R grade may be assigned to students who have done their best but are still failing (or nearly so) the course. This grade does not affect a student’s cumulative average or endanger financial aid. He or she will repeat the course the following semester, and his or her grade will be based on the work done in the repeated course.

The Portfolio

The final portfolio consists of the following:

- The diagnostic essay (a clean copy).
- Two revised essays (clean copies with drafts), one of which demonstrates argumentative writing, basic research, and proficiency in basic MLA documentation methods.
- Mid-semester in-class timed essay.
- Final exam in-class timed writing (i.e., Common Final Exam).
- A cover letter—a final reflective statement in which the student articulates his or her writing processes and progress in the course.
- (Optional) An additional paper or writing-based project.

Composition II

Composition II continues the development of writing skills begun in Composition I. The course reviews as necessary basic writing principles: grammar, sentence structure, and style; it also emphasizes writing cogent, coherent prose. The course focuses, however, more intensively on the development of critical thinking and reasoning abilities, stressing the skills needed to interpret, to evaluate, and to synthesize information. Other emphases of the course are discussion and critical interpretation of a body of rhetorical works. Special attention is paid to research techniques, methods of argumentation, and critical reading skills. There are required oral presentation and library skills components in Composition II.

Composition II Themes

Designed as a first-year seminar, each section of Composition II is organized around a specific theme selected by individual instructors. The themes should emphasize the discourse around a multi-disciplinary topic (e.g., “Food Fights,” “Earth: Discourses of Our Planet,” “Science and the Public Sphere,” “Jazz: Arguments about Music,” etc.).

Composition II Course Objectives

By semester’s end, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Write persuasively and stylistically in an increasing variety of rhetorical situations, i.e. for different purposes, occasions, and audiences.
2. Craft sustained, logically-organized, stylistic, and grammatical sentences, paragraphs and essays.
3. To enter intelligently into academic and cultural conversations (understanding and representing other views; developing a position; establishing exigence), with a focus in one particular arena of discourse.
4. Analyze and evaluate arguments from multiple genres by considering aesthetic elements, rhetorical strategies, premises and assumptions, deductive and inductive reasoning, logical fallacies, and forms of evidence.
5. Use a body of knowledge about a topic for creating breadth and depth in documents, and to take that skill set to future work.
6. Conduct research as a means of discovery (develop a research question and search strategy; use general or specialized databases and search engines; locate, retrieve, and evaluate information sources; construct a bibliography; organize and synthesize information).
7. Critique one’s own written and oral discourse and the discourse of others.
8. Select the best information and use it ethically and legally, considering the ethical ramifications of different arguments.
9. Expand formal oral argument skills.
10. Enhance computer and library information literacy skills.

Composition II Writing Requirements and Suggested Grade Distribution

- A minimum of three take-home essays of approximately 1,000-1250 words each 45%
- A documented research essay of approximately 1,250+ words 20%
- An in-class timed essay 5%
- Reader-response journal/informal writing exercises 10%
- Participation in library workshop and library-skills assignment 5%
- An in-class oral presentation 5%
- Class participation and attendance 5%
- Timed final essay exam 5%

Supplemental Writing Workshop

Composition I SWW and ESL/SWW

This intensive Composition course includes a required weekly one-hour, non-credit workshop and one hour of tutorial assistance. ESL/SWW sections of this course include two required one-hour non-credit workshops and a required one hour of tutorial assistance.

Composition I SWW and ESL/SWW Course Objectives

The aims and objectives of Composition I SWW, ESL, and ESL/SWW are the same as those for Composition I. Additionally, satisfactory attendance and class participation during all required contact hours (including attendance at the workshop and tutorial sessions) is mandatory.

Composition I SWW and ESL/SWW Writing Requirements and Suggested Grade Distribution

The writing requirements and suggested grade distribution of Composition I SWW and ESL/SWW are the same as those for Composition I.

Composition I SWW and ESL/SWW Course Exiting Requirements

The course existing requirements for Composition I SWW and ESL/SWW are the same as those for Composition I, including preparation and assessment of a portfolio of student work.

This intensive Composition course includes a required weekly one-hour, non-credit workshop and one required hour of tutorial assistance.

Supplemental Writing Workshop

Composition II SWW and ESL/SWW

Composition II SWW and ESL/SWW Course Objectives

The aims and objectives of Composition II SWW and ESL/SWW are the same as those for Composition II. Additionally, satisfactory attendance and class participation during all required contact hours (including attendance at the workshop and tutorial sessions) is mandatory.

Composition II SWW and ESL/SWW Writing Requirements and Suggested Grade Distribution

The writing requirements and suggested grade distribution of Composition II SWW, ESL and ESL/SWW are the same as those for Composition II.

General Honors English II

General Honors English II sharpens students' abilities to write grammatical and coherent sentences and to develop ideas more fully and in an organized fashion. General Honors English courses develop students' abilities to write essays based upon selected readings and class discussions. Special attention is paid to research techniques (including MLA documentation), methods of argumentation, and critical reading skills. Additionally, students sharpen their abilities to conduct literary analysis and interpretation. Students completing the course are capable of producing expository, analytic, argument, and critical essays, as well as papers reflecting a variety of approaches to thinking. There are oral presentation and library skills components in General Honors English II.

Aims

- To acquaint students with selected texts of classic and modern literature.
- To emphasize the development of effective communication skills.

General Honors English II Course Objectives

- To recognize selected texts of classic and modern literature.
- To read, analyze, and interpret classic and modern literature effectively.
- To increase the ability to write well-developed, well-organized, clear essays.
- To increase the ability to write correctly, grammatically, and coherently.
- To develop the abilities to reason, to think critically (i.e., to analyze, to infer, to synthesize, to interpret, and to evaluate information).
- To develop the ability to argue effectively (i.e., to develop a position, reasons, warrants, and evidence).
- To analyze and evaluate arguments (i.e., premise, deductive and inductive reasoning, forms of appeal, logical fallacies, and forms of evidence).
- To develop methods of conducting research (i.e., develop a research topic and search strategy, use general or specialized databases, use Internet search engines; locate, retrieve, and evaluate information sources; construct a bibliography; and organize and synthesize information).
- To evaluate sources of information using criteria such as currency, authority, objectivity, accuracy, specificity, and relevance.
- To use information ethically and legally, avoiding plagiarism.
- To develop oral presentation skills (i.e., present expressive, informative, or persuasive speeches).
- To critique the oral and written discourse of members of the class.

General Honors English Writing Requirements and Suggested Grade

Distribution

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • A minimum of four take-home essays of approximately 750-1,000 words each | 40% |
| • Reader-response journal/Discussion Board Responses | 20% |
| • A documented research essay of approximately 1,250 words (Honors II) | 20% |
| • An in-class final exam | 10% |
| • Class participation and attendance | 10% |

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Statement on Academic Integrity

“Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their academic work. Cheating, forgery, and plagiarism are serious offences, and students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action” (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 33).

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged (intentional or unintentional) use of summary, paraphrase, direct quotation, language, statistics, or ideas from articles or other information sources including the Internet. A student must cite according to the Modern Language Association (MLA) format outlined in an updated handbook (2009 or later).

Faculty members must report in writing cases of cheating, plagiarism, or forgery to their department chair and their academic dean.

Three ways of correctly using information obtained in research are paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting (summarized from *Simon and Schuster Handbook*, by Troyka & Hesse):

1. *Paraphrasing*: a paraphrase makes a detailed restatement of someone else’s words; it is usually at least as long as the original. In the process you have to use your own words, not those of the source of your information; you cannot simply change a word or two in a sentence and leave the rest of it the same.
2. *Summarizing*: a summary recounts the principal information in a passage the writer wishes to include. The main difference between it and a paraphrase is that it is much shorter: it reduces, condenses, and/or abbreviates the ideas in the source used.
3. *Quoting*: a quotation is the exact words of an author and is always set off either by quotation marks or, in the case of long passages, by indentation from the left side of the margin.

Note: Even though no quotation marks are used in the case of paraphrases and summaries, you must document the source of your information when summarizing and paraphrasing.

Document your source whether you paraphrase, summarize, or quote!

Do not forget to list your sources in the proper MLA format on your Works Cited page at the end of each paper.

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT NEW PALTZ COMMON SUMMER READING PROGRAM FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Common Summer Reading selection for 2016?

The Composition Program has selected a collection of [TED Talks \(short for Technology, Entertainment and Design\)](#) and corresponding articles focused around the common theme of “Thinking like a Human.”

Why does the SUNY New Paltz Composition Program require first-year students to read over the summer?

