

QEP Executive Summary: *Let's Write Right: Writing in the Disciplines*
University of Holy Cross (UHC)

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By increasing writing support and offering writing-intensive upper-level courses in each degree program, the *Let's Write Right* QEP will provide undergraduate students with the knowledge and skills necessary for successful writing in their chosen professional careers and/or graduate studies.

UHC has identified five Student Learning Outcomes that will be assessed through evaluation of written artifacts. These outcomes have been adapted from the components of successful writing given in the Written Communication VALUE Rubric developed by the Association of American Colleges and Schools, which will be used as the primary assessment tool throughout the program. Students will be able to

- Demonstrate an understanding of the “context, audience, and purpose” of the writing assignment;
- Develop content that reveals sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject throughout the writing assignment;
- Apply the conventions for formatting and organizing the writing assignment in the style expected in their major discipline;
- Synthesize evidence drawn from relevant sources with their own ideas, paraphrasing and quoting them correctly, and citing sources by using the format appropriate to their major disciplines; and
- Write clearly and effectively, using syntax and mechanics appropriate to the writing assignment.

UHC faculty will assess student writing at every level of their undergraduate curricula. Proficiency testing of all students, those completing ENG 102 at UHC and those transferring credit for ENG 102, will be conducted by the English composition faculty and the QEP Director, with the tests scored using the AAC&U Written Communication Value Rubric, to ascertain if they are sufficiently prepared for upper-level writing-intensive courses. Those who do not exhibit proficiency with a milestone composite score of two (2) on the rubric will be enrolled in a new course, ENG 201—Introduction to Writing in the Disciplines. The Institution demonstrates its commitment to the QEP and to improving student learning by the fact that this course will be tuition-free, non-credit, and not only open to students who fail the English Proficiency Test but also to all students who wish to improve their writing skills. Expansion of the Writing Lab tutoring program will provide additional writing support for all students across the University, independent of course enrollment.

As the AAC&U contends, “written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.” For this reason, achieving the QEP goal and student learning outcomes requires that faculty in all disciplines focus on writing in their upper-level courses, especially in those designated as “writing-intensive.” To assist faculty in developing “writing to learn” assignments, semi-annual faculty development workshops will be offered. UHC has contracted Dr. Rochelle Rodrigo, an expert in Writing in the Disciplines and Writing across the Curriculum, to design and facilitate the first two workshops. The FSSE Experiences with Writing topical module, which the University has purchased for local usage, will assess the improvement of faculty teaching of writing. The QEP Co-Directors will collect syllabi and writing assignments before and after the workshops and conduct annual evaluations assessing student writing in the upper-level writing-intensive courses, using the AAC&U Rubric, to determine their effectiveness in enhancing teaching and the need for improvements.