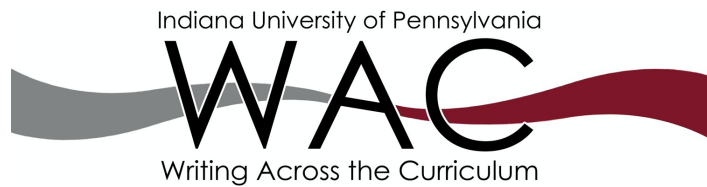


Last Updated June 17, 2024



**DEPARTMENT OF
CRIMINOLOGY &
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Department Writing Plan

Compiled by

Dr. Shannon Phaneuf, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice
in consultation with Dr. Bryna Siegel Finer, Director, Writing Across the Curriculum

Submitted to:

Dr. Daniel Lee, Department Chair
the Faculty of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Dr. Curt Scheib, Dean, College of Art, Humanities, and Media
Dr. Dawn Smith-Sherwood Director of Liberal Studies
Dr. Lara Luetkehans, Provost

Table of Contents

SUMMARY	3
2021 ADDENDUM	4
PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC GENRES IN DISCIPLINE	5
STUDENT WRITING SKILLS AND ABILITIES	5
INTEGRATION OF WRITING INTO UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM	6
COMMUNICATING WRITING EXPECTATIONS TO STUDENTS	7
COMMUNICATION OF WRITING EXPECTATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM	7
COMMUNICATION OF WRITING EXPECTATIONS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM	7
WAYS TO BETTER COMMUNICATE/REINFORCE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING	7
SYLLABUS STATEMENT	8
IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT OF DEPARTMENT WRITING PLAN	8
WRITING OUTCOMES CURRICULUM MAP	9
APPENDIX A – SENIOR WRITING SAMPLES ASSESSMENT	12
PROTOCOL	12
RUBRIC	14
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WAC DIRECTOR BASED ON ASSESSMENT RESULTS	16
APPENDIX C – FACULTY SURVEY AND RESULTS	17
RESULTS OF FACULTY SURVEY	22

Summary

Initial meetings with Dr. Bryna Siegel Finer were held with Dr. Shannon Phaneuf to explain the concepts of Writing to Learn and Writing to Communicate, as well as to share information about Writing Across the Curriculum and other departments' writing plans. Dr. Siegel Finer also attended an informal meeting of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice Teaching Circle, which is registered through Reflective Practice, to describe the Department Writing Plan (DWP) process.

At the beginning of the Spring 2019 semester, Dr. Phaneuf created a comprehensive list of discipline-specific writing characteristics/genres and developed an initial list of student writing objectives, which were brought to the full faculty for discussion and revision.

Additionally, she contacted department faculty requesting information on the specific writing assignments they used when teaching a particular course. For each course in the undergraduate curriculum, Dr. Phaneuf emailed at least two instructors (tenured/tenure-track faculty, TAs, and Temps) who had recently (within the last 5 semesters when possible) taught the course and asked them to list/describe each writing assignment associated with the class. Instructors also had the option to indicate if they did not require written assignments in their course. Upon receiving information from each instructor, Dr. Phaneuf entered each written assignment (e.g., essay exams, free writes, term paper, etc.) into an Excel file arranged by course and type of writing assignments (e.g., writing to learn, writing to communicate, professional writing). This activity allowed several types of writing assignments to be identified for each course in the undergraduate curriculum. This information was then used to assess the current state of writing in the curriculum and where gaps existed between the types of writing typically assigned in classes and the types of writing majors do in the field. For instance, this process demonstrated that, while the department does well incorporating writing-to-learn activities throughout the curriculum, as a whole, activities that allow students to develop/hone skills associated with discipline-related professional writing are in short supply.

Dr. Phaneuf also solicited faculty input via email/faculty meetings on the ways in which department faculty communicate writing expectations both in- and outside of the classroom and what the department could do to better communicate and reinforce the importance of writing in the future. Towards the end of spring semester, the department faculty decided to form a three-person committee to handle the remainder of the work on the writing plan post spring semester. The Departmental Writing Plan Committee consisted of Drs. Kathleen Hanrahan and Jennifer Roberts, in addition to Dr. Phaneuf, who served as committee chair.

In May 2019, Dr. Phaneuf attended the Writing Across the Curriculum Two-Day Writing Workshop and participated as an invited panelist at the workshop to discuss getting started and moving forward on a writing plan.