SUNY New Paltz, like many colleges and universities across the country, has implemented a common summer reading program for several reasons. We want to reinforce the principle that engaging in critical reading is an important part of being a member of an academic community. To that end, we create a study guide that includes discussion questions and writing assignments to help students think about the text(s) as they are reading. We also hope that this program will provide a means by which our incoming students become part of the academic community here at SUNY New Paltz. By encouraging first-year students to engage in critical reading, discussion, and to think about rhetorical situations in written and oral texts—whether in their Composition classrooms or in extracurricular settings—the reading initiative invites dialogue among students as well as between students and faculty. We are currently coordinating extra-curricular programming (in previous years, we have sponsored a photography exhibit, author speaking engagements, film screenings, and residence hall discussion groups), to be announced in Composition classes this fall.

Does every first-year student read the selection(s)?

Almost. Those students enrolled in Composition I or Composition II in the Fall semester will be required to read the text. However, we encourage those students who are in General Honors English and Intermediate Composition to read them, too, and to take part in campus discussions and events. Check with your instructor if you have questions.

Where do students find the background material, discussion questions, and writing assignments associated with the summer reading?

Throughout the summer, first-year students can [visit the following link](#) to introductory materials.

Other Common Summer Reading materials may later be posted on Composition course sites by individual instructors. When students come to SUNY New Paltz, they will be issued a computer ID and password to allow them access to our campus Blackboard site for this purpose. Students should check their campus email accounts regularly for updates on related study materials and events.

If you have any questions, email Joann K. Deiudicibus, Composition Program Staff Assistant: deiudicj@zmail.newpaltz.edu

PART TWO:

WRITING AND REVISING EFFECTIVELY

EFFECTIVE WRITING

THE COMPOSING PROCESS

One of the objectives of the Composition Program is to have students engage in a process of composing when they write essays. Writing requires more than the act of turning in the final draft; it involves processes of feeling, thinking, and creating. The Program hopes to nurture these acts of composing.

The Composition Program recognizes that the composing process varies from writer to writer and from writing situation to writing situation. There are as many processes as there are students and writing situations; e.g., a laboratory report, a research paper, and a meditative essay necessarily require different processes of feeling, thinking, and creating. A unilateral process may not, therefore, be described or prescribed. However, several distinct phases of the process may be isolated and encouraged:

- Gathering
- Shaping
- Drafting
- Revising
- Editing
- Proofreading
- Reflecting

Stage One: Gathering

The first stage of the writing process, gathering, takes place before writers begin their first drafts. During this stage, writers generate ideas about subject matter; the appropriate form with which to deliver their subject; and their rhetorical situation, i.e., their purpose, occasion, and audience. Strategies for gathering include brainstorming, taking notes, listing, drawing on past readings and experiences, talking with others, clustering, mapping, asking the journalist's questions (i.e., *who, what, when, where, why, and how*), and using modes of development to discover subject matter and approach.

Stage Two: Shaping

During the second stage of the writing process, shaping, writers plan their writings. They narrow or focus their subject matter, further define form, clarify their rhetorical situation, and begin to develop their theses and determine how to organize and develop supporting statements. At this point, some writers map ideas or create informal or formal outlines.

Stage Three: Drafting

The third stage of the writing process is drafting. Some writers compose at top speed, discovering ideas and organizing topics and specifics as they draft. Other writers work from an outline as they develop their writings. At this point writers consider not only focus, approach, purpose, theses and points, but also development and organization. Writers may reshape their theses, alter points, delete information, add supporting information, and sharpen and change wording. Some writers proceed paragraph by paragraph and revise and edit as they draft. Other writers work through successive drafts, refining theses, development, and wording.

Stage Four: Revising

During the fourth stage of the writing process, revision, writers consider their relationships with their audiences and ask themselves if they have conceptualized, organized, and developed points with their audiences in mind; i.e., they ask themselves if their drafts achieve their purposes. Revision often necessitates the reconceptualization and clarification of ideas—the rethinking of the piece.

Stage Five: Editing

During the fifth stage of the writing process, editing, writers sharpen presentation and clarity of ideas. Writers may, for example, change word choice (usage and diction) and sentence structure for clarity, emphasis, and variety.

Stage Six: Proofreading

Proofreading is the final stage of the writing process. At this point, writers check their final drafts for typographical or spelling errors. They also check the manuscript form to make sure that it fits the requirements of the assignment.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

The Official Statement Composed and Approved by the English Department, State University of New York, New Paltz

The English Department has developed a set of criteria by which student writing will be evaluated in Composition I and II. These are the qualities that the Department believes student writing should exhibit. Students should work to develop these qualities in their writing throughout each semester.

1. Your writing should have a central focus or purpose.
 - The purpose of your writing should be clear.
 - The writing should be unified by its central purpose or focus. The thesis of the writing should be clearly stated or implied and should provide a specific direction for the essay.
 - Your writing should reflect an awareness of rhetorical situation, i.e., purpose, audience, and occasion.
2. Your writing should be logically organized.
 - Your writing should have a clear beginning, middle, and end.
 - If your writing is an essay, it should include introductory, middle, and concluding paragraphs.
 - If your writing is a paragraph, it should have appropriate paragraph structure.
 - Sentences within a paragraph should be cohesive; i.e., sentences within a paragraph should fit together in a clear, logical sequence.
3. Your writing should be developed.
 - Your writing should have sufficient supporting information, i.e., assertions, details, examples, and illustrations.
 - This supporting information should be specific, to the point, and relevant to the writing's rhetorical situation.
4. Your writing should demonstrate a command of diction, vocabulary, sentence sense, punctuation, and spelling. You should use appropriate language for your purpose and rhetorical situation.
 - Your vocabulary should be well-suited to the context.
 - Your word choice should be accurate, exact, and clear.
 - Your style should fit the rhetorical situation.
 - Your sentences should reflect a command of syntax within the range of standard written English.
 - Your sentence structure should be correct, i.e., no run-on sentences or fragments.
 - Your writing should be grammatically correct, i.e., appropriate subject-verb agreement, tense, usage, pronoun agreement, case, and reference.
 - Your sentences should be punctuated correctly, i.e., correct usage of commas, semi-colons, colons, apostrophes, parenthesis, and periods.
 - Your spelling should be accurate and correct.

Please consult with your instructor and/or refer to the appropriate pages in your *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers* if you have any questions regarding language usage or writing mechanics.

CHECKLIST FOR REVISING OR EVALUATING AN ESSAY

Purpose and Focus

- The purpose of the essay is clear.
- The essay's thesis is stated clearly or implied and provides a clear direction for the essay.
- The essay is unified by its purpose and thesis.
- All topics are subordinate to the thesis; i.e., there are no irrelevant topics.
- The content of the essay fits the purpose.
- The writing reflects a sense of a rhetorical situation, i.e., purpose, audience, and occasion.

Organization

- The essay has a clear beginning, middle, and end, including carefully developed introductory and closing paragraphs.
- The essay has carefully developed body paragraphs.
- The sentences within each paragraph fit together in a clear, logical sequence; i.e., the paragraphs are cohesive.
- There are transitions between sentences within a paragraph, as well as between paragraphs.

Development

- The writing contains sufficient details and examples to support the main ideas.
- The details and examples are specific.
- The details and examples fit the purpose, audience, and occasion.

Sentence Sense, Style, and Spelling

- The writing is grammatically correct.
- Word choice is accurate, exact, and clear.
- Spelling is correct.
- The style fits the purpose, rhetorical situation, and thesis.

TOP 10 MOST TROUBLESOME GRAMMAR ERRORS

Like poor spelling and misused punctuation, bad grammar interferes with comprehension and gives the reader a negative impression of the writer's capabilities. The following errors are usually considered the most serious, and students should make a concentrated effort to eliminate these fundamental mistakes from their writing. The following examples are from the handbook, *Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age*, Second Edition, by Blakesley and Hoogeveen. Some examples are excerpted from *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, Ninth Edition, by Troyka and Hesse. The chapters listed below reference where to find detailed explanations of these errors in *Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age*.

1. FRAGMENTS are incomplete sentences. Often, a sentence that is a fragment is missing the verb or main action word.

Error: The stolen bicycle.

Correction: The stolen bicycle reappeared.
(Chapter 31.)

2. COMMA SPLICES result from joining two complete sentences with a comma rather than using a period or a semi-colon.

Error: No one would be more surprised than Mary Shelley at the idea most immediately evoked by the name *Frankenstein*, she intended her novel as a meditation on creativity, not creepy monsters.

Correction: No one would be more surprised than Mary Shelley at the idea most immediately evoked by the name *Frankenstein*. She intended her novel as a meditation on creativity, not creepy monsters.
(Chapter 32.)

