

**Model Course/Program Outcomes Guide**  
**Last Update: 1/15**

**Course/Program Title: English 112 Technical Writing**

**Course/Program Team: Joan Johnson, Melinda May, Kathryn Benchoff, Alicia Drumgoole, Amanda Miller**

**Expected Learning Outcomes as of September 2014:**

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Students will be able to:

**Processes**

- Employ prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing to contribute to the clear communication of ideas, taking into consideration the feedback of instructors and peers.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the correlation between communication and design through the construction of graphically enhanced documents that increase reader understanding.

**Conventions**

- Render clear, cogent ideas and employ critical judgment for discourse in writing while adhering to the conventions of standard written English in a well-structured document.

**Rhetorical Knowledge**

- Demonstrate critical thinking and an understanding of appropriate audience and rhetorical mode in order to employ collegiate voice, tone, level of formality, and development of support.

**Research**

- Engage in inquiry-driven research, properly attributing and citing the language and ideas of others to avoid plagiarism in a well-reasoned report.

**Expected Learning Outcomes prior to September 2013:**

The student will be able to:

- determine the specific purpose and audience in professional written communication
- evaluate pieces of technical writing with respect to tone and clarity
- revise all written communication using a reader-centered approach
- employ standard written English
- render clear, cogent ideas and employ critical judgment for discourse in writing

**Assessment:**

**Instructors will require a formal recommendation report prepared in either MLA or APA format.**

See also these Course Content Objectives:

- write routine, negative, and persuasive business correspondence
- prepare professional career development materials
- participate in collaboration exercises at the brainstorming and revision stages
- prepare a long report that includes front elements, a table of contents, pagination, visuals, and documentation in MLA or APA format
- prepare a PowerPoint presentation that includes visuals and takes audience into consideration

**Validation**

## ENG 112 Course Outcome Revision Rationale

In order to better measure student achievement and course success, we decided to revise the outcomes in such a way that data collection would be more streamlined and specific areas of weakness and strength could be better pinpointed. To that end, we decided that creating outcomes that spoke to a specific category of skill (and then revising the rubric to reflect these categories and the subset of skills measured in each) would help us to see where the course was reflecting the most success and where students or instructors were struggling to meet the course goals.

In order to ensure consistency of writing expectations across the English curriculum, the new Technical Writing Student Outcomes and Common Assessment were designed to mirror the English 101 Outcomes while preserving the cornerstones of effective business writing. It is also necessary, given the presented data, to redesign Technical Writing to ensure that it contains academic rigor comparable to the English 101 course.

The first step of the process was to research other colleges and universities in order to get some idea of how other writing and English programs structured their goals and assessment. Upon gathering that data, we met several times to discuss the pros and cons of each of the strongest examples. With those in mind, we decided the best way to organize our outcomes was in the following categories: rhetorical knowledge, critical reading and thinking, processes, conventions, and research. While these five categories were always the foundation of assessment in this course, the rubric was organized (more or less) by essay structure rather than by category, and thus data collection and thoughtful reflection was more difficult.

Once we had decided on the categories, we went back to our original course outcomes and the specific skills measured in the rubric, and reshuffled everything into the appropriate category. We also added some items that we came across in our research that we thought were appropriate and valuable, and which had been overlooked in previous iterations of the rubric. For example, we added into our “processes” category the element of reflection consideration of feedback from peers and instructors. We also eliminated items that seemed to be redundant or unclear. The elements in place, we worked carefully on synthesizing everything into five concise outcome statements.

Finally, we applied those new categories and revised outcomes to our rubric, separating the rubric by category and then by skill. After devising a draft of the new rubric, we held a department meeting and reviewed each section and skill sub-set, and determined that success in the category “critical thinking and reading” was going to be difficult to measure in a concrete way, so we absorbed the skills into “rhetorical knowledge” and “research.” We reordered the sections of the rubric to reflect the process of writing from a student’s perspective, and were in agreement that we should be introducing research requirements into essays earlier than the formal research essay or report. We applied tentative point values to each section of the rubric, agreeing to each try the new rubric on five of our research essays from this semester, after which we would meet for a norming session and revision of the rubric before sending it out to the rest of the faculty.

