

The University of Montana – Missoula

**University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment (UPWA)
2022 Annual Report**

Amy Ratto Parks, MA, MFA, EdD
UPWA Program Coordinator
Associate Director, Writing and Public Speaking Center

Contents

Overview/Background	3
Overview of the UPWA Annual Cycle	3
Spring and Fall Student Participation.....	3
Spring Writing Assessment Workshop.....	4
Fall Writing Symposium	4
2021-2022 UPWA Cycle.....	4
2021 Fall Writing Symposium	4
2021-2022 Submission Survey Revision.....	5
2022 Spring Writing Assessment Workshop.....	5
2022 UPWA Data	6
2021-2022 Submission Participation.....	6
2014-2022 Scoring Percentage Comparison	6
2022 Qualitative Data.....	8
2022 Student Survey Data.....	9
Major Takeaways	12
Looking Toward the Future.....	13
Appendix A: Writing Course Guidelines	14
Procedure	14
Procedure.....	14
Number:	14
Appendix:	14
I. Overview.....	14
II. Guidelines.....	15
Appendix B: Student Survey Questions	18
Appendix C: UPWA Holistic Rubric	19
Appendix D: UPWA Data Management Procedures.....	21

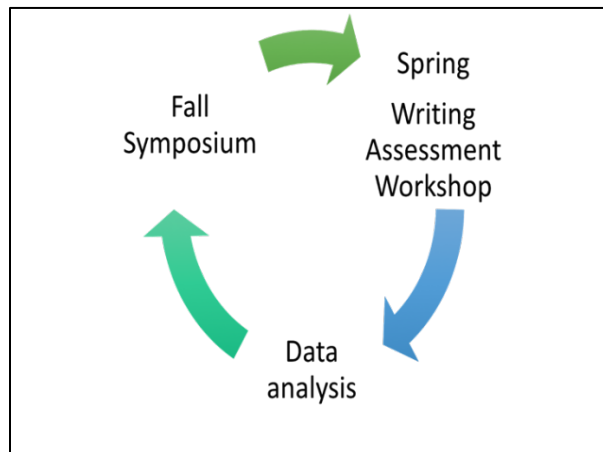
Overview/Background

The University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment (UPWA) assess student writing from Intermediate Writing Courses across the curriculum at University of Montana's Mountain Campus, Missoula College, and Bitterroot College. Intermediate Writing courses are part of the General Education Writing Requirement. Intermediate Writing Course status is awarded by the ASCRC Writing Committee based upon a course application; the proposed course must meet the required Intermediate Writing Course Guidelines (Appendix A).

The UPWA was approved by the Faculty Senate in Fall 2013 and replaced the Upper-division Writing Proficiency Assessment on the UM-Missoula campus. The current assessment provides relevant information about student writing proficiency by assessing and scoring student-revised papers from Intermediate Writing courses using a Holistic Scoring Rubric that was developed locally by faculty members. All sampled papers have come from courses who have Intermediate Writing Course status and because Intermediate Writing Courses are a General Education Writing Requirement, the UPWA offers insight into academic work happening at the heart of students' overall education at UM.

Overview of the UPWA Annual Cycle

The annual UPWA cycle is one of the things that helps make it a unique writing assessment in higher education. The annual cycle consists of three core overlapping elements that allow us to collect and observe timely data. Over the course of each academic year, there are two submission periods for student work (the end of fall and spring semester), a spring Writing Assessment workshop, and a fall Writing Symposium.



Spring and Fall Student Participation

At the end of each fall and spring semester, all students in Intermediate Writing (IW) courses take a short survey and submit their work to the UPWA via a secure Submittable. The success of this part of the process relies heavily on bridge-building, campus collaboration, and communication between the UPWA Coordinator, the course instructors, and the students. Communication about the UPWA begins two weeks before the semester begins, when the coordinator reaches out to all IW teachers to 1) let them know they are teaching an IW course, 2) offer background and links to information about the UPWA, 3) share instructional resources, 4) share language for them to include on their syllabi and Moodle page.

By mid-semester, the coordinator creates a survey and a new submission form in Submittable; each semester has a unique submission link for tracking purposes, but the survey and submission language are identical. The submission portal assigns a code to each paper so that samples can be confidential. Toward the end of the semester, the coordinator receives a list of student emails from the IW courses from the Registrar's Office and sends the students a short, friendly email about the upcoming UPWA submissions deadline.

Because we encourage students to submit revised work, the submissions link is opened two weeks before the end of the semester and left open until one month after classes have ended. During this time, the coordinator writes back and forth with students who have questions or issues with their submissions, and sends a series of reminders as the deadline for submissions approaches.

Spring Writing Assessment Workshop

The Spring Writing Assessment Workshop (WAW) is a pedagogical conversation about writing that is facilitated through a lens of professional development and which results in data for the UPWA. In order to prepare for the assessment workshop, the UPWA Coordinator chooses a randomized selection of essays (through the use of a random number generator). The coordinator then reviews each selected work and removes submissions that identify the student, course, or instructor in any way.

The WAW is a regional day-long assessment workshop open to faculty, new writing teachers, graduate teaching assistants, high school teachers, and dual enrollment teachers. The group's hearty, cross-disciplinary conversations result in scoring and coding the writing; the scores and codes generate data that can be analyzed to make observations about the kinds of writing practices happening in Intermediate Writing courses at UM. The quantitative and qualitative data from the WAW then guides the development of the Fall Writing Symposium, a faculty development event focused on practical problem-solving in the higher education writing classroom.

