WRITTEN COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

This rubric was developed by an interdisciplinary team representing Columbia Gorge Community College through a process that examined and modified the AACU Written Communication Value Rubric to meet the needs of CGCC's Institutional Core Learning Outcomes assessment. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The CGCC team agrees with the utility of the AACU Value rubric, which "is to position learning at undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success".

Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Framing Language

This rubric focuses assessment on how specific written work samples or collections of work respond to specific contexts. The central question guiding the rubric is "How well does writing respond to the needs of audience(s) for the work?" In focusing on this question the rubric does not attend to other aspects of writing that are equally important: issues of writing process, writing strategies, writers' fluency with different modes of textual production or publication, or writer's growing engagement with writing and disciplinarity through the process of writing.

The first section of this rubric addresses the context and purpose for writing. A work sample or collections of work can convey the context and purpose for the writing tasks it showcases by including the writing assignments associated with work samples. But writers may also convey the context and purpose for their writing within the texts. It is important for faculty and institutions to include directions for students about how they should represent their writing contexts and purposes.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

Content Development: The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.

Context of and purpose for writing: The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: who is reading it? who is writing it? Under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writer's intended effect on an audience. Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to work through complexity or confusion; they might want to argue with other writers, or connect with other writers; they might want to convey urgency or amuse; they might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.

Disciplinary conventions: Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer's purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.

Evidence: Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers' ideas in a text.

Genre conventions: Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts and/or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. lab reports, academic papers, poetry, webpages, or personal essays.

Sources: Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

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	Mastery 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Not Demonstrated 0	Not Applicable
Audience, Context, and Purpose	Demonstrates a **thorough understanding** of context, audience, and purpose that is **wholly responsive** to the assigned task(s) and **applied consistently** through all elements of the work.	Demonstrates **adequate consideration** of context, audience, and purpose and a **clear focus** on the assigned task(s).	Demonstrates **some attention** to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s).	Demonstrates **minimal attention** to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s).	**Fails to meet minimum criteria** in addressing the audience, context, and purpose for writing.	
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content and ideas that **illustrate the writer's command and deep understanding of the subject, skillfully** shaping the **whole work**.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to **accurately explore ideas within the subject** and shape the **whole work**.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and **accurately explore ideas** through **most of the work**.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to accurately **develop simple ideas** in **some parts of the work**.	**Fails to meet minimum criteria** in addressing content development.	
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates **skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop** ideas that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates **consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support** ideas that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates an **attempt to use credible and relevant sources to support** ideas that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates an **attempt to use sources to support** ideas in the assignment.	**Fails to meet minimum criteria** in demonstrating the use of sources to support ideas in the assignment.	

Organization And Presentation	Demonstrates **consistent, skillful, and thoroughly detailed attention** to organization, presentation, and **stylistic choices as appropriate** to the assignment.	Demonstrates **consistent and skillful** organization and presentation as appropriate to the assignment.	**Follows expectations** for a **consistent system of basic** organization and presentation as appropriate to the assignment.	**Attempts to use** a **consistent system for basic** organization and presentation as appropriate to the assignment.	**Fails to meet minimum criteria** in organization and presentation.	
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses **graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning** to readers with **clarity** and **fluency**, and is **nearly error-free**.	Uses **straightforward language** that **conveys meaning** to readers with **clarity**. The language in the work has **few errors**.	Uses **language that generally conveys meaning** to readers, although writing **may include some errors**.	Uses **language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors** in usage.	**Fails to use language that demonstrates control of syntax and mechanics.**	
Visual aids	Visual aids **effectively support** the communication of purposes and ideas; aids are **integrated into the presentation seamlessly**, thus **fostering a full understanding** of the message's content.	Visual aids **generally support the** communication of the student's ideas and purposes; the aids **effectively amplify or resonate** the presentation of ideas and **foster a good understanding** of the message's content.	Visual aids **support** the communication of the student's ideas and purposes but are only **partially useful or informative**.	Visual aids **do not particularly support** the communication of the student's ideas and purpose; they **are insufficient** to be of much use as they **do little to elevate understanding**.	**Visual aids are virtually non-existent, serve no purpose, or are not credible**	

Adapted from AACU LEAP and SFA Written Communication Rubrics