

26-02
March 23, 2026

Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Policy

This Policy Statement was recommended by the Academic Senate on January, 22, 2026, and approved by the President on March 12, 2026.
(supersedes PS 12-12 and 04-06)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The California State University (CSU) Chancellor's Office policy for Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Determination of Competence in English ([CSU Policy Stat ID 16519465](#); effective 9/10/2024, formerly EO 0665) mandates in part that all students must "demonstrate competence in writing skills at the upper division level as a requirement for the baccalaureate degree."

California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) is committed to developing students' academic, professional, public, and personal writing skills. At CSULB, students must demonstrate the ability to write effectively in order to earn their degrees. They shall demonstrate this ability by meeting the following student learning outcomes: Students shall:

- Employ a process which includes invention, drafting, and revision
 - Use conventions appropriate for particular audiences
 - Express and synthesize their own and others' ideas clearly and correctly
 - Demonstrate comprehension of texts by developing accurate summaries, reasoned analyses, and responses
 - Demonstrate proficiency in writing to learn, writing to engage, and writing in the discipline
 - Evaluate and incorporate source materials, including academic and other, as appropriate to a given task
 - Apply the conventions of standard written English
- 1.2 Students may only utilize generative artificial intelligence tools as supplementary resources to support their learning and achievement of writing outcomes, and each instructor will determine what use of generative artificial intelligence is consistent with course guidelines and ethical academic practices for their course.
- 1.3 It is the intent of this Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) policy to implement appropriate assessment and instruction to help all CSULB students achieve the learning outcomes.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 This document describes a sequence of two writing courses that all students must complete successfully in order to graduate. This document also details supplemental learning activities that

students may be expected to undertake in service to their GWAR completion. It is the purpose of this document to clarify the roles of various entities on campus in providing writing instruction and assuring the writing competencies of CSULB graduates.

2.2 Objectives of the CSULB GWAR Program:

- Sustain the writing of students across their academic careers
- Support implementation of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) policy
- Increase student writing proficiency across courses and within their majors
- Increase student engagement in learning through writing
- Promote revisions of written text, based on feedback students receive from their instructor and/or peers, to address specific audiences for specific purposes
- Introduce students to discipline-specific genre conventions such as organization, evidentiary support, and citation styles
- Assess student writing development over time and writing proficiency by graduation
- Increase student preparedness for writing in the workplace and communities beyond campus
- Offer professional development and redesign opportunities for writing course instructors
- Attract faculty from every college and department on campus to seminars, workshops, and individual GWAR consultations
- Create a campus culture that supports writing and a faculty community with expertise in writing instruction
- Help the campus design and maintain effective mechanisms for approving and recertifying GWAR courses
- Support instructors and students through online writing skills modules developed by writing experts

2.3 CSULB GE and GWAR Writing-focused Undergraduate Requirements in Alignment with CSU Systemwide Requirements:

2.3.1 In order to graduate with an undergraduate degree from CSULB, all undergraduate students must satisfy writing-focused coursework requirements in alignment with CSU systemwide requirements. These include:

2.3.1.1 Satisfaction of the General Education Area 1A English Composition (GE1A) requirement as described in the CSULB Policy on General Education.

2.3.1.2 Satisfaction of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) via completion of a CSULB-approved GWAR course (designated by “GWAR” notation).

2.3.2 Learning to write effectively is essential for all CSULB graduates. Writing skills take many years of intentional study to develop, and graduates who write effectively have developed both discipline-general and discipline-specific habits and strategies. As a result, all programs are encouraged to assess the needs of the populations they serve and to integrate structured experiences to learn writing skills into their program requirements beyond the minimum requirements in 2.3.1 as appropriate.

2.3.3 CSULB GWAR courses must be upper-division undergraduate courses that meet all definitions within this policy and standards established by the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Committee (GWARC). GWAR course prerequisites must include successful completion of the GE Foundation according to the CSULB Policy on General Education.

2.3.4 Grades and Repetition of Courses: Students must complete their GE1A and GVAR courses with a grade of C or higher.

2.3.4.1 Students who do not earn a grade of C or better in a lower-division course that satisfies GE1A in order to meet the prerequisites for a GVAR course may satisfy this prerequisite by earning a grade of C or better when either retaking the same course or taking another GE1A course.

2.3.4.2 Students who do not earn a grade of C or better in a GVAR course may satisfy this requirement by earning a grade of C or better when either retaking the same course or taking another GVAR course.

2.3.4.3 Students in need of support while taking the GVAR course may be recommended to the University Writing Center for writing assistance.

