

Guidelines for Cluster 2B Learning Outcome #3

This learning outcome states that students will be able to “effectively communicate scientific information in writing.” To provide guidance for what expectations the Gen Ed Committee will have regarding the scope and nature of assignments related to this outcome, the following guidelines have been established.

Generally speaking, the Committee believes the following criteria will be satisfactory:

- A course should contain at least one writing assignment.
- This assignment(s) may be low-stakes (i.e., not involving rigorous grading or a substantial number of points—points might be awarded just for completing the assignment, for instance).
- The assignment(s) should involve some element of advance instruction or guidance about what is involved in communicating scientific information. This may take place during an in-class session or as part of the assignment’s description and directions.
- There should be some element of feedback to students about their success in meeting the learning outcome. This may take many forms, including the following:
 - Individual comments provided to each student.
 - Presentation to the class of selected student work that demonstrated proficient writing or that provided examples of common mistakes (and instructions about how to avoid them).
 - Peer review in which students assess one another’s writing using criteria established by the instructor.

Additionally, the Gen Ed Committee wants to express its understanding that the level of mastery expected among students is commensurate with their status as *developing* writers. Moreover, it is understood that the scope of writing instruction that can occur in the context of a typical 2B course cannot be presumed to address all elements of the writing process. In that spirit, the Committee suggests “effectively communicate” in this context mean:

- using appropriate conventions and discourse in the context of science.
- conveying appropriate contextual information about scientific evidence or data.
- that surface features (e.g., grammar, spelling, syntax) be given low priority in the instructions and feedback for the writing assignments.