

GUIDE TO THE ADVANCED WRITING PROFICIENCY PORTFOLIO



**Teacher Education Program
Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN**

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Introduction to Advanced Writing Proficiency in the Education Department

The goal of the writing proficiency program is to help teacher candidates learn to write well. In order to achieve this goal, candidates must learn to think critically and objectively about both what they want to say and how best to put their thoughts on paper. Writing is a developmental skill that needs to be pursued over time. The College approved an advanced writing requirement that began with the class of 1990. The advanced writing requirement provides the opportunity to improve the quality of writing in all disciplines in the college and to graduate candidates confident of their abilities to write well in their future academic and professional careers.

Purpose of Advanced Writing Proficiency

As professional educators, we are asked to develop the teaching abilities of teacher candidates in the language arts. According to the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) Elementary Education Standards teacher candidates must be prepared in the following areas.

Curriculum: 2.1 Reading, Writing, and Oral Language: Candidates demonstrate a high level of competence in the use of the English language arts and they know, understand, and use concepts from reading, language and child development to teach reading, writing, speaking, viewing, listening, and thinking skills and to help students successfully apply their developing skills to many different situations, materials, and ideas.

Supporting explanation

- Candidates model effective use of English, including its syntax, lexicon, history, varieties, literature, and oral and written composing processes.
- Candidates provide both instruction in and opportunities for elementary students to develop effective writing and speaking skills so that they can communicate their knowledge, ideas, understanding, insights, feelings, and experiences to other students and to parents, teachers, and other adults. They provide their students with many different writing and speaking experiences in order to teach the skills of writing and speaking. They enable students to explore the uses of different types of writing and speaking with different audiences and in different situations.
- Candidates help students develop their capacities to listen so that they understand, consider, respond to, and discuss spoken material, including non-fiction, stories, and poems.

(See the ACEI Elementary Education Standards posted under Course Documents within the Education Department on Blackboard.)

Before teacher candidates can become skilled as teachers of language arts, they must develop their own skills as readers, writers, and speakers. The Advanced Writing Proficiency offers teacher candidates opportunities to sharpen and refine composition skills. It is also a device that can be utilized for the development of reflective practice. Teacher candidates who successfully meet the requirements of Advanced Writing Proficiency are prepared to meet the responsibility of teaching the writing process to others.

At another level, professional educators share their work with others in written form. Reports originating with various committees or task force groups are common. Parent communication is ongoing. Curriculum development projects created over time for the classroom or the grade level require consummate skill in writing. Additionally, professional educators write for publication in a variety of areas. Educational journals, textbook publications, historical reviews, and results of research are a part of the professional educator's life.

Requirements

Each Elementary Education teacher candidate will complete and pass two Advanced Writing Proficiency submissions over the course of study.

Paper 1. In October of the junior year, the candidate will submit the Student Teaching Essay to the Director of Student Teaching.

Paper 2. In February of the junior year, the candidate will submit the AWP paper, Critical Reflection on the Standards, to the AWP Committee. This paper is a commentary delineating an appraisal of personal competence in each of the Saint Mary's College Teacher Performance Standards (see Appendix I).

Please note that the Advanced Writing Proficiency requirement must be passed before the Petition for a Degree can be signed by the Department Chair. If the papers need extensive revisions, the members of the AWP Committee may recommend to the Chair that the student take an additional writing class.

Preparation for Submission of Papers for Advanced Writing Proficiency

The candidate should follow these procedures when submitting a paper for Advanced Writing Proficiency:

- 1) The paper must be a clean copy.
- 2) The paper must have a cover sheet with the following information (see Appendix III):

- *Title of paper
- *Date of completion
- *Paper number and submission number
(e.g. paper 2, submission 1)
- *Author's name

3) The second paper must have a copy of the self-assessment form completed by the candidate (see Appendix II).

4) The paper must be typed or word-processed (see Appendix I).

Evaluation of the Advanced Writing Proficiency Portfolio

The Advanced Writing Proficiency Committee of the Education Department will review papers after the submission date. Results of the review will be provided to the candidate. Revisions and resubmissions may be required. Candidates will be informed in writing when both papers have passed (see criteria for evaluation of the Advanced Writing Proficiency Portfolio Guidelines in Appendix IV). The Advanced Writing Proficiency Committee of the Education Department will consist of four full time faculty members.

