

## **Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Policy**

This policy statement supersedes 04-06.

The following policy statement was recommended by the Academic Senate on October 4, 2012 and approved by the president on December 20, 2012.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The California State University (CSU) Chancellor's Executive Order 665 (EO 665), Determination of Competence in English and Mathematics, mandated in part that all students must demonstrate competence in writing skills at the upper division level as a requirement for the baccalaureate degree, and, if not previously met in the CSU, for a second baccalaureate degree or a graduate degree.
- 1.2 At California State University Long Beach (CSULB), our highly valued degrees include evidence of the ability to write effectively. At all levels and in all disciplines, CSULB is committed to developing students' academic, professional, and public writing skills as demonstrated by the following learning outcomes:
- Employ a process which includes invention, drafting and revision;
  - Use conventions appropriate for particular audiences;
  - Express and synthesize their own and others' ideas;
  - Demonstrate comprehension of texts by developing accurate summaries, reasoned analyses, and responses;
  - Evaluate and incorporate source materials as appropriate to a given task; and
  - Apply the conventions of standard written English.
- 1.3 Therefore, it is the intent of this GWAR policy to implement appropriate assessment and instruction to help all CSULB students achieve these goals.

### **2. GWAR PLACEMENT EXAMINATION**

- 2.1 CSULB students who are required to fulfill the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) must first take the CSULB GWAR Placement Examination (GPE) or an alternate assessment approved by the GWAR Committee.
- 2.2 Continuing undergraduate students shall take the GPE or alternate assessment when they have completed between 30 and 50 CSULB baccalaureate units.
- 2.3 Upper-division transfer students shall complete the GPE preferably before they enroll at CSULB, but no later than their first semester of enrollment.
- 2.4 Graduate students who have previously (1) received degrees from accredited colleges and universities in the United States; or (2) received degrees from an accredited non-US institution located in a country where English is a primary language of communication; or (3) attained an appropriate score on the analytical writing component of an approved test are exempt from the GPE. All other graduate students shall either self-place into a low- or mid-range pathway in consultation with their graduate advisor or take the GPE in their first semester of enrollment.
- 2.5 The GPE will be used to place students into pathways that give them opportunities to achieve required learning outcomes. Students may take the GPE only once unless they are approved to take it a second time by a GWAR advisor.
- 2.6 The GPE and its administration will be monitored for validity/reliability by the GPE Advisory Committee, whose membership and charge are outlined in Section 4 of this policy.

### 3. PATHWAYS

#### 3.1 Undergraduate Pathways

3.1.1 A student's score on the GPE shall determine which of the following course sequences the student must complete to fulfill the GEAR:

3.1.1.1 Students with an upper range score on the GPE shall successfully complete (with a C or better) a General Education capstone course certified as writing intensive by the GEGC.

3.1.1.2 Students with a mid-range score on the GPE must meet the following criteria:

- Complete a GEAR portfolio course, including the submission of a portfolio that earns a passing score; and subsequently
- Successfully complete (with a C or better) a General Education capstone course certified as writing intensive by the GEGC.
- Students may appeal to complete requirements concurrently if required for timely graduation. Appeals will be reviewed by the Associate Vice President, Undergraduate Studies or designee.

3.1.1.3 Students with a low-range score on the GPE must meet the following criteria:

- Successfully complete (with a C or better) English 301A or equivalent, and subsequently:
- Complete a GEAR portfolio course, including the submission of a portfolio that earns a passing score; and subsequently:
- Successfully complete (with a C or better) a General Education capstone course certified as writing intensive by the GEGC.
- Students may appeal to complete requirements concurrently if required for timely graduation. Appeals will be reviewed by the Associate Vice President, Undergraduate Studies or designee.

3.1.2 Undergraduate students with a low- or mid-range score on the GPE must begin their pathway within two semesters of taking the GPE. These students must enroll in an appropriate pathway course each semester until they have been deemed ready to take the Writing Intensive capstone course. Registration may be prevented for students not complying with timely completion of the GEAR requirement.

#### 3.2 Graduate Pathways

3.2.1 Unless a graduate student self places or is exempt from the GPE as specified in 2.4, his or her score on the GPE shall determine which of the following pathways the student must complete to fulfill the GEAR:

3.2.1.1 Students who are exempt from the GPE and students with an upper range score on the GPE shall successfully meet any writing requirements specified by the student's department.

3.2.1.2 Students with a mid-range score must meet the following criteria:

- Complete a GEAR portfolio course, including the submission of a portfolio that earns a passing score; and subsequently
- Successfully meet any writing requirements specified by the student's department.
- Students may appeal to complete requirements concurrently if required for timely advancement to candidacy. Appeals will be reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee.

