

WI Guidelines Apr 2026

### **Purpose of This Document**

This document is meant to serve several, related purposes:

- Provide background on the Writing-intensive (WI) requirement at Lehman College
- Clarify Lehman’s policy and practice for Writing-intensive sections of courses
- Provide guidance and resources for departments and faculty interested in developing Writing-intensive sections
- Align WI sections across Lehman College
- Support faculty across the curriculum to adopt similar learning outcomes
- Create a more accessible learning environment for the retention and timely graduation of Lehman students.

**The first part of this document will focus on institutional context and policy, while the second part will provide guidance and resources.**

Please note:

*Any and all amendments to the WI Guidelines policies (**Part I**) must be approved by the Lehman College Senate's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Lehman College Senate's Committee on Undergraduate Admissions, Evaluation, and Academic Standards (CAEAS) and the Lehman College Senate.*

Once approved by the UCC, the document is passed on to CAEAS. Once approved by CAEAS, the document becomes part of the committee's report, and has a place on the Senate agenda. No action is needed by the Governance Committee Chair.

*Any and all amendments to the WI Guidelines regarding WI course design and resources (**Part II**) can be made via the Writing Council,<sup>1</sup> with an update to Lehman Senate as an informational item. (see: Writing-Intensive Guidelines Approval Process)*

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<sup>1</sup> Made up of faculty members from each School, staff and students willing to serve on the Council, and the annual Council meeting will be open to the Lehman College community. Student Government Association will also appoint a minimum of four student senators to the Writing Council each year.

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**Part I: Institutional Context and Overview****A. The Development Process for the Writing-Intensive Guidelines**

The original set of Lehman College Writing-Intensive Guidelines came out of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, which created a Writing-Intensive subcommittee, headed by Vinny Prohaska (Psychology and then director of General Education). The task of the subcommittee was to revise WI guidelines for use in WI courses. The subcommittee consisted of Vinny Prohaska, Tyler Schmidt (English, WAC Co-Coordinator), Jessica Yood (English, WAC Co-Coordinator), Amod Choudhary (Economics, Business), and Janette Tilley (Music). The Guidelines were finalized in May 2014, and approved by the UCC and Senate in Fall 2014.

In December 2024, the Writing-Intensive Guidelines were revised by a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), tasked by Associate Provost Karin Beck, which included members from departments throughout Lehman College. The committee was co-chaired by the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program co-coordinator Sarah Soanirina Ohmer & Associate Professor in School of Education Sherry Deckman. Institute of Literacy Studies (ILS) Director Jane Kehoe-Higgins, Freshman Year Composition Director Maeve Adams, co-coordinator WAC program Sophia Hsu, and Writing and Literacy Coordinator at the Instructional Support Services Program Lisa Estreich, also participated. Lehman College Registrar Yvette Rosario and representative from the Office of Undergraduate Academic Advising Scott Calvin also participated in drafting the guidelines and aligning the information on the Lehman College website with the policy and practice as outlined in the guidelines.

The drafting process was collective and included several feedback loops with presentations in Spring 2024 to: the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), the Faculty Personnel and Budget (FP&B) Committee, Lehman Senate, CAEAS, General Faculty, Student Government Association.

**B. The Writing-Intensive Guidelines Approval Process**

The Writing-Intensive Guidelines were originally encapsulated in a document that was approved by the Senate in 2014. The revised 2025 guidelines are proposed to serve as a “living document,” which will be *revised as needed, based on feedback from campus constituents, and ongoing research on best practices for WI courses.*

Going forward, some changes will need approval from entities such as Senate and its committees if, for example, they change the policy (Part I). Other changes and additions, such as those related to resources and evidence-based best practices (Part II), can be made without formal changes to the underlying policies.

Please note: *Any and all amendments to Part I will be **approved** by the Lehman College Senate's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Lehman College Senate's CAEAS Committee, **presented** at the Senate, the General Faculty meeting, and the Student Government Association meeting, and **approved** by the Lehman College Senate.* Once approved by CAEAS, the document becomes part of the committee's report, and has a place on the Senate agenda. No action is needed by the Governance Committee Chair.