The Advanced Writing Proficiency Process in the Education Department

The candidate will complete the following to fulfill the requirement:

1. Examine the Advanced Writing Proficiency assignments.
2. Obtain direction, assistance, and critical feedback from a professor regarding the paper.
3. Submit the first AWP paper (Student Teaching Essay) to the Director of Student Teaching. Submit the second AWP paper (Critical Reflection on the Standards) to the Chair of the AWP Committee. Submissions must be made prior to or on the due date.
4. If the paper receives “grade 1” by the first reviewer, the paper returns to the candidate with the recommendation of consulting at the writing center on campus. Revised paper must be resubmitted within a week after being returned.
5. If the paper does not pass, meet with an Advanced Writing Proficiency Committee member to discuss revisions.
6. Consider the Advanced Writing Proficiency Committee member’s evaluation of the submitted paper.
7. Make the revisions and resubmit the paper. When the paper is resubmitted, return it directly to the committee member who suggested the revisions.
8. The final copy of the paper must be perfect, without any errors.

Resources

Education Course Instructors
The Saint Mary’s College Writing Center
Advanced Writing Proficiency Committee Members

Questions / Answers

1. Do I have to submit two papers if I declare my elementary education major later than usual?

Yes. You must submit papers as soon as you possibly can in order to meet the requirement on time for graduation.

2. I am a transfer student. Do I have to submit the same number of required papers and meet the same deadlines as non-transfer students?

Yes.

3. I am a double major. Do I have to meet the writing proficiency requirement in my elementary education major as well as my other major?

No. Choose to meet the writing requirement in the elementary education major or in the other major.

4. I am a Notre Dame student with an elementary education major. Do I have to meet the writing requirement of the Education Department?

Yes. The proficiency is a requirement of the major.

5. How clear of errors must the paper be?

The paper is evaluated in terms of content, appropriate usage, mechanics, citations, and composition. The paper is also evaluated in terms of typographical errors. One error of any kind means that the paper must be revised and resubmitted.

6. Does a faculty recommendation mean automatic acceptance of the paper in my Advanced Writing Proficiency Portfolio?

No. A faculty person may state to you that the paper is ready for submission to the Advanced Writing Proficiency Portfolio, but that does not mean the review of the paper by the Advanced Writing Proficiency Committee will be positive. You must work with the faculty person to develop the paper to meet the criteria of an advanced writing proficiency paper in the portfolio. Committee members may suggest that you make additional changes.

7. How long should the Advanced Writing Proficiency paper number 2 (Critical Reflection) be?

The paper should be 1,000 words.

8. Is paper number 2 connected to a course?

No, it is not connected to a course. You may have been asked to write a similar paper in one of your courses. Be sure to polish it before submitting it.

9. What happens to my paper?

You will need to save a copy of both papers after they have passed the Advanced Writing Proficiency Committee. A perfect copy of Paper #2 should be placed in your Education Portfolio.

10. Does my paper really need to be perfect?

Yes. It should be free of all errors. The Writing Center is a good resource for the student needing additional help.

11. I'm not sure where to begin with Paper #2.

This paper is your critical reflection on the SMC Teacher Performance Standards. Discuss your growth in mastering the standards through the course work within the department. Also, any on-campus and/or off-campus learning experiences which are applicable to the standards should be explained and discussed.

APPENDIX I

Advanced Writing Proficiency Paper #2

Critical Reflection on the Standards

The Education Department at Saint Mary's College is committed to preparing teachers of all children. As such, teacher candidates must develop skills as reflective decision makers; this incorporates knowledge of the scholarship, methodology, and professionalism of teaching. As an NCATE accredited program, the Department is implementing eight Saint Mary's College Teacher Candidate Performance standards which are based on the Indiana state developmental and content standards. All coursework, assignments, and formative and summative assessments used in the department align with these eight standards, which delineate the performances of effective teachers (please see the standards under Course Documents within the Education Department on Blackboard).

The second Advanced Writing Proficiency (AWP) in the Education Department is a **Critical Reflection on the Standards paper**. The Critical Reflection is a 1,000-word commentary delineating an appraisal of personal competence in each of the eight teaching standards at this point in time. Growth in mastering the standards can be looked upon as a continuum with four levels of achievement: *beginning, developing, proficient, and outstanding* (see "SMC Teacher Candidate Performance Standards Rubric" under Course Documents in Education Department – Blackboard, for more information on these levels). After self-assessing on each of the eight standards using the attached form (see Appendix II), the candidate should write the reflection which provides a rationale for her ratings. *At the junior level, the expectation is that the candidate will be at the beginning or developing levels.* The rationale might include an explanation of on-campus learning experiences (e.g., coursework, assignments, workshops), off-campus learning experiences (e.g., field placement experiences, study abroad, professional meetings), school-related experiences (e.g., volunteer/job positions), and/or any other events that support her/his choice of performance ranking and which are applicable to the standards. For those standards about which the candidate rates her/himself as *beginning*, s/he should identify possible ways to grow in mastery over the next year; these are, in effect, goals for the senior year-long internship.