Fall Writing Symposium

The Fall Writing Symposium is an annual gathering designed to foster a shared conversation about the teaching of writing across disciplines. Specifically, the topic of each annual conversation is drawn from observations and insights from the previous spring's workshop and subsequent analysis of the scoring data. The explicit goal of the event is to find practical applications for locally generated questions about writing. For example, if the UPWA data shows a trend toward weakness in organization, the Fall Symposium will focus on how to teach organization. If the data shows weakness in information literacy, the Fall Symposium will teach instructors how to understand, teach, and assess the Information Literacy outcomes. Although the Fall Symposium always attends to one specific question, the power of the event lies in the diverse, cross-campus conversations that spiral out into more general philosophical and logistical questions about writing in higher education.

2021-2022 UPWA Cycle

2021 Fall Writing Symposium

The goal of each annual symposium is to offer a continued and more practical application of an observation made during the spring writing workshop. Data analysis of the qualitative data and feedback from the 2021 UPWA workshop indicated that students were struggling with sentence-level decisions in grammar, usage, and mechanics. Therefore, the fall 2021 event focused on teaching instructors about why sentence-level issues arise and how they can strengthen their teaching in that area.

The 8th annual Fall Writing Symposium, *Working with Grammar*, was held on Friday, November 5, from 12-1:30 pm via Zoom. The two explicit goals of this workshop were to 1) re-frame and expand how we think about the concept of grammar and 2) to offer practical teaching applications for the classroom. The beginning of the workshop asked participants to consider research about the relationship between thinking and writing in order to ask questions about when and where strict grammatical conventions are vital. The second half offered insights into teaching strategies that can unintentionally position students for weak writing as well as effective strategies for supporting writing and creating classes where students are able to learn to help themselves.

The event included 11 participants from Pharmacy Practice, Missoula College, Art, the UM Entertainment Management Program, the Writing Center, and English, though others reached out to request the details and information from the event. Following the event, all teachers of Intermediate Writing received a PDF copy of the slides from the event.

2021-2022 Submission Survey Revision

From 2013 until 2021, the UPWA data included student responses to the same survey questions. In the spring of 2021, the survey data failed to report from Moodle. During the same semester, the assessment was migrated to the Submittable platform, which includes a survey tool, but required us to redesign our questions. During the fall of 2021, the members of the Writing Committee reviewed and approved eight new survey questions (Appendix C).

2022 Spring Writing Assessment Workshop

The Spring 2021 Writing Assessment Workshop (WAW) diverged from the previous format in response to our software migration and COVID impacts on our campus. The Writing Committee voted to follow a similar procedure for the Spring 2022 WAW.

There were eight readers for the Spring 2022 WAW; six veteran UPWA readers and two experienced assessment readers who were new to the UPWA. Readers' disciplines included Literature, Biology, Pharmacy Practice, Creative Writing, Linguistics, ESL, and Education. All readers were sent a collection of files with which to review the UPWA scoring procedures: the holistic rubric, anchor papers and annotations, practice papers and annotations. New UPWA readers either prepared independently or met with the coordinator; all readers brought a wealth of writing assessment experience.

The coordinator assigned 30 essays to each pair of readers who then read and scored the piece in the Submittable platform independently, before the WAW. Because Submittable hides the scores from other readers, these papers were read double-blind. If a third read was required, the coordinator read and scored the essay. In total, readers scored 109 essays. Data from the scores are outlined below in the section "2022 UPWA Data".

After reviewing all the essay scores in Submittable, it became clear that all papers that received a score of 4 from one reviewer also received a score of 3 from the other reviewer (in almost every single case). Therefore, the Coordinator decided to select nine essays from across the scoring teams to review and discuss in the in-person workshop. The guiding discussion question was "what makes a 4 paper a 4?" During the workshop, every essay was read by every person and all of them met with unanimous scores.

In answer to our discussion question, "what makes a 4 paper a 4?" readers offered the following traits. Papers earning a score of 4: demonstrate consistency in language and tone, include sophisticated organizational strategies both internally (in paragraphs) and in the overall structure of the work; show all thinking on the page in order to bring the reader through their logic or analysis; keep the purpose of the work in mind throughout. Readers also noted that a 4-paper isn't perfect and isn't always an "A" paper – that an "A" paper could be a 3 or a 4 in the classroom.

During the workshop conversation, readers made a number of other important insights. One of the benefits of this smaller workshop model is the depth of conversation that can arise from collective years of writing assessment experience. This year the readers noticed that 1) the papers were significantly longer than in years past; 2) the sentence-level mechanics were noticeably stronger than in years past; 3) there were more 4's and fewer 1's all the way around.

By the end of the conversation, the group had the following questions: are instructors moving toward an instructional model that assigns many drafts of a single longer paper (versus the previously popular model of assigning a few shorter papers)? If so, why? And if so, is this connected to the improved overall scores (and improved marked on sentence mechanics)? Does this allow for more time or more focus in the feedback and revision? The group also wondered if the threshold for a 4 outlined in the Holistic Rubric was actually easier to meet with a longer essay. The Holistic Rubric was designed and tested on a wide variety of cross-disciplinary works, but the group acknowledged that it would be worth exploring whether or not page length was related to score.