3.2.1.3 Students with a low-range score on the GPE must meet the following criteria:

- Successfully complete (with a C or better) English 301A or equivalent, and subsequently:
- Complete a GEAR portfolio course, including the submission of a portfolio that earns a passing score; and subsequently:
- Successfully meet any writing requirements specified by the student's department.
- Students may appeal to complete requirements concurrently if required for timely advancement to candidacy. Appeals will be reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Studies or designee.

3.2.2 Graduate students with a low- or mid-range score on the GPE must begin their pathway no later than the semester after taking the GPE. These students must enroll in an appropriate pathway course each semester until they have been deemed ready to take any writing requirements specified by the student's department. Registration may be prevented for students not complying with timely completion of the GEAR requirement.

#### **4. GPE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

4.1 The GPE Advisory Committee shall report to the GEAR Committee.

4.2 The charge of the GPE Advisory Committee is as follows:

- Approve the format and administration of the GPE
- Provide advisement concerning the appropriateness and value of forms of the GPE
- Ensure that the reliability and validity of forms of the GPE are monitored
- Ensure that the GPE is continually updated
- Approve any scoring guides used for the GPE
- Propose any suggested changes to the GPE to the GEAR Committee

4.3 Membership of the GPE Advisory Committee shall include the following:

- Six instructors with experience in writing instruction and writing assessment, at least three of whom have taught a GEAR portfolio course, and at least one of whom has knowledge of effective writing assessment of speakers of other languages
- GEAR Coordinator (ex-officio)
- Director from Testing, Evaluation and Assessment (or designee)
- Director from Disabled Student Services (or designee)

4.4 Elected members shall serve staggered, three-year terms to ensure continuity.

4.5 Elected members may serve consecutive terms.

4.6 The GPE Advisory Committee shall annually elect a Chair, Vice-chair, and Secretary.

#### **5. GEAR COMMITTEE**

5.1 The GEAR Committee shall report to the Curriculum and Educational Policy Council of the Academic Senate.

5.2 The duties of the GEAR Committee shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Supervise the GPE Advisory Committee and its oversight of placement assessments used for the GEAR;
- Approve the scores for low, mid, and upper ranges on the GPE;
- Review the GPE at least once every three years;
- Establish and disseminate preferred qualifications for faculty being considered for teaching GEAR portfolio courses, such as background in teaching composition, teaching English as a second language or other evidence of experience in developing academic writing skills;
- Approve and continue to monitor GEAR portfolio courses, by reviewing portfolios. Approve alternate assessments other than the GPE for placement into GEAR pathways;
- Coordinate implementation of writing intensive capstone courses with the GEGC;
- Approve professional development processes developed for faculty who will teach portfolio courses and intensive writing courses;
- Advise colleges in developing additional courses for the GEAR approved pathways;
- Oversee the distribution of information to students, faculty members, and advisors about resources available to help students develop the required level of writing skills and about policies and procedures for meeting the GEAR;
- Consult with any university offices that represent populations of students, faculty, staff or administrators that may be significantly affected by a proposed change to the GEAR;

5.3 Requests for exceptions to the GEAR shall be made to the GEAR committee.

5.4 Decisions of the GEAR Committee on the approval or disapproval of examinations or other writing assessments proposed as a means for satisfying the GEAR, on the training process for faculty seeking to become qualified as readers of GEAR writing assessments, on exceptions to the GEAR, or on other matters may be appealed to the Curriculum and Educational Policies Council and, if still unresolved, to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate.

5.5 Membership of the GEAR Committee shall include the following:

- Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (or designee)
- GEAR Coordinator
- Director, Testing, Evaluation and Assessment (or designee)
- Senior Director of the Center for International Education (or designee)
- Representative from the University Advising Council, selected by that Council

- Two (2) faculty members from the College of Liberal Arts and one (1) faculty member from each of the other colleges, including the University Library. At least one (1) member must be probationary or tenured, and at least one (1) member must be a lecturer. At least one (1) member shall have specific training, background, or expertise in teaching and assessing writing in second language learners. In addition, at least three (3) members shall have experience or expertise in teaching and/or assessing university writing
- One (1) member representing the composition program coordinator or the Writer's Resource Lab Coordinator (or designee)
- One (1) student member, selected by the Associated Students, Inc.

5.6 Faculty members shall serve staggered, three-year terms to ensure continuity. Members may serve consecutive terms.

5.7 The committee shall annually elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

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EFFECTIVE: Immediately

Obsolete Policy