The self-assessment form with the attached Critical Reflection paper should be turned in to the Chair of the AWP Committee. The paper will be assessed using the attached rubric (see Appendix IV).

APPENDIX II
AWP Paper 2 Self-Assessment Form
Critical Reflection on the Standards

Use the following worksheet to self-assess your competence in the Saint Mary's College Teacher Candidate Performance standards. This serves as a guideline for the Critical Reflection paper. Please put an X in the appropriate column indicating your level of mastery of each standard.

- Note: **Developing** is the highest expected level for juniors and **Proficient** is the passing level for seniors.

Name _____ Date: _____

Standards		Performance Levels			
		<i>Beginning</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
1	Student Development and Diversity				
2	Learning Processes				
3	Instructional Planning and Delivery				
4	Assessment				
5	Learning Environment				
6	The Professional Environment				
7	Reading				
8	Content				

APPENDIX III

The Format of the AWP Paper Critical Reflection on the Standards

1. Cover Sheet

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Title of paper</u> Date of completion Paper number and submission number (e.g., Paper 2, Submission 1) Author's name (your name) Phone # E-mail Address</p>
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2. Main body of the paper (Length of the paper: Approximately 1,000 words, in font 12 style Times New Roman)

Smith	← Header (your last name)
1	← Page number
Your first paragraph starts...	

3. This is your commentary delineating an appraisal of personal competence in each of the Saint Mary's College Teacher Performance Standards at this point in time.
4. The paper must be a clean copy, typed or word-processed, 1.5 spaced, one-inch margins all around the page, and use American Psychological Association (APA) style.

APPENDIX IV

ADVANCED WRITING PROFICIENCY (AWP) PAPER RUBRIC

Education Department, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN

Candidate's Name					Candidate's ID				
Title of the Paper						Candidate's E-mail			
First Reviewer						Second Reviewer			
Reviewer 1 Grade		Date		Reviewer 2 Initial Grade		Date		# of Submissions	
Point/Score	Descriptions								
4	<p>Thesis is focused, creative, sophisticated, & engaging; there is a clear purpose with independent ideas. Development unfolds naturally and allows the thesis to control the organization of the essay with each paragraph building on the previous one. Support is evident with thorough evidence that firmly supports the thesis. Each example is carefully chosen. Style is always on target with exactly the right word chosen and sentences tied together nicely one to another, just the right number of words written with confidence. Mechanics are correct; punctuation accurate; sentences are polished and quotations (if used) are handled smoothly</p>								
3	<p>Thesis is adequately focused, relatively creative, generally sophisticated, & reasonably engaging, with a reasonably clear purpose and some independent ideas. Development unfolds in an organized fashion and the thesis generally controls the organization of the essay with each paragraph generally building on the previous one. Support is generally evident with thorough evidence that supports the thesis. Each example is generally chosen with care. Style is mostly on target with generally the right word chosen and sentences that are tied together with the right number of words spoken with relative confidence. Mechanics are mostly correct; punctuation mostly accurate, and sentences are structurally competent and quotations (if used) are handled accurately.</p>								
2	<p>Thesis is sometimes focused, somewhat creative and sophisticated, & somewhat engaging; there is a reasonably clear purpose with independent ideas. Development unfolds in a somewhat organized fashion and the thesis somewhat controls the organization of the essay with some paragraphs building on the previous one. Support is sometimes apparent with some evidence that supports the thesis. Some examples work better than others. Style is sometimes on target and sometimes the right word chosen with some sentences tied together; voice is not convincing. Mechanics are problematic with a number of errors in punctuation and sentence structure.</p>								
1	<p>Thesis is not present or inadequately focused. It is not creative or sophisticated, and is not engaging; there is a no clear purpose or the main ideas are obvious & predictable. Development unfolds in a formulaic or chaotic fashion. Support is shaky and/or skimpy Style is awkward with many errors that get in the way of the content, either not enough or too many words. Mechanics show little understanding of the use of grammar and punctuation.</p>								

Passed by AWP Committee: _____ Date: _____