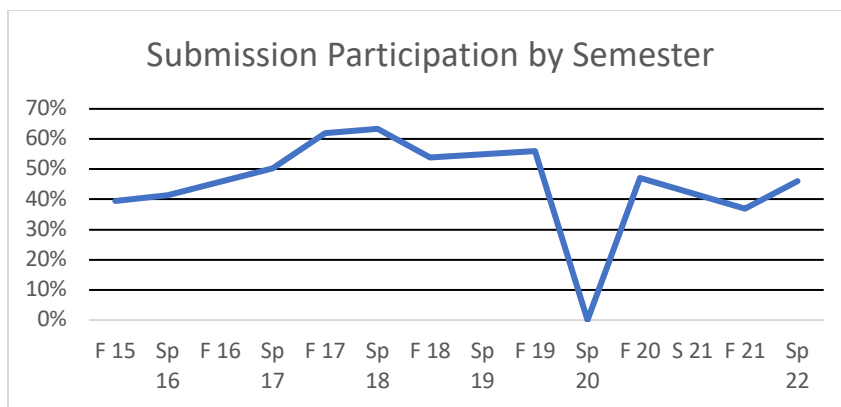
Finally, perhaps due to the length of the works, the readers noted that students seemed to struggle repeatedly with introductions, conclusions, and the use of subheads. The group decided that this would be an excellent topic for the Fall 2022 Writing Symposium.

2022 UPWA Data

2021-2022 Submission Participation

During the fall of 2021, there were 30 instructors from 15 programs teaching 44 sections of Intermediate Writing. In the spring of 2022, there were also 30 instructors from 15 programs teaching 44 sections of Intermediate Writing. While broad disciplinary stratification lends itself to strong cross-campus connections, it can also lead to pedagogically isolating situations; many people teaching Intermediate Writing courses do not have colleagues in their department with whom to collaborate, share, or problem-solve. In recent years, these faculty were more pointedly invited to the Fall Writing Symposium and Spring Writing Assessment Workshop.

In the fall of 2021, 37% of students in Intermediate Writing courses submitted work to the UPWA. During the spring 2022 46% submitted work. Although the fall 2021 percentage could suggest a reduction in submissions or overall participation, some of the difference could be contributed to the fact that our initial student count included students who had dropped or withdrawn and could not be removed from the contact list. By the spring of 2022, we were able to identify and remove students who had dropped or withdrawn from the class.



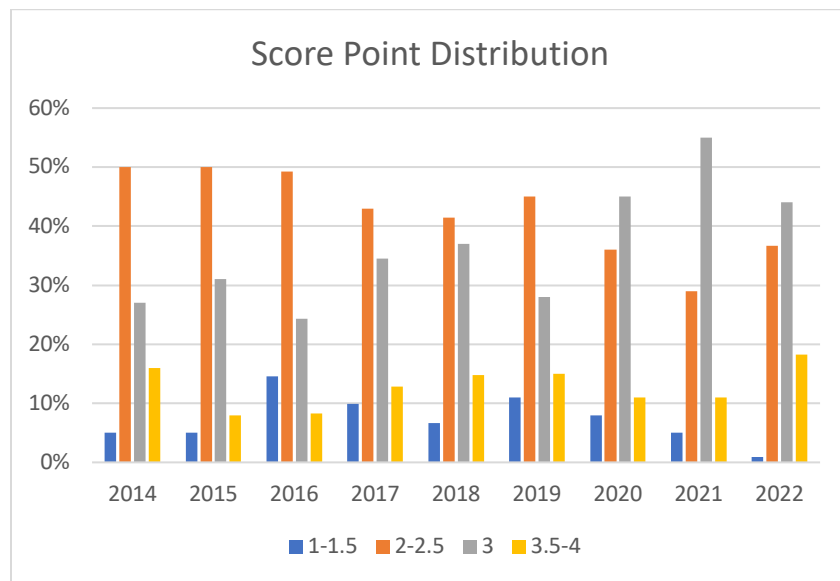
2014-2022 Scoring Percentage Comparison

At the Writing Assessment Workshop, scorers read each sample essay give it a score between one and four. A score of one represents novice-level work while a four represents advanced-level work. The complete UPWA scoring rubric is available in Appendix D.

Score Point	% of sample								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1-1.5	5%	5%	14.58%	9.86%	6.67%	11%	8%	5%	0.90%
2-2.5	50%	50%	49.30%	42.96%	41.48%	45%	36%	29%	36.70%
3	27%	31%	24.30%	34.51%	37.04%	28%	45%	55%	44%
3.5-4	16%	8%	8.30%	12.86%	14.81%	15%	11%	11%	18.30%

Over time, these distributions have held to a relatively regular bell curve. Between 2014 and 2019, the trend was moving toward more students scoring in the 3-4 range. The data from 2020 and 2021 show an interruption in that trend at both the lowest and highest score points. The papers in the lowest category showed positive improvement, moving from 11% to 8% to 5%, which demonstrates the fewer students were writing at the lowest threshold. However, in 2020 and 2021, fewer essays were scored as a 4; the percentage dropped from 15% to 11% in 2020 and stayed there in 2021. It is reasonable to attribute some of this shift to Covid interruptions to school in general.

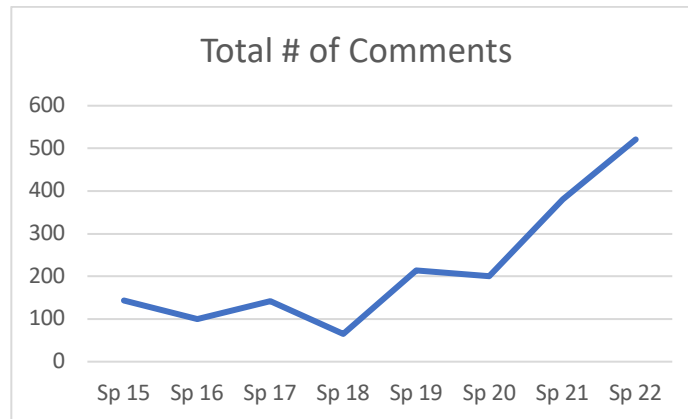
In 2021 and 2022, the shifts at the high and low ends were also notable. Less than 1% of students (specifically, only 1 paper of the 109 scored) received the lowest score. Conversely, 18.30% received a score of 4, which is the highest percentage of 4 scores in the history of the UPWA.



