

## **University Studies 1C Intermediate Writing Course Criteria**

*Approved by the Faculty Senate, December 2021*

Students who have completed ENL 101 and 102 are *emerging* writers. Most are just beginning to meet expectations for college-level writing, and so still require ongoing instruction, support, and guided practice in writing. Intermediate Writing courses foster continued growth in student writing by developing students' writing abilities in disciplinary contexts that involve a particular purpose and audience.

### **Intermediate Writing courses at UMassD meet the following criteria:**

#### **1. Intermediate Writing courses include pedagogies that develop student writing**

Intermediate Writing courses do more than simply assign writing. They include instruction about the writing process itself, they provide opportunities for students to practice their writing and receive formative feedback, and they encourage students to think about and reflect on their writing so that their writing choices become purposeful and contextually appropriate. The best pedagogical approaches instructors might adopt are numerous and always evolving, but might include some of the following:

- informal or low-stakes writing exercises that provide opportunities to practice without concern about earning a poor grade
- pre-writing exercises that use writing as a way of preparing to learn about a topic
- peer review
- outlining
- meta-reflection (writing about writing) in which students are asked to consider the writing decisions they make and to justify their choices or analyze the reasons for different writing moves they make
- one-on-one or group conferences about student written work
- iterations of multiple drafts, in which students have the opportunity to incorporate feedback from the instructor and/or peers
- modeling, in which the instructor reflects on their own writing in ways that allow students to understand how they approach their writing and comprehend disciplinary conventions
- breaking down writing assignments into manageable chunks for students
- giving feedback to students about their writing throughout the writing process
- scheduled time in class devoted to explicitly talking about the writing process and the conventions of discipline-appropriate writing

## **2. Writing is the central focus and comprises the preponderance of the student work in the course**

Most of the graded work for the course should be written work, and a substantial amount of student writing should be included in the course requirements. When thinking about the amount of writing, instructors are encouraged to think about all the types of writing students will do, including informal (pre-writing, low stakes, and freewriting) and formal writing, early drafts and final drafts. There is no formal quantification for this requirement, such as a page minimum, but the general idea is that this should be a course where writing is central to the learning objectives, not just a small component. Many types of courses, that is, can use writing as a means of learning; 1C courses explicitly help students learn to write.

## **3. A variety of writing types and forms are appropriate for Intermediate Writing courses, but a major focus should be on discipline-appropriate writing**

The 1C learning outcomes reference *discipline-appropriate writing*, which acknowledges that genres and forms of writing used in a discipline or expected of graduates vary considerably. The type of writing relevant to a 1C course will be determined by the department and instructors. Discipline-appropriate writing need not be limited to the kinds of writing done by academic professionals in that discipline (e.g. historians or biologists writing research articles for publication in a peer-reviewed journal), but could encompass other types of writing that graduates are frequently expected to do in their fields. For example, 1C classes may teach students how to write analytic/persuasive/critical essays and reports, white pages, reviews, journals, proposals, op-eds, lab reports/observations, written responses to readings, application of key concepts, free-writing, mathematical proofs, and/or reflections on their own written work.

## **4. Intermediate Writing courses should have a lower number of students, ideally fewer than 20**

This enrollment goal allows instructors to devote attention to each student's writing (in the form of in-person and written feedback), and aligns with the recommendations from the Conference on College Composition and Communication's (CCC) Position Statement on the Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing ([found here](#)). The Association of Departments of English (ADE) affirmed this position in their statement on class size ([found here](#)). The NECHE accreditation standards also suggest course enrollments matter, insofar as they can affect instructors' abilities to successfully teach and evaluate students. Standard 6.7, for example begins "Faculty assignments are consistent with the institution's mission and purposes. They are equitably determined to allow faculty adequate time to provide effective instruction, advise and evaluate students..." ([linked here](#)). Good writing instruction requires time, so high course caps impede instructors' ability to provide effective instruction and meaningful evaluation.