**i. Changes to Part I for approval:**

- 1) A WI Council will convene annually to review the guidelines policies (Part I) and assess the function of WI courses at Lehman College, across departments, and propose changes to the policies as needed. Changes to the guidelines policies (Part I) will go through the same feedback loop as the 2025 draft: Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Faculty

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Personnel and Budget, Senate, Advising Council. The WI Council meeting will be open to the public and serve as a forum for feedback on WI policies and guidelines.

- 2) After implementing feedback from all, the guidelines will be turned into UCC for a vote, to CAEAS for approval, presented at the General Faculty meeting, then to Senate for a vote.
- 3) For UCC review:
  - a) send the Guidelines revisions to Academic Affairs Manager who will submit to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) as new business for UCC.
  - b) With UCC approval, WI Guidelines will be included into the UCC agenda for Senate vote, and posted on the Senate website.
  - c) The WI Guidelines will fall under the UCC Committee report, and during UCC committee report, the WI Guidelines will be presented for a vote on the Senate floor for approval of the changes.
- 4) For CAEAS review:
  - a) send the Guidelines revisions to CAEAS Committee chair who will submit to the CAEAS Committee as new business.
  - b) With CAEAS approval, WI Guidelines will be included into the committee's agenda for Senate vote, and posted on the Senate website.
  - c) The WI Guidelines will fall under the CAEAS Committee report, and during the committee report, the WI Guidelines will be presented for a vote on the Senate floor for approval of the changes.

a. Changes to Part II for approval:

*Amendments to the WI Guidelines regarding information on WI course design and resources (Part II) can be made via the Writing Council, and presented as an update to Lehman Senate as an informational item.*

*The Writing Council meeting will take place once a year and be open to the Lehman community.*

**C. Writing-Intensive Requirement for Graduation**

From the Lehman College Undergraduate Bulletin:

Students must complete four courses designated as writing-intensive, three prior to earning the 60th credit and one following. Individual sections of courses will be designated as writing-intensive, and students may take writing-intensive sections of courses in General Education, major, minor, and elective courses.

Transfer students who have completed less than 30 college credits must complete four courses designated as writing-intensive; those who have completed at least 30 but less than 60 college credits must complete three courses designated as writing-intensive; those who have completed 60 or more college credits must complete two courses designated as writing-intensive.<sup>2</sup>

**D. Writing-Intensive Courses and Writing-Intensive Class Sections**

WI Course Level Designation and UCC Approval

At Lehman College, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee does not oversee the designation of classes as WI *at the section level*. However, the UCC *does* oversee WI designations *at the course level*.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://lehman-undergraduate.catalog.cuny.edu/baccalaureate-programs/undergraduate-general-education-curriculum/2013-general-education-program-pathways>

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Departments and Programs may submit proposals to the UCC for courses to be considered WI at the course level. When a WI course is accepted at UCC, every section of the course that is offered is a WI-designated class. For such course proposals, the UCC may refer to the WI guidelines to assess the WI components of the course.

WI Section Level Designation and Department Chair or Department P&B Approval

Outside of this process, any section of any course can be designated as WI, *as decided by the department chair*, department curriculum committee, P&B committee, or instructor with chair approval. These guidelines are a reference to design WI class sections and by chairs, department curriculum committees, or P&B committees, to assess whether classes fulfill the WI requirements for students.

Individual sections of courses can be designated as WI, and students may take WI sections of courses in General Education, major, minor, and elective courses. For undergraduate majors, all departments are encouraged to offer at least one WI course at the 300-level or above.

Enrollment Cap Recommendation

Sections of courses that are designated as WI should have a student cap of no more than 22 students.<sup>3</sup>

Syllabus Checklist Self-Assessment Form

Before scheduling the section, department chairs, department P&B committees, or department curriculum committees, will remind instructors to [fill out a "syllabus checklist self-assessment" form](#). The data will inform professional development training and may assist campus-wide assessment efforts.

**E. Guidelines for Departments and Programs:**

Departments and programs will:

- *Establish* the measurable learning outcomes to use for WI courses, as needed (see p. 9 for examples)
- *Use* the guidelines to review and assess WI courses, as needed
- *Consider* offering WI classes within their discipline as part of the minor or major requirement

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<sup>3</sup> In 2014, Lehman Senate voted to cap students in WI sections to 22.

