

**Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at
the University of Virginia**

Creating a Culture of Writing



**Year 3 Report
Academic Year 2019 – 2020**

The purpose of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to enhance the culture of writing at the University of Virginia, through increased pedagogical support for faculty and students with respect to writing instruction, a wider range of inquiry-based writing opportunities for students, and adequate infrastructure to support writing instruction.

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September 29, 2020

Dear Faculty, Students, and Staff:

The 2019-2020 academic year marked the third year of implementation of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). As we enter the QEP's fourth year, I write to provide an update on the progress that has been made towards enhancing a culture of writing and to share our goals as we move forward.

The third year of the QEP built upon the foundation for writing enhanced (WE) courses that was developed during the previous two years; a primary accomplishment was piloting the WE criteria in multiple undergraduate schools. Specifically, the new WE criteria were piloted in 25 courses across the College of Arts & Sciences, the Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, and the School of Nursing. Altogether, the new WE criteria impacted more than 300 undergraduate students. Through their participation in WE courses, which are considered high-impact practices, we expect our undergraduate students to benefit from higher levels of engagement and deeper understanding of course content.

The second half of Year 3 of the QEP presented an immense challenge to the entire University community, as our faculty, students, and staff made unprecedented adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the QEP Oversight Committee, with addition support from the Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, continued to support the development and implementation of tools for the QEP. For instance, the 7th annual Faculty Seminar on the Teaching of Writing was held remotely via Zoom, school and departmental workshops and individual consultations were held to encourage the use of the WE criteria, an online platform designed for the peer review of student work was piloted, and a new Graduate Instructor Seminar on the Teaching of Writing was launched.

As we look forward to the fourth year of QEP implementation, we reflect upon these accomplishments so that we can take what we have learned and further develop and refine strategies to enhance the culture of writing at the University of Virginia.

In Year 4 of QEP implementation, the Oversight Committee will continue to explore opportunities to pilot and evaluate the WE criteria across the institution. For instance, the College of Arts & Sciences has approved a two-year plan to allow second writing requirement (SWR) courses to use either the existing SWR criteria or the new WE criteria. Broad testing of the WE criteria in the College and across the University will provide important data to inform how the institution can continue to support a culture of writing for our students. Embedded in the piloting of the WE criteria is continued support of resources for instructor and curricular development. For instance, during the upcoming academic year, instructors will be able to participate in a pilot use of Peerceptiv, an online platform designed for the peer review of student work guided by instructor-created criteria. Interested instructors began receiving training on Peerceptiv during the summer months.

In this report you will find more detailed summaries of QEP Year 3 efforts relating to piloting the WE criteria as well as the implementation of instructor and curricular support interventions. I welcome your continued engagement as we enter into the final two years of QEP implementation, so that together we

can demonstrate to our students that writing is a valued and integral part of their University of Virginia education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Archie Holmes". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Archie Holmes
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Chair, QEP Oversight Committee

QEP Oversight Committee
2019-2020 Academic Year

Archie Holmes, *Provost's Office and Chair*

Matt Banfield, *Provost's Office*

John Casteen, *University President Emeritus
and College of Arts & Sciences*

T. Kenny Fountain, *Director of Writing Across
the Curriculum, College of
Arts & Sciences*

Natasha Heny, *Curry School of Education &
Human Development*

Ashley Hurst, *School of Nursing*

Emily Keyser, *Graduate Student*

Victor Luftig, *College of Arts & Sciences*

Charlotte Matthews, *School of Continuing
And Professional Studies*

Christina Morell, *Institutional Research
and Analytics*

Lois Myers, *Institutional Research
and Analytics*

Kathryn Neeley, *School of Engineering and
Applied Science*

Heidi Nobles, *Associate Director of Writing
Across the Curriculum, College of
Arts & Sciences*

Rob Patterson, *McIntire School of Commerce*

Andy Pennock, *Frank Batten School of
Leadership & Public Policy*

Lisa Reilly, *School of Architecture*

Adriana Streifer, *Center for Teaching Excellence*

Phil Trella, *Office of Graduate
and Postdoctoral Affairs*

WAC@UVA 2019-2020 Report

Prepared by: T. Kenny Fountain Associate Professor of English & Director of Writing Across the Curriculum

In 2019-2020, T. Kenny Fountain and Heidi Nobles (Assistant Professor, English & Associate Director, Writing Across the Curriculum) worked on a number of projects aimed at fostering and sustaining a culture of writing at UVA. These writing across the curriculum projects, all performed in collaboration with the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Writing and Rhetoric Program, Institutional Research and Analytics, and the Quality Enhancement Plan Oversight Committee, involved (1) the Second Writing Requirement and (2) instructor and curricular resources and development.

Second Writing Requirement

To provide useful information for program development, the 2019-2020 assessment of the Writing Enhanced/SWR program intentionally addressed three topics: 1) instructors' confidence in teaching writing; 2) instructors' use of writing-enhanced teaching practices; and 3) students' writing proficiency as measured across four outcomes specified in a rubric. Lois Myers (Associate Director and University Assessment Coordinator) and Carrie Worcester (Assessment Analyst) of Institutional Research and Analytics supervised this assessment.

We piloted a new writing-enhanced (WE) criteria in 11 Second Writing Requirement (SWR) courses:

Fall 2019

Nursing: NUCO 2210, 001-003 = 93 students

Batten: LPPP 3001, 001-004 = 84 students

Spring 2020

A&S: ARTH 3591, 023 = 16 students

A&S: ARTH 3591, 031 = 14 students

A&S: ARTH 4591, 024 = 9 students

A&S: ENCW 2200, 01 = 12 students

A&S: ENGL 2507, 01 = 18 students

A&S: ENWR 2520, 01 = 16 students

A&S: EVSC 4170, 01 = 13 students

A&S: PHIL 3500, 01 = 30 students

SCPS, ISLS 3210, 101 & 102 = 20 students

Total number of individual students involved = 323 (two students enrolled in two of these courses)

1) Instructors' confidence in teaching writing: Institutional Research and Analytics managed administration of a pre-course survey of instructor confidence in teaching writing. The survey asked instructors to rate their confidence on 20 aspects of writing instruction (e.g., grading, designing syllabi) and gave them the opportunity to expound on the topic through text comments. Results from this survey were used to design mid-semester targeted support for instructors and will inform subsequent roll-out of WE criteria.

2) Instructors' application of WE criteria. We designed and administered a post-course survey to 1) identify the challenges instructors encountered in implementing the WE criteria, 2) elicit instructors' perceptions of their students' responses to the instruction, and 3) for Spring 2020 only, to learn how instructors managed the change on online formats. Institutional Research and Analytics managed administration and analysis of this survey after the term ended.

3) Assessment of student writing. To assess student proficiency in writing, we collected the following documents from each course that participated in the pilot:

1. Course syllabus and weekly schedule
2. Students' final writing projects (actual student papers)
3. Writing assignment sheet/prompt for that final writing project
4. Any evaluation criteria or rubric used to grade that final project

In spring 2020, the assessment team (Myers, Nobles, Worcester, and Fountain) created assessment rubrics based on the AAC&U Written Communication rubric but tailored to the final writing projects for the Batten SWR course and the Nursing SWR course.

- Nursing WE Criteria Pilot Course: Applying the rubric designed for this SWR course, three Nursing faculty assessed a representative random sample of student writing from all three sections of the SWR course. Institutional Research and Analytics analyzed the results and prepared a report summarizing the findings. Results, which were shared with School of Nursing faculty and administrators, informed plans for Fall 2020 course planning.
- Batten WE Criteria Pilot Course: A preliminary review of a sample of papers from the Batten course, however, revealed that an assessment of the papers would be premature. Examination of the pre and post survey results, course syllabus, assignment prompts, and evaluation rubrics yielded a list of recommendations for assignment revisions and instructor development. We provided these recommendations to Batten administration in lieu of a formal assessment of student writing.
- Spring WE Criteria Pilot Courses: In light of the impact of the pandemic on instruction that term, the assessment team decided to postpone (until Fall 2020) the formal evaluation of student papers collected from these courses. In early fall, the assessment team (following the process used in the Fall 2019 assessment) will create and test assignment-specific rubrics and gather (likely via Zoom) disciplinary faculty to read and score samples of student writing from a sample of three of the nine pilot courses.

The plan for 2020-2021 is to continue the WE Criteria Pilot by recruiting 10 sections/courses each semester to participate, ideally targeting the following: (1) science and social science courses (SWR or similar); (2) courses in other schools, such as Architecture, Batten, Curry, McIntire, and SEAS; (3) courses (SWR or similar) taught by less-experienced teachers of writing; and (4) humanities SWR courses from departments offering a large number of SWRs (e.g., history, religious studies, etc.). Extending the pilot to 20 courses total in 2020-2021 will allow us to increase and diversify our documentation and assessment in a manageable way.

Approved CEPC Two Criteria Pilot

The College of Arts & Sciences Committee on Educational Policy and Curriculum (CEPC) approved our proposal for a two-year curricular pilot which allows SWR courses to use either the existing SWR criteria or the new WE criteria. Also, this pilot will include a new SWR approval process. Beginning in Fall 2020, all courses seeking a new SWR designation will be reviewed by a University committee of faculty,

chaired by Fountain. This advisory committee will review the instructor's course materials and answers to an SWR questionnaire and make a recommendation to the CEPC Executive Committee concerning the course's alignment with the specific criteria chosen. This pilot, including voluntary consultations with instructors, will begin in Fall 2020.

New SWR Website

Thanks to the efforts of Alexandra Reborn (Communications Director, Office of the Provost) and Carl Stukenborg (Undergraduate Administrator, Department of English), Fountain a page on the Writing and Rhetoric Program website dedicated to the SWR and the CEPC Two Criteria Pilot:

<https://writingrhetoric.as.virginia.edu/swr>

This site introduces the CEPC pilot, explains the new SWR approval step, and provides a link to the SWR questionnaire. The page also introduces WAC-related instructor resources provided by Fountain and Nobles and offers a rationale for UVA's WAC efforts.

Instructor and Curricular Resources and Development

Instructor Seminars and Workshops

Faculty Seminar on the Teaching of Writing: Fountain and James Seitz (Associate Professor, English) taught the 7th annual Faculty Seminar on the Teaching of Writing via Zoom for a diverse group of 14 UVA instructors from across Grounds (specifically from A&S, Batten, McIntire, and Medicine). Institutional Research and Analytics collected and analyzed data from the instructor participants in the form of pre-seminar and post-seminar confidence surveys.

Workshops for Faculty: Fountain and Nobles conducted four workshops for instructors in SEAS, Nursing, and A&S, as well as instructors teaching in the A&S Engagements Curriculum. We also held two information sessions for English, which introduced instructors to the new WE criteria and pilot.

In 2020-2021, Fountain and Nobles will continue to offer one-on-one consultations with faculty and will expand the workshops to include sessions on incorporating the WE criteria, responding to student writing, structuring peer review, guiding students in writing with sources, and offering forms of writing instruction.

Pilot of the Online Peer Review Platform Peerceptiv: In spring 2020, working with Yitna Firdyiwiek (Instructional Designer, Learning Design & Technology) and Jennifer Sessions (Associate Professor, History), we sought to pilot Peerceptiv, an online platform designed for the peer review of student work and guided by instructor-created criteria and guideline. Unfortunately, we were unable to proceed with the pilot due in part to complications created by the transition to online teaching as a result of COVID-19. In preparation for a 2020-2021 pilot, Firdyiwiek researched the subscription costs and technical support options for both Peerceptiv and Eli Review, a similar online peer review platform. In order to provide this online resource to the largest number of faculty possible, Firdyiwiek, Fountain, and Vice Provost Holmes decided to purchase a campus wide subscription to Peerceptiv for 2020-2021. During summer 2020, Fountain will work with Firdyiwiek on Peerceptiv training for instructors.

