



# University Summary Report: Written Communication and Information Literacy Assessment of Student Learning

*Version 1: September 12, 2019*

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

[Institutional Learning Outcomes \(ILOs\)](#) are those learning outcomes that are expected of every graduate of the institution, both undergraduate and graduate, and are closely aligned with [General Education](#) requirements. ILO Assessment follows the [ILO Long Term Assessment Plan](#) which aligns the schedule for undergraduate, graduate, and general education assessment.

Following the schedule for the ILO Long Term Assessment plan, Cal State East Bay has gathered recent student learning data to support the assessment of the University's Written Communication and Information Literacy Institutional Learning Outcomes. These data are intended to provide additional context for existing academic review discussions, analysis, and decision making to improve student learning.

### Overview of Writing

Students develop greater sophistication and autonomy in their writing as they progress from lower to upper-division coursework in [General Education](#) (GE) and their majors. For first-time freshmen, GE Area A2 Written Communication course(s) taken during the first-year (also known as first-year composition) form the foundation for writing skills that are built upon and reinforced in subsequent writing-intensive courses, particularly Second Composition and upper-division GE Areas C4 Arts & Humanities and D4 Social Sciences. Upper-level writing in the discipline should be further developed and practiced within the major, although this occurs to varying degrees depending on the major. Transfer students are presumed to be ready to step into upper-division GE and major-level courses which emphasize writing. Co-curricular writing support for all students is available through the Student Center for Academic Achievement (SCAA).

### Overview of Information Literacy

Students develop information literacy skills as part of their GE and major coursework at Cal State East Bay. The GE program includes courses focused on developing information literacy skills in GE [Area E](#), with additional courses with information literacy-focused learning outcomes in upper-division GE Areas C4 and D4 courses, and Second Composition courses. The University Libraries provides additional opportunities for students to develop information literacy skills through individual instruction including [reference services](#) or group instruction such as [information literacy workshops](#) or [instructional sessions embedded in disciplinary courses](#).

## METHODS

The University gathered the most current available data from several relevant sources (Table 1).

Table 1. Sources of data and dates of collection for ILO Written Communication assessment.

Data Sources	Date
Pilot Assessment of GE A2 (First-year Composition)	2018-19
University Writing Skills Requirement	2017-18
Assessment of Student Work for Written Communication & Information Literacy ILOs	2018-19
University Libraries' Information Literacy Program	Ongoing
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	2015-17
Assessment of Graduate Level ILO Written Communication and Information Literacy Student Work	2018-19
Student Center For Academic Achievement (SCAA)	2017-18

### **Pilot Assessment of GE A2 (First-year Composition)**

Refer to the *General Education Assessment of Student Learning Area A2 Written Communication* report which will be posted on the [GE Assessment](#) website.

### **Writing Skills Requirement**

Per [Executive Order 665](#), the CSU Chancellor's Office requires that all undergraduate and graduate students demonstrate competence in writing skills as a requirement for graduation. This system-wide requirement is called Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). To fulfill the GWAR at Cal State East Bay, students demonstrate competency by either passing designated upper-division writing course(s) or passing the [Writing Skills Test](#).

### **Assessment of Student Work for Written Communication and Information Literacy ILOs 2018- 2019**

*Undergraduate courses aligned to ILO Written Communication:* Twenty-five senior level courses were aligned to the ILO of Written Communication (Table 2). These courses represented 19 disciplines from the four colleges: College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences (CLASS), College of Science (CSCI), College of Education and Allied Studies (CEAS), and the College of Business (CBE).

*Undergraduate courses aligned to ILO Information Literacy:* Three senior level courses were aligned to the ILO Information Literacy, representing three disciplines from CLASS and CEAS.

ILO Written Communication Courses Assessed 2018-19 by College			
CEAS	CBE	CSCI	CLASS
2 courses	2 courses	11 courses	10 courses
Kinesiology Hospitality/Recreation	Business Administration Economics	Chemistry & Biochemistry Biological Science Computer Science Geology Psychology	Anthropology Communication Criminal Justice English Ethnic Studies History Human Development International Studies Political Science Speech Pathology & Audiology

Table 2. Numbers of courses assessed by college for ILO Written Communication 2018-19.

