

Writing Proficiency Program

Goals/Objectives:

- To create an environment at Lincoln University in which writing skills and writing instruction are given the highest priority
- To ensure that Lincoln University students graduate with a high standard of competence in formal English writing as reflected in course work throughout the disciplines
- To provide Lincoln University students with writing skills that will ensure the achievement of their lifelong personal and professional goals

Executive Summary:

The Lincoln University academic community—faculty, staff, administrators, and members of the Board of Trustees—recognizes the imperative of graduating students who are proficient writers in every discipline—particularly the one in which they have majored. Toward this end, the Department of English and Mass Communications, with support of the University Writing Committee, has coordinated the directives of the Board of Trustees with the intentions of the faculty to create a university-wide structure which it believes will greatly enhance the writing proficiency of Lincoln University students.

This strategic plan requires of students a high performance standard and offers many opportunities to develop writing skills, remediation, and a system of accountability in reaching both university-wide and personal writing goals. It is composed of four distinct yet interdependent initiatives, which include the Composition Core Sequence, the Writing Proficiency Exam, Writing Intensive Courses, and the Writing Portfolio. It includes three assessment instruments:

- Successful completion of WPE administered in E102
- Successful completion of four writing intensive courses
- Successful completion of portfolio in major department

The Writing Proficiency Program (WPP) is administered by the Department of English and Mass Communications in cooperation with Lincoln University's faculty in all academic departments. It uses the following key individuals as facilitators:

- Freshman Writing Coordinator (internal)
 - Oversees freshman placement
 - Coordinates core curriculum development
 - Oversees evaluation standards and procedures of Writing Proficiency Exam
 - Oversees WPP assessment
- Writing in the Disciplines (WID) Coordinator
 - Coordinates Faculty Workshops in Departments

- To develop criteria for writing intensive courses
- To develop criteria for portfolios
- To offer feedback on writing related issues (assessment, writing standards, evaluation, etc.)
- Serves as liaison between Department of English and Mass Communications and other university departments

Composition Core Sequence

There are five courses in the English composition sequence. The first two, ENG 100 Basic Writing I and ENG 101 Basic Writing II, prepare the student for E102, and are not counted toward graduation credit. ENG 100 covers basic English grammar and syntax, and focuses on the paragraph as the fundamental unit of writing. ENG 101 moves the student from the paragraph to the essay, using rhetorical modes as the organizing principle (narration, description, comparison/contrast, process analysis, cause/effect, etc.) Grammar and syntax are addressed at a more advanced level.

ENG 102, English Composition I, is considered the first college level writing course. E102 gives students practice in writing college level essays, organized according to rhetorical modes. Issues of syntax, grammar, spelling, and punctuation are addressed systematically according to the needs of the class. In E102, students are also introduced to the skills needed to develop a portfolio.

In order to pass ENG 102, students must pass both the course itself and the Writing Proficiency Exam that is administered three times during the semester. By the time a student passes ENG 102, he/she is considered to be writing at a college level.

ENG 103, English Composition II, offers instruction in the rhetorical structures of the argument essay, provides an introduction to literature according to genre, and reviews the process and format of the college level research paper.

Students are placed in one of these four courses according to their scores on required standardized tests (ACT, SAT). Misplacements (though rare) are addressed by having a student complete a portfolio in the course in which he/she is placed. The portfolio comprises writing assignments required in the subsequent course. The “skip” portfolio is evaluated by a panel of English and Mass Communications faculty and is used to determine whether or not the student is sufficiently prepared to “skip” to the next composition course in the sequence.

II. Writing Proficiency Exam

The Writing Proficiency Exam is administered in the E102 course. Students are closely monitored as they write an in-class essay on a topic identified by Department of English and Mass Communications faculty. The exam is offered at least three times per semester. Essays are graded by the teaching faculty according to a common grading rubric established by the Department of English and Mass Communications and reviewed by faculty in grading standards workshops. Students must receive a B- or better on this essay in order to pass both the ENG 102 course and the Writing Proficiency Exam.

Writing Intensive Courses

Each academic department has designated a minimum of four (4) courses for each major which emphasize writing. Faculty teaching these courses will participate in workshops, coordinated by the WID English Department representative, in which they design specific course assignments consonant with the standards of the Writing Proficiency Program. These faculty will use a common English Handbook (Harbrace) so that the standard for grammar, syntax, and research formats remains standard throughout the university. Students will use their work in these classes to contribute to the Senior Portfolio (described below).

Senior Portfolio

Every student graduating from Lincoln University must prepare at the end of the junior year a portfolio of written work. The materials in the portfolio may be assembled from each of the Writing Intensive courses and must include a minimum of four writing assignments, one of which must be a documented research paper. The criteria for each major's portfolio will be developed in consultation with the assigned English WID professor. The portfolio will be reviewed by a team of faculty from the major department, assisted by the WID representative. Successful completion of the portfolio requirement is a prerequisite for graduation. Students who fail to complete this requirement (either by failing to submit a portfolio or having it rejected by the Committee) will be required to take a Writing in the Discipline course for remediation offered in the Department of English and Mass Communication (i.e., Advanced Writing, Technical Writing, or Business Writing), and to resubmit the portfolio. These courses will address discipline-specific writing forms and assist with the successful completion and resubmission of the portfolio.

**** Only those students who have successfully completed all aspects of Lincoln University's Writing Proficiency Program--the E102 Writing Proficiency Exam, four Writing Intensive courses, and the Writing Portfolio--will be eligible for the notation of "Successful Completion of the Writing Proficiency Standards" on their diploma. This notation is a graduation requirement.**