In the Fall 2019 semester, the Committee further condensed and revised the list of student writing objectives that was developed during the previous spring semester. In an attempt to ensure the writing plan is inclusive of the views and opinions of all department faculty, the Committee developed and conducted a 10-question faculty survey via Qualtrics, whereby faculty voted on a number of items related to the plan. More specifically, faculty were asked to indicate their support of the student writing objectives, the minimum class-level for expectation of mastery of objectives (e.g., at the 100-level students should be able to utilize proper grammar and mechanics), the wording of a syllabus statement, and whether they would include the syllabus statement in future class syllabi. In addition, faculty were given the opportunity to provide suggestions for improvements to the wording of writing objectives and syllabus statement and to add to the lists of writing activities they personally engage in with students in- and outside of the classroom that communicate/encourage the importance of good writing. They were also able to add to the list of writing activities associated with professions in the field. Appendix C contains a copy of the faculty survey. A total of 13 out of 16 faculty participated in the survey for an 81% response rate. Upon conclusion of the faculty survey, the Committee analyzed survey results and made edits and additions to the writing plan accordingly. In the Spring 2020 semester, the Committee focused on conducting the assessment phase of the plan, which began with developing a rubric based on the stated student writing objectives and concluded with team-scoring student papers in the sample. More information regarding the assessment process is discussed in the Protocol section of Appendix A on page 12.

In Fall 2019, the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice developed a statement of commitment to the writing plan to be included in syllabi where appropriate, effective Fall 2020. This statement can be viewed on page 8 of this document.

At a meeting on April 28, 2021, the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice voted to support the Department Writing Plan in addition to the WAC Director's recommendations for continuing program facilitation on page 8 and 16 of this document.

In spring 2024, faculty voted to accept biennial assessment results and recommendations from the WAC director on page 21 of this document.

2021 Addendum

As our class sizes are expected to increase significantly over the next few years, we may need to modify or suspend some portions of our writing plan as deemed necessary by faculty. These modifications will remain in place until class sizes return to manageable levels, whereby we can implement the writing plan as originally intended.

CRIMINOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Department Writing Plan Rollout FALL 2021

Professional and Academic Genres In CRIM

Professionals in Criminology and Criminal Justice must be able to write reports and narratives, behavioral treatment plans, legal writing (e.g., case briefs, motions), studies and research, policies, persuasive arguments (e.g., opening/closing arguments, justifications/rationale for policy changes), proposals (e.g., grants), training materials (e.g., handbooks, training manuals), assessments/evaluations and synthesize in literature reviews. They must be able to participate in internal communication (e.g., policy manuals, emails, memos) and community outreach (e.g., social media, press releases)

The IUP Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice is committed to helping students in improving their writing skills toward the goal of being able to communicate as professionals in the field are required to do.

Student Writing Skills and Abilities

Students in Criminology and Criminal Justice need a variety of writing skills and abilities upon completion of their degree in order to write in the above genres. These include the abilities to:

- 1) demonstrate sound fundamentals of writing (i.e., use of clear, concise, and articulate writing; develop paragraphs that stay on topic and that link to each other to produce a flowing line of argument/information; support information with proper citations);
- 2) create written documents that align with the work of professionals in our discipline (i.e., effectively arrange and organize text to tell a narrative; develop a persuasive and well-supported argument; identify and validate different perspectives/points of view on an issue; produce text that is factual, accurate and supported by direct observation, case law, prior research, etc.);
- 3) utilize writing to demonstrate learning of criminology and criminal justice material (i.e., critically assess and synthesize academic research; demonstrate command of the subject-matter material).

The IUP Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice is committed to introducing, emphasizing, and reinforcing these skills and abilities throughout the curriculum, and does so through the purposeful mapping of writing assignments and activities that follows at the end of this document.

Integration of Writing into Undergraduate Curriculum

Department faculty have participated in professional development training in writing-to-learn pedagogy¹ through writing workshops with the WAC director, participation in the end-of-year Liberal Studies writing workshop, and in full department faculty meetings that the WAC director has visited.

Currently, we do not use many assignments that reinforce professional writing (see outcomes chart below). In the future, faculty may want to consider incorporating more assignments to build skills particular to specific professional genres (e.g., case briefs could be used in our courts class, pre-sentence investigative report writing could be used in our corrections course, incident report writing could be used in policing course, etc.) and assignments that allow students to apply discipline-related material/concepts to real-world situations (i.e., theoretical application to case studies).

Additionally, the department is committed to devoting at least one departmental teaching circle meeting per year to the topic of increasing professional genre writing assignments. We also will create a folder of sample assignments on the departmental O-drive (with Chair permission) in which faculty may share examples of writing assignments they use for other faculty to use as examples for their own courses. Within this folder, there could be subfolders of the different types of written assignments (e.g., writing to learn, academic writing, professional writing) and/or different folders for assignments by course. We will continue to encourage faculty to post assignments to these folders throughout the AY.