3. FUSED SENTENCES, commonly called RUN-ON SENTENCES, result when two complete sentences are put together as if they were one, with no punctuation between sentences.

Error: Galileo recanted his confirmation that the Earth revolves around the Sun in return the Pope commuted his sentence to house arrest.

Correction: Galileo recanted his confirmation that the Earth revolves around the Sun. In return, the Pope commuted his sentence to house arrest.
(Chapter 32.)

4. AGREEMENT: Errors in agreement result when the subject and verb of a sentence do not agree in number (singular or plural) or person (first, second, and third).

Error: The vase of flowers are on the desk. (VASE is singular; ARE is plural.)

Correction: The vase of flowers is on the desk.
(Chapter 35.)

5. VERB FORM: Errors in verb form occur when the verb form or tense is incorrect.

Error: This week I seen her Thursday, but she usually visits on Friday.

Correction: This week I saw her Thursday, but she usually visits on Friday.
(Chapter 34.)

6. PRONOUN ERRORS result when either the wrong pronoun case (subjective or objective) is used or the pronoun's antecedent is not clear.

Error: Me and John found an old sword in the rotting shed that was just as his grandfather had left it.

Correction: John and I found an old sword in the rotting shed; the weapon was just as his grandfather had left it.

Error: Charlotte brought Anne to the seashore to recuperate, but there she died. (Who died? Anne or Charlotte?)

Correction: Charlotte brought Anne to the seashore to recuperate, but there Anne died.
(Chapter 33.)

7. MIXED/FAULTY CONSTRUCTIONS occur when parts of a sentence do not relate coherently.

Error: Driving past the school, the vandalism was apparent.
(This means that the vandalism was doing the driving)

Correction: Driving past the school, we saw the vandalism.

Error: Because the great cattle drives lasted only a few decades, the mythology of the cowboy remains one of the most compelling in American life.

Correction: Even though the great cattle drives lasted only a few decades, the mythology of the cowboy remains one of the most compelling in American life.
(Chapter 26.)

8. SHIFTS: An unnecessary shift in person, number, or tense results in confusion and awkwardness.

Error: If a person works hard, you can accomplish a great deal.
("a person" is in the third person, while "you" is in the second person)

Correction: If a person works hard, he or she can accomplish a great deal.
(Chapters 33, 35.)

9. PARALLELISM: Errors in parallelism result when the parts of the sentence are not grammatically balanced.

Error: Whether drunk or when he was sober, he liked to pick a fight.

Correction: Whether drunk or sober, he liked to pick a fight.
(Chapter 25.)

Error: Roger is interested in studying philosophy as in working.

Correction: Roger is **as** interested in studying philosophy **as** he is in working.

10. ADJECTIVES/ADVERBS: Sometimes adjectives are confused with adverbs, or an incorrect comparative or superlative is used.

Error: This is a real poor paper, but I have seen some that are worsen.

Correction: This is a really poor paper, but I've seen some that are worse.
(Chapters 30d, 30e; 36.)

PREPARING A FINAL COPY OF YOUR ESSAY IN MLA STYLE

While it is true that our Composition Program stresses the writing process, there comes a time when your essay must be handed in for a grade. Preparation of your essay's final copy is very important.

The Composition Program requires students to follow the MLA style guidelines for formatting all papers. You should refer to *The Little Seagull* writing handbook, second edition (required in all Composition courses this academic year) for an example of how an essay is properly formatted, and for instructions about following MLA format. In addition, you may visit the <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.

The Modern Language Association (MLA) sets the conventions in English that we follow; the rules are neither arbitrary nor self-made. Unless otherwise stated abide by the following for every assignment you turn in:

- Use a high-quality printer and a standard, easily readable typeface, such as Times Roman, 12-point font.
- Use only white, 8½-by-11-inch paper of good quality.
- Except for page numbers, leave margins of one inch at the top and bottom and on both sides of the text.
- Indent the first word of a paragraph one-half inch (or five spaces) from the left margin.
- Indent set-off quotations one inch (or ten spaces) from the left margin.
- Double-space pages throughout, including quotations, notes, and the list of works cited.
- Do not create a title page. Instead, beginning one inch from the top of the first page and flush with the left margin, type your name, your instructor's name, the course number and section, and the date on separate lines, double-spacing between the lines.
- Double-space also between the lines of the title, and double-space between the title and the first line of the text.
- Do not underline your title, put it in quotation marks, or type it in all capital letters.
- Number all pages consecutively throughout the paper, including the Works Cited page, in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin.
- Type your last name before the page number, as a precaution in case of misplaced pages.
- Proofread and correct your paper carefully before submitting it. You may make brief corrections on the page; write them neatly and legibly in ink directly above the lines involved, using carets to indicate where they go. Retype the page if corrections on any page are numerous or substantial.
- When documenting outside sources, use parenthetical in-text citations and a Works Cited page.
- **Be sure to keep a copy of your paper.**

PART THREE:

SUPPORT SERVICES

Educational Opportunity Program

[The Educational Opportunity Program](#) (EOP) exists to provide support services to students who are educationally and financially disadvantaged. The services include tutoring, personal counseling, academic advisement, financial assistance, and career development. In order to assist students with the development of their writing skills, EOP has established the Writer's Workshop, which is required of all EOP first-year students. Sections of this workshop are held twice per week and are conducted by professional writing tutors, many of whom are Composition instructors in the English Department. The Writer's Workshop is designed to provide a specific time and place for small groups of students to receive assistance in any phase of the writing process, whether it be prewriting strategies, grammar review, dialogue to foster ideas, indications for revisions, hints on library research, or writing as a study tool. While students are permitted to bring writing assignments that are in progress to the workshop, great care is taken to hold students responsible for correcting their own errors and writing their own revisions.

The referral and attendance of EOP students are closely monitored by academic support coordinators, the EOP counselors, and the professional tutors. Composition instructors are asked to report on student progress via the EOP mid-term evaluations and other correspondence forms to provide information for the tutorial process.

The Center for Student Resources and Academic Support

The Center for Student Resources & Academic Support (CSRAS) promotes student learning, academic engagement, and timely degree completion through the coordination of tutoring, writing assistance, and holistic academic success programs. Through collaborative efforts with faculty, academic departments and student services, the CSRAS provides an inclusive, student-oriented learning environment which stimulates academic engagement and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and the personal attributes in support of lifelong learning.

Writers' Studio

In conjunction with its multidisciplinary content-area tutoring, the CSRAS' Writers' Studio aims to support student writing across the curriculum. Tutors and Writing Consultants are recommended by faculty, have distinguished academic records, and participate each semester in a wide variety of training workshops as part of their development as academic mentors and facilitators.

The Center's tutor training curriculum promotes a philosophy of education that supports a learner-centered environment and encourages students to become active and independent scholars, skilled in analytical thinking and problem solving. Students working on their writing projects can make appointments with tutors who have received training in grammar, composition theory, tutoring methodology, writing assessment, and information literacy. In addition, writing tutors support Composition instructors in SWW and SWW/ESL courses in the classroom and tutor students weekly in small groups outside of class through their role in the Center.

At the Writers' Studio, a student may receive support on their assignments at different stages in the writing process. Students may choose to take advantage of walk-in sessions for short-

term work or have a regular meetings during the semester. The Center encourages students to work collaboratively with the peer tutors in order to discuss their writing and engage in an ongoing dialogue about their experiences with drafting, revising, and research. The Coordinator works with tutors to explore the rhetorical expectations and modes of discourse in various disciplines in order to assist students enrolled in writing-intensive courses.

Haggerty English Language Program

The [Haggerty English Language Program](#) (HELP) provides instruction contributing to the development of English language proficiency required by students to succeed in college courses and chosen areas of study in an English-speaking society. The Intensive English and Pathways Program also facilitates the effective participation of non-native speakers in their professions and daily lives.

The Haggerty English Language Program offers English language training at four levels – Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Academic Purposes – for both full-time and part-time students. In addition to instruction in all skill areas, the program also includes orientation, cultural activities, excursions, conversation partners, and Computer-Assisted Language Learning. Students enrolled in Academic Purposes classes may receive Liberal Arts credit toward graduation.

Non-native English speakers who are admitted to the College are tested on arrival to assess their English proficiency. Students are placed in the appropriate skill area classes (Grammar, Listening/Speaking, Reading, and Writing) as indicated by their performance on the English language proficiency and placement tests. While some students may not need to take any ESL courses, others may take one or more semesters to complete these requirements.

Conditionally admitted undergraduates who require further writing instruction before enrolling in Composition courses are placed into ESL writing courses, most often at the Advanced or Academic Purposes levels.