In the interest of consistency and appropriate data collection measures, we then changed the Technical Writing Student Outcomes and Common Assessment to mirror the ENG 101 assessment with a few minor changes necessary to preserving the goals inherent in business writing. This includes a bullet point on document design and substitution of the word document or report for essay where appropriate in the outcomes. We then translated these outcomes into a rubric that mirrors the expectations listed in the Outcomes.

While revising the rubric, we addressed some key issues regarding data collection. After a lengthy discussion, we decided to continue using the formal research report for data collection, at least until we see how the new outcomes and rubrics work in terms of data collection. We determined that we may be able to use the General Education Outcome database to develop reports that would provide feedback broken into the new outcome categories, though we would need to add other courses into that database.

## **Results**

Although data and statistical goals are certainly important in assessing an English class, we must also ensure that the transformation of subjective data (evaluation of documents) into statistical data (number of students satisfying a certain outcome) is standardized.

While we might say we expect 80% of our students to achieve 70% competency levels in all outcomes, these numbers are arbitrary until we are able to standardize the way we collect qualitative data and transform it into statistical data.

In SP 13, the English Faculty revised the course outcomes and the rubrics to more effectively collect data that aligned with those course outcomes. The rubric became the collection tool for this course, and the former general education requirements were preserved and captured in the Conventions section of the rubric. This shift allowed us to generate richer data for the course.

### SU 13-SP 14 Course Outcomes

Semester	Instructor	Section	Total	Processes					Conventions					Rhetorical Knowledge					Research					Web/ Lecture
				A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F	
SU 13	Drumgoole	112-V02	16	10	2	2	0	2	12	0	2	0	2	12	0	1	1	2	11	1	2	0	2	WEB
FA13	Drumgoole	112-01	16	11	2	2	1	0	12	2	2	0	0	11	3	2	0	0	13	1	2	0	0	WEB
FA13	Drumgoole	112-02	18	8	5	3	1	1	6	7	5	0	0	8	6	3	1	0	11	3	2	2	0	LEC
SP 14	Drumgoole	112-01	9	4	2	0	1	2	3	3	2	1	0	3	3	2	1	0	3	3	2	0	1	LEC
SP 14	Drumgoole	112-02	15	8	5	2	0	0	8	4	2	1	0	9	2	4	0	0	10	4	1	0	0	WEB
SP 14	Lawson	112-03	10	5	2	1	0	3	2	4	2	0	3	1	6	1	0	3	4	4	0	0	3	LEC
	Totals	--	84	46	18	10	3	8	43	20	15	2	5	44	20	13	3	5	52	16	9	2	6	--
	Percent			55%	21%	12%	4%	10%	51%	24%	18%	2%	6%	52%	24%	15%	4%	6%	62%	19%	11%	2%	7%	

In Technical Writing, students were exceeding the 80% goal in all categories:

Processes: 88% C or above

Conventions: 93% C or above

Rhetorical Knowledge: 91% C or above

Research: 92% C or above

Average: 91% of students receiving C or above in all categories

While we have met and exceeded our goal of an 80% at above a C, we also wanted to know why the students received such high performance in the class. There are many high-performing students in this course, and because of this, students tend to do very well on the Recommendation Report. At the end of the Spring Semester, as we noticed this trend emerging, it became important to verify that these grades were correct and not inflated. Beginning in FA13, we began to cross reference grades with student transcripts and found that the tendency was that students who perform at high levels in Technical Writing performed at high levels (3.6 GPA or higher) in classes across the campus. Additionally, Technical Writing tends to draw many more mid-career working professionals than some other English classes, and this is another likely reason for higher performance in the course. This trend seems to be disappearing in the SU14 classes as the student demographics shift, but we will continue to monitor the issue. It may be that the points distribution on the rubric for the Recommendation Report should be revisited.

The data collected in Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 reflect information about the previous rubric.

We began data collection Spring 2012, so our first semester was a pilot of an entirely new database and new general education outcomes. First we measured the research paper for outcome.