During the 2019-20 AY, the department began work on revising the undergraduate curriculum. The proposal included developing groupings of courses geared towards specific interests/career goals. One of the groupings is geared towards students who aspire to work within the Criminal Justice System. This grouping of classes lends itself nicely to include assignments that are more geared to professional writing and those faculty assigned to teach those courses will be encouraged to incorporate such assignments as they see fit. Due to both external events (Covid-19) and internal events (reduction in faculty), curriculum revision has slowed.

Lastly, the department will encourage invited guest speakers to stress the importance of writing in the field/their occupation. More specifically, our department typically hosts an Alumni Panel event each spring in which a slate of alumni from our various programs return to campus and speak to current students about their career. During the Spring 2019 term, while we were in the drafting phase of this writing plan, our committee had the moderator of the event ask the panel how important they believed writing was to their occupation. By all accounts, this tactic had the intended effect of emphasizing the importance of writing in our field. A number of faculty members contacted our committee chair to share feedback from student papers that indicated they [students]

¹ "What is Writing to Learn?" *Writing Across the Curriculum Clearinghouse*. Colorado State University. 2015. <http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/pop2d.cfm>

2023-24 Assessment

The department writing plan committee for the 2023-24 assessment consisted of Drs. Alida Merlo, Sadie Miller, and Shannon Phaneuf (committee chair).

To begin the assessment phase, all full-time faculty in the department were asked by the department writing committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) to review the current writing plan, which was provided to faculty via email, and any identify additions, deletions, modifications they wanted to bring forward for full-faculty discussion. No additions, deletions, or changes were brought forth to the Committee for this assessment.

The Committee surveyed all teaching faculty (full-time, temporary, and teaching associates) (N=13) to assess the extent to which faculty include a statement regarding our commitment of writing in their course syllabi. The survey item read as follows:

As part of the departmental writing plan that was published in 2021, faculty developed and approved the following Commitment to Writing Statement for inclusion in course syllabi: *The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice is committed to developing the writing and critical thinking skills of students throughout the curriculum. In this class, students will complete writing assignments and/or participate in activities designed to improve their ability to communicate in various written forms.* Please indicate whether you routinely include this statement, or some other statement indicative of our commitment to writing, in your course syllabi.

Response options included the following: Yes, I routinely include this statement of our commitment to writing; I routinely include some other statement indicative our commitment to writing; I do not include any statement concerning our commitment to writing.

Results indicated that the vast majority (77%) of all teaching faculty include the approved Commitment to Writing Statement or some other statement expressing our commitment to writing in their course syllabi. Moving forward, the department would like to reach inclusion of this statement among 100% of our teaching faculty. Future surveys should delineate a question to identify whether the faculty member is filling a tenure-track, temporary, or teaching associate (TA) position within the department, as it is believed that those who did not include the Commitment to Writing Statement (N=3) were not full-time tenure-track faculty. This belief is based on personal conversations non-tenure-track faculty had with members of the Committee post survey that indicated they were not aware of the Commitment to Writing Statement or that they should include it in their syllabi. In the future, the department will be more cognizant to inform temporary, TA, and new hires about the inclusion of the syllabus statement.

For this assessment, the Committee reviewed the current list of classes offered in our curriculum and determined that there were no additions/deletions of classes during this assessment period.

Below are specific objectives identified in our previous writing plan and the actions taken related to each objective for the current assessment period.

1. Incorporation of more professional writing assignments throughout curriculum.

As part of this assessment, the Committee asked all members of the teaching staff (tenured full-time, temporary, and TA) to examine the types of assignments previously used for each class they taught over the last 3 academic years, as indicated on the curriculum map on pages 12-16 of this document, and to indicate if they use any written assignments/instruction that were not listed for that class. This allowed the committee to update the curriculum map for the current assessment period (track changes were used to indicate new additions).

Faculty were successful in incorporating more assignments targeting professional writing skills development during this assessment phase. Under the previous assessment, only nine (9) assignments overall were placed in the professional writing genre. Under the current assessment, a total of 31 assignments geared towards professional writing were reported. This is an increase of 144% from our previous assessment total. The department continues to focus on the inclusion of professional writing assignments throughout our curriculum.

2. Devote at least one Departmental Teaching Circle (DTC) meeting per year to the topic of (professional) writing.

Discussions regarding how to increase, improve, and assess student writing have routinely occurred during both DTC meetings and faculty meetings during this assessment period. For example, during the current academic year, two DTC meetings were devoted to topics related to student writing. At the November 2023 meeting, Dr. Bryna Siegel Finer led a discussion following her presentation on "Using Artificial Intelligence to Teach Students to Write Better". At the February 2024 meeting, Dr. Shannon Phaneuf led discussion following her presentation on "Writing Across the Curriculum and Better Way to Integrate Professional Writing into our Classes". The department will continue to encourage the inclusion of topics related to student writing for DTC meetings in future academic years.