College	Departments Represented	# Courses Assessed
CEAS	Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism Kinesiology	2
CBE	Business Administration Economics	2
CSCI	Biological Sciences Chemistry and Biochemistry Computer Science Geology Psychology	11
CLASS	Anthropology Communication Criminal Justice English Ethnic Studies History Human Development International Studies Political Science Speech Pathology and Audiology	10

*Faculty Assessed Student Work:* For each participating course section, four student samples were selected using Blackboard Outcomes, an electronic assessment platform within Blackboard. Each student work sample was assessed by two faculty assessors. [Assessment calibration training](#) was provided to the participating faculty representing the four colleges and Library Services. Trained faculty assessed four samples of student

work from participating courses using the [Written Communication ILO Rubric](#) or the [Information Literacy ILO Rubric](#) at the end of academic year 2018-19.

### **University Libraries' Information Literacy Program**

The University Libraries collects data on the utilization of information literacy services provided by its [Information Literacy Program](#), which includes individual reference consultations, information-literacy focused workshops, instructional sessions embedded in disciplinary courses, and information literacy credit courses (INFO 200, 210, 220, and 310).

### **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

The [NSSE](#) collects information from four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The survey captures questions related to student experiences with reading, writing, and research.

### **Assessment of Graduate Level ILO Written Communication Student Work 2018- 2019**

Academic Senate policy requires that graduate programs align to at least two ILOs as specified in the ILO Long-Term Assessment Plan. Seventeen of the thirty-five graduate programs at CSUEB chose to align one or more of their Program Learning Outcomes with the Written Communication ILO and hence participated in assessment of that ILO in 2018-2019. Due to the wide variation in the goals of the various graduate programs with respect to the written communication ILO (e.g., proficiency in technical report writing vs. persuasive essays), each graduate program was asked to develop program-specific rubrics for assessing the Written Communication ILO. Each participating program identified one or more graduate courses in which the ILO was to be assessed, and the instructor of the course was asked to develop an assignment that could be effectively used for assessment purposes. Individual programs decided how many samples they would gather in each assessed course and also identified faculty members responsible for applying the program-specific rubrics to generate the assessment data. The results of the assessment efforts are to be provided in each program's annual report to CAPR.

### **Student Center For Academic Achievement (SCAA)**

The SCAA offers academic support services to students. [The SCAA 2017-18 Annual Report](#) outlines student support provided through eTutoring, The Online Writing Lab (OWL), Peer Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), Writing Associate (WA) Program and the Writing Skills Test (WST Bootcamp).

## **RESULTS**

### **Pilot Assessment of GE A2 (First-year Composition)**

Refer to the *General Education Assessment of Student Learning Area A2 Written Communication* report which will be posted on the [GE Assessment](#) website.

### **University Writing Skills Requirement**

[The Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement/University Writing Skills Requirement \(GWAR/UWSR\) Annual Report for 2017-18](#) provides data on student performance on the WST including demographic variables, academic variables, and pass/fail rates by major.

## Assessment of ILO Written Communication Student Work at Graduation for Undergraduates 2018- 2019

### Student Performance Written Communication

The results of assessment for the six categories of student writing performance in the [ILO Written Communication Rubric](#) (Purpose, Audience, Organization, Idea Presentation, Language, Mechanics) ranged between 79% and 95% competent (Level 3) and fully competent (Level 4). Student writing was strongest in the category of Audience Awareness and weakest in Idea Presentation (Fig. 1).

