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**Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)  
Policy**

**(This policy document replaces PM 94-05)**

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**1. Overview**

- (The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) was implemented by the CSU in 1977 and has undergone several CSU revisions, the most recent of which is Executive Order 665 implemented in the fall of 1998 and in italics in the sections below.)
- The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) obliges all CSU campuses to certify the writing proficiency of all undergraduate and graduate students before their degrees are granted.
- The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Coordinator and the Writing Competency Committee (WCC) shall be responsible for seeing that the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) is implemented and administered at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH). **Procedures for implementing and administering the GWAR may be amended or altered without necessitating a new Presidential Memorandum.**

The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) program reports to the Associate Vice President for Academic Programs in the Office of Academic Affairs.

**2. CSU Policy and CSUDH Implementation: GWAR at the Baccalaureate Level**

**A. Competence in Writing Skills at the Upper Division Level**

*(Executive Order 665: "All students subject to the degree requirements of the 1977-78 or subsequent general catalogs must demonstrate competence in writing skills at the upper division level as a requirement for the baccalaureate degree*

*and, if not previously met in the CSU, for a second bachelor's degree.")*

Undergraduate CSUDH students may meet the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) in any of the following ways:

1. by passing the Graduation Writing Examination (GWE) with a score of 7 or better;
2. by completion of one of the approved writing certifying courses with a grade of C or better;
3. by satisfying a Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) examination or course before matriculating to CSUDH.

### **B. Campus Matriculation**

*(Executive Order 665: "Students shall be matriculated at the CSU campus where they satisfy the GWAR.")*

CSUDH shall allow students in distance learning programs to meet the requirement at other CSU campuses or at CSUDH through the use of a proctor-administered GWE.

### **C. Time Frame for Completing Writing Skills Proficiency Requirement**

*(Executive Order 665: "As soon as possible after students are admitted, campuses shall inform them of writing skills proficiency requirements for graduation, as distinct from lower division curricula and tests. Certification of writing competence shall be made available to students as they enter the junior year. Students should complete the requirement before the senior year.")*

The writing skills proficiency requirements for graduation shall be highlighted in each course schedule booklet. In addition, CSUDH students at or near the 60-unit level, and all entering transfer students, shall receive a letter from the Office of Academic Affairs informing them of this requirement

### **D. Certification by Examination**

*(Executive Order 665: "Certification of graduation writing proficiency is an all-campus responsibility. Certification may rely on evidence of writing ability as demonstrated in written coursework, essay examinations, or other measures of student writing competence. Measures may be developed which best fit individual campus needs. However, certification by examination shall include a common essay written and evaluated under controlled conditions and scored by at least two faculty members.")*

CSUDH shall use the one-hour Graduate Writing Examination (GWE) as its common essay, holistically scored. Students for whom English is not the preferred language shall be given an additional hour to complete the Graduate Writing Examination (GWE)

**E. Certification Transferability**

(Executive Order 665: "*Certification of graduation writing competence shall be transferable from one CSU campus to another.*")

**F. Implementation Changes and Periodic Review**

(Executive Order 665: "*Campuses shall submit annually to the Chancellor's Office as requested a description of any changes in campus provisions for implementation of the GVAR. Campus GVAR programs shall be subject to periodic review and evaluation at least every five years under the supervision of the Advisory Committee on Student Writing Skills.*")

CSUDH shall respond to the Chancellor's Office as requested. In addition, the GVAR program shall be part of the Program Effectiveness Council (PEC) processes and the outcome of that evaluation shall be reported annually to the Academic Senate.

**3. CSU Policy: GVAR at the Graduate Level**

**A. Writing Proficiency as a Condition for Graduate Program Admission**

(Executive Order 665: "*Campuses may require demonstration of writing proficiency as a condition for admission to a graduate program.*")

CSUDH shall accept this option with the understanding that the graduate program shall require GVAR certification of all its applicants, including those who graduated from campuses outside the CSU.

**B. Writing Proficiency prior to the Award of a Graduate Degree**

(Executive Order 665: "*Campuses shall require demonstration of writing proficiency prior to the award of a graduate degree. The level of proficiency shall be no less than the level required for GVAR certification at the baccalaureate level.*")

At CSUDH, each graduate student should complete this requirement prior to the completion of 9 units; if a student has not met the requirement by the completion of 9 units, the student shall receive an ASAP hold on registration and must meet with an ASAP advisor in the University Advising Center (UAC) before the hold will be lifted.