3. Create a repository of professional writing assignments that faculty/instructors may use in their own courses.

Members of the Committee, in conjunction with the DTC, created a repository of professional writing assignments for use by faculty in the department. Examples of assignments included developing a witness impact statement, crafting a memo explaining a new policy on responding to allegations of child maltreatment, preparing a summary for a judge that includes a recommendation for a juvenile's dispositional hearing, preparing a public service announcement on intimate partner violence that includes the hotline or agency information, creating an Infographic/brochure related to community outreach activity, composing professional office emails, writing closing argument for a criminal trial, developing a resume and cover letter, and role playing a debriefing session that involves correctional staff explaining what transpired during the previous day/shift and having students write a brief that includes central points addressed in that interaction. Moving forward, the Committee will continue to update the repository with additional professional writing assignments as they become aware of them.

4. When curriculum revision is in place, encourage faculty assigned to teach within the Criminal Justice System group of courses to include professional development writing assignments as they fit nicely with this particular cluster of courses.

No curriculum revisions were made during this assessment period. However, as curriculum revisions occur in the future, the Committee will continue to encourage faculty assigned to teach classes most directly associated with the Criminal Justice System to include professional writing assignments within their course. Knowing, however, that the ultimate decision on what type of assignment to include lies with the individual instructor.

Related to curriculum, for the time being, the department has decided to retain the writing-intensive status for our senior-level required criminological theory class, CRIM 400, and several other elective courses (e.g., CRIM 321, 323, 493) despite having a published writing plan in place.

5. The department will encourage invited guest speakers to stress the importance of writing in the field/their occupation when meeting with students.

In the years when we host our Alumni Panel, specific questions regarding writing are directed to each panelist. More recently, the department has been hosting a variety of professionals, often on a weekly/biweekly basis, to meet with students in the lobby of our building and to visit classes and speak to students about their profession. These visits have provided a consistent opportunity for faculty to prompt classroom discussion with these professionals regarding the importance of writing and good communication skills for their specific profession, as well as the different types of writing they use during their day-to-day work. Moving forward, all teaching faculty are encouraged to ask invited guests from the field direct questions regarding types of writing they engage in and how writing, and/or communication skills more generally, are important to their profession.

Communicating Writing Expectations to Students

We communicate expectations about writing to students in the following ways:

Communication of Writing Expectations in the Classroom

- provide written description of writing assignments on syllabi
- provide written description of writing assignments on handout disseminated to students in class/posted online
- discuss details and expectations of writing assignments in class
- utilize rubrics tailored for specific writing assignments
- spend class time discussing qualities of good writing
- encourage class discussion of writing assignments
- provide feedback on drafts
- permit revision and resubmission for major writing projects
- refer students to the Writing Center
- refer students to other writing resources (i.e., Purdue OWL, etc.)
- provide and discuss examples of good writing from published sources
- peer reading of drafts with detailed directions about giving proper feedback
- identify and ask students to attend or participate in at least two or three lectures or other presentations related to the discipline outside of class time. These are treated as extra credit assignments. In connection with them, students complete a written assignment. The written assignment is designed to develop their critical thinking and writing skills.

Communication of Writing Expectations Outside of the Classroom

- mentor student research
- faculty advisors to student organizations that integrate writing skills (i.e., mock trial, Alpha Phi Sigma)
- faculty judges at undergraduate scholars forum
- provide writing tips for resumes and application letters for employment and graduate programs (i.e., during office hours)

Ways to Better Communicate/Reinforce Importance of Writing

- Alumni Career Panel – ask all panelists pointed questions regarding importance of writing in their job, no class, extra credit
- Departmental funding for UG travel to present original research at conferences as budgets allow
- Announcing student publications at commencement ceremony and awarding a certificate of recognition (on hold until department commencement ceremony is reinstated)

- Student writing contest – featured in department newsletter and on TV in dept. lobby
- Include our published writing plan on our departmental curriculum webpage so that is visible and accessible to students

Syllabus Statement

Results of the faculty survey indicated that most of the faculty (9 of 11 – 81%) are willing to include the statement on their undergraduate course syllabi. Consensus on the exact wording is emerging; 9 of 12 (75%) faculty approved of the original wording of the statement. Several faculty made wording suggestions in the qualitative comments section of the survey, which were subsequently incorporated by the committee. Given that the majority of faculty support the inclusion of a syllabus statement, we include the revised syllabus statement here, with acknowledgement that that the department can only encourage faculty to include the statement as they deem appropriate.

Thus, faculty are encouraged to include the statement as they deem appropriate and may revise it according to their class.

The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice is committed to developing the writing and critical thinking skills of students throughout the curriculum. In this class, students will complete writing assignments and/or participate in activities designed to improve their ability to communicate in various written forms.

