

The Writing Proficiency Requirement Effective January 1, 2018

Midwestern State University requires all students seeking baccalaureate degrees to fulfill the Writing Proficiency Requirement between the completion of their 60th and 90th semester credit hour, either by passing the Writing Proficiency Examination or by enrolling in and passing ENGL 2113, Intermediate Composition and Grammar. Students transferring to MSU with more than 90 semester credit hours must take the Writing Proficiency Examination during their second long (fall or spring) semester at MSU and if necessary enroll in and pass 2113 in their third semester. Alternatively, they may choose to enroll in and pass 2113 in their first semester without attempting the examination.

Each student's academic advisor and major program are responsible for making the student aware of the Writing Proficiency Requirement and the ways in which it can be fulfilled

The Writing Proficiency Examination

Administration. The Writing Proficiency Examination is administered by the Writing Program Administrator (WPA), who reports directly to the Associate Vice President of Undergraduate Education and Assessment. The WPA appoints English faculty as necessary to assist in grading the exam. In consultation with the Provost and the AVP, the WPA recommends a fee schedule for the compensation of the graders, proctors, and clerical assistants as necessary, and for incidental handling of off-campus exams. These fees then require the approval of the Board of Regents.

The Office of Writing Proficiency, under the supervision of the WPA, is responsible for the following:

- . preparing the exam
- . scheduling specific dates and locations for the exam
- . disseminating information about the exam and about testing times and places
- . assigning proctors for each exam
- . overseeing the grading of the exams to ensure fairness and consistency
- . recording exam results and maintaining comparative statistics of present and past results
- . arranging special accommodations for students with disabilities and/or at a distance
- . clearing holds placed on students who have not fulfilled the Writing Proficiency Requirement by 90 hours and/or who did not pass the Writing Proficiency Exam.

Nature of the Exam. The Writing Proficiency Examination tests the ability of juniors to write a college-level persuasive essay. Each test-taker responds to one of two prompts by writing an essay of at least 300 words in a two-hour period. (Extra time and alternative locations may be arranged for students with documented disabilities.)

Criteria for Grading. A passing essay responds to one of the prompts with a clearly stated thesis, which then receives adequate support and development in the rest of the essay. Additionally, a passing essay presents a clearly organized argument, demonstrates reasonable command of sentence structure and vocabulary, and adheres to standard

The Writing Proficiency Requirement Effective January 1, 2018

American conventions of spelling, usage, and punctuation. Exam instructions and the descriptive rubric used by the graders are available on the Writing Proficiency Requirement website.

Who May Take the Exam. Students may take the exam only after completing 60 semester hours of university credit (junior standing) and only after passing the Communication Core (6 hours). Students may take the exam only once

When and Where the Exam Is Given. The Writing Proficiency Examination is given several times on the MSU campus midway through the spring and fall semesters and early in the second summer term. Exact dates and locations are published in each semester's *Schedule of Classes* and on the MSU web page. Beginning approximately six (6) weeks prior to each exam cycle, students will be able to register online at the Writing Proficiency Requirement website.

For an additional fee, distance education students and students enrolled at a Midwestern State satellite campus (Flower Mound or WCWC) may take the WPE online through MSU's D2L interface. To do so, students must apply for a proctored exam and purchase an online test ticket. Then they must schedule an appointment with a designated online proctoring service within one of the scheduled testing periods

Exam Procedures. Test-takers must arrive on time (late comers will not be admitted) and bring a photo identification, a pen or pencil, and a receipt confirming online payment of the test fee. All other permitted materials will be provided, including an acknowledgment of the Writing Proficiency Requirement to be signed by each test-taker. Not permitted at the testing site are notebooks, paper, dictionaries, thesauri, book bags or back packs, or any electronic devices, including spell-checkers, grammar-checkers, and cell phones.

The proctor will distribute materials, and he or she will then explain the format for the examination, review the criteria by which the exam is evaluated, and answer questions. (Students who take the exam off-campus cannot expect the online proctor to answer questions beyond those covered in the written test materials the proctor has been provided.) Test-takers then have two hours in which to complete essays of at least 300 words. Some may wish to write a rough draft and then a final draft. In such cases the final draft must be clearly indicated since only the final draft will be evaluated.

Special Accommodations. Students with documented disabilities who wish to arrange special accommodations for the Writing Proficiency Examination should do so through the Office of Disability Support Services at least two weeks before the date of the exam. Midwestern State University will make any reasonable accommodation that does not directly affect the skills being tested in this exam.

Exam Evaluation. The final draft of each essay is read by two full-time members of the English faculty, who have no knowledge of the writer's name or of the other reader's

The Writing Proficiency Requirement Effective January 1, 2018

evaluation. No marks are placed directly on the essay, but each grader notes errors, records his or her evaluation of the essay based on the writing proficiency rubric, and assigns an overall grade of pass or fail. If the two graders do not agree on whether the essay passes or fails, it is read in the same manner by a third member of the English faculty, also without knowledge of the writer's name, for a final determination. The evaluation of the graders is final, and though a student, on request, may review his or her rubrics, there is no appeal. Essays and rubrics will not be returned to the student.

Exam Results. The results of the Writing Proficiency Examination are confidential; therefore, results cannot be given out over the phone or via e-mail. They are reported via confidential memo from the Office of Writing Proficiency to the deans of the colleges, to the Provost, and to the Registrar. The Registrar posts each passing result to the individual student's transcript. Students should check their transcripts through the MSU website approximately four weeks after the test date to determine if they passed the exam. A "Writing Proficiency Exam Failed" hold will be applied to students whose essays do not pass the exam. The hold must be released by our office.