### **C. Additional Demonstration of Writing Proficiency**

(Executive Order 665: "*Campuses may require additional demonstration of advanced-level writing proficiency as a condition for admission to a graduate program and/or award of the graduate degree.*")

CSUDH shall allow to graduate programs greater flexibility in satisfying the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). Programs may develop their own advanced-level examinations, holistically scored, or use national tests that include a holistically scored writing competency component. The Writing Competency Committee (WCC) shall review and approve or disapprove all such variations.

## **4. Responsibilities of Various Campus Entities Pertaining to GWAR**

- A. The Academic Senate shall review and recommend approval for changes in policy and implementation of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR).
- B. The Writing Competency Committee (WCC) and the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Coordinator are responsible for administering all the elements of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement and assessing their effectiveness.
- C. The Office of Academic Affairs has administrative authority over the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement program.

## **5. Writing Competency Committee (WCC) Service and Composition**

### **A. Committee Service**

Service on the committee of the elected members shall be in staggered two-year terms with the terms of newly-added

members to be determined by lot at the initial Writing Competency Committee meeting.

**B. Committee Composition**

One full-time faculty member from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) (excluding English Department faculty) elected by the full-time faculty of the college.

One full-time faculty member each from the Schools of Education, Health, and Business and Public Administration, elected by the full-time faculty of the school.

One full-time faculty member, with ESL competency, elected by the Academic Senate.

The Chair, or designee, of the Educational Policies Committee of the Senate.

The Chair, or designee, of the General Education Committee.

One full-time faculty member from the English Department elected by the department faculty.

One full-time faculty member of the Graduate Council, elected by the faculty of the Council.

The Coordinator of the Writing Adjunct program in IDS.

The Composition Coordinator of the English Department.

The Director of the Testing Office, as an *ex officio* member.

A University Advising Center (UAC) representative familiar with ASAP, as an *ex officio* member.

The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Coordinator, who shall serve as chair of the Writing Competency Committee.

**6. Term of Office of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Coordinator**

The current (2001) Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Coordinator shall serve a three-year term, with 2001-2002 the initial year, at which point the succeeding application and selection process will apply (See "Procedures," #5). The coordinator may seek a successive three-year term.

**Procedures for Implementation of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Policy**

### **1. Time Frame for completing Writing Skills Proficiency Requirement, Undergraduates**

**Any** student who has not met the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement by 72 units shall receive an ASAP hold on the registration and must meet with a University Advising Center (UAC) advisor to map out a strategy, including a signed contract, to meet the requirement before the hold will be lifted. Any student who has reached 90 units without satisfying GVAR must enroll in a certifying course.

### **2. Certification by Examination, Undergraduates**

Students who seek to meet the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement through examination must receive a score of 7 or better. All scores of 7 shall be scored by a third reader and can be changed either to 6 or 8, or remain at 7.

### **3. Certification by Course, Undergraduates**

All certifying courses must emphasize writing, either generic or disciplinary, with ample writing activity and instructor feedback and must be reviewed by the Writing Competency Committee (WCC) for approval. They must also participate in the Composition Cooperative (CC). The composition Cooperative shall consist of a common examination in all sections of certifying courses and a holistic reading resulting in a letter grade that must count for at least 25% of the student's grade in the course.

### **4. Writing Proficiency Prior to the Award of a Graduate Degree**

Graduate students who have not met the GVAR requirement by the completion of 9 units shall receive an ASAP hold on registration and must meet with an ASAP advisor in the University Advising Center (UAC) to map out a strategy, including a signed contract, to meet the requirement before the hold will be lifted. The contract shall require the student to take a certifying course and meet the requirement before beginning the thesis or attempting the comprehensive examinations. To satisfy the requirement, graduate students shall need a GWE score of 8 or better, or a certifying course grade of B or better.

### **5. Procedure for Selection of the GVAR Coordinator**

The Office of Academic Affairs shall send out a campus-wide announcement, drafted by the Writing Competency Committee (WCC), to the CSUDH full-time faculty inviting applications for the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Coordinator position. The Office of Academic Affairs, **after consultation** with the Academic Senate, shall appoint a GWAR Coordinator Selection Committee. The Selection Committee shall review the applications and recommended three applicants, in ranked order, to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, or his/her designee, who shall make the final appointment.