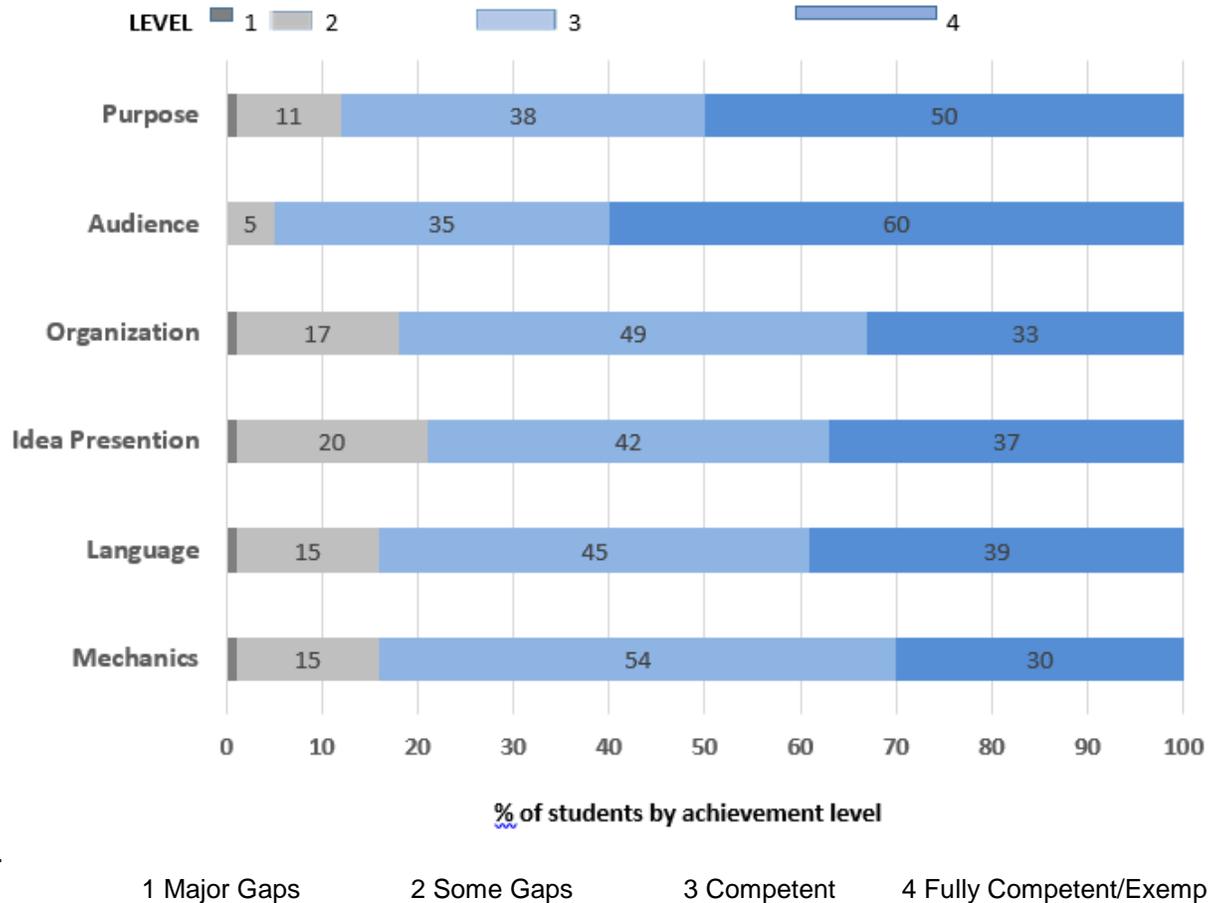


Figure 1. Student performance on written communication indicated by percent of students in each performance level (1 major gaps - 4 fully competent/exemplary) on each of six categories (purpose, audience, organization, idea presentation, language, and mechanics). N = 100 students.

### Faculty Feedback Highlights for Written Communication

Highlights of feedback from faculty who aligned an undergraduate assignment to the ILO of Written Communication included:

### *Student Strengths*

- Students are adept at self reflection.
- Students do better work breaking larger assignments into smaller assignments.
- Well designed assignments by faculty bring out students' best work.

### *Student Areas For Improvement*

- Range of student competence and preparedness for writing at graduation could improve.
- Students could be stronger in the development of arguments and ideas.
- Students could see more relevance of writing in their careers.
- Students could benefit from increased awareness of SCAA as a resource for writing skills improvement.

### **Assessment of ILO Information Literacy Student Work at Graduation for Undergraduates 2018-2019**

The "N" was too small to provide meaningful results (3 courses, 12 students), and the ILO Subcommittee will address this issue in the future. However noteworthy feedback from faculty who aligned an assignment to Information Literacy included: "...students do cite properly" and "a common problem I see in my students' writing is an over-reliance on quotations from sources (to support their ideas), rather than paraphrasing and discussing the ideas in their own words."

