

## Appendix A

### **Outcomes for First-Year Composition in the UMS Writing Programs<sup>1</sup>**

The Writing Programs of the University of Maine System recognize the lasting impact that writing education can have on student persistence, graduation, and workforce preparation. In order to generate writing experiences for students that promote such success, Writing Program Administrators from across the System have developed a set of outcomes for first-year composition classes.

UMS Writing Programs help develop rhetorically versatile and purposeful writers who harness the power of writing as a means to discover and cultivate ideas and to communicate productively and ethically within academic, workplace, and civic communities. Because UMS students already write and read skillfully in many domains of their lives, the UMS Writing Programs emphasize curricular approaches designed to help students adapt their existing skills to collegiate study and to the demands of new writing situations and audiences. Sustaining good writing habits requires continual adjustment and reflective practice. After first-year composition, successful UMS students will move into advanced coursework and other new settings where expected outcomes become more specific, diverge, and multiply; thus, students' writing and reading abilities will also need to diversify. Therefore, these outcomes offer both a description of what UMS stakeholders can expect students to demonstrate in FYC and language on which faculty beyond FYC can build as they teach the versions of these outcomes that are characteristic of advanced coursework in the disciplines.

While approaches vary and are tailored to the faculty strengths and student priorities of UMS's diverse campuses, students who earn graduation credit in one of the UMS Writing Programs have experienced a curriculum that prioritizes the following outcomes.

#### **Engaged academic citizenship**

Engaged academic citizens build knowledge responsibly and communicate ideas ethically. They ensure that issues are considered from multiple perspectives, they attend to the origins of insights and others' contributions, they are comfortable with complexity, and they do not rush to conclusions. Engaged academic citizens are critical thinkers who analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts. When writers think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and

<sup>1</sup>Portions of this document were borrowed or paraphrased from, or inspired by, the Council of Writing Program Administrators' *Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition* ([wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes](http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes)); others from the CWPA, NCTE, & NWP *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* ([nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/3479](http://nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/3479)). Still

others were adopted and adapted from local documents originating with specific UMS campuses. In both form and content, therefore, this document unifies national outcomes with local practices.

generalizations that are sensitive to the limitations of the available evidence. By the end of first year composition, UMS writers will:

- Use strategies—such as analysis, interpretation, synthesis, response, and critique—to develop complex thoughts that spring from their diligent study of a topic
- Observe foundational conventions of academic writing in meaningfully organized thesis driven arguments and other projects that situate ideas in relation to source materials; purposefully define important terms; and show consistent attention to paragraphing, transitions, and overall structure
- Understand the concepts of academic integrity and intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions and observe these conventions with some degree of consistency

### **Rhetorical versatility**

Rhetorical versatility is the ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then to act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts. Rhetorically versatile and ethical writers successfully negotiate purpose, audience, context, and conventions as they compose a variety of texts for different situations with an eye to honesty and accountability. By the end of first-year composition, UMS writers will:

- Apply rhetorical concepts when analyzing texts
  - Identify and assess a variety of rhetorical situations and occasions, attending to such factors as purpose, audience, accountability, genre, truthfulness, mode, etc.
  - Adopt and adapt conventions to the needs and expectations of particular audiences
  - Enact knowledge of linguistic and stylistic choices in composing and revising practices

### **Purposeful and flexible composing**

Successful writers can draw on a range of strategies to conceptualize, develop, and finalize different kinds of writing projects. Composing processes are flexible and seldom linear: successful writers adapt their composing processes to different communicative contexts. By the end of first year composition, UMS writers will:

- Compose as a means to discover and reconsider ideas
- Flexibly use composing processes, such as reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, and editing, interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign, to develop writing projects through multiple drafts
- Participate in collaborative and social aspects of writing processes, including giving and acting on productive feedback to works in progress
- Explain and account for their own composing processes

### **Reflection**

To thrive in postsecondary education and in the highly contingent workplaces typical of the 21st century, UMS students will need to be reflective practitioners, with the ability to reflect on their own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes and systems used to structure knowledge. As a first step toward these abilities, UMS writing programs encourage FYC students to examine processes they use to think and write in a variety of disciplines and contexts; reflect on the texts that they have produced in a variety of contexts; connect choices they have made in texts to audiences and purposes for which texts are intended; and use what they learn from reflections on one writing project to improve writing on subsequent projects. By the end of first-year composition, UMS writers will:

- Describe the writing practices that will help them move forward in college studies and how they envision their ongoing development of composing practices and habits of mind in relation to values, intellectual growth, and life goals
- Articulate what they contribute to communities of language users
- Explain their responsibilities to other language users, including the responsibility to evaluate and challenge socially unjust language practices