Implementation and Assessment of Department Writing Plan

The WAC Director recommends the following action items for continuing program facilitation:

- Elect at least one faculty member to continue to be the WAC/DEPT liaison (this should count as department Service)
- Provide all newly hired faculty a copy of the DWP, and recommend attendance at at least two WAC workshops or the May 2-day writing workshop for Liberal Studies faculty
- All faculty should add “Department Commitment to Writing” statement to syllabus as appropriate
- Department should continue to collect samples of senior writing every two years and analyze results with WAC Director
- Through faculty development seminars with WAC director, workshop attendance, and writing-enriched curriculum, attempt to move assessment results to target 75% and maintain results in other areas
- Add areas for the teaching and assessment of writing as goals on department five-year review documents
- Continue to update the writing outcomes curriculum map as courses are added,

removed, and revised in the CRIM curriculum (and communicate these changes to the WAC Director)

Writing Outcomes Curriculum Map

The Writing Outcomes Curriculum Map demonstrates:

- Conscious effort on the part of department faculty at placing core disciplinary genres at appropriate levels of the curriculum, scaffolding and reinforcing the writing skills necessary for students to succeed in writing those genres (for example: case studies, narrative papers, theoretical application papers, report writing, persuasive papers, etc.).
- Thoughtful integration of writing-to-learn activities in most courses in the curriculum (for example: free writes, reaction papers, discussion questions/boards, etc.).
- Balanced measures for assessing writing as process and product, that is, writing is graded for demonstrating mastery of course content as well as improvement of writing skills over time.

Course	Writing to Learn	Writing to Communicate	
		Academic Writing	Professional Writing
When students complete the 100-level courses, they should be able to: 1) develop paragraphs that stay on topic and that link to each other to produce a flowing line of arguments/information; 2) use clear, concise, and articulate writing; 3) utilize proper grammar and mechanics			
101 - Crime & Justice Systems	Free writes Reaction papers Split method forms		Professional email writing
102 - Survey of Criminology	Free writes Group writes	Research paper Essay exams	Theoretical application paper Case studies Professional email writing Infographic presentation

<p>When students complete the 200-level courses, they should be able to: 1) demonstrate command of the subject- matter material through writing; 2) effectively arrange/organize text to tell a narrative; 3) be able to support information with proper citation;</p>			
205 - Policing & the Community	Discussion questions Free writes	Project paper Essay exams Research paper	Persuasive community outreach paper
210 - Criminal Law	Free Writes Quizzes	Essay exams	Case study Policy recommendation papers
215 - Survey of Courts & Crim Just Systems	Courtroom observation Discussion questions Free writes Minute writes	Essay/short answers on exams	Mock trial scripts
225 - Survey of Corrections	Discussion questions/boards Reaction papers Free writes	Essay exams Research presentation Short papers	
235 - Survey of Juvenile Justice & Law	Free writes Muddiest/clearest point papers Guided response papers	Essay exams Short papers	
255 - Law, Social Control, & Society	Free writes	Essays	Application papers Mock trial script
<p>When students complete the 300-level courses, they should be able to: 1) produce text that is factual, accurate, and supported by direct observation, case law, prior research, etc.; 2) identify and validate different perspectives/points of view on an issue</p>			
306 - Crim Research Methods	Free writes Quizzes	Literature review Research paper Essays/short papers Essay/short answer exams	Research proposal
321 - Cybersecurity & Loss Prevention	n/a		Memos Brochures White papers Presentations Security assessment Cybersecurity policy

			development
323 - Cybersecurity & the Law	n/a		Memos Brochures White papers Presentations Security assessment Cybersecurity policy development
344 - Terrorism	Split method forms Free writes Discussion boards journals	Essay exams Term paper	
354 - White Collar Crime	Discussion questions Free writes	Research paper Essay exams Research presentation	
374 - Environmental Crime & Justice	Discussion boards journals	Essay exams Term paper	
384 - Violence & Victimology	Free writes	Essay exams Research poster	Professional email writing
391 - Substance Use & Abuse in Crim Just	Free writes Reaction papers	Term paper	
394 - Crime & Delinquency Prevention	Discussion questions Reaction papers	Essay exams Outline Short papers	Application paper
When students complete the 400-level courses, they should be able to: 1) develop a persuasive and well-supported argument; 2) critically assess and synthesize academic research			
400 - Theoretical Criminology	Reaction papers Journals Discussion questions Muddiest/clearest point papers Guided response papers	Annotated bibliography Research paper Theoretical summaries Essay/short answer exams	Application papers
401 - Contemporary Issues	Discussion boards journals	Essay exams Term/research paper	