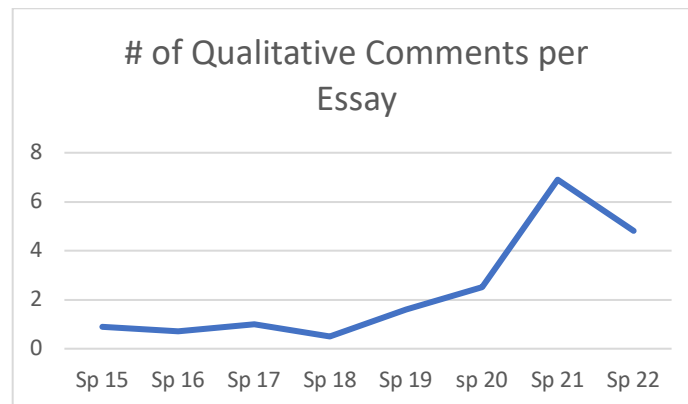
Scorers during the spring 2022 assessment workshop anecdotally observed that the essay samples were noticeably longer than in previous assessment workshops. Since these readers had, in general, many assessment workshops under their belts, they were able to agree that in the past, a 16–20-page paper was an anomaly; that 3-7 pages was the most common length. While Intermediate writing courses must include 16 pages of new writing, instructors are free to choose how those pages are assigned. During the spring 22 assessment, however, the randomly selected writing samples were predominantly at least 10 pages in length. In discussion, scorers wondered if the pedagogical move to a longer paper led to high scores in information literacy, stronger usage and mechanics, and overall higher number of papers earning a score of 4.

2022 Qualitative Data

At each Writing Assessment Workshop student papers are coded for strengths and weaknesses. Scorers are instructed to give a paper a strengths or weaknesses code as a part of a holistic scoring method. Not every paper receives a code (scorers can choose “none” if they do not see a strength or weakness), and some receive more than one. Scorers are instructed to add these comments when something stands out to them in the writing. Scorers used the following codes to score papers: ideas (ID), organization (OR), information literacy (INF), writing style (WS), and grammar, usage, and mechanics (GUM).

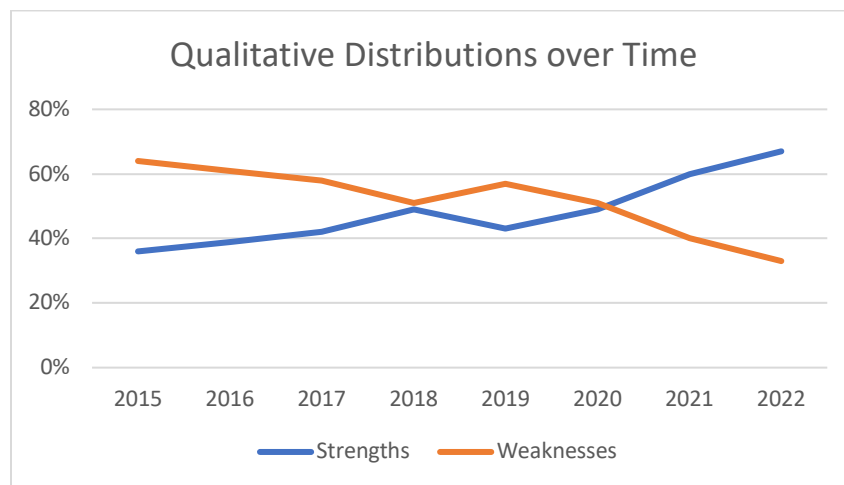


In 2022, the number of comments across reviewers rose again, but the number of comments per essay dropped. It is most likely that this drop was the result of adding the “none” option to the required qualitative options. The digital scoring platform still required a selection as it had in the past, but this year, scorers could show that there were no notable strengths or weaknesses.



Over a span of years, the qualitative comments have not demonstrated the same equanimity in observation from scorers. The table below shows how many and which codes were used to describe an attribute of a student paper as either a strength or a weakness for the last seven scoring sessions. In 2015 and 2016, scorers were very dominantly commenting on the weaknesses in student writing. By 2018, the distribution of comments also moved toward 50/50, however, in 2018 there were the lowest number of comments made – only one comment per every two essays (though they had a good balance of strengths and weaknesses). By 2020, scorers were making an average of 2.5 comments per essay and the distribution of those comments was approaching 50/50. By 2021, scorers were making 6.9 comments per essay and the trend had fully reversed - were noting strengths more often than weaknesses.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Strengths	36%	39%	42%	49%	43%	49%	60%
Weaknesses	64%	61%	58%	51%	57%	51%	40%



Collectively, this data suggests that some important things are beginning to happen for the overall character of writing instruction at UM. Not only are scorers demonstrating a consistent ability to use a holistic rubric to assign a numerical score, but the dramatic rise in qualitative comments also shows that they are beginning to be able to see the writing concepts at work within student writing – and they are noticing strengths in the work as well as weaknesses. When teachers are able to use consistent language to describe what works well and what doesn’t work well in student writing, they are more likely to offer clear direction for revision. Clear direction not only makes it more likely that a student will revise the paper, but (perhaps unexpectedly) it also improves the morale of the teacher, who would also like to see strength and revision in their students’ work. During the past two years, the rich experience of the scorers could have also impacted this increase; these readers have spent many Writing Assessment Workshops learning to identify the strengths of a piece of writing.

