

Professional Writing



Each General Education category is grounded in a set of learning outcomes. For the full set of learning outcomes for Professional 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 Professional Writing General Education Category:

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

- *Write for the intended readers of a text, and design or adapt texts to audiences who may differ in their familiarity with the subject matter.*
- *Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counterarguments.*

Criterion for review of student work	Descriptions of levels of student performance			
	Advanced	Proficient	Beginning	Unacceptable
<p>PURPOSE Articulates the purpose of the document, one that is appropriate for the rhetorical situation (i.e., relationship between the writer; topic; audience; genre; and broader social, academic, or professional context).</p>	<p>The writer clearly articulates the purpose of the document. The writer persuasively establishes the reasons for writing for this purpose, about this specific topic, for this specific audience, and at this specific time and place.</p>	<p>The writer explains the purpose of the document, although perhaps not as clearly as possible. The writer presents several good—but perhaps not the most compelling—reasons for writing for this specific purpose, about this specific topic, for this specific audience, and at this specific time and place.</p>	<p>The writer attempts to explain the purpose of the document, but that purpose is difficult to determine. The writer provides reasons, but not the most logical or persuasive reasons, for writing about this topic, for this audience, and at this time and place.</p>	<p>The writer makes little or no attempt to explain the purpose of the document. The writer provides few, if any, persuasive reasons for writing about this topic, for this audience, and at this time and place.</p>
<p>AUDIENCE Identifies an appropriate audience for the topic and the document. Anticipates and responds to the values, needs, and expectations of the audience.</p>	<p>The writer targets an appropriate audience for the document, given both the writer’s and the audience’s standing in relation to the topic and to one another. The writer also identifies logical secondary audiences. The writer effectively adapts the content, structure, and language of the document to these intended audiences.</p>	<p>The writer targets an appropriate audience for the document. The writer adapts most elements of the document to the primary audience but does not include a key supporting reason; provide an explanation; or use types of language the audience would value, need, or expect. The writer makes some effort to address a secondary audience.</p>	<p>The writer targets an audience for the document but demonstrates a limited understanding or awareness of the audience’s values, needs, and expectations. The writer attempts to anticipate and respond to these perceived values, needs and expectations of the audience but does not succeed in several different ways. The writer may identify a secondary audience but does not work to address it.</p>	<p>The writer targets an audience for the document that is inappropriate, given the writer’s and the audience’s standing in relation to the topic and/or to one another. The writer targets no secondary audience. The content, arrangement, and style of the document reflect the interests of the writer, not the audience.</p>

<p>GENRE Uses conventions of the genre, such as content (e.g., general or discipline-specific types of evidence and reasoning); arrangement (e.g., format, structure, document design); and style (e.g., voice, tone, sentence complexity) to meet the demands of the rhetorical situation.</p>	<p>The writer adapts the conventions of the genre to meet the demands of a specific rhetorical situation. Every part of the document works toward the end of achieving the writer’s purpose.</p>	<p>The writer meets the audience expectations for the conventions of the genre, but the writer misses potential opportunities to adapt the genre conventions to meet the unique demands of the rhetorical situation. Most, but not all, rhetorical elements of the genre work toward the writer’s purpose for the document.</p>	<p>The writer follows standard conventions for the genre but does not attempt to adapt the genre conventions for the unique demands of the rhetorical situation. Several elements of the document do not work in support of the writer’s purpose for the document.</p>	<p>The writer fails to use standard conventions of the genre and does not attempt to write for a specific rhetorical situation. Most elements of the document undermine the writer’s expressed or apparent purpose for the document.</p>
<p>ARGUMENT Identifies an arguable issue or problem. Presents a clear, logical, persuasive argument in response to the issue or problem.</p>	<p>The writer clearly and persuasively articulates the major argument of document. The argument presents a substantive, original response to the unique rhetorical situation. The writer presents logical, persuasive reasons to support this argument.</p>	<p>The writer clearly articulates the major argument of the document. The argument represents a substantive response to the arguable issue, although the argument does not directly respond to every aspect of the unique rhetorical situation. The writer presents logical reasons to support this argument.</p>	<p>The writer attempts to present the major argument of the document, but the specific argument is difficult to determine. The argument presents a predictable response to the rhetorical situation. The writer presents supporting reasons for the argument, but they are neither persuasive reasons nor clearly explained and fully developed.</p>	<p>The writer attempts to make an argument in the document, but the writer presents few, if any, supporting claims and makes little or no attempt to persuade the audience.</p>
<p>EVIDENCE Supports the argument using concrete, relevant, accurate, and sufficient evidence. Analyzes the evidence and explains its relevance to the major argument and supporting reasons.</p>	<p>The writer clearly supports the argument with accurate evidence that the audience would consider credible. The writer provides sufficient details to support the main points of the argument. The writer uses a variety of appropriate sources, both primary and/or secondary.</p>	<p>The writer provides many details to support the argument but does not fully elaborate on each one or make each one sufficiently specific. The writer provides some evidence that the audience will not find relevant for the argument.</p>	<p>The writer provides some supporting evidence but does not fully explain the evidence. Some evidence is not relevant to the argument, or the audience will not find it credible or convincing. The writer does not include important content that the audience would have expected the writer to address.</p>	<p>The writer provides little or no data or logical reasoning to support the main ideas of the argument. Much of the writer’s data is inaccurate, outdated, or irrelevant.</p>

<p>COUNTERARGUMENTS</p> <p>Anticipates and responds to arguments that various stakeholders would likely make about the writer’s major argument, supporting reasons, and evidence.</p>	<p>The writer anticipates questions or objections about the argument that stakeholders would likely want to or need to see addressed. The writer addresses those counterarguments in a clear, convincing way through logical reasoning, presentation and analysis of additional evidence, or qualification of the argument.</p>	<p>The writer anticipates the most important questions or objections that stakeholders would likely pose to the writer, although some additional related concerns might not be addressed. The writer attempts to address these counterarguments in a clear, convincing way, succeeding in most but not all of these attempts.</p>	<p>The writer mentions counterarguments but does not explain them in a clear, even-handed way. The writer makes superficial attempts to address these counterarguments.</p>	<p>The writer makes no attempt to anticipate or engage counterarguments.</p>
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The Professional Writing Rubric was developed by the Professional Writing Faculty Board, supported by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment with the Professional Writing instructors upon review of the AAC&U VALUE rubrics and according to standards determined by the Professional Writing Faculty Board for student performance in the General Education Professional Writing courses. The rubric defines the standards for student performance in Professional Writing courses at the University of Maryland.