### Course Totals for General Education Outcome 1: SP12 (Pilot) ENG 112 Recommendation Reports

Course	Organization		Coherence		Development		Standard English Skills		Source Citation	
	% Pass	%Fail	% Pass	% Fail	%Pass	% Fail	% Pass	% Fail	% Pass	% Fail
ENG 112	82	18	82	18	82	18	86	14	82	18

In the ENG 112 classes for the SP12 Semester, we found that the department averages indicated that of the 26 students who turned in a Research Paper, upwards of 82% passed all categories of the rubric

### Course Totals for General Education Outcome 1: FA12 ENG 112 Recommendation Reports

Course	Organization		Coherence		Development		Standard English Skills		Source Citation	
	% Pass	%Fail	% Pass	% Fail	%Pass	% Fail	% Pass	% Fail	% Pass	% Fail
ENG 112	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0

In the English 112 classes in the FA12 Semester, we found that 100% of the 33 students who turned in a Recommendation Report passed in all categories. This seems to be an aberration in the data, and further indicated a need to see the distribution of grades for these papers.

### Course Totals for General Education Outcome 1: SP13 Recommendation Report

Course	Organization			Coherence			Development			Standard English Skills			Source Citation		
	A	B-C	D-F	A	B-C	D-F	A	B-C	D-F	A	B-C	D-F	A	B-C	D-F
ENG 112	55%	42%	3%	42%	55%	3%	55%	42%	3%	65%	32%	3%	61%	35%	3%

The data indicated that while a large number of students ( 97%) of the 31 students who submitted the assignment passed the Recommendation Report, many of the students fall into the B-C category.

Anecdotally, a possible explanation for the high success rate in Technical Writing has to do with the demographics of the class – unlike a 101 or 102 level English class, Technical Writing tends to draw a disproportionate number of mid-career professionals who have years of experience writing for a professional audience; this fact has a positive impact on the report grades.

However, the data indicates that we should pay greater attention to essay development and source citation, as these two categories have the highest fail rate in all sections.

Likewise, this data presented a problem because the staff agreed that “passing” (above 60%) did not reflect an adequate measure of student success. We agreed that success should be defined as the achievement of the minimum grade of C (70%).

Therefore, we decided to break out the success measures into grade-specific categories so that we can see the students who are genuinely successful. Otherwise, A students are combined with D students, the latter of which we should not determine as successful per our outcomes.

As a result, we changed the databases to reflect letter grades rather than pass/fail. We also changed the rubric (see “validation” above) and have planned norming sessions to ensure the viability of the new rubric.

For General Education outcome 2, we require students to “evaluate a piece of writing from either literature, current events, non-fiction essays, or a college textbook for logical flaws, rhetorical purpose, organization, and evidence for claims.”

We selected a piece called “The Case for Torture” (attached) and asked students to read this text and answer four accompanying questions about that text. The questions ask students to evaluate rhetorical purpose, organization, evidence, and logical flaws using a multiple choice format.

In SP12, the data indicated that of the 21 Technical Writing students who completed the exercise, 78.75% passed the test. However, we did notice that only of the students successfully answered Question 4. We noted this and then collected more data on the same reading for the FA12 data.

#### **Course Total for General Education Outcome 2 – SP 12 Critical Reading Sample**

SP 12 ENG 112 Outcomes for Gen Ed. 2		
	%Pass	%Fail
Question1:	75	25
Question 2:	86	14
Question 3:	96	4
Question 4:	58	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.75</b>	<b>21.25</b>

In FA12, the data indicated that of the 34 Technical Writing students who completed the exercise, 73.75% passed the test. However, we did notice that only of the students successfully answered Question 4. We noted this and then collected more data on the same reading for the FA12 data.

#### **Course Total for General Education Outcome 2 – FA 12 Critical Reading Sample**

SP 12 ENG 112 Outcomes for Gen Ed. 2		
	%Pass	%Fail
Question 1:	82	18
Question 2:	58	42
Question 3:	97	3
Question 4:	58	42

<b>Total</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>26.5</b>
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For the SP 13 semester, the Department decided to alter the wording of question 4 because we felt it was more important that we assess the student's understanding of logical fallacies rather than the student's memorization of specific logical fallacy names.

In SP13, the data indicated that of the 34 Technical Writing students who completed the exercise, 76.75% passed the test. However, we did notice that only of the students successfully answered Question 4. We noted this and then collected more data on the same reading for the FA12 data.

