

Sample Descriptions to Support Essential Abilities Requests

Below are two examples of Essential Abilities requests that describe course assignments and indicate specifically how they address the learning outcomes. They are provided here as models for what kind of information is needed for a request to be approved.

Writing Intensive Request: The departmental senior capstone course is proposed as the Writing-Intensive course within the major. While the course does not include multiple substantial writing assignments, the course is built around one major writing assignment, which is the write-up for the student's capstone research project. All faculty members in the department offer this course, and the culmination of the block (as well as the grade for the block) is the research paper. While each faculty member has a different syllabus, the course contains the same elements: extensive reading of the literature in the field with class discussion and low-stakes writing of reading reflections/summaries, a written research proposal that receives feedback and is revised by the student, actual hands-on research and the collection of data, analysis of data including construction of figures/tables/graphs, and interpretation of the data. All of this process is underlain by a scaffolded schedule of drafts and revisions of the parts of a major research paper, including: Abstract, Introduction, Background, Methods, Results, and Interpretation. Students work on the writing of their final paper throughout the block, revising each section multiple times. The final piece for each student is a public presentation (at Student Symposium as well as possibly at a national conference).

Writing Encounter Request: Writing is a primary focus in this course [taught in a foreign language] and during the block students will complete both formal and informal writing assignments. They will write 6-8 informal responses as well as a 4-5-page research paper. Significant class time will be used to discuss vocabulary, grammatical forms, and sentence structures used in various types of writing. Students will create sample sentences during class, and have homework assignments in which they will practice elements of writing. Students will write the research paper in 3 stages, incorporating feedback as they work toward the final version. Several times during the block students will meet with the instructor to discuss their drafts as they revise their papers.