

# Academic Writing – Inquiry



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](http://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 an understanding of the connection between writing and thinking and use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating in an academic setting.*

Criterion for review of student work	Descriptions of levels of student performance			
	Advanced	Proficient	Beginning	Unacceptable
<b>Guiding Question/ Statement of Inquiry</b>	The writer crafts an insightful, complex, and open-ended question that guides an inquiry and opens a field of scholarly conversation. The question can be explicit or implicit.	The writer crafts an open-ended question that initiates a scholarly conversation and leads to related inquiry. The question can be explicit or implicit.	The writer crafts a question that may be easily answered or may not lead to productive inquiry. The question can be explicit or implicit.	There is no question, either explicit or implicit.
<b>Exigence</b>	The writer effectively and persuasively establishes the urgency and importance of the topic and inquiry in the opening paragraphs. The writer employs multiple strategies to cultivate	The writer establishes the urgency and importance of the topic and inquiry in the opening paragraphs. The writer cultivates exigence at one or two other points in the essay.	The writer gestures at the exigence of the issue but the reasons for the issue's exigence are insufficient or unpersuasive.	There is little to no articulation of exigence for the topic or the line of inquiry.

	exigence throughout the entire essay.			
<b>Inquisitive Stance</b>	The writer pursues the guiding question throughout the essay by resisting argument and closure, thoughtfully deepening the chosen audience's understanding of the issue. The writer engages in the process of inquiry through nuanced, accurate, and unbiased portrayals of varied aspects of the issue.	The writer pursues the guiding question through resisting argument and closure. The writer offers accurate and unbiased portrayals of varied aspects of the issue for most of the essay.	The writer attempts to address the guiding question throughout the essay but is not entirely successful. The writer might slip into argument or offer somewhat biased or shallow portrayals of the issue.	The writer does not address the guiding question throughout the essay. The writer takes a position or exhibits either strong bias or an inaccurate portrayal of the perspectives within the issue.
<b>Using Research to Forward Inquiry</b>	The writer effectively and expertly synthesizes convincing evidence pulled from a rich variety of scholarly and popular sources relating to the topic. The writer effectively connects sources in order to identify or create a conversation that engages the guiding question and propels the inquiry forward in interesting and original ways.	The writer synthesizes evidence pulled from a number of scholarly and popular sources relating to the topic. The writer connects sources in order to identify or create a conversation that engages the guiding question and propels the inquiry forward.	The writer includes several sources. However, the sources used may offer similar or one-sided perspectives relating to the topic, or the engagement with sources may be shallow. The writer attempts to connect sources to a conversation or to the guiding question.	The writer may consult sources that are problematic because of bias, a lack of evidentiary proof, or outdated data. The writer does not engage the research in an open-ended way.

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.