Comparative data from the last seven years show a remarkable shift in the quality of students’ grammar, usage and mechanics (GUM). In past years, comments on GUM have tended to lean toward GUM as a weakness. The quality seemed to be improving through 2020, but in 2021, the sentence-level qualities were again weaker (likely due to a stressed, distracted study body). However, in 2022, the comments showed strong GUM with 78% of the comments focusing on GUM as a strength.

GUM	Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Strength	2	1	3	1	11	14	12	58
	Weakness	21	14	10	7	21	19	54	16

2022 Student Survey Data

Because drafting, feedback, and revision are at the heart of a strong writing process, these practices are structured into the requirements of all Intermediate Writing courses at the University of Montana. Intermediate Writing courses require the instructor and students to commit to feedback and revision in writing throughout the course. In order to submit work to the UPWA, students first take a brief survey that asks them to comment on

classroom activity, use of campus resources, and their ideas about writing. The list of survey questions can be found in Appendix C. The results discussed in this section cover all 283 student submissions.

Revisions

Instructors of Intermediate Writing courses agree to require revision as part of the course. Students are asked to submit a piece of writing that has been revised, but we cannot know for sure whether they are, in practice, required to revise; we also do not know if the writing they submit is writing that has been revised. Data from the 2022 survey shows that 97% of students revised the writing they submitted for assessment. 69% revised more than once before submitting their work.

# of Revisions	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Once	32%	42%	34%	No data	No data	28%
Twice	11%	24%	33%			28%
2+	18%	20%	19%			41%
None	39%	13%	12%			3%

Feedback from Instructor

Instructors of Intermediate Writing classes agree to offer feedback on writing that will help guide students toward revision. Results from the survey show that overwhelmingly, students received comments from their instructor on their writing.

A	I received feedback from my instructor on my writing submission.	87% said yes	13% said no		
B	How many times did you revisit & revise this paper before submitting it?	28% revised once	28% revised twice	41% revised more than twice	3% did not revise

Library Resources and Writing & Public Speaking Center

Students are not required to use the Library Resources or the Writing & Public Speaking Center, however, because these resources are often integrated into course requirements at all levels at UM, the Writing Committee was curious about what confidential, self-reported data might show about student behavior.

C	I used library resources (e.g., electronic database, library website, librarian assistance) for this writing.	45% yes	55% no		
D	I worked with the Writing & Public Speaking Center to support my writing.	11% yes	89% no		

Students' Ideas about Writing

Research in Writing Studies reveals that student beliefs about writing can be a powerful influence on their academic behaviors. The next set of survey questions explore these students' beliefs about academic writing and their own writing in academic spaces.

E	Revision is an important part of the writing process for me.	69% yes	29% something in between	2% no	
F	When I turn in writing, my ideas are more important than my spelling.	38% yes	36% something in between	27% no	
G	The subject of my writing submission is connected to my major or is a topic of personal interest.	52% said yes	20% something in between	28% no	
H	This writing submission is stronger than my writing from earlier in the semester.	61% yes	28% something in between	11% no	

In Survey Question E, 69% of the students surveyed agreed that revision was an important part of the writing process, while 29% were on the fence. In Question F, students were asked to think about whether ideas or mechanics are more important and the results show almost a perfect 3-way split between the answers (mirroring, we might suspect, what faculty have to say on that matter as well). Question G asks whether the content of their paper is, essentially, something they're interested in. 72% of the students said yes or something in between. This data points to the wide variety of courses offered as Intermediate Writing Courses – and it is a nod to the fact that many of those courses allow students to choose the topic of their writing. Finally, in Question H, only 11% of students said that this writing was not stronger than their work earlier in the semester. It is encouraging to see that so many (89%) feel that their writing has improved.

Students' Self-Score Comparisons

The final question of the survey asked students to give their writing a score. Their options were:

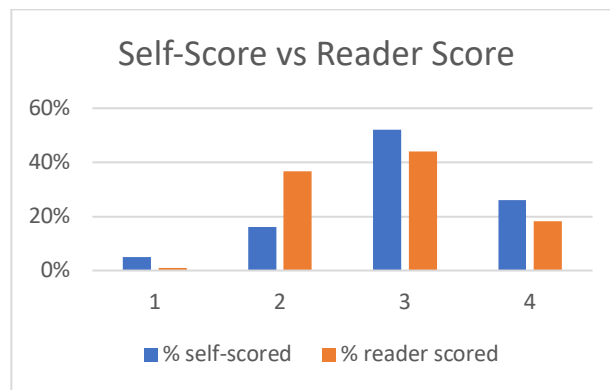
- (1) Weak: I don't think this is the best work, but this is what I have right now.
- (2) OK: I think this work meets the expectations, but it's not my best writing.
- (3) Good: I'm satisfied with this work, but I can think of specific ways I could have improved it.
- (4) Great: I'm happy with this work. I cannot think of other specific ways I could have improved it.

The survey shows the following results of their self-scores.

I	How would you describe the quality of your writing submission?	5% score 1	16% score 2	52% score 3	26% score 4
----------	---	------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

This data becomes more interesting when it is compared with the actual scores the students received. Data show that students underestimated themselves as the lower score levels (at 1 and 2) and overestimated their abilities in the upper score levels (at 3 and 4).

Score	% self-scored	% reader scored
1	5%	0.90%
2	16%	36.70%
3	52%	44%
4	26%	18.30%



To dig one step deeper, 39 of 109 students (36%) accurately estimated the quality of their writing. In terms of metacognitive monitoring as a predictor of academic outcomes, this is a strong number. It is also interesting that students were more likely, overall, to overestimate the quality of their writing. Since the quality of this sample was generally strong, this doesn't indicate a cause for concern and more likely is a result of students feeling happy and satisfied with their revision at the end of the semester.