Students who successfully complete ESL Writing for Academic Purposes will take the AP Final Exam and submit a course portfolio in order to demonstrate proficiency in composition skills required to enroll in Composition I.

The English Department has designated certain sections of Composition I and Composition II as ESL/SWW sections. These sections have the same objectives and requirements as all other sections, but are taught by instructors trained and experienced in working with ESL students.

Support Services for Students with Disabilities

[The Disability Resource Center](#) provides support services to all students with disabilities. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) under Section 504, students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments. Students are responsible for self-identifying to the DRC staff who will provide each instructor of the accommodations assigned to each student.

SUNY New Paltz supports students with disabilities by providing accessible facilities and academic adjustments. The DRC provides services that include but are not limited to the following:

- Alternate testing location
- Extended time on exams
- Test readers and/or scribes
- Enlarged font on exams or handouts
- Audio recording in classrooms
- Electronic documents or textbooks
- Use of computer for tests or note-taking
- Note-taking services
- Captioning or interpreter services
- Other reasonable accommodations

Psychological Counseling Center Academic Success Program

First-year students enrolled in Composition classes at New Paltz are welcome to participate in the Psychological Counseling Center's Academic Success workshop series. This series is free, open to students, and may be attended on a walk in basis! The Counseling Center is located in the Student Health and Counseling Building located between Gage and Esopus Hall, across from the pond. A list of programs follows:

- Writer's Block
- Time Management and Procrastination
- Balancing College, Home, and Work
- Test Anxiety
- Stress, Distress, and Coping
- Psychological Hardiness

Additional workshops presented by the Counseling Center include Anxiety Management, Social Skills and Body Image. Individual psychotherapy is available on a short-term basis for students. To schedule an appointment or inquire about a program call 257-2920, consult [the Counseling Center's website](#). Staffing of the Center is by doctoral counseling and clinical psychologists, a social worker, and supervised MA Counseling trainees.

APPENDIX:

**PLACEMENT AND PROFICIENCY
TESTING SYSTEM
FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF WRITING
SKILLS**

PLACEMENT AND PROFICIENCY FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF WRITING SKILLS

This section will introduce students, parents, and teachers to the evaluation scale for proficiency in Composition used by the English Department of the State University of New York at New Paltz.

SUNY New Paltz Placement and Proficiency Rubric

A Placement and Proficiency Rubric was designed in 2009 and updated recently by the Composition Program to determine student placement into Composition courses. Diagnostic essay tests are administered to students in all Composition and Honors English classes during the first week of each semester for evaluation of writing proficiency. We have included the Placement and Proficiency Rubric, a sample diagnostic essay, student essays, and commentaries on the essays. Each sample essay received the same score from seven readers—members of the English Department committee for placement and proficiency testing—and, therefore, may be viewed as representative. Students are encouraged to review the essays here in preparation for compiling final exit portfolios for Composition I.

SUNY New Paltz Assessment Rubric

We have included the SUNY New Paltz Assessment Rubric that the Composition Program uses to evaluate final exit portfolios. The scale has five levels. Some students are required to enroll in specially designated sections of Composition I entitled Composition I Supplemental Writing Workshop (SWW). Students who place into SWW classes must take these sections. SWW sections are composed of the regular class sessions, a required one-hour non-credit supplemental writing workshop, and required tutoring. We offer a similar model with two workshop hours added to the main course for students who are multiple language learners (ESL). The writing proficiency levels of students placed into these sections are below entrance level to Composition I; however, through supplemental writing workshops and tutorial assistance, students should gain the skills needed to reach a level of minimal exit proficiency from Composition I. Other placement levels include those with minimal readiness for Composition I, and those with minimal exit proficiency from Composition I. Some students may earn direct placement into the Honors Composition sequence (General Honors English I and General Honors English II). These courses are equivalent to Composition I and II.

This scale helps instructors diagnose strengths and weaknesses in student writing. At SWW and ESL levels, writing may have significant strengths as well as weaknesses; at an honors level, despite considerable strength, there is still room for improvement beyond correctness and clarity. Such excellent writers strive for originality in ideas and voice, outstanding scholarship, maturity of style, unusual intellectual initiative, and an ability to engage the reader's interest.

Another purpose of this section is to give both students and parents a clear sense of the criteria for judgments concerning placement and proficiency, and, in so doing, to provide students with definitive goals to work toward in their Composition courses. For this reason, the sample essays at each level have commentaries. Most of the sample essays were written in fifty minutes under test conditions with little time for preparation and revision.

SUNY NEW PALTZ DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION PROGRAM PLACEMENT RUBRIC

Please use this reference list regarding placement into Composition I and II or General Honors English II courses. Students must meet three out of four placement criteria listed below for placement into ENG 206, ENG207, ENG 180, ENG 160, ENG 160 SWW, or ENG 160 ESL/SWW. Note the additional criteria for first-semester and transfer students into Honors English II.

All students who matriculate at SUNY New Paltz must complete Composition I and Composition II (or, an equivalent to Composition II) in order to complete the General Education III (GEIII) requirement for Composition. The Offices of Academic Advising and the Composition Program have developed the following rubric for Composition and General Honors English course placement. All students write a diagnostic sample on the first day of class to ensure accurate placement into the proper type of Composition or General Honors English course (See the *Composition Program Handbook* for course descriptions). The Office of Transfer Admissions grants transfer credit; the Composition Program office cannot award credit. **Students who place into Composition II or Honors II with AP credit must provide the offices of Academic Advising with proof of scores by the end of the first week of classes.**

COMPOSITION I (ENG 160)

- 1) minimum written-component SAT score: 510-630
- 2) minimum verbal SAT score: 510-630
- 3) "B/C" (or above) overall average in high school English
- 4) 75-100% average on NYS Regents exam in English (for in-state students)

SUPPLEMENTAL WRITING WORKSHOP COMPOSITION I (ENG 160 SWW)

- 1) written-component SAT score: 450-500
- 2) verbal SAT score: 450-500
- 3) "B/C" (or below) overall average in high school English
- 4) 65-85% average on NYS Regents exam in English (for in-state students)

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE/SUPPLEMENTAL WRITING WORKSHOP COMPOSITION I (ENG 160 ESL/SWW)

- 1) written-component SAT score: 450-500
- 2) verbal SAT score: 450-500
- 3) "B/C" (or below) overall average in high school English
- 4) 65-85% average on NYS Regents exam in English (for in-state students)

And/or by advisement based on oral and written English language proficiency for self-identified students whose first language is not English.

COMPOSITION II (ENG 180)

Students placed into Composition II have either successfully completed a Composition I course at SUNY New Paltz; taken a Composition I equivalent course through an approved college-in-the-high-school program; earned Composition I credit through the AP (score of 3 or higher) or the **College Composition CLEP exam** (score of 70 or higher) **before matriculating at SUNY New Paltz** (see "Top Ten" Transfer and Accreditation List); received transfer credit for Composition I for an equivalent course at another university (as per an articulation agreement); or have met at least three of the four high school and testing standards listed below.

- 1) minimum written-component SAT score: 640
- 2) minimum verbal SAT score: 640
- 3) "A" overall average in high school English
- 4) 85-100% average on NYS Regents exam in English (for in-state students)

GENERAL HONORS ENGLISH II (ENG 206)

First-semester and transfer students placed into General Honors English II have taken a Composition I course (and earned “exceeds” on the final-exit portfolio and an “A” in Composition I at SUNY New Paltz); a Composition I equivalent course through an approved college-in-the-high-school program; earned Composition I credit through the AP (score of 3, 4 or 5) **or College Composition CLEP exam** (score of 70 or higher) **before matriculating at SUNY New Paltz** (see “Top Ten” Transfer and Accreditation List); or received transfer credit for Composition I for an equivalent course at another university (as per an articulation agreement). **Transfer students must have 640 written SAT scores** and (if applicable) a grade of “A” in Composition I. Students eligible for General Honors English II are interested in writing and literature. Students eligible for General Honors English II may elect to take Composition II.

INTERMEDIATE COMPOSITION (ENG207)

This Writing Intensive course is designed for transfer students with more writing experience who still need composition credit. Like Composition II, the course concentrates on academic argument and research writing, and process, but unlike Honors English does not focus as much on literature. While ENG207 is a Composition II equivalent, in special cases it may also be used to fulfill the Composition I requirement. Transfer students must have met all the criteria below.

- 1) Transfer student with 50+ credits
- 2) At least a “B” in a previous composition or similar writing course, or an AP exam score of 4 or 5

Placement Reminders:

-3 or higher on the AP English exam places students into Composition II.

-Students are placed into ESL/SWW or SWW sections of Comp I and II based on their academic profile, or their Composition I portfolio, or a diagnostic writing sample composed on the first day of class.

