Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)

Writing Placement for Juniors Exam Workshop Packet

1. Overview of the GWAR
   a. The two-step process: GWAR placement → Writing Intensive class
   b. The placement options: WPJ or ENGL 109W/M
   c. The placement scores: 3-unit, 4-unit, and 6-unit placement

2. Overview of the WPJ
   a. A sample exam prompt
   b. The placement criteria

3. Writing tips for test
   a. Other preparation tips
   b. FAQs about the WPJ

Writing Programs Office
Calaveras Hall 101
Phone 916-278-6409
Fax 916-278-5410
english@csus.edu
http://www.al.csus.edu/writing/gewritingrequirements/gwar.php
What is the Undergraduate GWAR?

The GWAR is a CSU wide requirement that should be completed by undergraduate students in the junior year. The purpose of the GWAR is for students to demonstrate their proficiency at writing in an academic setting at an upper-division level. The GWAR requires a two-step process:

Step 1: Receive a GWAR Placement
Step 2: Take a Writing Intensive class (with or without additional writing instruction dependent on your placement)

When should I start the Undergraduate GWAR Placement Process?

Once you have completed your sophomore-level writing class and are a junior who has 60 units towards your degree, you may start the Undergraduate GWAR Placement Process.

Transfer Students: If you satisfied the GWAR at another CSU campus, contact the Writing Programs office to see how you can transfer that completed requirement from your previous campus to Sac State.

Second Bachelor's Students: If your first bachelor's degree is from a non-CSU campus or a CSU campus, you may have already completed the GWAR requirements. Contact the Writing Programs office for more information.

How do I receive an Undergraduate GWAR Placement?

You have two options for receiving your GWAR Placement. For more guidance on how to make this choice and where to get additional help, see the Undergraduate GWAR webpage (listed above).

Option 1: Take the timed Writing Placement for Juniors (WPJ) exam. The exam asks students to review several texts and write an essay based on the texts.

Option 2: Take a semester-long writing class, English 109M or English 109W. This class will focus on writing in your specific major. At the end of the semester, your revised work will be collected in a portfolio that will be evaluated. Students who are multilingual can choose 109M or 109W. Students who are native English-speakers should choose English 109W.

What are the Undergraduate GWAR Placements?

The GWAR Placement determines whether you will need additional writing instruction or assistance before or during your Writing Intensive class. The placements are described below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You will see</th>
<th>What it means</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Placement fulfilled at another CSU campus. Pass a Writing Intensive course with a 'C-' or higher to meet General Education/Graduation Requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>80/81</td>
<td>3-unit placement - Pass a Writing Intensive course with a 'C-' or higher</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>4-unit placement - Pass a Writing Intensive course and ENGL 109X concurrently</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>6-unit placement - Pass ENGL 109W, then pass a Writing Intensive course with a 'C-' or higher</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>6-unit placement - Pass ENGL 109M, then pass a Writing Intensive course with a 'C-' or higher</td>
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FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY
Sacramento State Comprehensive Writing Program Flow Chart

**English Placement Test**  
(if not exempt)

**Directed Self Placement**  
All incoming freshman participate

- **English 5 or English 5M**  
  1 unit tutorial available (English 1X)

- **English 10 + 11 or English 10M + 11M**  
  1 unit tutorial available (English 1X)

**English 20 or English 20M or equivalent**  
Prerequisite: 30 units

**Upper-Division Placement**  
(must have 60 units)  
Students may choose either:

- **English 109W or English 109M**  
  3-unit course which ends with portfolio placement in one of the following:

- **Writing Placement for Juniors (WPJ) Exam**  
  Placement exam which gives one of the following placements:

  - **80 Placement Score (3-units):** Upper-Division Writing Intensive Course
  - **70 Placement Score (4 units):** Upper-Division Writing Intensive Course (3 units) + English 100X (1 unit, CR/NC)
  - **50 or 60 Placement Score (6 units):** English 109M or English 109W (3 units) then Upper-Division Writing Intensive Course (3 units)

Revised May 2016
The Writing Placement for Juniors (WPJ)

The WPJ is a two-hour essay exam. **Students are not allowed to retake the exam as it is a placement exam.** The exam asks students to write two essays. The first essay will ask students to respond and make an argument about a topic represented by several texts. The second essay asks students to discuss their writing history and practices. On the day of the exam, bring the following (an exam booklet and scratch paper will be provided):

- two forms of photo ID (e.g. Sac State One Card, Driver's License, passport, Military ID, etc.)
- several pens and pencils (final draft must be in ink)
- printed dictionary (optional) – thesaurus and electronic dictionaries are not allowed

### WPJ Exam Dates

| Upcoming Exam Dates | Online Registration Available | Make-Up Exam Date *
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 21, 2016</td>
<td>May 2 – May 13, 2016, noon</td>
<td>May 25, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 8, 2016</td>
<td>September 19 – September 30, 2016, noon</td>
<td>October 12, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 7, 2017</td>
<td>December 5 – December 16, 2016, noon</td>
<td>January 11, 2017</td>
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### Registration & Fees

Register online at [www.csus.edu/testing](http://www.csus.edu/testing) during the two-week period indicated above. Late registration is NOT accepted. You can request accommodations during registration for the following:

**Students with Disabilities:** Students who are registered with Services to Students with Disabilities (SSWD) may be eligible to receive accommodations. For more information, contact SSWD in Lassen Hall 1008 (phone: 916-278-6955).

