

All About Additional Writing (W)

The Additional Writing (W) requirement is a general education requirement for all UW undergraduate students. W courses utilize sequenced assignments to strengthen students' written communication skills in a **specific field**. They can be taught in a variety of languages and can include multiple forms of writing. Use this guide to learn more about Writing, course evaluations, and registration.

⚠️ The number of W credits required for every UW school and college is different. Check how many you need using the [Requirements by School and College webpage](#).

WHAT ARE 'W OPTIONAL' COURSES? These courses assign writing tasks to the entire class but will require additional assignments (ex: a second draft of a paper) for students who want to earn Writing credit. Students must identify themselves to faculty as a W-earning student to be given these extra assignments and graded appropriately.

WHAT DEPARTMENTS OFFER WRITING COURSES? Students can find Writing courses in various departments across campus. While Writing courses are offered in the English department, the English department is not the only department which teaches Writing courses.

Students who have taken more credits in English Composition coursework than required for their degree can apply extra Composition credits to the Writing requirement.

Writing Course Learning Goals

For full information on Writing courses, visit the [Writing Webpage](#).

- W courses have an assignment sequence built to support growth through the writing process. These include low-stakes assignments (informal, reflective, and/or ungraded) that are later developed into high-stakes assignments (well-supported, formal, and/or graded). Drafting and revision are required aspects of sequenced learning.
- Writing assignments will have prompts that contain learning goals. These goals align with course learning outcomes. Feedback students receive from instructors should be based on these learning goals and not solely spelling or grammatical edits.
- W credit is not awarded based on the amount of pages and/or words written. Credits are based on the number of writing sequences a student goes through.

HOW ARE COMPOSITION AND WRITING COURSES DIFFERENT?

While writing is a major part of Composition and Additional Writing (W) courses, the way it is utilized within their curriculums results in two distinct requirements:

Writing courses focus on teaching content within a specific discipline, which is reinforced through writing assignments.


Composition courses focus on teaching English writing and rhetoric skills, with any other content being secondary.

Because they are disciplinary, W courses

- Can be taught in various languages,
- Are taught in various departments across UW,
- And can overlap with other graduation requirements, including general education, Areas of Inquiry, and major specific coursework.

Therefore, Composition classes

- Are taught in the English language,
- Are mainly offered in the English department,
- And can only fulfill the Composition or the Additional Writing requirement.

 [Click here](#) for more information on the Composition requirement.

HOW CAN COURSEWORK BE EVALUATED FOR WRITING CREDIT?

Courses taken outside of UW can be evaluated for W credit using the following process:

- Students should send the course syllabus to an adviser, including:
 - Undergraduate Academic Affairs professional advisers (best for pre-majors).
 - Major/departmental advisers (best for students declared into a major).
- If the course fits the learning goals above, they may award the class with W credit.
- Humanities Academic Services advisers can provide additional review, if needed.

Evaluated coursework must abide by the following policies:

- The number of credits earned must be aligned with the rule that 1 credit= 3 hours of work/week, as stated on the [Academic Credit webpage](#).
- All coursework must follow [UW's transfer credit policies](#).
- Courses with equivalents listed on the [Washington State Community College Equivalency Guide](#) must receive the equivalents listed.

Note: Due to the specificity of the W requirement, transfer coursework is not often given W credit. Most transfer courses earn W credit by being Composition courses taken in excess of the Composition requirement. Currently, coursework granted for exam scores is not eligible for W credit, as stated on the [Exams for Credit webpage](#).