Michigan
Technological
University

Undergraduate Student Learning Goal 5A: Written Communication Rubric   (for use 2022-23)

Students are able to communicate effectively in writing and in new media to a wide variety of audiences. 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.

Written Communicati	What is being assessed	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Exemplary 4
5A.1 Context of and Purpose for Writing	Level of understanding of context, audience (perceptions, expectations, assumptions), and purpose relevant to the writing task(s) and adjustment of writing to address those considerations	Demonstrates minimal awareness of context, audience, purpose, OR task.	Demonstrates attention to context, audience, purpose, AND task.	Demonstrates adequate consideration that aligns work to considerations of audience, context, purpose, and task.	Demonstrates a thorough understanding that focuses all elements of the work.
5A.2 Organization and Conventions	Clear and consistent organizational pattern and structuring elements including introduction, thesis and main points, conclusion, and transitions; follows formal and informal rules of genre or disciplinary expectations about organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Develops unclear organizational pattern; shows little awareness of conventions.	Develops recognizable organizational pattern; follows conventions at a basic level of understanding.	Develops adequate organizational pattern that structures the whole work; uses conventions consistently.	Develops organizational pattern that enhances flow and cohesiveness through the whole work; demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of conventions.
5A.3 Content Development	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop ideas, situate ideas in a disciplinary context, and shape the work	Demonstrates minimal development of content in some parts of the work.	Demonstrates simplistic development of ideas and disciplinary context through most of the work.	Demonstrates appropriate ideas and subject development through the whole work.	Demonstrates compelling ideas and subject development through the whole work.
5A.4 Sources and Evidence	Uses a variety of quality sources and acknowledges different views to support ideas; may use data to support observations and draw conclusions	Demonstrates minimal support for ideas in the writing.	Demonstrates inconsistent use of credible and/or relevant sources.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources.	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, diverse, and relevant sources.
5A.5 Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Quality of language use to communicate meaning and control over syntax and mechanics of writing	Shows minimal understanding of writing basics. Errors in syntax and mechanics distract from meaning.	Shows understanding of syntax and mechanics. Conveys meaning although may have some errors.	Shows competent use of writing to clearly convey meaning with minor errors.	Shows skillful use of writing to communicate meaning with clarity and fluency.

Adapted from Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubric [http://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics] on written communication.

Glossary

- **5A.1 Context of and Purpose for Writing**
  - <u>Context</u>: the framing situation, conditions, or perspectives for a piece of writing; this may include social, cultural, historical, or technical contexts. The context is what an audience might take into consideration in order to understand the meaning, usefulness, or competence of a piece of writing.
  - <u>Purpose</u>: the reason for a piece of writing; what the writer sets out to achieve with the writing. This may differ from the stated thesis or argument because the purpose may be generic (to persuade) or dictated by the type of writing. The purpose should be appropriate for the audience and may be shaped by the context. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer's purpose for the text.
  - <u>Difference between 5A.1 level 1</u> ("Demonstrates awareness") <u>and level 2</u> ("Demonstrates attention"): at level 1, a student may show some recognition of context, purpose, audience, and task but does not adequately respond to them; at level 2, a student attends to context, purpose, audience, and task in rudimentary and minimal ways.

- **5A.2 Organization and Conventions**
  - <u>Organizational pattern</u>: a systematic arrangement of all aspects of writing; may follow chronological, historical, topical, or other forms of arrangement.
  - <u>Structuring elements</u>: Parts of a piece of writing that form the basis for an overall pattern; these include the introduction, thesis and main points, conclusion, and transitions.
  - <u>Disciplinary conventions</u>: 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.
  - <u>Genre conventions</u>: 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.

- **5A.4 Sources and Evidence**
  - <u>Sources</u>: may include a variety of relevant authorities depending on the task and conventions of the writing. Note that sources may be academic or technical but may also include personal experience depending on the nature of the writing.
  - <u>Evidence</u>: may include a variety of forms including explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, and quotations. Evidence may be attributed to a source using a citation but may also include personal narratives and first-hand observations. If the writer does not use citations, there may still be a use of evidence.

- **5A.5 Control of Syntax and Mechanics**
  - <u>Syntax</u>: the structure or word order of sentences
  - <u>Mechanics</u>: rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation