

November 7, 2022

Dear Members of the SMU Community:

We are writing to you with important information about changes to the Writing in the Major (WiM) Proficiency of the Common Curriculum (CC) that were made to make it easier to administer and fulfill.

1. We will be tracking student completion of the WiM Proficiency through program assessment, rather than through DPR tracking.
2. DPR change will go into effect in November 11 with program assessment change effective Fall 2023.
3. This change will make it easier for departments to administer and assess this Proficiency and for students to fulfill it.

On September 9, 2022, the [Council on General Education](#) approved a proposal to change how the [Common Curriculum's Writing in the Major Proficiency and Experience](#) is tracked on the Degree Progress Report and replace it with program-level Writing in the Major student learning outcome. Below we share the rationale for this forthcoming change, how it will impact CC students and academic programs moving forward, and support that will be offered through this process.

SMU faculty have consistently expressed concern about the challenges of isolating the teaching of Writing in the Major to a single course, since many programs distribute the teaching and practice of writing across a program. For the same reason, students on the Common Curriculum have struggled to find sufficient opportunities to satisfy the Writing in the Major requirement, even when they have spent several courses learning to write in accordance with the parameters of their discipline. For this reason, effective Fall 2023, we will replace individual tracking of the Writing in the Major Proficiency through course-level tags, and we will instead track it through program learning outcomes and program-level assessment.

On October 21, 2022 the Council approved an implementation plan for this assessment and tracking change, and as a result of this plan, effective Fall 2023, the Writing in the Major Proficiency and Experience graduation requirement be removed from the Degree Progress Report for student-level tracking.

In lieu of DPR level-tracking each academic program will be required, via the [Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness](#) program evaluation process, to write and assess one learning outcome that best represents the conventions of writing in their discipline. This will require each program to develop assessments and measures appropriate to their disciplines – many of which can be used from WiM-tagged courses. In this way, students will receive the instruction they need

regarding discipline-specific writing, and departments will be able to deliver discipline-specific writing instruction without having to confine that instruction to a single course. Academic programs that distribute the teaching of writing across the program sequence (which is best practice) would no longer need to place the proficiency tag on every course that delivers writing instruction to ensure students receive the tag. Instead, they can concentrate on developing student proficiency in discipline-specific writing in the way that makes the most sense for their program.

This approved change and implementation plan honors the true intent of the Writing in the Major Proficiency and values the tremendous work done by faculty to develop WiM-tagged courses, learning outcomes, and assessments. During the transition to this new method of tracking and assessing Writing in the Major, the [Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness](#) will work closely with faculty and programs to write discipline-specific learning outcomes for Writing in the Major and to develop appropriate measures to assess this writing.

Questions related to this change can be directed to the [Office of General Education](#) at [theccmail@smu.edu](mailto:theccmail@smu.edu).

Sincerely,



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