403 - Dilemmas in Crim & Crim Just	Discussion boards/questions Reaction papers	Essay exams Research presentation & abstract	Application papers
410 - Race, Ethnicity, Social Structure & Crime	Discussion boards/questions journals	Essay exams Research paper Essays/short papers Critical reflection papers	
420 - Media Portrayal of Crime	Side-by-sides Reaction papers Discussion questions Journals	Creative writing book chapter Critical analysis paper	Professional letter writing (advocacy letter to elected official)
450 - Women & Crime	Discussion boards Free writes Muddiest/clearest point papers Guided responses papers	Essay exams Research presentation	Application papers
470 - Comparative Study of Justice	Discussion questions Free writes Reaction papers		
482 - Independent Study	n/a		
493 - Internship	journals	Professional development paper	Resume/cover letter

Appendix A – Senior Writing Samples Assessment

Protocol

The committee used a convenience sample of all student papers that met the assignment requirements submitted in the Fall 2023 semester for two sections of CRIM 400, Theoretical Criminology. This course is a senior level writing intensive required course. Students were informed by the instructor of record of the objectives, requirements, and assessment criteria for the assignment itself. Students, however, were not given the rubric developed specifically for the assessment of writing plan objectives. It bears noting that the instructor of record for this course is not affiliated with the department writing plan committee.

Student papers were given by the instructor of record to the chair of the Committee who redacted student names and provided each paper a unique identifier. The assignments had not yet been assessed by the instructor of record, thus no scores or comments were on the papers prior to the Committee receiving them.

The assignment selected for assessment was a short 2- page, low-stakes writing assignment for the course. For the assignment, students were to read an empirical theoretical article and write an article review that consisted of a 1-page summary of the article followed by a 1-page critique of the article. This was one of 10 article reviews students were required to complete during the semester for this class. Students received detailed feedback from the instructor for each assignment, with the goal of improving student writing/outcomes as they progressed through the semester with these assignments. The specific assignment used for this assessment was submitted by students during the second half of the semester, providing them ample opportunities to receive instructor feedback on previous assignments.

All papers were scored during the Spring 2024 semester by two members of the Committee using the rubric below. After all papers were scored, members of the Committee met to resolve scoring discrepancies for each paper.

Students responded to the following instructions for the written assignment:

Article Reviews (10 X 10=100 points): Each week, after (weeks one and two) a different article will be assigned to read prior to the next week of class. For the article review, students will write a one-page (typed and double spaced) summary about the article (no opinion) and a one-page reaction/critique of the article. A citation page is not needed since everyone will be assigned the same article. Article reviews are due in **hard copy form** at the beginning of class when assigned. (One page means = 12 point font, double-spaced, Times New Roman)

Rubric

The committee discussed wanting to add another objective to the rubric for future assessments that would capture a student's ability to follow directions, adhere to formatting instructions, and completion of all assignment elements.

Objective	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Developing/ Emerging (2)	Below Expectations (1)
Demonstrate conceptual command of discipline	Student's written product demonstrates <i>superior</i> understanding of disciplinary frameworks and concepts and their appropriate application.	Student's written product demonstrates clear understanding of disciplinary frameworks and concepts and their appropriate application.	Sample demonstrates basic understanding of disciplinary concepts and adequate application.	Mentions concepts but provides weak or inaccurate application.
Demonstrate command of discipline-related terminology	Student is fluent in use of the terminology of the discipline.	Student uses terms appropriately but may miss a few key terms.	Weak grasp of disciplinary terminology.	Haphazard or missing use of terminology from the discipline.
Produce written documents appropriate for entry to profession - Introduction/ Thesis Construction	Introduction and/or thesis is clear, succinct, and indicates understanding of the assignment/objective.	Introduction and/or thesis is clear and directly responsive to assignment/ objective	Introduction and/or thesis is unclear or only clear but indirectly responsive to assignment/ objective	Introduction and/or thesis is unclear, unrelated, or missing.
Produce written documents appropriate for entry to profession - Evidentiary Support	Support is expertly organized ; connections are clearly articulated	Effectively organizes relevant evidence; connections are at least loosely articulated.	Support is disorganized and/or irrelevant; fails to articulate connections.	Lacks factual support.
Produce written documents appropriate for entry to profession - Synthesis of Literature	Superb synthesis of academic literature/research.	Solid synthesis of academic literature/research.	Weak synthesis of academic literature/research.	No synthesis of literature/research.
Produce written documents appropriate for entry to profession - Conclusion	Conclusion is easily identifiable, clear, and directly related to the assignment/objective.	Conclusion is identifiable but incomplete or only indirectly related to the assignment/ objective.	Conclusion is unidentifiable, unclear and/or unrelated to the assignment/objective.	Conclusion is missing.
Demonstrate sound fundamentals of writing	Evidence of superior writing ability.	Polished grammar and mechanics; carefully edited; few or no errors.	Minor errors in grammar or mechanics that do not impede meaning or clarity.	Text is readable but there are enough errors to be distracting.
Demonstrates sound fundamentals of APA style	Accurate use of APA style.	A few citation lapses.	Multiple errors in citation.	Citation is inconsistent or missing.

