

**Department of STS/Public Policy
Public Policy Program**

**College of Liberal Arts
Writing Policy
Revised 1/03**

- A. The Public Policy Program grants both Bachelors and Masters degrees. (It should be noted that the program was initiated in AY 2000.)
- B. The Public Policy Program does have a writing policy. (Please note the department has amended its policy since approval by the College Writing Committee. A copy of the amended policy follows. Additions are noted by *italics* and deletions are noted by ~~striketrough~~.)
- C. The Public Policy writing policy only partially fulfills the Institute Writing Policy. The policy currently is silent on requirements and procedures for graduate students. The proposed modifications to the Public Policy writing policy described in Section B above include additional measurable writing skills appropriate to Public Policy undergraduate students. (See Item #2 under Assessment Criteria.)

PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM WRITING POLICY (REVISED 1/03)

Introduction

An important skill for the public policy analyst is the ability to effectively communicate with a variety of audiences. Written communication is paramount. It is the policy of the faculty in Public Policy that all students must achieve a high level of proficiency in writing ability in order to be certified for a Bachelor of Science degree.

All students must achieve a level of writing skill as needed for career growth, enhancement of their personal lives, and effectiveness as members of society.

Assessment Criteria

Students' writing ability will be assessed on the following criteria:

- A. Understanding and fulfilling the writing assignments.
- B. Logical plan of organization, including clearly stated and effectively developed ideas. *Emphasis will be placed on the student's ability to identify and clearly state a problem, and to articulate evaluation methods and results.*
- C. Consistent focus on the writing task without digression.
- D. Clarity, accuracy, and conciseness. This includes the appropriate use of vocabulary, prose style, accurate spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.
- E. Ability to effectively express critical thought and analysis.
- F. Appropriate use and documentation of references in accepted bibliographic citation format (e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago)

Implementation

Assessment of students' writing ability will take place throughout their academic career. All required Public Policy courses will include substantial writing assignments and all faculty in these required courses will be charged with assessing students' writing skills.

The Foundations of Public Policy course (a required course for all freshmen and transfers) will serve as the entry checkpoint to assess students' writing skill. Instructors will require formal writing assignments, including research papers, position papers, and policy critiques. Students' writing ability will also be tested through essay examinations. Students with writing deficiencies will be advised on how to raise their abilities to an acceptable level, and if necessary, may be referred to the Academic Support Center (ASC) for remedial instruction. The referring professor will track all student referrals to the ASC; the referring professor will follow-up with the ASC instructor to monitor students' progress.

All Public Policy students are required to take a three-course policy analysis sequence in their third year of study. These three courses will include substantial writing requirements in short- and long-term assignments. ~~The last course in the~~ sequence will place significant emphasis on proposal writing, memo writing, executive summary writing, the presentation of statistical information, final analysis formatting, and press conference presentational styles, all of which students will be expected to employ in their final project.

All students will be required to take a final Public Policy course in their fourth year called The Senior Project. This course will build on the third year writing requirements and will culminate in a major research and writing project. This project will be used as a final determination of students' writing proficiency. Given the nature of this course, writing proficiency will be measured by students receiving a passing grade of "C" or above *on the writing component of the final project*. Students not meeting this requirement will not be certified for the Bachelor of Science degree.

Assessment of the extent to which the Public Policy Program is currently carrying out its writing policy:

Although only in its third year of operation, the Public Policy Program is fulfilling its writing policy in a number of ways. The Foundations of Public Policy course (required of all first year students and transfer students in their first year in the program) is writing intensive. The primary writing assignment is several 1-3-page position papers. Other writing assignments include short essays and critiques of reading assignments (articles). Students are required to take six (only five count toward the final grade) short essay quizzes. The final exam is take-home and includes several questions that require students to synthesize and analyze ideas and concepts in clear and succinct written answers. As required by the program writing policy, the instructor in the Foundations class has been advised of the requirement to identify student writing deficiencies and to advise students on how to raise their abilities to acceptable levels. No such deficiencies have been identified to date.

Introduction to Qualitative Policy Analysis, a course required of all undergraduate students in the program, was offered for the first time in the spring quarter AY 2001/3. Thirty-five percent of the final grade in this course included a major (10-15-page) paper based on observations and interviewing in a specific local government setting. This exercise encourages students to develop analytical writing skills using data collected through these specific research methodologies.

In the Policy Analysis sequence, usually taken in the third year of the program, students are expected to further develop the writing skills appropriate to public policy analysis. In Policy Analysis I, students are

required to prepare written reports on seven policy explorations and seven problem sets. These writing exercises expose students to the specific writing skills appropriate to the discipline, including the presentation of statistical information, final analysis formatting, and summarizing policy recommendations. Policy Analysis II extends these skills into more complex problem sets and projects, and requires students to prepare three extensive project reports. Final exams for both courses include significant analytical writing. Due to the newness of the program, Policy Analysis III has not yet been offered.