**Multilingual Students:** Multilingual students are eligible to receive an additional hour and fifteen minutes for the exam. Multilingual accommodations will be given to students who answer the multilingual question during online registration.

The $25 exam fee is NONREFUNDABLE and NONTRANSFERABLE. Your exam fee will be posted to your MySacState account after you complete registration. Though the fee may be posted sooner, please allow until the end of business the day after you register for the fee to show on your account. Be sure to check your account frequently for an update of your fees. Fees must be paid by the due date listed on your MySacState account. It is recommended that you pay your fee within 72 hours. If you fail to pay your exam fees by the due date, your registration will be cancelled.

1. **Paying in person** at the Student Financial Services Center located in Lassen Hall room 1001. Normal Fall office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In person payment will be accepted through 5pm on the last day of registration. OR
2. **Paying online** through your MySacState Student Center, choose Account Inquiry, then click the green button to make an online payment. Additional fees will apply.

### Preparation Workshops

At the end of the registration process you will find a link to sign up for a free, one-time, one-hour informational WPJ workshop, which will give you information about the exam, show you a sample, and give you a chance to ask questions.

### Make-Up Exam

A make-up exam is available for those who aren't able to attend the exam for religious, academic, medical, or other compelling reasons. Make-up requests are only considered for those who already registered for the exam. If your request is approved, you will receive an email at your Saclink email address by 12pm on the Tuesday following the exam. To qualify for the make-up exam, students must send a request in writing according to the following instructions:

- Written requests can be sent via email to english@csus.edu or delivered to Calaveras Hall 103.
- All requests must be received by 12pm on the Monday following the original exam date.
- All requests must include the following information: 1) Name, Student ID #, Registration Confirmation #, and 2) supporting documentation (e.g. a written statement on letterhead from your clergy, proof of a conflicting exam appointment, a class schedule showing a Saturday course, a letter from your coach showing a conflicting athletic event, a doctor’s note or police accident report proving an emergency on the day of the exam, etc.).

### Exam Results

Placement scores (see above for an explanation of these scores) will be made available as soon as possible—typically within three to four weeks after the exam date. You will find your score on MySacState. Go to your Student Center and select “Test Score Summary” from the drop down menu located toward the middle of the page.
Sample Writing Placement for Juniors (WPJ) Prompt

Essay #1 (60 minutes/90 minutes for MLi)

Several significant issues could emerge from the following texts. Please read the texts and write an academic essay in which you not only identify one significant issue, but also take a position on that issue. Use information from the texts provided as well as your own experience to support your position.

► TEXT 1
Adults were asked the following question: Do you feel that you will need more training or education in order to maintain or increase your earning power during the next few years? Their responses are tabulated below:

| FEEL MORE TRAINING/EDUCATION NEEDED TO MAINTAIN/INCREASE EARNING POWER DURING NEXT FEW YEARS |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|                                  | Yes | No | DR/NC | Total | N I  |
| TOTAL                           | 53  | 45 | 2     | 100   | (1001)|
| AGE                             |     |    |       |       |      |
| 18-25 years                     | 80  | 20 | 0     | 100   | (125)|
| 26-40 years                     | 66  | 34 | *     | 100   | (318)|
| 41-65 years                     | 58  | 40 | 1     | 100   | (289)|
| 66 and over                     | 26  | 73 | 1     | 100   | (127)|
| EDUCATION                       |     |    |       |       |      |
| Less than H.S.                  | 42  | 57 | 1     | 100   | (79)|
| H.S. grad.                      | 52  | 47 | 1     | 100   | (306)|
| Voc/Community college           | 66  | 31 | 3     | 100   | (131)|
| Some 4-year college             | 66  | 34 | 1     | 100   | (144)|
| College grad.                   | 48  | 51 | 1     | 100   | (326)|

*Less than one-half of one percent.


► TEXT 2
From “Winning over young voters” by Tamara Draut, San Francisco Chronicle

To win young voters, politicians need to understand that today's youth -- who are in the thick of their battle to work or educate their way into the middle class -- are being hit by a one-two punch.

The economy no longer generates widespread opportunity and our public policies haven't picked up any of the slack. As soon as they graduate from high school, young adults are plunged into an obstacle course that has dramatically changed in just one generation. From the price of a college education to the new cutthroat realities of the economy, young adults are trying to establish themselves in a society that has grown widely unequal and less responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens. At each step in the obstacle course to adulthood -- getting an education, finding a job, starting a family and buying a home -- our nation's public structures are showing major signs of decay and distress. The outcome: This generation has less economic mobility and security than other generations.

