

The Intensive Writing Requirement at IU Northwest (DRAFT 07/17/08)

What is the pedagogical purpose of the Intensive Writing Requirement?

The IU Northwest writing requirement consists of Elementary Composition (W131) and Intensive Writing (IW). The purpose of the IW requirement is to provide students with practice in writing (preferably within their majors), with substantive feedback provided by instructors well acquainted with the standards of effective writing in their disciplines. Departments and schools/colleges will be allowed considerable latitude in defining what sorts of writing experiences are most appropriate for their majors; consequently the kinds of IW courses offered by different units will vary.

What are the standard guidelines and requirements for IW credit?

To qualify for IW credit, a course must require that students write at least 5,000 words (20 double-spaced pages). Revisions, in-class essay examinations and informal writing (e.g. journal entries) will not be included in the page count. Students should be required to redraft at least one paper in response to the instructor's comments. Generally, students will write a series of papers over the course of a semester, rather than one, long paper. However, a single, long paper (such as an honors thesis) may be acceptable, if it is drafted in sections that are reviewed during the semester, and if the entire paper is revised at least once.

The outcomes for the IW requirement provide that IU Northwest graduates will:

- Read actively and critically, analyzing and evaluating a writer's ideas and assumptions, use of illustrations, examples and evidence, and the effectiveness of the structure and style of challenging written texts.
- Analyze and evaluate the relationship between a writer's central purpose in a text and the rhetorical means—ethical, emotional, and logical—used to advance that purpose.
- Use the writing process as a tool of inquiry to discover, explore, test, and develop ideas.
- Draft and revise written texts that provide readers with effectively organized and clearly integrated support—in the form of illustrations and examples, relevant and sufficient data, and other pertinent sources of information and ideas—of a well-formulated thesis.
- Incorporate the words and ideas of others correctly and effectively, as support of the text's thesis.
- Edit written texts for clarity and appropriateness of style, precision of language, and correctness in grammar and punctuation, and adhere to the expectations of an appropriate documentation style.

The instructor is expected to provide feedback to the student (through marginal notes on papers and/or private conferences) on the quality of the writing—its organization, logic, correctness, and style—as well as its substance.

What sorts of classes carry IW credit and who teaches them?

Intensive writing must be taught **at the 200-level or above** by a **qualified instructor**. In most cases, the instructor will be a full-time member of the faculty; under unusual circumstances, the instructor may be a visitor or an adjunct faculty with the approval of the department/school.

How big are IW sections?

Classes designated for automatic IW credit should be limited to 25 students. Exceptions to the 25 students rule must be explained in the IW course request (see the last two sections).

What is the prerequisite for an IW course?

Students must satisfy the writing foundation requirement, W131, before enrolling in IW courses. Many capstone courses and senior theses could carry IW credit; however, a student should have at least one IW course as a sophomore or a junior.

Should students take IW courses in their majors?

Yes, whenever possible: The intention of the Intensive Writing requirement is to encourage students to take IW courses in their majors, learning the modes of writing appropriate to the discipline, in the context of courses dealing with issues in the field. Ideally, students should enroll in as many IW courses as possible, including courses outside their major.

When is it appropriate for a student to receive a credit for Intensive Writing by Special Arrangement?

It is appropriate only in exceptional cases and only with departmental and university approval, prior to enrollment. Students may meet the IW requirement in conjunction with individualized readings courses, supervised research, internships, or senior theses, as long as the total amount of writing, the structure of the writing assignments, and the commentary provided by the faculty member all meet the guidelines for IW credit.

Can a student earn IW credit for a course taken at another university?

IU Northwest will not consider coursework taken at another university for IW, unless the chair/dean in the student's major specifically makes such a request in writing. As evidence that a student has successfully completed writing assignments comparable to those employed in the unit's own IW courses, the request must be accompanied by a copy of the course syllabus and all the written papers with instructor's comments.

How can faculty develop a new IW class, and what do they need to do to get it approved?

Instructors who want to offer new IW courses should submit requests for a new course or change to the existing course to the originating school/college curriculum committee. The Committee will verify that the proposed writing assignments meet the general IW guidelines. A signed copy of the form for a new course or change to the existing course with a syllabus must accompany the request.

Who will approve the IW designation?

A course will be designated as an IW course after the approval by the course originating school/college curriculum committee and then by the IU Northwest Curriculum Committee. After the approval by the second committee, the course will carry IW designation after its name in the subsequent course schedules and bulletins.