-We no longer offer Honors English I (ENG 205). Students previously eligible for Honors English I (ENG 205) are exempt from Composition I and move straight to Composition II (AP 3) or Honors English II (AP 4 or 5) if they have an interest in writing/literature.

-Honors II is for highest achievers *interested in literature/writing*. (These students do not have to be potential English majors, however.)

-Incoming students who are exempt from Composition I (due to either a transfer course, AP scores, other test scores, high school and SAT performance, or any other valid reason) may take Composition II in Fall or Spring semesters **(but must complete this course within their first year of study)**.

*Students eligible to take Composition II in the Fall or Spring semesters includes those who have Composition I waived due to high school grades and SAT scores that meet the previous Honors English I requirements (“A” in English, 640 written SAT, 640 verbal SAT, 85%+ NYS Regents).

**IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
THE COMPOSITION PROGRAM:**

**Matthew Newcomb, Coordinator, Composition Program (newcombm@newpaltz.edu) OR
Joann K. Deiudicibus, Composition Program (deiudicj@newpaltz.edu)
845.257.2727**

SAMPLE FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION DIAGNOSTIC PLACEMENT ESSAYS

Students complete a diagnostic essay on the first day of classes to assess their skills in critical thinking, analysis, and writing. Many instructors offer the option to write about the Common Summer Reading selection, which all students read before they arrive to campus. The majority of the following responses were prepared in relation to a series of commencement speeches by various authors. Note: Essays between levels 4-2 are reproduced in exactly the form in which the students wrote them, with the exception of a bracketed ellipsis [...]; this indicates an omitted section.

Level 5 Essay: Composition I Honors Level

Ladies, gentleman, others, and those who have yet to decide, I would like to congratulate all of you. Today should be a day of pride, of apprehension, and of maturity. Whoever sits on this stage, as I did just last year, is graduating high school. Whoever sits in front of me knows these graduates and should share in their feelings—all of them. You should be proud, because a major feat has been accomplished. You should be apprehensive, because this accomplished feat brings ineffable change, but that change allows for a new goal to be reached. Maturity isn't a feeling, but you should still be mature, because you can get kicked out of the ceremony. Yes, this applies to you too, families.

I'm sure most people don't know why I'm speaking today, let alone know who I am. I can tell you that Mr. Murray asked me to speak today; I can tell you that my middle name is really Nevada; and I can tell you what I have done thus far in my life. But who am I? I'm still figuring that out, and I am perfectly content with that. What I want to tell not only the graduates, but everyone, is that it is fine to not know who you are. It is fine to change your mind about who you are, as well.

I am speaking to everyone as a group because I can't tell each person individually to take my advice. So I've decided to give one almighty speech to which I sincerely hope at least one person listens. I won't blame anyone for not listening. For both of my sisters' graduations, I played my Gameboy. For my graduation, of course, I couldn't play Gameboy on stage. All my Pokémon were at home, as immobile as I was. I was a stuck in those hard plastic chairs, listening to jokes about selfies, and staring out into the abyss of crying parents, bored siblings, and obnoxious stage lights. Really, they can't turn those down?

Anyway, I know graduating high school in Plainview seems status quo, but it is actually an incredible achievement. As of 2011, an average of only 77 percent of students in New York graduate high school. People don't graduate for many reasons, a very prevalent one being lack of encouragement. All of you are so gifted to have a staff that pushes you forward. Without them, I don't know if I would have gone to college, let alone graduate high school.

Woah, did your speaker just say she almost dropped out of high school? Yes. I'm about to get very personal, so brace yourselves. From the middle of ninth grade to the middle of eleventh, my goal was not to get to where I am today, but to convince everyone to let me drop out of school. For a while, it was really considered. During this time, my bipolar depression was preventing me from doing most everything, even getting out of bed. I'm sharing this because I want to prove that one can move through those oceans of issues, and that it's okay to change

one's plans. It might take a month to change, it might take two years, but if that change suits the person, the time doesn't matter.

Let's get a little more personal, but a little more hopeful. Presently, I am a student at SUNY New Paltz. I am rather comfortable here, and I can see myself graduating. It's a big change from my previous state, right? You might be surprised to know that New Paltz was not my first choice. I did get into my first choice college, with the biggest scholarship they offer, to boot, but I was told to visit New Paltz "just in case," and "as a backup." I also visited the other three colleges to which I applied and into which I was accepted, but they didn't sway me. My mind was set on this tiny other college way past New Paltz, thus I was going to the latter college's accepted students' day by force. However, when I saw everything my current school offers, that little Amish community faded away. It was still a big decision to make, choosing a college, and I was still hesitant to change my plan. What I learned from settling on a school is that I shouldn't focus too much on a first choice or a first plan, because another option might be much better. I am so grateful to have resisted my reluctance, to have taken that unlikely step, to have had a Plan B at all.

I am surprisingly pleased with my life now because I embraced my backup plan. If I could convince anyone to take away one piece of wisdom from my speech, it would be to respect your backup plan, and don't avoid it or be ashamed of it. Please strive for happiness, even if the route to happiness takes years. You *will* get there. Congratulations, class of 2015.

Reader's Comment on Level 5 Essay

The speech contains vivid yet concise language to engage the reader. The writer uses concrete, and surprising personal examples but connects these back to the thesis of the speech. There is a level of vulnerability in the writing regarding the student's mental health struggles, but the piece never trails off into unnecessary detail or tangents. The honest voice and well-chosen examples are highly effective together; the author has a good grasp of audience. Overall, the essay follows a logical structure with clear paragraphing, effective transitions, and development of ideas. The essay is not only grammatically correct, but also exudes a confident, lively tone that makes it interesting to read. There is a natural sense of conclusion when the essay ends.

Level 4 Essay: Composition I Exit Level

Congratulations, first-year class of 2015 at SUNY New Paltz, you should feel extremely proud that you have made it this far. It is such a great honor to be delivering this speech. The whole first week of college at SUNY New Paltz I was miserable; I wanted to come home. Upon my arrival, fall of 2014, I thought I was completely equipped for college life. I was not. I never would have imagined that a year later I would be here giving advice to the. My best counsel to you all is to be prepared to not be prepared. College will test your malleability.

Imagine you are a honey badger; you are ferociously tracking down an average, quick jumping toad. Out of nowhere, a hawk swoops in and devours the toad- your toad. Saliva in the corners of your mouth evaporates, your lips crackle, and defeat swarms your mind. If you go home now, you go home hungry. But honey badgers never go home hungry. As you continue to hunt, you unexpectedly discover and treat yourself to a giant bird, which in truth is far better than a toad. Had the hawk not ruined your first meal, you would have settled for a trivial toad, instead of a lavish bird.

I call these "pop" scenarios. "Pop" scenarios are a complete alteration of your direction in life. Many times they occur, when they are most unwanted. You have to learn to navigate the "pops."

I have spent fourteen years training for college soccer. I dedicated myself to the sport and gained a starting position my first year. It only took one play in the middle of the season for me to tear my anterior cruciate ligament, taking me out of the sport for nine months. When it happened, not only did I hear an actual pop, but also the “pop” that changed my life. I could no longer run two hours a day, I could no longer travel to away games and stay overnight at hotels, and worst of all I could no longer compete for my team. The hawk swooped in and took my toad. Yet, I discovered my unexpected bird. This injury just gave me more time than ever to work on my mental training and my physical training. In addition, it gave me more time to visit home when I had doctors’ appointments, which comforted my homesickness.

Coming into college, you are coming into a foreign environment with many expectations. Be aware to be flexible. Classes you want to take might be full, you might be in a forced triple room with clothes stored on the highest shelves so you have to jump just to get a sweatshirt, you might lock yourself out of your room, or maybe the shower drain is constantly clogged with hair; whatever it is, you will find your way and gain intelligence with each “pop.” [...]

After graduation you will need to be malleable when it comes to getting a job, buying a house, finding a spouse etc, and by being prepared to be unprepared will prepare you for life. As David Foster Wallace stated, you can “choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning” (54). You are capable of constructing the purpose of your “pop.” At this school, there are honey badgers who will go home or honey badgers who will adapt to the “pops”-which one will you evolve into?

Reader’s Comment on Level 4 Essay

This essay earns a score of 4 because the writer responds clearly to the topic and shows an understanding of essay organization. There is a clear and appropriate focus, presenting logical and unique ideas to support each topic. The body paragraphs are developed with specific, relevant anecdotes. Overall, the writer demonstrates an understanding of sentence structure and paragraph development while providing concrete transitions throughout the essay. The essay exhibits mostly error-free punctuation and grammar, and the writer provides a variety of sentence lengths and structures. The writer also demonstrates an awareness of audience and creates a strong voice, at times attempting to step away from generic phrasing to employ somewhat original figurative language. The concluding paragraph reaches beyond the thesis, connecting back to the pop scenarios and the significance of perspective.