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**Part II: Guidance and Resources**

“Through writing, we figure out what things mean.”

- Rosenwasser & Stephen, *Writing Analytically*

Low stakes writing is "for learning, figuring out, and exploring new and complicated ideas."

- Peter Elbow, *Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*

This section of the WI guidelines is to help align WI sections across Lehman College, to support faculty across the curriculum to adopt similar learning outcomes, and to create a more accessible learning environment for the retention and timely graduation of Lehman students.

**A. The Role of the WI Guidelines**

These Writing-Intensive (WI) guidelines are designed to help align WI sections across Lehman College, to support faculty across the curriculum to adopt similar learning outcomes, and to create a more accessible learning environment for the retention and timely graduation of Lehman students.

**B. Writing in the Discipline and Writing Across the Curriculum**

Writing helps students uncover what they are unsure about, and to ask questions. Writing helps students to learn what is being presented: concepts, genres of the discipline, etc. Writing paired with reading allows students to observe texts and components of a discipline more closely. Through low stakes and exploratory writing (where the assessment of writing is different than in a writing-heavy discipline) students learn about and practice key strategies and analytical moves related to a discipline or to a topic within a discipline.

**C. Writing-Intensive Courses and WI Intensive Class Sections**

At Lehman College, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee does not oversee the designation of classes as WI *at the section level*. However, the UCC *does* oversee WI designations *at the course level*. Departments and Programs may submit proposals to the UCC for courses to be considered WI at the *course level*, in which case every section of the course that is offered would be a WI-designated-class. For such course proposals, the UCC may refer to the WI guidelines to assess the Writing-Intensive components of the course.

Outside of this process, *any section of any course can be designated as writing intensive*, as decided by the department chair, department curriculum committee, department P&B committee, or instructor with chair approval. The guidelines will be used as a reference to design WI class sections and by chairs, department curriculum committees, or department P&B committees, to assess whether classes fulfill the Writing-Intensive requirements for students.

Each instructor who teaches a WI class will be asked to fill out a self-assessment form prior to scheduling the class (sample form [here](#)). The forms will be collected by the Associate Provost's office for data and assessment, and to instruct professional development training.

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**D. Writing-Intensive Classes**

As part of a greater curriculum at Lehman College, WI classes function as spaces wherein writing is a tool to understand and to process the *content of the course*, regardless of the discipline (STEM, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Nursing, Business, Arts, Humanities).

Instructors can determine different modes of expression according to their discipline, students' learning modalities and needs: multimodal writing, podcasts, presentations, discussion, audiovisual recordings— with accompanying scripts, lab reports, etc.<sup>4</sup>

*1. A WI syllabus*

- will include some, not necessarily all, learning outcomes from the WI guidelines;
- will include some, not necessarily all, not necessarily only, writing assignments from the modes of writing listed in the guidelines;
- may also include learning outcomes related to the discipline, program, major or minor (not listed in the guidelines)
- may also include learning outcomes related to discipline-specific writing (not listed in the guidelines)

*2. A WI instructor*

- will have access to support to develop assignments and assessments in their class(es).
- will be incentivized to join a seminar to develop their class(es), similar to instructors who are new to teaching online, especially those who are new to teaching writing in their discipline
- will have access to designated Lehman faculty to adjust their courses as they see fit.

**E. Assessment in WI classes**

At the beginning and the end of each semester, WI instructors and students may be asked to fill out a short survey about the writing components of the class. The goal of the assessment would be to support college-wide assessment and WI course design professional development programming. Assessment may include questions related to:

- Whether writing was used to process/reflect on content and concepts
- The variety and frequency of writing assignments
- Whether there were assignments that prepared students for final projects or papers
- The types and amount of low stakes (ungraded and/or anonymous) writing
- Opportunities for feedback on writing (from instructor and/or from peers) and revision
- Whether writing was used to reflect on features of writing in the discipline (conventions, genre, research methods, etc.)

**F. The Syllabus for Writing-Intensive Classes**

To meet the learning outcomes of a WI class, a syllabus will *reflect* the following ideas:

1. **Writing is comprehensively integrated into the course.** Writing assignments in a WI class serve as a means to achieving mastery of class content. They can also serve to develop professional output, though that is not required – it may be required to meet program or department learning outcomes.
2. **Writing is a significant part of the coursework.** It is not recommended to assign a single major assignment. Instead, distribute the writing over a variety of assignments. The genres and mode of production should be appropriate for the course and discipline.