2.3.5 In accordance with CSU system policy, certification of GVAR completed at another CSU campus (including through the CSU Fully Online program) will be accepted at CSULB when the following conditions are met:

- The student was officially enrolled at the CSU campus that certified completion of the GVAR.
- The certifying course carries a minimum of three upper-division semester units and is designated by that campus as meeting its GVAR or upper-division writing requirement.
- The student earned a grade of C or better (or CR, where applicable).
 - CSULB may require verification of course certification when documentation from the prior CSU campus is unclear or when multiple completion pathways exist.

2.3.6 GVAR courses shall be reviewed and recertified based on Standard Course Outlines as well as a representative sample of course syllabi. Further details of the review and recertification process shall be specified by the GVARC.

2.4 Definition of GVAR Courses and Course Elements

GVAR courses are a culminating writing experience for CSULB students. In GVAR courses, students use writing in the English language to inquire into and respond to course topics, engage in rigorous study of a body of knowledge essential to various audiences, and communicate that knowledge clearly to those audiences in writing. Writing may emphasize, for instance, research, organizational, citational, terminological, and rhetorical strategies. In GVAR courses, faculty teach students about genre, audience, and the purpose of writing within the relevant discipline(s), and they design recursive processes for improving writing. More technically, GVAR courses are courses that are certified by the GVARC to integrate significant writing and writing instruction into the topic of the course.

2.4.1 Definition of GVAR Courses

GVAR courses are courses in or designated by the major/degree program that integrate writing and writing instruction with discipline-specific subject matter of the course. In GVAR courses, students use writing in the English language to make claims about disciplinary issues and questions, engage in inquiry about a body of knowledge essential to the major, and communicate that knowledge to professional and nonprofessional audiences.

As a culminating student writing experience, faculty will teach students the genres, audiences,

and purposes of writing in a discipline, and design recursive processes for working with writing so that students demonstrate writing proficiency in that major. The GWARC will work with department faculty to establish advanced standards for these courses, and to provide training in responding to and assessing student writing for proficiency.

2.4.2 In GWAR courses, and in ways that are appropriate to the discipline(s), students will:

- Write and read texts in order to question, investigate, and draw conclusions about ideas and issues on a selected subject
- Practice key textual strategies such as finding, evaluating, analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting appropriate primary and secondary sources, and integrating their own ideas with those of others
- Learn and apply discipline-specific genre conventions such as organization, evidentiary support, style, tone, and citation styles
- Revise written text, based on feedback they receive from their instructor and/or peers, to address specific audiences for specific purposes
- Write frequently in the forms or genres of writing appropriate to the discipline or subject area
- Reduce errors in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling

2.4.3 Policy for GWAR courses:

- The course is at least 3 units.
- Course enrollment shall not exceed 25 students.
- The course includes a substantial writing component, that is, at least a total of 5,000 words in the various assignments throughout the semester.
- The course includes writing instruction, i.e., class time spent on discussing writing strategies and/or workshopping writing.
- Writing assignments in the course are a substantial factor in evaluating student performance, that is, at least a total of two-thirds of the final grade is based on the student's writing.
- There is early (usually week three of the semester) feedback on student writing and further feedback throughout the term.
- At some point, the course requires rewriting/revision of a substantial assignment.
- Assessment criteria or rubrics clearly designate writing proficiencies as all or a portion of assignment grades included in the writing component of the course

2.5 Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (CSU GWAR)

CSU Long Beach meets the CSU GWAR requirement through the provision of upper-division writing courses in each baccalaureate degree program. Each degree program is required to designate one or more GWAR courses to be taken by students in their junior or senior year. Satisfactory completion of this GWAR course fulfills the GWAR requirement.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Academic departments are responsible for creating, developing, or referring students to high-quality writing proficiency GWAR courses (or transitioning existing courses to GWAR). If an academic department offers a GWAR course, it is additionally responsible for (1) maintaining and upholding policies and procedures for writing courses, (2) developing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for GWAR courses and carrying out regular assessments, and (3) providing GWAR course assessment information as requested by the Provost. For additional information department Chairs and college Deans are encouraged to contact the GWARC.

3.1 In particular, academic departments offering one or more GVAR courses are responsible for:

- Developing their own SLOs for the GVAR courses
- Assessing GVAR course SLOs, in accordance with the course requirements and elements listed in this policy, as well as by discipline-specific conventions and formats for written communication
- Providing GVAR course information to the Provost as requested. Requests may be for course syllabi, student writing samples, reflective surveys, or faculty assessment of student writing proficiency needed by the Chancellor's Office, the Provost's Office, college Deans, the University Writing Center, the GVARC, the Testing Department, or the Office of Institutional Research.
- Working with the GVARC as needed to facilitate faculty in developing and regularly assessing SLO.

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