Self-Score vs Reader Score		Received Feedback	Did Not Receive Feedback
Accurate Self-Assessment	39	32	7
Underestimated quality	21	19	2
Overestimated quality	48	42	6

Major Takeaways

The 2021-2022 assessment cycle turned out to be anomalous and enlightening in a number of ways. Here are some highlights:

- For the first time in any review cycle, we had the lowest number of weak papers (score of 1) and the highest number of strong papers (score of 4). This could be possibly related to the fact that the Fall '21 Writing Symposium was on Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics. (The readers were hopeful that this was connected, though were also realistic that there were other compounding influences!)
- That the number of qualitative comments (the strength and weakness codes) rose *again*. In the past three years, the number of qualitative comments has risen dramatically. Once again, scorers identified strengths more often than weaknesses in the essays.

- After migrating the submission process to Submittable, the Writing Committee chose eight new survey questions that offered us insights into actual classroom practice in Intermediate Writing classes, student use of campus resources, and their beliefs about writing. We learned
 - that 87% of students received feedback from their instructor, 97% of students revised their papers at least once, 45% used Library Resources, 11% used the Writing & Public Speaking Center.
 - that 98% of students recognized the value of revision in some way, 72% were able to write about topic related to something of interested to them, and 89% felt that their writing improved in some way over the course of the semester.
 - that 36% of students accurately assessed the quality of their writing submission.
- Rather than a day-long face-to-face event, the Writing Assessment Workshop was conducted with eight scorers in a hybrid model (part of the work conducted independently and part conducted in in-person workshop conversation). Readers noted:
 - a trend toward longer (10+ page) papers
 - a trend toward smoother sentence mechanics
 - weakness in introductions, conclusions, and the use of sub-heads/transitions

Looking Toward the Future

During the 2022-2023 assessment cycle, we look forward to continuing to make the most of working with Submittable. The process works well for submitters, but has some kinks to smooth out on the administrative/scoring side. We look forward to a Fall 2022 Symposium on Introductions, Conclusions and Sub-Heads and might consider a short survey of Intermediate Writing instructors about the length of their assigned papers.

Finally, we also look forward to moving back to an in-person, communal Spring Writing Assessment Workshop event that allows for the kind of scholarly discourse and light, collegial interaction we have all enjoyed over the years. We are very hopeful that we will be able to find a rhythm as we rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic because assessments like the UPWA work best when students, faculty, and administrators are able to give it the attention it deserves during the semester. As always, we will continue to revisit our vision and refine our processes in order to more fully meet the evolving needs of the students and instructors at the University of Montana.

Number:	202.50
Procedure:	Writing Course Guidelines
Date Adopted:	11/13/08
Last Revision:	4/9/09 (8/12/15)
References:	
Approved by:	Faculty Senate
Appendix:	FAQs

I. Overview

The ability to write effectively is fundamental to a liberal arts education, essential to academic inquiry, and important for student success in academic, professional, and civic endeavors. Composition and writing courses at The University of Montana (UM) help students become adept at writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. Effective writing both strengthens and is strengthened by an understanding of critical thinking and information literacy. Students should learn to use writing as a means of finding, synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating information, retaining course material, and using that information and material in order to form and express coherent thoughts and arguments.

Writing Requirements for Graduation

To fulfill the writing requirements at UM and to demonstrate writing proficiency, students should satisfy the following four requirements in order:

1. Introductory College Writing

2. Intermediate College Writing

3. Advanced College Writing

The Advanced College Writing requirement can be fulfilled using the following options:

- One advanced college writing course (numbered 300-400), with a grade of C- or better defined by the department and approved by the ASCRC Writing Committee, or
- An advanced college writing expectation defined by the department and approved by the ASCRC Writing Committee

A. Introductory College Writing Course

The Composition Program seeks to advance the University's mission to pursue academic excellence in the context of writing instruction. Introductory College Writing Courses facilitate students' achievements in exploring and enacting rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, writing and research processes; and knowledge of conventions. Writing is a powerful means of purposeful inquiry, communication, and action in

the classroom and in the world. (For current information, see: <http://www.cas.umt.edu/english/composition/curriculum.htm>.)

B. Intermediate College Writing Course

These courses use informal and formal writing to enhance writing skills and promote critical thinking in content areas. Information literacy is integrated into all general education courses approved for Group I: English Writing Skills. Students are required to complete Introductory College Writing, unless exempted, prior to taking An Intermediate College Writing Course.

C. Advanced College Writing Requirement by the Major

This writing requirement typically focuses on the student's major area of study. For this reason, faculty members within specific disciplines develop courses or expectations *based on the conventions for research, analysis, and writing in their field*.

Types of Acceptable Writing Tasks

Writing tasks may include formal and informal, graded and ungraded, and in-class or out-of-class exercises. The range of possible writing tasks includes journal entries, case studies, blogs, e-portfolios, hypertext, lab reports, free writing, annotated bibliography, essay, analyses, proposals, abstracts, reviews, field notes, electronic postings, research papers, or proofs. For more ideas, contact the [Writing Center](#).

II. Guidelines

Writing requirements establish a logical progression of development as students move through the college curriculum. Therefore, intermediate and advanced college writing courses have different outcomes. The courses are reviewed and approved by the Writing Subcommittee and Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee (ASCRC). Proposals for all writing courses and expectations should specifically address how they will achieve the learning outcomes. Faculty who propose writing courses or are assigned to teach departmental courses are encouraged to seek guidance from the Mansfield Library, the Writing Center, and other campus resources. Specifically, collaboration with library faculty is encouraged for addressing information literacy. Departments will determine the criteria for graders, if used.