### **University Libraries Information Literacy Program Data**

The [University Libraries Information Literacy Program website](#) includes data on the utilization of the University Libraries' information literacy services. Results include the [number of information literacy sessions per year, by department and college](#); the number of workshops conducted; analysis of reference service interactions with service actions mapped to information-literacy focused learning outcomes; and assessment of student learning in the information literacy credit courses (INFO 200, 210, 220, 310).

### **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

[Institutional Effectiveness and Research](#) administered the NSSE to all first-year and senior undergraduate students in 2015, 2016, and 2017. In Spring 2015, CSUEB administered the NSSE "[Experiences with Information Literacy](#)" module. Highlights from the NSSE results from [Spring 2016](#) and [Spring 2017](#) detail CSUEB student engagement with reading, writing, and research practices.

### **Assessment of Graduate Level ILO Written Communication Student Work 2018-2019**

Graduate programs have been asked to submit the assessment data that they collected in 2018-2019 as part of their annual reports, due October 1, 2019. That data will be compiled and summarized to provide college-level and university level views. These views will be made available by late October to prompt discussions by the departments, colleges, and the university at large. In particular, discussions will be initiated within the Graduate Advisory Council.

### **Student Center For Academic Achievement (SCAA)**

[The SCAA 2017-18 Annual Report](#) outlines student support through eTutoring, The Online Writing Lab (OWL), Peer Tutoring, Supplemental Instructions (SI), Writing Associate (WA) Program and the Writing Skills Test (WST) Bootcamp. Results include how services improve DFW rates, WST pass rates, and student confidence.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLEGE DISCUSSIONS

### *Role of ILO Subcommittee*

The [ILO Subcommittee](#) will review calibration results and faculty feedback in order to recommend potential changes to the [ILO Written Communication Rubric](#) and the ILO Assessment process.

### **College/Unit Discussions**

Led by associate deans, each college/unit will decide their own approach to reviewing results and conducting discussions generally following the schedules outlined in ILO Long Term Assessment Plan and EEC Communication Plan focused on discussions in fall of 2019 and implementation in Spring 2020. This includes reviewing those results that add meaning to their discussions about student performance in Written Communication and Information Literacy.

### **Support for College Discussions**

Planning and meeting facilitation support is available from Academic Programs and Services and the Office of Faculty Development:

Academic Programs and Services

Maureen Scharberg,

[maureen.scharberg@csueastbay.edu](mailto:maureen.scharberg@csueastbay.edu)

Julie Stein, [julie.stein@csueastbay.edu](mailto:julie.stein@csueastbay.edu)

Caron Inouye, [caron.inouye@csueastbay.edu](mailto:caron.inouye@csueastbay.edu)

Office of Faculty Development

Jessica Weiss, [jessica.weiss@csueastbay.edu](mailto:jessica.weiss@csueastbay.edu)

University Libraries

Stephanie Alexander,

[stephanie.alexander@csueastbay.edu](mailto:stephanie.alexander@csueastbay.edu)

Custom college reports should be requested through the Associate Deans who will work with Fanny Yeung in Institutional Research. As individual faculty and students are not identified in this institutional assessment, disaggregated results will not be provided in the event that individual faculty can be identified.

### **Possible Meeting Format**

- Brief overview and purpose of wide-scale assessment
- Presentation of key Written Communication and/or Information Literacy results for the college/unit
- Discussion in large or smaller groups: consider questions that fit your college/unit and record discussion results:

#### *First discuss results:*

- How does this information fit with our experience of students' development of writing and research skills at Cal State East Bay?
- How do the results compare with program/college for programmatic assessment of writing and research skills?
- What are the most noticeable gaps?

#### *Next, discuss possible/tentative course of action*

- What seems to be working well that we can further support student writing and research?
  - What can we do to improve student writing and research?
  - How do we meet students' needs for writing and research at critical junctures for their learning?
- Summarize key topics and possible action steps and review next steps.