Graduate Instructor Seminar on the Teaching of Writing: Fountain, Victor Luftig (Professor, English and Director, Writing and Rhetoric Program), and Phil Trella (Associate Vice Provost and Director, Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs) successfully proposed a new Graduate Instructor Seminar on the Teaching of Writing, modelled after the Faculty Seminar but designed for graduate instructors teaching

writing-enhanced courses. This Graduate Instructor Seminar, which took place August 10-14, 2020, brought together 21 graduate students from across Grounds for four-days of interactive workshops taught by faculty in the Writing and Rhetoric Program – Heidi Nobles, Tamika Carey (Associate Professor, English), and Patricia Sullivan (Assistant Professor, English). As with the Faculty Seminar, Myers and Worcester conducted pre- and post-seminar surveys with the participants.

Nursing WAC Project

Fountain and Nobles continued working with Nursing, as they seek to implement a writing-enhanced curriculum in their BSN program. As part of the Nursing faculty's pilot of the new WE criteria in their SWR course, Fountain gave a presentation about writing in Nursing to the students in that course (NUCO 2210). After the assessment of student papers from Fall 2019, Fountain, Nobles, Myers, and Worcester met with faculty and administrators in Nursing to discuss the report and plan next steps. In Fall 2020, Nursing will again offer NUCO 2210 using the WE criteria; this will allow those instructors a second opportunity to incorporate the criteria and to revise the writing assignments and evaluation rubrics based on the assessment team's recommendations.

Writing Fellows Project

Working with Claire Chantell (Assistant Professor, English and Director, UVA Writing Center), Marcus Meade (Assistant Professor, English and Assistant Director, UVA Writing Center), and Victor Luftig, we continued the Writing Fellows project, which pairs experienced Writing Center tutors (usually graduate students in English) with specific Distinguished Majors (DM) programs to offer focused, disciplinary writing tutoring to the students working on their DM projects. In 2019-2020, Writing Fellows (WF tutors) worked with DM students in American Studies, Art & Art History, Arts Administration, and Media Studies. The WF tutors offered a variety of writing support to the DM students, including in-class workshops and one-on-one tutoring. For the first time, the assessment team collected data on the Writing Fellows project in the form of interviews with DM instructors (conducted by Nobles) and two focus groups with WF tutors (conducted by Worcester). Based on this data, Fountain, Chantell, Meade, Luftig, and Nobles have decided to implement the following changes to the Writing Fellows project in 2020-2021: to aim to work with 4 DM programs each semester (ideally including at least one science or social science program) and to suggest a more structured set of resources that WF tutors can provide DM instructors and students.

QEP Professional Development Offerings and Participation- 2018-2020

Faculty Seminar on the Teaching of Writing			
	# Participants	Participants' Schools	Assessment Method
Spring 2018	16	Curry, Law, Nursing, College (70%-8 programs)	Pre/post confidence survey
Spring 2019	17	Arch, Batten, Law, McIntire, Transition, College (69%-9 programs)	Pre/post confidence survey
Spring 2020	14	Batten, Curry, McIntire, Medicine, College (70%-7 programs)	Pre/post confidence survey

Graduate Instructor Seminar on the Teaching of Writing			
	# Participants	Participants' Schools	Assessment Method
Summer 2020	21	Curry, College (90%-12 programs)	Pre/post confidence survey

Engaged Writing Institute in Teaching of Writing			
	# Participants	Participants' School	Assessment Method
Summer 2020	10	English- ENWR instructors	Pre/post confidence survey (modified for EW)

Total # participants = 78

Recurring themes in surveys:

- how to manage the time commitment required
- how to motivate unmotivated students
- how to manage wide range of student abilities to write
- when and where to refer students who need help with writing
- how to teach editing techniques

QEP Writing Enhanced Criteria Pilots and Participation 2019-2020

	# Participants	Participants' School/Program	Assessment Methods
Fall 2019	3	Nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-survey re: confidence • Post-survey re: experience w/reflection • Rubric-based assessment of sample of student papers from 3 course sections
Spring 2020	9	Architecture: Art History (3) College: English (4), Environmental Science, Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-survey re: confidence • Post-survey re: experience w/reflection • Rubric-based assessment of student papers from 3 courses (planned)
Fall 2020 (planned)	8	Batten (1), College (1), Curry (1), McIntire (4), SEAS (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-survey re: confidence • Post-survey re: experience w/reflection • Rubric-based assessment of student papers

Total # participants= 20

Pre-survey results—least confident in ability to:

- Teach editing techniques
- Know when/where to refer students who need extra help with writing
- Balance teaching of writing with teaching of content
- Manage wide range of student abilities to write
- Incorporate writing activities into classroom setting
- Design writing intensive syllabi
- Organize in-class peer review/feedback opportunities

Post-survey results:

Integrating the new SWR writing criteria ranged from slightly to moderately challenging. Not all instructors were similarly challenged.