A. Intermediate College Writing Courses

Students should plan to take the intermediate college writing course after completing the introductory college writing course and prior to taking the advanced writing course specified by their major. Upon completing the intermediate writing course, students should understand writing as means to practice academic inquiry and demonstrate the ability to formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing. Upon completing the intermediate writing course, the student should be able to:

1. Learning Outcomes

- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express written opinions and ideas that are developed, logical, and organized
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically

- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

2. Requirements for Approved Writing Courses*

Instructors must:

- Limit enrollment to 25 students per instructor or grader (FAQ 8)
- Identify course outcomes in the syllabus
- Provide students with detailed written instructions, including criteria for evaluation, for all formal writing assignments (FAQ 3)
- Provide adequate instruction and require students to write frequently for specified audiences, purposes, and genres
 - Formal or informal
 - Graded or ungraded
 - In-class or out-of-class
- Provide feedback on students' writing and require students to revise and resubmit at least one formal writing assignment (FAQ 3)
- Require each student individually to compose at least 16 pages of writing for assessment(FAQ 5/6) over the course of the semester
- Base a significant portion (at least 50% of a 3 credit course or equivalent hours) of the course grade on student performance on writing assignments (FAQ2)
- Incorporate information literacy into learning outcomes, instruction, and assignments

* Proposals requesting approval for writing courses that do not meet the requirements should include justifications for these changes that address how learning outcomes will still be achieved.

B. Advanced College Writing Requirement

The advanced college writing requirement is defined for the major and may be met by either a course or an expectation as articulated by the program. Upon completing the advanced writing requirement, students should be more active, confident, and effective contributors to a body of knowledge and should understand the ethical dimensions of inquiry. Upon completing the advanced college writing requirement, the student should be able to:

1. Learning Outcomes

- Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources
- Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate
- Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline
- Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work
- Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline
- Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy

2. Requirements for advanced College Writing Courses*

Instructors must:

- Limit enrollment to 25 students per instructor or grader (FAQ 8)
- Identify course outcomes in the syllabus
- Provide students with detailed written instructions, including criteria for evaluation, for all formal writing assignments (FAQ 3)
- Provide students with tools and strategies for effective writing and editing in the major
- Require students to write frequently for specified audiences, purposes, and genres
 - Formal or informal (FAQ 4)
 - Graded or ungraded
 - In-class or out-of-class
- Provide feedback on students' writing and require students to revise and resubmit at least one formal writing assignment (FAQ 3)
- Require each student to individually compose at least 20 pages of writing for assessment (FAQ5/6) over the course of the semester
- Base a significant portion (at least 50% of a 3 credit course or equivalent hours) of the course grade on student performance on written assignments(FAQ 1)
- Incorporate information literacy into learning outcomes, instruction, and assignments

3. Requirements for Advanced College Writing Requirement not fulfilled by a Course**

- This approach to fulfilling the advanced college writing requirement should be designed to produce learning outcomes similar to those described for advanced college writing courses.

* Proposals requesting approval for advanced college writing that do not meet the requirements should include justifications for these changes that address how learning outcomes will still be achieved.(FAQ 9)

** Proposals requesting approval for advanced college writing that are not fulfilled by a course or combination of courses must clearly articulate how the learning outcomes will still be achieved.

Appendix B: Student Survey Questions

I received feedback from my instructor on my writing submission.

- True
- False

How many times did you revise this paper?

- Once
- Twice
- More than two times
- I did not revise in response to my instructor's feedback

I used library resources (e.g., electronic database, library website, librarian assistance) for this writing.

- True
- False

I worked with the Writing and Public Speaking Center to support my writing.

- True
- False

Revision is an important part of the writing process for me.

- True
- False
- Something in between

When I turn in writing, my ideas are more important than my spelling.

- True
- False
- Something in between

The subject of my writing submission is connected to my major or is a topic of personal interest.

- True
- False
- Something in between

This writing submission is stronger than my writing from earlier in the semester.

- True
- False
- Something in between

Appendix C: UPWA Holistic Rubric

The University of Montana – Missoula

University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment Holistic Rubric
(Created by the ASCRC Writing Committee, Revised May 13, 2013)

Learning Outcomes for Approved Writing Courses

1. Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
2. Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
3. Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
4. Revise written work based on constructive feedback
5. Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
6. Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions (largely style conventions like APA or MLA)
7. Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

Score 4: Advanced

The texts show a strong sense of purpose and audience. Expression of ideas is articulate, developed, and well-organized. These texts demonstrate a clear ability to synthesize concepts. The texts consistently show the writer's ability to evaluate and use information effectively. Writing style (word choice and sentence fluency) is highly effective for the purpose and audience. The writer is beginning to use discipline-specific writing conventions with general success. While there may be a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, a strong command of English language usage is clearly evident.

Score 3: Proficient

The texts show a clear sense of purpose and audience. Expression of ideas is generally developed and organized. These texts demonstrate an ability to synthesize concepts. The texts show the writer's ability to evaluate and use information. Writing style (word choice and sentence fluency) is effective for the purpose and audience. The writer is beginning to use discipline-specific writing conventions with uneven success. While there may be some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, a competency in English language usage is evident.

Score 2: Nearing Proficiency

The texts show some attention to purpose and audience. Expression of ideas may be vague, unclear, and/or unorganized at times. These texts demonstrate developing ability to synthesize concepts. The texts reveal the writer's uneven ability to use information; use of information may be insufficient. Writing style (word choice and sentence fluency) is sometimes ineffective for the purpose and audience. The writer shows minimal knowledge of discipline-specific writing conventions. A basic control of English language usage is apparent, even though frequent errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics may occasionally hinder understanding.