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<sup>4</sup> The use of multimodal text, podcast, presentation, would be accompanied with a process that includes writing.

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*Note: The finished writing will vary depending on the discipline.*

3. **Writing is a significant part of the course grade.** Though it is not required to put the majority of the weighted grade on a single major assignment, a WI class will include writing as 30% or more of the class grade, for example, discussion board posts, “think pieces” or reflection papers, in-class writing assignments, etc. The grading can also be based on completion, and/or collective rubrics, for example, completing lecture notes, or completing a peer-reflection exercise.

4. **Writing is learned through revision.** Feedback, peer-reflection, and/or revision will be part of the regular coursework/curriculum. *Note: Feedback and revision does not need to take place via drafts; it can be resubmission of a report, or a reflection.*

5. **Writing is explained and practiced in the course.** In the WI class, the instructor and the students will engage in reflection, conversation, and writing about the function of writing in the discipline, and the structures of writing in the discipline. The syllabus or course materials can explain the forms and types of writing instruction that the class will use, such as five-minute papers, concept maps, discussion board posts, annotated design notebooks, case study or case notes, reflection for a photo essay, etc. Alongside a writing activity, there could be a workshop to engage students to interactively learn the conventions of the writing style.

### G. Syllabus Checklist for a Writing-Intensive Class

#### Syllabus Checklist Self-Assessment Form

Before scheduling the section, department chairs, department P&B committees, or department curriculum committees, will remind instructors to [fill out a “syllabus checklist self-assessment” form](#). The forms will be collected by the Associate Provost’s office for data and assessment, and to inform professional development training.

Every syllabus for a WI class should:

- Contain 2-3 of the guiding principles selected from the list below
- Contain 3-7 learning outcomes related to writing-to-learn (see examples below)
- Include a description of ungraded or low stakes writing that will be used in the course
- Include a description of how smaller writing assignments will prepare students to complete a larger writing assignment or exam
- Include a description of a larger graded (high stakes) writing assignment (when applicable)

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**H. Guiding Principles for a Writing-Intensive Class****Choose 2-3 from the list to include in your syllabus.**

1. **Focus on process, content and genre:** Writing, reading, and discussion activities and assignments allow students to process the *content of the course* and identify, explore, and practice *genres of writing specific to the discipline*.
2. **Writing as a tool for learning and questioning:** Ungraded and/or anonymous writing assignments/activities invite students to ask questions, identify what they know and don't know. By expressing themselves, they make sense of, synthesize, and analyze course material (in writing, discussion, and/or presentations).
3. **Writing as a mode of evaluation (of texts, of ideas, of the world)** Writing functions as a discovery tool to explore and familiarize oneself with the genres and formats of a discipline, with a particular audience and/or workplace discourse in mind (lab reports in science, charts, music sheets, research-focused writing).
4. **Frequent and varied opportunities to write and revise:** Students should experience frequent and some varied writing assignments and activities, in different modalities, formats, and genres, with different types of assessment for the writing, and opportunities for self-assessment or peer-review when applicable. This helps to become aware of the choices one can make as a writer depending on the needs of a situation.
5. **Writing as multimodal:** Alphabetic, text-based writing is one possible mode of expression/communication that can be used in WI courses. Opportunities for students to engage and/or compose in multimodal writing fosters student confidence and versatility (e.g.: podcast, poster presentation, infographic, brochure, video, soundscape, online materials, etc.)
6. **Opportunities for multilingual expression:** WI classes can make room for students to write in their first language, particularly when writing is being used as a tool for learning and reflection.
7. **Scaffolding:** WI classes can help students build writing skills and work towards completing larger assignments by breaking them into smaller, discrete components. Smaller assignments support the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge.

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**I. Examples of Learning Outcomes for a Writing-Intensive Class**

*WI instructors may draft their own (department/program-specific WI learning outcomes are also welcome), or select 3-7 from the list below. This will depend on whether a WI class also includes discipline-specific / program-specific learning outcomes and assessment practices related to programs (Middle States, etc). For further guidance on learning outcomes, see this list of [measurable learning outcomes](#).*

Here are examples of measurable learning outcomes, organized into categories.