Level 3 Essay: Composition I Entrance Level

Hi, uh...this is awkward. Might as well just jump in... I am a New Paltz freshman. A little background information: I’m from Manhattan where I attended high school, and my favorite ice cream flavor is mint chocolate chip. I’m here to tell you that I’m just like you, a fellow student, and I am extremely nervous to be here but also very happy.

This school is a fresh start for me--a scary fresh start. In high school I had mediocre grades, and a mediocre attitude with a mediocre sports career. Generally, I don’t apply myself fully, and this is what made me mediocre. You all know those kids; they stay out too late, and show up to class hung-over and groggy. That was I; I was the kid who made wise cracks at people and copied homework when I forgot to do it and was late to class. I was one of those smart kids with lenient parents who loved me and let me do whatever I wanted as long as I passed all my classes with mediocre grades. The kids who are smart but never wanted to be smart on paper. The kids who are generally lazy.

Going into college, I knew of only one other person, beside myself, that attended the same high school as me and continued on to New Paltz, and truthfully, I wasn’t even going to go to New

Paltz; that wasn't the plan. I interviewed with my top choice, I was confident I was going to get in, and I knew I was going to get money. At the end of the college application process, I had gotten accepted into that dream school. But it wasn't meant to be. I got in and received over half my tuition paid, but as a top private school they charge you ridiculous amounts. I would have incurred debt along the way and my mom realized why do that when you won't have any debt at New Paltz. Another truth: I got deferred from early action and then got put on the waiting list for New Paltz. I found this insulting; I got into another major university for art, as well as my dream school with scholarship money. New Paltz offered me no financial aid and put me on a waiting list. Which wasn't the end of the world, but it was an annoyance that bothered me truthfully. But even then, I decided with my mother that this was the school for me. The campus, the art education program, and the students, were all things up for discussion when deciding on a school to go to. But at the end of the day it was all about one thing—money.

So here I am, an 18 year old with big dreams of becoming an art teacher, and an attitude that doesn't reflect a role model figure. Seems like a life's going to be easy for me, right? School started out rough for me; the problem was China. You might be asking, "Why the hell is China a problem?" And China is the problem because I was out of country there for the entire summer and missed all the orientation sessions. You see, I was part of that special group of people that attended orientation 6. I accompanied 40 others and we made up the last orientation group. This orientation was different from the usual orientation that was held with around 200 kids. Being last also meant that we had the smallest choice of classes and many were filled before we got a chance to look at them. We moved in early with the international students and we made up this small group. The dorms were empty, and for almost all of us, we had no roommates yet. This was worrying to me; I wondered if this was how college was going to be for the next four years. Was it going to be this boring for the rest of my college career? This quiet? This dead? This rough start really got me nervous. Here comes a kid from the city of New York, who lived in Manhattan his entire life surrounded by the hustle and bustle and never ending noises. I come up here and am surrounded by silence; literally, I could hear my own thoughts aloud. I don't know if any one of you are from The city, but when you are from the city and you come to a quiet place where there's more trees than people, it shocks you and makes you feel uncomfortable. It makes you nervous and anxious, same thing with cops. But I think what I'm getting at, in the most round about way, is that college is scary and it wont always be perfect for you at first. But soon, you'll meet some of the best people you've ever met and you wont even miss home...that much. Some of you will even go as far to say that you like college more than home. The classes are hard and the workload is high but those are mixed in with living next to your favorite people and seeing them everyday. You'll pull all nighters with them and eat together, and it will feel like a new home almost. You'll all be in the same boat and everyone will be able to relate. In conclusion: college will be one of the most important times of your life, so enjoy it while you can and make the most of it!

Reader's Comment on Level 3 Essay

This level 3 essay is an entrance level example with a primarily subjective and meandering response to the writing. The essay proceeds to include some interesting and entertaining examples from the student's own life. While the narrative anecdotes could help elaborate on a thesis regarding the transition into college life, the writer does not offer any of these connections and simply moves on to the next. This is not yet a level 4 essay due to a few problems with the writing. For example, the language is clear but wordy and colloquial at times. The essay contains some grammar and spelling errors, as well, and leaves the reader with clichéd remarks in the conclusion. Therefore, the writer would benefit from completing Composition I, for while the meaning is fairly clear, he or she could improve the substance of ideas, as well as better organize, connect, and develop on examples to create a piece that is well supported.

Level 2 Essay: Composition I SWW Level

The word “Average” according to Google dictionary means “lacking self distinction, rank, or status.” (“Average”). Being average has advantages while at the same time has its own disadvantages. Many people in society today such as rock stars, rappers, and movie stars try not to be average. On TV shows being average is not going to get you the winning prize. Average does not fit in society anymore. While to others society does not matter to them, and being average is okay.

Being average gives people a sense of security with themselves. Being average has its disadvantages. Being average a person does not become a “go getter”, meaning that a person does not take risks in life. For example, if a person is offered a job in Japan with a higher pay wage, an average person is not going to take the risk. The reason for this being is because they feel a sense of comfort with where they are in life right now. Being average to me means blending in with the crowd. When going on an interview the person who is hiring will most likely pick a person that stands out. Such as, wearing vibrant colors or having a glow to their personality. The show *American Idol* is based on who has the best voice not the most average. Only the best singer can win. Average singers and rappers are outshined by the best. *American’s next top model* the people who win are the ones who stand out in their photos or so something over the top. Being average does not bring a person to the top. For example. The singer Lady Gaga is known for her extremely loud outfits and unusual music. Lady Gaga catches people’s attention from this a person is more likely to flip thru a channel and stop if they see a flashy outfit made out of meat opposed to someone who is wearing jeans and a T-shirt. Nowadays in a society the more flashy you are the more likely you are given a rank of status. Lady Gaga is not considered average because she has her own self distinction.

Being average has its own perks, and person does not always need to overdo something in order to stand out. Many people are okay with being average. For example, “The girl next door” means that a girl is just average looking probably plays a sport and has a nice job. Being average means a person is confident with what they have in life. This may be the reason why people do not seek to find a better home, car, or outfit. Many people in school are average students. For example, when I was in high school I had a 3.0 which is considered an average G.P.A. I did not want to be known as the snotty high school senior who thought her work was better than anyone else’s. Being average may not help a person gain rank or status, but it may help a person find a boyfriend or husband. Many men like girls who don’t wear makeup, wear fake nails, or have extensions. Many men say they prefer “average woman”. According to men, an average girl is someone who does not try and out do another person in fashion, or try to have the most makeup on. Men just like girls who get up in the morning put jeans and a T-shirt on.

Being average has its advantages and disadvantages. Some people prefer being a risk taker, while some are okay with where they are in life. Being average depends upon the person. In today’s society there are not that many average people.

Reader’s Comment on Level 2 Essay

This level 2 essay does attempt a thesis, but the thesis lacks focus and cohesiveness. The essay is broken up into separate paragraphs and organization of ideas is evident, as well as the use of transitional words. The essay has a limited introduction, but the body paragraph does include some concrete examples of support. Unfortunately, the ideas are not always connected or well organized. The conclusion is very weak, as well. The essay is a low passing level 2 for the writer shows a basic understanding of the topic and does make some connections, but he/she relies on broad statements rather than developing ideas sufficiently to support his/her thesis. The essay contains numerous errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and MLA format.