What are some of the specific issues politicians would be smart to address? The high cost of college and the dramatic rise in student loan debt, to start. Today, the average college graduate leaves school with $20,000 in student loans. Far more smart young people never make it through college because they can't scrape together enough loans, grants or money from minimum-wage jobs to foot the bill. Today, the cost of attending a public four-year state college is just more than $11,000 -- about what it cost to attend a private university, adjusted for inflation, a generation ago.
According to 2003 Census Bureau statistics on earnings in the United States:

-- Associate’s degree holders average $8,000 a year more than high school graduates.
-- Workers with bachelor’s degrees make nearly $23,300 more a year than high school graduates.
-- Master's degree holders average $11,300 more a year than bachelor's degree holders.

Essay #2 (30 minutes/60 minutes for MLI)

Please read the following text and write an essay in which you discuss to what extent this statement resembles your own experience with writing.

“Learning to write is a complex process, both individual and social, that takes place over time with continued practice and informed guidance.”

Statement on Learning Outcomes for First Year Composition from the Council of Writing Program Administrators.
Writing Placement for Juniors (WPJ) Placement Rubric

1. **FOCUS**: Identifies and communicates a focus arising from the prompt: sets a task that engages the texts provided and shows an understanding of the key ideas in the texts.

2. **POSITION**: Articulates writer’s own position on the focus identified: writer’s position demonstrates an appropriately analytical task for academic expectations.

3. **COHESION**: Composes an introduction, body, and conclusion that analyze major ideas surrounding the focus and position articulated: produces a cohesive academic composition that advances the writer’s articulated position.

4. **DEVELOPMENT**: Develops writer’s position by incorporating specific details and examples from the texts provided and personal experience as support: integrates the readings and personal experience to advance the writer’s own position on the topic.

5. **PROCESS**: Provides evidence of awareness of writing as a process: demonstrates awareness of process steps, and/or reflects on writer’s own literacy history and practices.

6. **CONVENTIONS**: Shows awareness of conventions of academic discourse: makes appropriate rhetorical choices regarding audience, purpose, tone, evidence, format, and organization.

7. **EDITING**: Displays evidence of editing with adequate control of grammar and mechanics appropriate to an early draft. Errors do not slow the reader, impede understanding, nor seriously undermine the authority of the writer. Grammatical errors, inappropriate word choice, or incorrect usage may occur throughout the essay but rarely interfere with effective communication.
Frequently Asked Questions about the WPJ

1. How long will the exam take? What are the time limits for the exam?
   You should set aside 2 hours for this exam – 3-1/2 hours if you signed up for the WPJ as a multilingual student.
   * **WPJ Time Limits**: The test proctor will take about 15-20 minutes to check in all students, verify identifications, mark the roster, and have students fill out a short questionnaire. Then, you will have 15 minutes to read the prompt and to plan your essays. You will be given 60 minutes to write Essay #1 and 30 minutes to write Essay #2. Test proctors will not remind you of these time limits. It is your responsibility to manage your time.
   * **Multilingual WPJ Time Limits**: If you are taking the multilingual version, it will take 15-20 minutes for check in. You will be given 30 minutes to read and plan your work, 90 minutes to write Essay #1 and 60 minutes to write Essay #2. Test proctors will not remind you of these time limits. It is your responsibility to manage your time.
   * **Students with Disabilities Time Limits**: If you are a student registered with SSWD accommodations and require additional time, your time will depend on your approved accommodations. Contact the Testing Center at 916-278-6296 for more information.

2. Will there be holds on my registration if I don't take the exam or enroll in the course?
   No holds will be placed on your registration if you do not take ENGL 109 or the WPJ. However, we strongly suggest you do one of the above by the time you reach 74 units. Delaying one of these options could delay your graduation progress.

3. Where can I see some sample WPJ student essays?
   Since the WPJ is a placement test, we do not provide any sample student essays.

4. What are the possible WPJ prompt topics?
   The prompt topics for the first essay will ask writers to read several short texts, identify an issue arising from those texts, and write an essay taking a position on that issue. The several short reading texts that we provide in a WPJ may be on any topic about which a college student may have some background knowledge. The second essay typically asks that students reflect on his or her writing process.

5. How long should the essays be for the WPJ?
   Your essays will not be scored on the length. You should plan accordingly so that you have time to draft and write both essays.

6. What format should I write the essay in?
   There is no required format for the essays. However, we do recommend that you skip lines between paragraphs (but not between each line) as you write; this makes your work easier to read and leaves you room to make some revisions if necessary.

7. Does the prompt change for Essay #2 or will it always be about writing processes?
   The prompt for Essay #2 will not always be the same; however, it will always ask writers to focus on some aspect of themselves as writers or on some aspect of their writing processes.

8. Can I retake the WPJ if I am unhappy with my score?
   No, the WPJ is a placement exam that may only be taken once.