**By the end of the WI course, students will be able to...****Writing style / voice**

- Compare and contrast their own writing voice/style with others
- Practice and integrate different strategies of analytical expression, including in traditional essay forms and/or other media forms (digital or analog)
- Use writing to critically reflect on and evaluate their own learning processes and course performance
- Reflect on the differences between writing and learning in a WI-course vs. non-WI courses

**Writing Process and Discipline-Specific Conventions**

- Identify which characteristics of a text are an argument, evidence, and/or a thesis statement
- Reflect on various steps of the writing process and their outcomes, such as free-/ prewriting, drafting, research, revision
- Identify which steps of a writing process work or do not work for them
- Demonstrate the steps involved in developing high-stakes writing-based projects
- Select a genre and/or mode of writing for their final project
- Identify the components of a disciplinary genre of writing (lab report; surrealist poetry; cultural anthropology reflection, concert review, etc)
- Identify discipline-specific writing conventions
- Apply discipline-specific writing conventions in their written assignments
- Describe quantitative research study findings
- Formulate a \_\_\_\_\_ [type of writing] for \_\_\_\_\_ [audience]. (Example: formulate a treatment plan for a patient)
- Produce a \_\_\_\_\_ [piece of writing] which integrates knowledge on \_\_\_\_\_ [concepts from the course]. For example: Produce an individual treatment plan for the management of IDA which integrates knowledge on nutrition and individual and cultural food preferences.

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**Reading Comprehension**

- Identify components of a disciplinary genre of writing (lab report; surrealist poetry; cultural anthropology reflection, concert review, etc)
- Practice asking questions about the reading
- Use freewriting, note-taking, annotating, and/or journaling to make sense of course readings and concepts (low-stakes ungraded or anonymous writing)
- Use freewriting, note-taking, annotating, and journaling, to synthesize course readings and concepts (low-stakes ungraded or anonymous writing)
- Use freewriting, note-taking, annotating, and journaling, to analyze course readings and concepts (low-stakes ungraded or anonymous writing)
- Differentiate between \_\_\_\_\_ (concept 1) and \_\_\_\_\_ (concept 2) by analyzing \_\_\_\_\_ (disciplinary text) For example: Differentiate between IDA and Sickle cell anemia by analyzing the CBC results.

**Peer-Review**

- Identify genre components or course concepts in peers' writing (peer-reflection or peer-review)
- Differentiate among published observational research studies in students' literature reviews.

**Research & Resources**

- Evaluate sources from a variety of genres and perspectives
- Use credible sources to define terms
- Refer to multiple pieces of evidence to illustrate an argument / support an idea.
- Evaluate multiple pieces of evidence to identify which best illustrate an argument / support an idea
- Design research questions that help develop to a topic in the discipline
- Explain how the components of a detailed outline relate to each other

**AI and Writing**

- Describe how AI is used in writing in the discipline
- Review the uses of AI in writing in the discipline
- Review the ethical uses of AI in writing in the discipline
- **for syllabus policies and resources on Generative AI** <https://www.lehman.edu/ctl/For-Faculty/generative-ai/>

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**J. Examples of writing assignments** [to be added online]

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**K. Writing Intensive Guidelines Committee members and Contributors:**

Sarah Ohmer	Latin American & Latino Studies & Africana Studies (co-chair)
Sherry Deckman	Middle School & High School Education (co-chair)
Karin Beck	Interim Associate Provost
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Maeve Adams	Director of First Year Writing Program
Sophia Hsu	WAC Coordinator, English
Scott Calvin	Pre-Health Program Director
Yvette Rosario	Senior Registrar
Tyler Schmidt	Previous WAC Coordinator, English
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Amy White	Health Equity, Administration, and Technology
Sebastian Rojas Villa	Biology
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Maria Plochocki	English, Freshman Year Initiative
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## Members of the UCC committee

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 Prof. Douglas Oberlin, EXS-SCI  
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## Members of the Advising Council

General Faculty Executive Committee

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FP&B Committee

Lehman Senators

General Faculty

Student Government Association (SGA)