Last Updated June 17, 2024

Holistic evaluation of assignment	Exemplary or outstanding job overall.	Solid job overall, with a few minor problems or issues.	Overall, final product is disappointing; falls short in some areas.	Student's work fails to meet expectations in numerous areas.
--	---------------------------------------	---	---	--

Appendix B – Writing Assessment Results, Spring 2020

These are considered “baseline” survey results.

Response Rate = 47 students

Areas in which student writing is ABOVE expectations: 77+

Criterion: *Thesis Construction*

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
Spring 2020	4% / 17% = 21%	15% / 64% = 79%
Spring 2024	37%/50% = 87%	13%/0% = 13%

Criterion: *Demonstrate command of discipline-related terminology*

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
Spring 2020	4% / 28% = 32%	45% / 23% = 68%
Spring 2024	26%/57% = 83%	17%/0% = 17%

Areas in which student writing is MEETING expectations: 68-77

Criterion: *Demonstrate conceptual command of discipline*

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
Spring 2020	4% / 34% = 38%	49% / 13% = 62%
Spring 2024	27%/43% = 70%	30%/0% = 30%

Criterion: *Evidentiary Support*

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
Spring 2020	2% / 36% = 38%	55% / 6% = 61
Spring 2024	23%/47% = 70%	30%/0% = 30%

Criterion: *Holistic Evaluation*

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
	2% / 32% = 34%	51% / 15% = 66%
Spring 2024	17%/53% = 70%	30%/0% = 30%

Areas in which student writing is BELOW expectations below: 67 and below

Criterion: *Synthesis of Literature*

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
Spring 2020	Not evaluated in this assignment	
Spring 2024	13%/53% = 66%	34%/0% = 34%

Criterion: *Conclusion*

Spring 2020	0% / 11% = 11%	19% / 70% = 89%
Spring 2024	20%/40% = 60%	33%/7% = 40%

Criterion: *Writing Fundamentals*

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
Spring 2020	0% / 51% = 51%	38% / 11% = 49%
Spring 2024	23%/3% = 53%	47%/0% = 47%

Criterion: *APA Style*

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2020	Not evaluated in this assignment	
Spring 2024 ¹	13%/40% = 53%	0%/47% = 47%

Recommendations from the WAC Director based on 2024 Biennial Assessment Results

The CRIM faculty should be commended for the drastic improvement in their students’ writing assessment results. As noted throughout this document, they did a lot of work “closing the loop” between their prior assessment results and their classroom practices to ensure students’ writing skills were improved.

As in many programs, CRIM students are struggling with APA style. This is common across levels and across the university. Students in CRIM can seek support with this at the Writing Center, and faculty in CRIM can support students by teaching APA style at all levels of the curriculum. Faculty are encouraged to have students attend Writing Center workshops on fundamentals of grammar, style, and proofreading in order to support these assessed

¹ The writing assignment used for this assessment did not require students to use APA in-text citations or include a reference page, however, some students still included these items. When APA elements were included by the student (N=15), they were assessed; otherwise, this variable was coded as missing (N=15).

criteria.

Recommendations from the WAC Director based on BASELINE Assessment Results

Based on assessment results of a single, 1 – 2-page, low-stakes writing assignment administered in one semester, Criminology and Criminal Justice, students appear to be *struggling to meet expectations in all of the assessed areas*. It should be noted, however, that the sample was taken during the spring 2020 semester, when classes were abruptly shifted online due to the covid-19 pandemic; there is no way to tell how that disruption could have affected students mentally and thus their academic performance.

Notably, the highest percentage of scores are commonly found in the “emerging” level for the majority of the criteria. This indicates that students are just below meeting expectations. Holistic evaluations also support this assessment. The WAC director thus recommends that the department look especially to those criteria (conceptual command of the discipline, thesis, evidence, discipline-related terminology, and conclusion), and concentrate on developing pedagogy that can help students improve in those specific skills.

Over AY 2020-2021, faculty should consider looking back through the course map developed in this document to find courses where they can add activities to help students increase performance in the criteria mentioned in the prior paragraph and scaffold them purposefully (the WAC director is available to support this). They should also determine which of these areas is their highest priority (which of these do students really need to master with confidence?) and consider professional development, workshops, or other resources to support their teaching. This will give them enough time to consider and make changes that could affect student learning outcomes in writing when they re-assess in 2021-2022.