SUNY NEW PALTZ DIAGNOSTIC/PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Level: Diagnostic	5 Exceeds (General Honors English)	4 High Meets (Exit Level Comp I)	3 Meets (Entrance Level Comp I)	2 Approaches (Entrance Level SWW or ESL/SWW Comp I)	1 Does Not Meet (Entrance Level SWW or ESL/SWW Comp I)
Portfolio	5 Exceeds (General Honors English)	4 High Meets (Exit Level Comp I)	3 Meets (Conditional Entrance Level Comp II)	2 Approaches (Entrance Level SWW or ESL/SWW Comp II)	(Repeat Comp I)
MEANING/CONTENT: the extent to which the response exhibits sound understanding, interpretation, and analysis of the task or text:					
Thesis:	Exhibits a thesis that is highly insightful, original, and cogently stated. Defines key terms in depth.	Exhibits a thesis that is insightful and clearly stated. Defines key terms.	Exhibits a thesis. Defines some key terms.	Exhibits a vague thesis. Defines few terms.	Does not exhibit a clear thesis. Defines few to no terms.
Analysis:	Reveals both in-depth analysis and independent thinking; makes insightful and original connections.	Reveals in-depth analysis; makes insightful connections.	Reveals understanding of topic; makes clear connections.	Reveals basic understanding of topic; makes some connections.	Rarely reveals understanding of topic; seldom makes connections.
DEVELOPMENT: the extent to which ideas are elaborated using specific and relevant evidence:					
Ideas:	Develops ideas expertly, thoroughly demonstrating an unusual ability to interest a reader through use of substantive details.	Develops ideas clearly and fully, effectively using of a wide-range of relevant/specific details.	Develops ideas clearly, using relevant/specific details.	Develops ideas briefly, using some detail.	Rarely develops complete ideas or details.
Paragraph Development:	Clearly develops and sustains substantive paragraphs directly related to thesis; each paragraph extends main idea.	Clearly develops paragraphs directly related to thesis; each paragraph contributes to main idea.	Develops paragraphs related to thesis; most paragraphs relate to main idea.	Develops some paragraphs related to thesis; some paragraphs relate to main idea.	Rarely develops paragraphs related to thesis; few or no paragraphs relate to main idea.
Level:	5	4	3	2	1
ORGANIZATION: the extent to which the response exhibits direction shape and coherence:					
Organization:	Maintains clear, coherent focus; exhibits logical, well reasoned structure, including exceptional arrangement of evidence through sophisticated transitions.	Maintains clear, appropriate focus; exhibits logical, coherent structure, including strong arrangement of evidence through appropriate transitions.	Maintains clear focus; exhibits mostly logical structure, including sound arrangement of evidence through transitions.	Maintains somewhat clear focus; sometimes exhibits logical structure, including sometimes sound arrangement of evidence through transitions.	Rarely maintains clear focus; rarely exhibits logical structure or sound arrangement of evidence through transitions.

Introduction:	Creates an engaging focus on topic; powerfully appeals to audience.	Creates a clear focus on topic; reasonably appeals to audience.	Creates a focus on topic; appeals to audience.	Somewhat focuses on topic; somewhat appeals to audience.	Does not clearly focus on topic; does not appeal to audience.
Conclusion:	Provides further thinking and implications (e.g., suggests further research, or extends key ideas); brings essay to logical, original closure.	Provides some further thinking (e.g., connects to and comments on key ideas); brings essay to logical closure.	Provides summary of key ideas; brings essay to closure.	Provides restatement of main idea; somewhat brings essay to closure.	Does not provide clear conclusion; does not clearly bring essay to closure.
Overall Organization:	Exceeds requirements of assignment.	Meets requirements of assignment.	Meets most requirements of assignment.	Meets some requirements of assignment.	Meets few to no requirements of assignment.

Level:	5	4	3	2	1
LANGUAGE USE: the extent to which the response reveals an awareness of audience and purpose through an effective use of words, sentence structure, and sentence variety:					
Description:	Creates compelling, vivid images through sophisticated, concrete language, engaging sensory details, and innovative literary devices.	Creates vivid images through concrete language, rich sensory details, and literary devices.	Creates images through concrete language, sensory details, and literary devices.	Creates some images through language, occasional sensory details, and some literary devices.	Creates few to no images through language, sensory details, or literary devices.
Word Choice:	Demonstrates sophisticated command of language; is eloquent and appropriate to the rhetorical situation.	Demonstrates worthy command of language; is precise and appropriate to the rhetorical situation.	Demonstrates command of language; is clear and appropriate to the rhetorical situation.	Demonstrates some command of language; is somewhat clear and appropriate to the rhetorical situation.	Rarely demonstrates command of language; is seldom clear or appropriate to the rhetorical situation
Sentence Variety:	Demonstrates original, sophisticated stylistic emphasis through frequently alternating length, structure, and pattern (e.g., declarative, imperative, exclamation).	Demonstrates recognizable stylistic emphasis through alternating length, structure, and pattern (e.g., declarative, imperative, exclamation).	Demonstrates stylistic emphasis through alternating length, structure, and pattern (e.g., declarative, imperative, exclamation).	Demonstrates some stylistic emphasis through occasional alternating length, structure, and pattern (e.g., declarative, imperative, exclamation)..	Demonstrates little to no stylistic emphasis, alternating length, structure, and pattern (e.g., declarative, imperative, exclamation).
Voice/Sense of Audience:	Strongly conveys writer's unique sensibilities; convincingly appeals to audience through logos, pathos, and/or ethos.	Clearly conveys writer's sensibilities; strongly appeals to audience through logos, pathos, and/or ethos.	Conveys writer's sensibilities; appeals to audience through logos, pathos, and/or ethos.	Somewhat conveys writer's sensibilities; sometimes appeals to audience through logos, pathos, and/or ethos.	Rarely conveys writer's sensibilities; seldom appeals to audience through logos, pathos, and/or ethos.

CONVENTIONS: the extent to which the response exhibits conventional spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, capitalization, grammar, and usage:					
Grammar/ Punctuation:	Exhibits nearly flawless use of mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.).	Exhibits correct use of mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.).	Exhibits mostly correct use of mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.).	Exhibits somewhat correct use of mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.).	Rarely exhibits correct use of mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.).
Spelling and Usage:	Always exhibits correct spelling and precise understanding of vocabulary.	Exhibits correct spelling and understanding of vocabulary.	Exhibits mostly correct spelling and understanding of vocabulary.	Exhibits somewhat correct spelling and some understanding of vocabulary.	Frequently misspells and misuses vocabulary.
Presentation:	Exactly conforms to Modern Language Association conventions for format and documentation (i.e., in-text citations and works cited); offers a unique title	Conforms to Modern Language Association conventions for format and documentation (i.e., in-text citations and works cited); offers a worthy title	Mostly conforms to Modern Language Association conventions for format and documentation (i.e., in-text citations and works cited); offers an appropriate title	Sometimes conforms to Modern Language Association conventions for format and documentation (i.e., in-text citations and works cited); offers a title.	Rarely conforms to Modern Language Association conventions for format and documentation (i.e., in-text citations and works cited); offers an inappropriate title or lacks title.

**GENERAL EDUCATION III
ASSESSMENT:**

FAQS, OBJECTIVES, AND RUBRICS

Frequently Asked Questions about General Education Assessment

Why does the faculty need to do this?

Assessment of student learning in general education (GE) courses is required in order for us to determine whether or not our students have mastered the content and skills of a liberal education as defined by our faculty. Although some GE assessments are mandated by the SUNY Board of Trustees, the primary reason why we do it is because it provides criterion-referenced data that informs our curriculum and instructional decisions. The GE Board encourages you to structure assessments in your GE courses so that you obtain information about student learning that will be useful to you in improving teaching, learning, and the curriculum.

What exactly does our campus need to do?

Our campus has developed a Campus-Based Assessment (CBA) plan and a Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment (SCBA) plan and they were approved by the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR), a SUNY-wide group (see below).

Annually, we submit a GE Summary Report to GEAR in which we discuss improvements we have made as a result of the previous assessment of GE, major findings of the current round of assessments, and actions to be taken in addressing these assessment findings. While we are no longer (as of spring 2007) required to report data to GEAR on the percentage of students “exceeding,” “meeting,” “approaching,” or “not meeting” each of the Board of Trustees GE objectives, GEAR requires that we keep these data on our campus. (The data that we keep is a summary of the overall percentages for all students assessed.)

Can you provide more information about the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) group?

The General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) was established in Spring 2001 upon the recommendation of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, and was formed jointly by leadership from the University faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and System Administration. The GEAR group’s primary goal is to work with the 57 SUNY campuses with general education programs as they develop and implement their campus-based plans for assessing student learning outcomes in general education, following the guidelines contained in the Task Force report. GEAR is charged with providing initial and ongoing review of campus-based general education assessment plans. The group’s review of the general education assessment plans focuses on the campus’ assessment processes and procedures that establish a culture of program improvement and not on the evaluation of the campus’ program or faculty. GEAR also has responsibility for conducting activities that facilitate the development and refinement of campus-based general education assessment plans.

How are students selected to have their work assessed?

We have some latitude on this. The requirements we must meet are: All students taking courses in the areas that are being assessed must have the same probability of being assessed. All courses and sections must be ready to have students in them assessed. In other words, all sections in an area must have an assessment plan in place by the start of the semester. At least 20% of all students enrolled in courses in the area must be assessed.

What is done in most areas is the following. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) uses a stratified random sample methodology. The principles are as follows: Every section has an equal opportunity of being chosen (except in those areas where there will be a census, i.e., 100%, rather than a sample). The sample will be a true random sample, in that results are generalizable to the entire population. The sample represents the whole. If there are exigencies or special situations in an area where the stratified random sample needs modification, OIRP will consider an adjustment.

