**State Council for Higher Education for Virginia**

**Assessment of Competencies**

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON  
June 30, 2019**

**Definition**. The ability to develop and communicate ideas effectively in writing as appropriate to a given context, purpose, and audience. It includes a variety of styles, genres, and media, including computer-mediated communications.

**Learning Outcomes.** Written communication proficiency was evaluated by measuring students’ abilities in four categories as expressed in an essay written for English 202 writing seminar.

Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the varying strategies to convey arguments, main ideas and support/evidence.

Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the varying patterns of composition organization and development.

Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the audience, the role of the writer, and rhetorical strategies.

Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of writing conventions and correctness.

Students will understand the process of editing and revising their written work.

**Standard(s) for Proficiency.** Of the four rating categories (limited proficiency, minimal proficiency, average proficiency, and high proficiency), at least 85% of students will receive an overall rating of *average* or *high*. It is also our goal for each student to score at least 85% for *each* of the four learning objectives. The assessment provides a point of comparison to gauge the proficiencies of a cross-section of all of our students in written communication.

**Description of Methodology Used to Gather Evidence of Proficiency.** Essays are collected from English 202, a writing seminar with our Writing Intensive designation with a variety of topics that serve as a focus for the writing assignments. Students from freshmen all the way to seniors are allowed to enroll, and enrollments show that the majority are juniors and seniors. Of the 149 students enrolled, 128 essays were collected and evaluated. The essays were scored after semester’s end using the four-point rubric noted above. Scoring is blind, using non-instructors outside of course grades.

**Summary**. Results of this assessment are presented in the tables below. The benchmark of 85% of students meeting the written communication standard of *average* or *high proficiency* is not met for three of the individual learning outcomes, although it is met for the first learning outcome, Ideas.

**Results of Written Communication Assessment by Category**

**(from 128 essays)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Ideas | Organization | Voice | Editing |
| Not Proficient | 14% | 16% | 29% | 37% |
| Proficient | 86% | 84% | 71% | 63% |

Report prepared by:

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