Score 1: Novice

The texts show little understanding of purpose and/or audience. Expression of ideas is confusing, minimal, or irrelevant; the organization is illogical or weak. These texts demonstrate difficulty in synthesizing concepts. The writer's use of information is inaccurate, inappropriate, or missing. Writing style (word choice and sentence fluency) is not effective for the purpose and audience. The writer shows little to no awareness of discipline-specific writing conventions. Severe problems with grammar, usage, and mechanics show poor control of English language and impede understanding.

Appendix D: UPWA Data Management Procedures

Background Information

The University of Montana University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment (UPWA) provides relevant information about our Intermediate Writing curriculum by assessing and scoring student-revised papers from Intermediate Writing courses. This is done using a Holistic Scoring Rubric. The assessment process offers professional development opportunities for faculty and staff who are committed to improving student writing proficiency at UM.

UPWA assessment data inform important decisions about teaching and learning; therefore, UPWA data should be protected and shared only with appropriate stakeholders. This document provides stewardship procedures for storing and providing access to UPWA data. Any new participant in UPWA data management should be informed of these stewardship policies. This document outlines procedures applicable to UPWA data files.

Expected Data

Types of UPWA data generated:

Data File	Types of data included	File Name	Format	Access/Storage Location
Moodle Output Files (by retreat)	Student IDs, Essay Codes, Scores, Strength and Weakness Codes, Survey Answers	SpringYearRetreatData Ex: Spring15RetreatData	csv file	UPWA coordinator only/UM Box
Banner Upload Files (by retreat)	Same as above, reformatted for uploading	wpwaSpringYearRetreat Ex: wpwaSpring15Retreat	csv file	UPWA coordinator only/UM Box
Output Files (by retreat)	All data from a single retreat plus data pulled from Banner (e.g., grades, courses, credits earned)	SpringYearRetreatOutput Ex: Spring15RetreatOutput	csv file	UPWA coordinator only/UM Box
Master Files (all retreats)	Data from all retreats plus data pulled from Banner; output file for each retreat will be merged with this file	MasterRetreatOutput	csv file	UPWA coordinator only/UM Box
Master File Stripped	Data from all retreats plus data pulled from Banner; ALL SENSITIVE DATA STRIPPED	MasterRetreatOutputStripped	csv file	UM Box

Data Storage, Preservation and Retention

UPWA data is stored in UM Box,* which provides a secure location behind a UM login and which allows for varied levels of appropriate access. Other UPWA related files (procedures, communications, etc.) also are stored in UM Box.

The UPWA Program Assistant/Coordinator is responsible for stored data, backup and preservation. The UPWA Program Assistant/Coordinator is also responsible for the overall and day-to-day management of the data. Data are stored for a period of five years in order to facilitate purposeful, longitudinal benchmarks.

Data Sharing and Dissemination

UPWA data must be protected from unauthorized acquisition or disclosure as well as accidental or intentional modification or loss. All sharing of UPWA data will happen in UM Box (e.g., not through email).

The following individuals should have full access (co-owner status) to UPWA data files in UM Box:

- UPWA Program Assistant/Coordinator
- Associate Provost for Dynamic Learning
- Director of the Writing Center

In an effort to ensure UPWA data are used to inform decisions that improve teaching and learning, additional stakeholders may be invited to view UPWA data files. For example, faculty should have access to the annual UPWA report, and other partners may be given access to assist in data analysis.

A co-owner (listed above), may provide access (*but not editing or downloading privileges*) to appropriate audiences. This can happen in two ways:

- A stakeholder may be granted non-editing access to a folder in UM Box. Privileges should be set up so that data may not be changed or downloaded.
- A co-owner can create a url for a specific folder or file. This url can then be sent to stakeholders for viewing of specific files.

Statement about Privacy and Confidentiality

The purpose of UPWA data collection is to improve instruction, but the collected data includes potentially-sensitive student information. To ensure minimal exposure to potentially-sensitive information, the UPWA Assistant/Coordinator will remove FERPA-protected information and other individually-identifying information from the files before they are stored in UM Box.

Statement about Institutional Review of Human Subject Research

The mission of UM's Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to ensure the protection of human participants in research, maintain federal regulatory compliance, and facilitate research at the University of Montana. The University's Federal-wide Assurance number is FWA00000078.

UM Policy 460 requires that all projects involving **human subjects research** be approved by the IRB when UM faculty, staff, or students are **engaged** in the research. Grant applications for these projects also must show evidence of IRB approval before they are processed by the Office of Research and Creative Scholarship. Please contact the IRB if you have any questions about your research.

Resources Consulted

FERPA Exceptions Summary

http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/FERPA%20Exceptions_HANDOUT_horizontal_0.pdf

North Carolina State University Libraries Elements of a Data Management Plan

http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/guides/datamanagement/how_to_dmp

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Data Management Plan Template

http://libraries.unl.edu/images/Services/Data_management_plan_template.pdf

University of Montana Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

<http://www.umt.edu/research/compliance/IRB/>

University of Montana University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment

http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/committees/writing_committee/UPWA.php

***UM Box tips**

- User must be online to use UM Box
- User should install Box for Office (on a PC)
- User should install Box Edit (on a PC or Mac) to be able to edit documents directly in UM Box to ensure only one version exists.
 - To edit directly in UM Box, click on the downward arrow next to the file. Select “Open with ...” Edit the file and save.
- User must be inside a folder before inviting people to that folder
- User must set up his or her UM Box account with @umontana.edu before accessing
- User may share files with people who don't have access to or prefer not to use UM Box by creating a url and allowing “people with a link” to access the file