### **Course Total for General Education Outcome 2 – SP 13 Critical Reading Sample**

SP 12 ENG 112 Outcomes for Gen Ed. 2		
	%Pass	%Fail
Question1:	89	11
Question 2:	74	26
Question 3:	89	11
Question 4:	55	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>76.75</b>	<b>23.25</b>

In each case, we feel that the evolution of these outcomes will provide the Department with better data. Additionally, we are using a Department-wide Moodle site to collect and evaluate data, and we feel that this will help establish and promote the requirement that all faculty participate in the data collection process.

### Course Total for General Education Outcome 2 – SU13, FA13 and SP14 Critical Reading Sample

Semester	Name	Course	Section		Question 1		Question 2		Question 3		Question 4	
				Total	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect
SU13	Drumgoole	ENG-112	V-02	14	10	4	11	3	14	0	3	11
FA13	Drumgoole	ENG-112	01	16	12	4	11	5	13	3	4	12
FA13	Drumgoole	ENG-112	02	17	17	0	11	6	15	2	9	8
SP 13	Drumgoole	ENG-112	02	15	8	7	9	6	10	7	2	13
SP13	Drumgoole	ENG-204	01	7	5	2	6	1	7	0	6	1
Total				69	52	17	48	21	59	12	24	45
					75%	25%	70%	30%	86%	17%	35%	65%

Data compiled in all sections of Technical Writing for SU 13, FA 13, and SP13 indicate that students are performing well in all categories, though not meeting the 80 percent goal in many categories. Question 4, which relates to logical fallacy, still indicates poor performance, despite the written assignments and discussions that address the topic. After analysis, the Department determined that it is necessary to find and adapt a new tool to assess these outcomes to discern a stronger assessment of student ability regarding General Education Outcome 2. Faculty plan to meet in the FA14 semester to address this issue.

#### Follow-Up

- Norming session will occur in FA 14 to determine grades for the Technical Writing report and to ensure that all faculty teaching Technical Writing are consistent in grading policy and procedure.
- Faculty will meet to determine a new tool for General Education Outcome 2 that will hopefully produce more telling data than the current tool used for assessment of reading.

#### Budget Justification

Professional development funds for full time faculty and stipends for adjunct faculty will be needed. These will go toward conferences, webinars, and training/norming sessions for full time and adjunct faculty.

Files referenced and attached on Moodle site:

- 112 Rubric
- Excel Database
- General Education Outcomes Data Collection Tools
- Reading for General Education Outcome 2: *The Case for Torture* and accompanying questions



**COMMON ASSESSMENT:****Recommendation Report Assignment****The Task:**

For this paper, you will identify a problem relevant to your field of study and explore possible solutions for this problem based on a set of criteria that you create. Your evaluation of the problem and your proposed solutions should be objective in nature, while addressing the needs of your specific audience (in this case, your audience would consist of your academic or professional peers). Keep the scope of your report specific by limiting yourself to the evaluation of three or four alternatives and no more than four or five evaluation criteria and create your recommendations based on these evaluations.

Your report should conclude by providing informed recommendations. Also, consider the scope of the report before you begin; choose a topic that is in-depth enough for a report that is comprised of 5-7 double-spaced pages of text. This is an individual project, not a group project, although you will be using your group pages to assist each other with your individual projects. Feel free to email me with topic ideas if you want feedback before you begin your work.

**Your report must include and evidence the active use of three to five academic sources. This should include a combination of direct quotes, paraphrase, and summary.**

Acceptable sources include: newspapers, trade magazines, academically-based articles or reports, and government or educationally based websites.

Unacceptable sources include: Wikipedia, any type of “infodump” websites (Buzzle, Ehow, Answers.com or anything like them), non-academic magazines, blog or online journal entries, or websites written by people who are not documented experts in their field.

Please use the example of a long report in your textbook as a guide, but please realize that you do not have to use the same headings they use within the report itself. For instance, if you look at the Long Report table of contents on page in Chapter 19, you'll see a large section of this report deals with results. Your table of contents and report organization should come from the outline that you will turn in during week 9. Think about the best organization for your report and then structure your report in that way. See the sample outline in this folder.

**Page Requirement:**

5-7 pages, single-spaced, not including front matter, end matter or cover pages. The writing should be chunked and broken into sections as shown in the examples in the book and/or on your Moodle site.

