Academic Writing

OFFICE OF
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Each General Education category is grounded in a set of learning outcomes. For the full set of learning outcomes for Academic Writing courses see:
www.gened.umd.edu

This rubric is designed as a tool to assess activities aimed at student gains in the follow learning outcome(s) for the Academic Writing General Education Category:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- *Demonstrate facility with the fundamentals of persuasion, especially as they are adapted to a variety of special situations and audiences in academic writing.*

Criterion for review of student work	Descriptions of levels of student performance			
	Advanced	**Proficient**	**Beginning**	**Unacceptable**
Thesis	Writer composes specific and ambitious thesis that articulates a complex argument, sets out the purpose of the essay, and has the potential to contribute to a scholarly conversation.	Writer composes a clear and specific thesis that articulates a viable argument and indicates the purpose of the essay. The thesis engages a scholarly conversation.	Writer composes a thesis, but the thesis may be weak in terms of specificity and clarity of argument, articulation of purpose, or viability. While the thesis may identify a scholarly conversation, it does not successfully engage or contribute to the intended conversation.	Writer's thesis is difficult to discern, posits a very basic or unarguable claim, and/or does not engage a scholarly conversation.
Exigence	Writer clearly establishes the value and urgency of the issue and explains why readers should attend to the issue by showing awareness and building upon an existing conversation. Writer also	Writer supplies reasons for exigence of issue and argument, but these reasons may not be wholly persuasive. The writer demonstrates why the exigence of the issue	Writer gestures at the exigence of the issue and his/her argument, but reasons for exigence for argument and issue are flawed or not fully developed. The writer may not connect the exigence to the	There is little to no articulation of exigence for issue or argument.

	establishes the exigence and importance of his/her argument.	matters for the identified conversation.	conversation, or the connections may be faulty.	
Supporting Arguments	Writer systematically, logically, and thoroughly advances the thesis through effective and appropriate lines of reasoning. All supporting claims are valid and arranged in a logical manner. The writer responds to counterarguments thoughtfully and effectively.	Writer provides sufficient, well-reasoned support for his/her thesis. Most of the supporting claims are valid and logically arranged. The writer addresses and/or responds to counterarguments.	Writer attempts to support thesis. The arrangement strategy may be confusing to the reader or the writer may not successfully connect ideas in a logical manner. Writer may provide oversimplified or "straw man" representations of counterarguments.	Writer's supporting arguments are off topic, illogical, and/or do not offer support to the thesis of the essay. Writer may not articulate or respond to counterarguments or may provide unfair representations of counterarguments. Writer's arrangement strategy may be critically flawed.
Audience	Writer consistently and persuasively tailors the argument to the expectations of an academic audience through tone and prose style, arguments and supporting claims, as well as logical, ethical, and emotional appeals.	For the majority of the essay, the writer tailors argument to the expectations of an academic audience through tone and prose style, arguments and supporting claims, as well as logical, ethical, and emotional appeals.	Writer attempts to meet the expectations of an academic audience through prose style, appeals, or stylistic concerns, but this attempt is not wholly successful due to appropriateness of execution.	Writer does not meet the expectations of an academic audience. The essay's tone, prose style, and/or rhetorical appeals may be ineffective or inappropriate for the intended audience.
Source Quality	The writer consistently integrates a rich variety of high quality and scholarly research relevant to his/her argument. The writer exceeds the audience's expectations for relevant sources.	Writer employs research that is credible and relevant to his/her argument. The writer meets the audience's expectations for appropriate sources.	Writer draws on sources that are not consistently relevant or credible. Few of these sources are scholarly. The writer may misunderstand the audience's expectations for research, drawing on inappropriate sources or ignoring important sources.	Writer rarely integrates research into his/her essay, and/or when the writer does integrate sources, they are not relevant, credible, or scholarly. The writer fails to meet the audience's expectations for relevant and appropriate sources.

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Source Use	Writer effectively and expertly integrates research into the argument by means of attribution, summarizing, quoting, or paraphrasing. Writer thoroughly analyzes research and offers meaningful and persuasive explanations of how it relates to his/her argument.	The writer judiciously integrates research into the argument by means of attribution, summarizing, quoting, or paraphrasing. Writer analyzes research and explains how it relates to his/her argument.	The writer integrates research into his or her essay but his/her attempts at attribution, summarizing, quoting, or paraphrasing are sometimes flawed. Writer may include quotations with no framing language when integrating source material. The connections between the research and the writer's argument may be missing or tenuous.	The writer's attempts at summarizing, quoting, or paraphrasing are frequently flawed. Writer may not attribute sources or frame quotations. The writer may not make connections between the research and his/her argument.
Citation	The writer expertly cites sources, both citing them correctly within the text and using correct conventions throughout the works cited list.	The writer cites sources in text and throughout the works cited list. There may be minor errors in MLA citation.	The writer attempts to cite all sources in text and throughout the works cited list, but there may be major errors in MLA citation.	The writer makes no attempt to cite sources, or the writer may attempt to cite sources, but there is no evident pattern or style for citations.

The Academic Writing Rubric was developed by the Academic Writing Faculty Board, supported by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment with the Academic Writing instructors upon review of the AAC&U VALUE rubrics and according to standards determined by the Academic Writing Faculty Board for student performance in the General Education Academic Writing courses. The rubric defines the standards for student performance in Academic Writing courses at the University of Maryland.