Sources of challenge:

- Expectations for and grading writing—instructors differ in expectations even w/in same course
- Time required to read/grade drafts
- Logistics of peer evaluation of each other's papers

- Balancing time to teach content vs. time to teach writing
- Sequencing and distributing writing assignments across semester
- Providing writing instruction and opportunities to discuss writing across semester

Text Responses:

What resources do you wish had been available?

- TA
- Writing workshop(s) or resources re: efficient (less time-consuming) grading and feedback strategies, exercises for students
- Portal of Writing for UVA, like Purdue's Online Writing Lab, Harvard's Writing Project, UNC, or Univ. of Michigan's Sweetland Center; UVA center would have helpful resources for faculty, grad students and undergrad students

For future classes incorporating WE criteria, what advice do you have for instructors?

- Ask students what their goals for writing are and incorporate those into instruction.
- Plan your syllabus early. Don't be afraid to change your schedule slightly if the students need more time to revise their work.
- Spend more class time discussing common writing errors.
- Embrace the process of writing and the process of revision, build in repetition, build in distance from activities for reflection (learning new strategies means students need time to practice and integrate -- just because you showed them how to do something once doesn't mean they know how to do it).
- Ask students to take responsibility for their own development as writers through process documents, reflective memos, status reports, self-evaluations and planning and goal setting updates.
- Find one or two aspects of writing or writing activities or types of writing that you know students will enjoy and use those as a base for harder (less fun but still rewarding) activities.
- Find a few examples of published, respected writers reflecting on their own education or writing process to inspire students and demystify the ongoing process of learning to write different genres in different contexts.
- Pick one or two things to do well the first time around. It can be tempting to do too much when you learn about all the ways to support student writing. One or two effective strategies is better, and less exhausting for you, than 10 mediocre ones.
- Whatever constitutes your course "texts", whether that is academic articles, novels, lab reports, memos, etc., engage your students in conversations about those texts not only for how they help students learn course content, but also for what they can teach us about how writers within a certain field/discipline/genre write.
- Treat student writing as texts to learn from. Use anonymous examples in class that illustrate a principle or idea well.

- Establish clear benchmarks or smaller assignments that can lead to a larger assignment. It takes writers a long time to figure out what they are really trying to say. Multiple small assignments give an instructor more time to help a student achieve that clarity and to head off a student who is straying into a nonproductive area.

Looking Ahead: Year 4 and 5 QEP Activities

The beginning of QEP Year 4 marks a turning point; the next two years will bring to full realization a sustainable culture of writing at the University, using the groundwork and infrastructure developed over the past three years. In Years 4 and 5 of QEP implementation, the Oversight Committee will expand, assess, and make sustainable writing enhanced (WE) courses across the institution. The QEP Oversight Committee is committed to supporting the implementation and assessment of the following activities during the final two years of implementation.

Communicating a Culture of Writing

- Launch a public awareness campaign to ensure that the University community understands the value that is placed on writing at UVA. This will include a public web presence that provides access to resources to support instructors in the teaching of writing.
- Engage leaders from each undergraduate school to build support for the utilization of the WE criteria across the institution.

WE Criteria Development

- Continuation of WE criteria pilots across the institution, including a two-year program in the College of Arts & Sciences that allows faculty to use the WE criteria in their second writing requirement (SWR) courses.

Professional Development

- Faculty Seminar on the Teaching of Writing during J-term and summer (2021 and 2022)
- Graduate Seminar on the Teaching of Writing during J-term and summer (2021 and 2022)
- Workshops and one-on-one consultations offered by the Director of Writing Across the Curriculum

Technology Support

- Deployment of Peerceptiv as a writing instruction resource