**Graphics Requirements:**

3-4 graphics should be used. One of these graphics should be your own creation. Remember that a graphic is not merely a picture or random clip art, but a captioned visual that functions to enhance reader understanding of the surrounding text.

**Examples of Acceptable Topics:**

You may use one of these topics or choose an ethical issue not on this list. I must approve your topic.

- Internet monitoring in the workplace
- Copyright infringement
- Grade inflation in public schools
- Ethics in engineering
- Confidentiality in social work
- Drug Testing in the Workplace
- Anti-discrimination laws in hiring

**Assessment:**

Your grade will be determined based on a 200-point rubric listed below. Individual factors for that score are listed in the rubric below, so please make sure to review the rubric and ask me if you have any questions concerning this material.

## English 112 -- Student Outcomes Assessment

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

A = excellent

B = very good

C = good

D = fair

F = poor

Processes	Points Possible = 40	Points Earned =
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates consideration of feedback from instructors or peers (10)</li> <li>The overall format of the report demonstrates an understanding of the correlation between communication and design through the construction of graphically enhanced documents that increase reader understanding. (15)</li> <li>A minimum of 3 graphics within the text function to further reader understanding and are placed in an area of the text that is relevant and attractive within the document. (15)</li> </ul>	Out of 40 A (37) B (33) C (29) D (25) F (__)	
Conventions	Points Possible = 80	Points Earned =
<u>Overall Organization (5)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays effective organization with clear transitions within and between paragraphs and sections.</li> </ul>	Out of 5 A (5) B (4) C (3) D (2) F (__)	
<u>Report Structure (45)</u> <i>Front Matter and Introduction (15)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains properly developed front matter, including a letter or memo of transmission, cover, Abstract, Table of Contents, and List of Figures</li> <li>Engages the reader with an inviting attention statement</li> <li>Provides background information that orients reader and transitions to the thesis</li> <li>Contains an insightful, focused, one-sentence thesis that states the central assertion or problem to be addressed.</li> </ul> <i>Body Paragraphs (15)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contain a topic sentence that directly supports thesis and states central idea of paragraph</li> <li>Provide concrete details/evidence to explain, expand, and support the topic</li> <li>Are well-organized, fully developed, and on topic</li> <li>Provide satisfying closure for each paragraph</li> </ul> <i>Conclusion and Recommendations (15)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides closure for entire essay</li> <li>Is well-developed, transitioned, and satisfying</li> <li>Includes a concise section on Recommendations that propose next steps to the issue addressed in the paper.</li> </ul>	Out of 45 A (42) B (37) C (33) D (29) F (__)	

<u>Grammar and Style (30)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a variety of sophisticated (but clear and concise) sentence structures</li> <li>• Exhibits specific, advanced vocabulary and diction</li> <li>• Avoids fluff, wordiness, and vague, generic phrases</li> <li>• Contains few errors in grammar, punctuation, usage</li> <li>• Avoids fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences</li> </ul>	Out of 30 A (28) B (25) C (22) D (20) F ( )	
<b>Rhetorical Knowledge</b> <b>Points Possible = 20</b> <b>Points Earned =</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates well-informed critical thinking and sound logical analysis</li> <li>• Demonstrates consideration of support structure consistent with appropriate rhetorical mode(s)</li> <li>• Addresses the proper audience</li> <li>• Displays a consistent and appropriate point of view</li> <li>• Adopts college-level voice and tone</li> </ul>	Out of 20 A (19) B (17) C (15) D (13) F ( )	
<b>Research</b> <b>Points Possible = 60</b> <b>Points Earned =</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses appropriate MLA format</li> <li>• Utilizes various sources and the student's own ideas to present a cogent argument</li> <li>• Uses timely, academic, and reliable sources</li> <li>• Uses summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation to avoid plagiarism</li> <li>• Integrates short, appropriate, focused quotations into paragraphs driven by student-authored text</li> <li>• Uses parenthetical citations properly</li> <li>• Provides an accurate, properly formatted Works Cited page</li> </ul>	Out of 60 A (56) B (50) C (44) D (38) F ( )	
Note: For the Long Report, instructors must weight this section at 60 points. Note: An instructor may assign a perfect or failing grade at their discretion, but please provide a written justification for this on the rubric so that students understand their scores.		
<b>Deductions</b>		
<b>Total</b>		