How do students have their work assessed?

This is usually done based on the assignments that departments and instructors develop for specific courses.

How are these assignments evaluated?

They are assessed by the instructor, who refers to rubrics that clarify what levels of students' performance constitute "exceeding," "meeting," "approaching," or "not meeting" each objective. The articulation of clear standards is important, since best practice requires that there be a mechanism to insure inter-rater reliability. One of the criteria that GEAR uses to evaluate our assessment plans is a provision for inter-rater reliability. Therefore, those provisions must be included in every course plan.

How does GE assessment relate to program assessment?

Each academic department on campus must do program assessment, with programs usually defined as majors and concentrations. It is up to each department to determine what aspects of their programs they want to assess and how they want to assess them each year. However, departments that contribute to GE should consider that as part of their program offerings. As with GE assessment, departments are expected to use the results of their program assessment to improve programs and student learning.

How is a department supposed to "close the loop" and use assessment results?

The purpose of assessment is improvement of student learning, so faculty need to discuss their results with other faculty to reflect on how they might more effectively meet this goal. Faculty have always made course and program changes to improve student learning; assessment just makes the process more transparent and systematic.

The above information is directly quoted from [the GE Board's FAQ document](#). Some information was removed for the sake of brevity.

For more information about GE course assessment, [click here](#).

Basic Communication-Written GE III Assessment Rubric
Composition Program, Department of English

Learning Outcome:	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Does not Meet
Students will produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms	Writer presents an engaging, coherent research essay, which proceeds from a focused, original, and creative purpose or claim, demonstrating a solid command and variety of sentence structure and language both eloquent and appropriate to the rhetorical situation, using nearly flawless mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and documentation (MLA format, citations, bibliography).	Writer presents a coherent research essay, which proceeds from a focused purpose or claim, demonstrating a command and some variety of sentence structure and language appropriate to the rhetorical situation, using correct mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and documentation (MLA format, citations, bibliography).	Writer presents a mostly coherent research essay, which proceeds from a somewhat focused purpose or claim, demonstrating some command and occasional variety of sentence structure and language somewhat appropriate to the rhetorical situation, sometimes using correct mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and documentation (MLA format, citations, bibliography).	Writer does not present a coherent research essay, which likely does not proceed from a somewhat focused purpose or claim, rarely demonstrating a command and variety of sentence structure and language appropriate to the rhetorical situation, rarely using correct mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and documentation (MLA format, citations, bibliography).
Students will research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details	Writer establishes, develops, and sustains a comprehensive and original argument that proceeds from a focused and commanding introduction to a fully supported, well-demonstrated conclusion, integrating a wide variety of primary and secondary sources (including scholarly articles), and	Writer establishes, develops, and sustains a comprehensive argument that proceeds from a mostly focused introduction to a mostly supported conclusion, integrating a variety of primary and secondary sources (including some scholarly articles),	Writer somewhat establishes, develops, and sustains a fairly comprehensive argument that proceeds from a somewhat focused introduction to a somewhat supported conclusion, integrating a limited variety of primary and	Writer rarely establishes, develops, or sustains a comprehensive argument that proceeds from a focused introduction to a supported conclusion, integrating few to no primary and secondary sources (including few to

	incorporating pertinent examples and evidence, logically developed and arranged.	and incorporating mostly pertinent examples and evidence, usually logically developed and arranged.	secondary sources (including few scholarly articles), and occasionally incorporating pertinent examples, somewhat logically developed and arranged.	no scholarly articles), and rarely incorporating pertinent examples and evidence, typically not logically developed and arranged.
Students demonstrate their abilities to revise and improve such texts	Writer demonstrates clear ability to revise, alter, and strengthen content and approach of material (i.e., introduction, body, conclusion, individual sentences) through appropriate additions, subtractions, and transpositions, carefully editing and proofreading to produce nearly flawless mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and documentation (MLA format, citations, bibliography).	Writer demonstrates adequate ability to revise, alter, and strengthen content and approach of material (i.e., introduction, body, conclusion, individual sentences) through mostly appropriate additions, subtractions, and transpositions, editing and proofreading to produce mostly correct mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and documentation (MLA format, citations, bibliography).	Writer demonstrates some ability to revise, alter, and strengthen content and approach of material (i.e., introduction, body, conclusion, individual sentences) through somewhat appropriate additions, subtractions, and transpositions, sometimes editing and proofreading to produce somewhat correct mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and documentation (MLA format, citations, bibliography).	Writer demonstrates little ability to revise, alter, and strengthen content and approach of material (i.e., introduction, body, conclusion, individual sentences) through somewhat appropriate additions, subtractions, and transpositions, rarely editing and proofreading to produce seldom correct mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and documentation (MLA format, citations, bibliography).

**Information Management Rubric for Composition and General Honors English Courses
(ENG 160, ENG 180, ENG 206)**

Information Literacy Learning Outcomes	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Does not meet
Performs the basic operations of personal computer use	Document of highly readable design with spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting conventions that correspond well to Modern Language Association guidelines	Document of readable design with spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting conventions that mostly correspond to Modern Language Association guidelines	Document of limited readability with spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting conventions that sometimes correspond to Modern Language Association guidelines	Difficult to read document with spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting conventions that do not correspond to Modern Language Association guidelines
Understands and uses basic research techniques	Retrieves a variety of information using varied online and print sources appropriate to the research topic, including specialized or academic databases, library materials, and independent resources	Retrieves information using online and print sources mostly appropriate to the research topic, including specialized or academic databases, library materials, and/or independent resources	Retrieves information using some online or print sources somewhat appropriate to the research topic, including either specialized or academic databases, library materials, or independent resources	Retrieves information using few or no online sources, specialized or academic databases, library and independent resources; or does not retrieve information
Locates, evaluates, and synthesizes information from a variety of sources	Integrates a variety of credible online sources, specialized and academic databases, library and independent resources to compose original ideas	Integrates some credible online sources, academic databases, library and independent resources to compose additional thoughts	Partially integrates less credible online sources, academic databases, library and independent resources to compose further summaries	Integrates few or no credible online sources, academic databases, library and independent resources; does not compose additional ideas in putting material together

**Basic Communication-Oral GE III Assessment Rubric
Composition Program, Department of English**

Learning Outcome:	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Does not Meet
<p>Students will develop proficiency in oral discourse.</p>	<p>-Argument Presentation conveys a well-articulated, significant, and compelling claim, fully supported by credible and well-chosen evidence, consistently expressed in vivid, precise, effective language.</p> <p>-Organization It uses strong signposting language to guide the audience, and clearly identifiable sections featuring a purposeful organizational pattern.</p> <p>-Delivery Speaker displays confidence and preparation through clear enunciation, consistent eye contact, vocal variety and few fillers.</p>	<p>-Argument Presentation conveys an interesting claim, mostly supported by credible evidence, expressed in fairly effective language.</p> <p>-Organization It uses some signposting language to guide the audience, and has sections featuring an organizational pattern.</p> <p>-Delivery Speaker displays some confidence and preparation through enunciation, eye contact, some vocal variety and some fillers.</p>	<p>-Argument Presentation conveys a claim, partially supported by somewhat credible evidence, expressed in intermittently effective language.</p> <p>-Organization It uses little signposting language to guide the audience, and an organizational pattern is difficult to identify but there at times.</p> <p>-Delivery Speaker displays minimal confidence and little preparation through enunciation, limited eye contact, minimal vocal variety and regular fillers.</p>	<p>-Argument Presentation does not convey a significant claim, rely on credible evidence, or include effective language.</p> <p>-Organization It does not use signposting language to guide the audience or have an identifiable organizational pattern.</p> <p>-Delivery Speaker displays a lack of preparation through unclear enunciation, minimal eye contact, lack of vocal variety and many fillers.</p>
<p>Students will evaluate an oral presentation according to established criteria.</p>	<p>Student rating exactly matches the instructor’s rating, and student’s evaluation paragraph demonstrates clear insight into meaningful features of argument, organization, and delivery aspects of the speech.</p>	<p>Student rating exactly or nearly matches the instructor’s rating, and student’s evaluation paragraph demonstrates awareness features of argument, organization, and delivery aspects of the speech.</p>	<p>Student rating differs from instructor’s rating, and student’s evaluation paragraph demonstrates limited awareness of relevant features of argument, organization, and delivery aspects of the speech.</p>	<p>Student rating significantly differs from instructor’s rating, and student’s evaluation paragraph does not demonstrate awareness of relevant features of argument, organization, and delivery aspects of the speech.</p>