

JAMES MADISON COLLEGE College Specific Tier II Writing Criteria

The James Madison College issued the following Tier II guidelines to the Departments, Schools and Programs that offer undergraduate degrees.

All James Madison College students are required to complete successfully one “W” course and one cluster equivalent of a “W” course in order to fulfill the University’s Tier II requirement. The following criteria are unit specific but also are responsive to the “outcomes” cited by the joint committee on writing requirements – e.g. specifically #2,4,6 below.

The “W” course shall be the senior seminar in each student’s major field of concentration.

1. Such courses have enrollment caps of no greater than 20 students to allow for the close interaction between faculty and students necessary for a quality seminar and for improving students’ writing skills.
2. In these courses, students have the opportunity for at least two major writing assignments with an opportunity for revision after instructor feedback.
3. Students have an opportunity for individual and/or group conferences, either in or out of class, to discuss their writing with the instructor.
4. Students write regularly throughout the term; this writing may be graded or ungraded, may be done in class or out of class and includes assignments with an opportunity for revision after instructor feedback.
5. Student assignments include formal and informal writing (such as quick summaries of points made in a lecture; questions raised by a lecture for the student to answer later; short responses to reading assignments; regular entries in a reflective journal, etc).
6. Students receive instruction and practice in the tasks, forms and styles of writing appropriate to their discipline. This includes, where possible, experience with communication technologies.

Clusters are comprised of courses in the student’s major field of concentration, as designated by the field and approved by the CCC and the faculty assembled. Fields have designated many 300 level or above courses as appropriate. In establishing such requirements, however, fields will **not** increase the number of courses now required of students for graduation from Madison College. No single course in a cluster is expected to fulfill all of the following criteria; that’s what distinguishes this from a proposal for two “W” courses and explains why such courses can be open to more than 20 students. However, every cluster must, as a group, meet the following criteria:¹

1. Students write regularly throughout the term; this writing may be graded or ungraded, may be done in class or out of class and should include assignments with an opportunity for revision after instructor feedback.
2. Students have an opportunity for individual and/or group conferences in or out of class, to discuss their writing with the instructor.
3. Student assignments include formal and informal writing (such as quick summaries of points made in a lecture; questions raised by a lecture for the student to answer later; short responses to reading assignments; regular entries in a reflective journal, etc).
4. Students receive instruction and practice in the tasks, forms and styles of writing appropriate to their discipline. This should include, where possible, experience with communication technologies.

The following restriction is to be included in the authorization of courses that are to be associated with the Tier II writing requirement: “Satisfactory completion of Tier I writing requirement.” We ask that this statement be added to the courses submitted as parts of the Tier II writing requirements.

¹ Students are allowed to select among courses in clusters, so any subset of courses which students take to meet the cluster requirement must, by itself, contain the elements enumerated above. That is, a field may designate all of its required 300 level courses and all of its selectives, but only require that students take one required course and one selective to meet the cluster requirement. Under such a scenario, however, any pairing of elective and selective would have to contain all of the enumerated elements.