



Goals for Student Writing



The ability to write with confidence, purpose, and precision

is essential to the success of graduates of Queens College. The professional success and personal satisfaction of twenty-first century citizens require fluency with a broad range of modes of communication. With this in mind, a Queens College education aims to enable students to take ownership of language and to develop a capacity for both critical analysis and considered reflection.

The College's curriculum reflects ambitious goals for student writing intended to foster a commitment to ideas, engagement with texts, and ownership of language. The cumulative experience Queens College graduates have had by the time they complete a bachelor's degree will prepare them to:

- **Become fluent with the elements of academic writing, including thesis, motive, evidence, analysis, and style**
- **Practice the processes and methods commonly used by effective writers**
- **Take ownership of the language and rhetorical strategies they employ**
- **Develop a working knowledge of the grammar and mechanics of standard English**
- **Gain experience with the conventions of various genres, disciplines, and professions**

The following pages offer a more detailed explanation of these goals and suggestions to help faculty engage students in working toward them.

To meet these ambitious goals, the college has made a broad commitment to writing across the curriculum and in the disciplines. This reflects the reality of student learning. No student learns to write in a single course, and the development of successful writing practices takes time. The college provides students with ample opportunities to develop writing practices, strategies, and skills throughout their academic work. This begins with English 110: College Writing (or its equivalent) and continues with the requirement to take three Writing-Intensive (W) courses. These may be taken in any department, though students are encouraged to take at least one in their majors. In addition to W courses—which must meet college guidelines in terms of the amount of writing assigned and attention to writing in class—courses throughout the curriculum, both in the General Education requirements and in the majors, have significant expectations for student writing.

Of course, the significance of particular elements of writing and the writing process will vary according to course and discipline. Faculty teaching both W and non-W courses are encouraged to develop a manageable set of specific goals appropriate to their courses by selecting from, and often modifying, the detailed cumulative writing goals outlined here.

These pages also list suggestions that may be useful to faculty in helping and encouraging students to meet their specific writing

goals. A variety of other writing resources are also available. The Writing Across the Curriculum program offers regular workshops, and the Web site (<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Writing/>) contains a number of teaching resources and handouts for students that will help teachers and students work on particular goals and strategies. Anyone interested in learning more may contact the Director of the Writing Across the Curriculum program (see URL above for contact information). In addition, the Writing Center offers students one-on-one consultation at any stage of the writing process. Students can set up appointments or find information at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/qcws/>.

Specific Goals and Strategies

Elements of Academic Writing

Students will be able to:

- **Articulate a focused argument (or line of thinking)**
- **Identify a genuine intellectual question or problem**
- **Discuss relevant evidence (including written texts, visual images, graphs and charts, and electronic media) and analyze it effectively**
- **Employ logical structures (paragraphs with identities, transitional language, and the progressive development of ideas)**
- **Engage sources critically and develop information literacy**

Faculty can prepare students to hone these abilities in some of the following ways:

- **Designing writing assignments that give students opportunities to practice particular elements of writing**
- **Providing students with language with which to discuss these elements at work in their writing, that of their peers, and that of professional writers**
- **Using course reading to model the elements at work in published writing**
- **Responding to student writing strategically, emphasizing elements of writing most relevant to assignments at hand or most significant in terms of each student's individual development**

Processes and Methods

Students will be able to:

- **Make use of pre-writing techniques: critical reading, note-taking, brainstorming, summarizing, outlining, etc.**
- **Develop ideas and language through a process of drafting and revision**
- **Conduct research and evaluate and synthesize results**
- **Gain an awareness of audience**
- **Engage in peer critique**

Faculty can prepare students to hone these abilities in some of the following ways:

- **Designing assignments so that students complete them incrementally**
- **Responding to student writing at key moments in the writing process**
- **Engaging students in peer critique**
- **Coordinating with the library to offer specialized library resource sessions**
- **Emphasizing the connection between research skills and critical thinking**
- **Building into course requirements opportunities for students to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses**

Style, Conventions, and Mechanics

Students will be able to:

- **Write in clear, controlled prose**
- **Employ standard usage of English grammar and mechanics (including sentence construction, verb consistency, pronoun consistency, and appropriate syntax)**
- **Write in a voice appropriate to college-level inquiry in general and individual assignments in particular**
- **Identify audience and orient readers accordingly**
- **Cite sources appropriately**

Faculty can prepare students to hone these abilities in some of the following ways:

- **Providing models of strong student and/or professional writing and discussing the stylistic and rhetorical strategies that make them successful**
- **Creating opportunities for students to write both formally and informally and to reflect on the differences between formal and informal writing**

- **Identifying individual student weaknesses and giving students opportunities to practice their skills in these areas**
- **Offering students opportunities for revision**
- **Referring students to the Writing Center and/or CUNY Writing Fellows for tutoring**

Discipline- and Profession-Specific Techniques

Students will be able to:

- **Articulate ideas within disciplinary conversations or debates**
- **Use language appropriate to the discipline and audience**
- **Continue developing their information literacy as they gain experience with discipline-specific research methods, including facility with appropriate research databases**
- **Integrate appropriate visual, graphic, or numerical information**
- **Use appropriate citation conventions and styles (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)**

Faculty can prepare students to hone these abilities in some of the following ways:

- **Providing opportunities for students to enter scholarly and professional debates, dialogues, and controversies about major issues in a given field**
- **Introducing students to the unique methods and contributions of their disciplines and offering models of outstanding student and professional work in the field**
- **Emphasizing cross-disciplinary inquiry where appropriate**
- **Creating opportunities for students to make their work public and interact with professionals**
- **Discussing models for appropriate citation and use of sources and giving students opportunities to practice citation and effective use of sources**

These goals and suggestions for helping students meet them are informed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (<http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html>). They are revised and expanded to address the broader scope of a Writing Across the Curriculum program and the local values and needs of Queens College students and faculty.

These goals were endorsed by the Academic Senate in May 2007.



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