Appendix C –Faculty Survey and Results

Q1 Please review the following proposed writing objectives. Below you'll be asked to indicate your support of these objectives and offer suggestions.

Students graduating with a bachelor's degree from the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice should:

- 1) demonstrate sound fundamentals of writing (i.e., use of clear, concise, and articulate writing; develop paragraphs that stay on topic and that link to each other to produce a flowing line of arguments/information; support information with proper citations)

- 2) create written documents that align with the work of professionals in our discipline (effectively arrange and organize text to tell a narrative; develop a persuasive and well-supported argument; identify and validate different perspectives/points of view on an issue; produce text that is factual, accurate and supported by direct observation, case law, prior research, etc.)

- 3) utilize writing to demonstrate learning of criminology and criminal justice material (Critically assess and synthesize academic research; Demonstrate command of the subject-matter material)

Do you support these objectives?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q2 Do you have suggestions (including additions and subtractions, wording) for the above stated objectives?

Q3 Below are a list of objectives students should master during their undergraduate career. For each of the following you'll find the MINIMUM level at which the objective should be satisfied (e.g., Freshman year/100 level courses). Bear in mind that writing is a developmental process; students will practice the skills, often for several years, before the skill is satisfied. Here we are looking to develop minimum expectations for each grade level.

WRITING OBJECTIVE	GRADE LEVEL
Students should be able to support information with proper citation	100/Freshman
Students should use clear, concise, and articulate writing	100/Freshman
Students should utilize proper grammar and mechanics	100/Freshman
Students should be able to develop paragraphs that stay on topic and that link to each other to produce a flowing line of arguments/ information	200/Sophomore
Students should be able to demonstrate command of the subject-matter material through writing	200/Sophomore
Students should be able to effectively arrange/organize text to tell a narrative	200/Sophomore
Students should produce text that is factual, accurate, and supported by direct observation, case law, prior research, etc.	300/Junior
Students should be able to identify and validate different perspectives/points of view on an issue	300/Junior
Students should be able to develop a persuasive and well-supported argument	400/Senior
Students should be able to critically assess and synthesize academic research	400/Senior

Do you support these minimum benchmarks?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q4 Please provide any suggestion regarding these benchmarks in the text box below.

Q5 Last year faculty were asked to provide a list of writing assignments and activities they do *in class* in support of writing. Below is a list of these activities:

- Provide written description of writing assignments on syllabi, handout, rubric, learning management (Moodle, D2L) post;
- Discuss details and expectations of writing assignments during class time;
- Use class time to discuss qualities of good writing;
- Encourage class discussion of writing assignments;
- Provide feedback on drafts;
- Permit revisions and resubmission for writing projects;
- Refer students to the Writing Center
- Refer students to other writing resources (e.g., Purdue OWL; TurnItIn)

In the text box below, please describe any other activities you do in your undergraduate classes to communicate/encourage the expectations regarding writing, the importance of good writing, and/or the development of good writing.

Q6 Last year faculty indicated they participate in the following activities *outside of class* in support of undergraduate student writing. These activities include:

- Mentor undergraduate student research;
- Serve as a faculty advisor to a student organization that integrates writing skills into the organizational activities;
- Serve as a faculty judge at the undergraduate scholar's forum;
- Encourage students to attend on-campus events that may include discussion of writing/writing skills

Please discuss any other activities that you do *outside of the classroom* to communicate/encourage the expectations regarding writing, the importance of good writing, and/or the development of sound writing.

Q7 As part of the department writing plan, we've been asked to develop a syllabus statement. This statement reads:

The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice commits itself to developing the writing skills of students throughout the curriculum. In this class, you will complete writing assignments, and/or activities designed to improve your ability to communicate in written formats.

Do you approve or disapprove of the wording of this syllabus statement?

- Approve (1)
 - Disapprove (2)
-

Q8 Would you include this statement on your undergraduate course syllabi in the future?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

Q9 Please provide any suggestions or changes for the syllabus statement in the text box below.

Q10 Finally, we've been asked to produce a list of writing tasks that professionals with a bachelor's in our discipline might be asked to complete. We want to recognize that some of our BA graduates may work in the CJS or attend some form of graduate school. Below are a list of applied writing assignments BA graduates may be asked to complete:

- reports
- proposals
- assessments/evaluations
- plans
- training materials
- organizational materials
- outreach materials

Using the text box below, please list any additional professional writing assignments our BA grads might be asked to complete.

Results of Faculty Survey

Item	N	%
Do you support departmental writing objectives?		
Yes	13	100
No	0	0
Do you support indicated minimum benchmarks?		
Yes	10	91
No	1	9
Do you approve wording of syllabus statement?		
Yes	9	75
No	3	25
Would you include syllabus statement on UG syllabi?		
Yes	9	82
No	2	18