

Guidelines for Petitions for Special Circumstances Waivers of the CSULB Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement

What is a Special Circumstances Waiver of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement?

To obtain a degree or certificate from CSULB, students must demonstrate upper-division competence in academic writing in English by satisfying the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). In unusual and exceptional cases, students may petition for a special circumstances waiver of the GWAR. Special circumstances generally refer to rare situations or conditions (e.g., writing-related medical issues, related learning disabilities, physical conditions, or other unusual circumstances beyond the control of the student) that have prevented the student from successfully completing the GWAR in spite of the student's completion of the GWAR Placement Exam (GPE), formerly WPE, and required GWAR course(s) or other sustained efforts to improve their writing skills using appropriate resources.

How do students qualify for a Special Circumstances Waiver of the GWAR?

Students who believe they qualify for a special circumstances waiver must provide evidence of their sustained efforts to satisfy the GWAR and must document the exceptional circumstances that may qualify them for a waiver. This documentation might include, for example, medical records; medical, educational, psychological, counseling, or occupational evaluations; and/or evidence of the special circumstances. Evidence of the student's sustained efforts to satisfy the GWAR might include copies of recommendation forms received from GWAR Advisor(s) and documentation of tutoring or other forms of assistance that do not appear on transcripts. The student's WPE/GPE test record is provided by the Testing Department.

How do students request a Special Circumstances Waiver of the GWAR?

Petitions for special circumstances waivers are available from the Testing Department (Liberal Arts 5 - 173) or www.csulb.edu/testing. Petitions can also be requested from GWAR-Advisor@csulb.edu. In addition to completing the petition form, the student must also submit a letter describing the special circumstances that have prevented the student from satisfying the GWAR along with appropriate documentation and evidence of the student's efforts to satisfy the GWAR.

Students submit their completed petition and supporting documents to GWAR-Advisor@csulb.edu. Petitions are evaluated by the GWAR Committee, and students are notified of the committee's decision by email in approximately **four to six weeks**.

What can students do if they don't qualify for a Special Circumstances Waiver of the GWAR?

Students who don't qualify for a special circumstances waiver should pursue the following options to help prepare or assist them with meeting the campus GWAR requirements:

- Students with physical or learning disabilities that interfere with their ability to demonstrate writing proficiency may qualify for BMAC testing accommodations. Students who believe they qualify should request a referral from the Bob Murphy Access Center (SSSC, Room 110). Please contact BMAC at BMAC@csulb.edu or (562) 985-5401, for further information.
- If they have not already done so, students who lack English language proficiency should enroll in the following course:
English 301A (English Proficiency) is 3-unit, intermediate course in English usage for students who need English language development beyond English 100. Contact the English Department for more information.
- Students should also seek tutoring and other one-on-one assistance from the following resources:

The University Writing Center <https://www.csulb.edu/university-writing-center> provides writing instruction through tutoring, workshops, and online resources. Instructional activities include one-on-one tutoring and GPE preparation workshops.

**Petition for Special Circumstances Waiver of the
CSULB Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement**

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address: _____ Apt _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

Student ID # _____

Anticipated Graduation Date: _____ Undergraduate Major: _____

GWAR Placement Exam (GPE): Date taken: _____ Score _____ Format: Online In-Person

Please attach the following documents to this petition (refer to "Guidelines for Petitions for Special Circumstances Waivers of the CSULB Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement" for detailed information pertaining to these documents):

- 1) Letter describing the special circumstances that have prevented you from satisfying the GWAR (required)
- 2) Any supporting documents you have for exceptional circumstances, such as medical records or other evidence of special circumstances (optional)
- 3) Evidence of sustained efforts to satisfy the GWAR (required)
- 4) Recent CSULB Transcripts, either official or unofficial (required)
- 5) Record of WPE, GPE and/or Portfolio results; must be obtained from the Testing Department, Liberal Arts 5, Room 173 or testing @csulb.edu (required).

Submit this petition form and all appropriate documents to GWAR-Advisor@csulb.edu

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date received by GWAR Advising: _____



For GWAR Committee Use Only:

This student's petition for waiver is _____ Approved _____ Not Approved

If "Not Approved," the Committee recommends the following options:

Date of Decision: _____ GWAR Committee Representative: _____