This handbook gives details about WAC Support Services for Student Learning on the Rutgers-Newark campus, about how to refer students to them, and about how to identify students early in the semester who need extra help.

**Letter to Writing Intensive Instructors...p. 2**
Goals and principles of Support Services network

**Description of Support Services..p. 3**
Overview of WAC workshop and tutoring services

**Requests to Writing Intensive Course Instructors ..p. 4**
Describes diagnostic essay and procedures for identifying and referring students

**WAC Workshops and Tutoring: Which Students Should You Refer? ..p. 5**
Offers suggestions on how to decide which students to refer for WAC Workshops or Tutoring.

**Student Information Sheet ...p. 6**
Please copy this for your students, and have them fill it out. It provides information you’ll need in making your decisions, and doubles as a referral form.

**Sample Diagnostic Essay Question..p. 7**
Use this prompt if you want, or, better, substitute a reading passage and writing prompt appropriate to your discipline and your course.

**Letter to Students..p. 8**
Please distribute to students if you think it would be useful. It describes support services from the student point of view. It will be more effective if coupled with an announcement from the instructor about the desirability of seeking extra help if needed.

**Writing Program Grading Scale..p.10**
This is the holistic grading scale used by the Writing Program for exit exams in English 102/122, the prerequisites for Writing Intensive Courses. It may be of use as you decide which students to refer for workshops or tutoring. In general, all "1" essays and most "2" essays should probably be referred.

**Midterm Progress Report..p. 11**
This is the form used for communication between the WAC tutor/workshop instructor and the writing intensive course instructor concerning the progress of students referred for support services. This permits an opportunity to fine-tune individualized instruction plans, and to set specific goals for the second half of the semester.

**ONLINE RESOURCES**: If you are looking for electronic versions of any of these documents, they are all available in PDF form on the WAC website at [http://wac.newark.rutgers.edu/Faculty/handbook7.pdf](http://wac.newark.rutgers.edu/Faculty/handbook7.pdf).

The [WAC Faculty Homepage](http://wac.newark.rutgers.edu/Faculty/F-Faculty.htm) also contains much additional material: basic information such as the "Criteria for Writing >Intensive Courses," learning goals of the Unified Writing Curriculum, schedules for professional development opportunities, excerpts from the Coordinator’s WAC report.

Several sample syllabi are up in the "WAC Faculty Area" on [Blackboard 6](http://blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu). Use your regular NETID.

**For more information or additional copies of this handbook, please contact:**
Carmine Simmons, Faculty Outreach Coordinator, WAC Program
Campus Mail: Writing Program, 139A Conklin Hall
Telephone: (973)(973)353-5853
E-mail: watc@andromeda.rutgers.edu  Website: [http://wac.newark.rutgers.edu](http://wac.newark.rutgers.edu)
Dear Fall 2005 Writing Intensive Instructor:

In the past, Writing Intensive instructors have sometimes felt overwhelmed, despite their best efforts, when confronted with a student who clearly needs additional help with his or her basic writing or reading skills before being able to complete the assigned work in the course at an appropriate level. I am writing to enlist your help, this semester, in a support program meant to address that difficulty, and to ensure that such students get the help that they need, in a timely and sustained manner.

In order to get this system to function effectively, we need to ask for the voluntary cooperation of instructors in Writing Intensive courses to help us to identify, during the first week of the semester, those students who need additional help, so that we can match them with appropriate workshops or tutoring. We have resources at present to support services for about 40 students, which is not that much considering that there are 40 sections of writing intensive courses this semester, but if this pilot project proves effective in improving student writing, we hope to expand it in the future.

This handbook gives details about our services, about how to refer students to them, and about how to identify students early in the semester who need extensive attention. Basically your participation would involve

a) assigning a diagnostic essay (preferably in-class) during the first week of classes,
b) referring students who meet the criteria for support services to the WAC Program.

We realize that this referral process will require some effort on your part during the early, chaotic time of the semester. The payoff, of course, would come in improved student writing in your course, and in allowing you to concentrate less on basic writing skills and more on discipline-specific writing and content issues when you’re providing your own feedback on student papers.

This semester the WAC Program will be more fully integrated into the Writing Program. As Interim Writing Program Director, Jonathan Hall will continue to be involved in the WAC Program, to be joined by Carmine Simmons as your WAC Faculty Outreach Coordinator, and by Patricia Bender, the Director of the Writing Center, as the WAC Support Services Coordinator. Both of them will be available, both before and during the semester, to consult both with departments and with individual instructors about any aspect of writing intensive courses. If you want to discuss your diagnostic essay prompt or other aspects of WAC pedagogy, or confer about referring a particular student, please do not hesitate to use the contact information below.

We are beginning a new phase in Writing Across the Curriculum at Rutgers-Newark, and the Writing Program in general. We look forward to working with you this semester.

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Patricia Bender, Support Services Coordinator, WAC Program and Director of the Writing Center, 126 Conklin
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http://www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~nwc
Support Services Network For Student Learning in Writing Intensive Courses: Fall 2005

Description of Support Services

This voluntary network is open to students in all Writing Intensive courses being taught during Fall 2005.

What we are able to offer, for Fall 2005:

   a) We have trained three Writing Center tutors who will be specifically dedicated to students enrolled in Writing Intensive courses. One of these tutors will be available in the evening for University College students in Writing Intensive courses. Our first priority for tutoring will be students who agree to regular weekly tutoring for the whole semester.

   b) Secondarily, we may have some resources for drop-in tutoring, in which students consult with a tutor on a one-time basis about a particular assignment in your course.

   c) We will offer several sections, limited to 10 students each, of a new WAC workshop. This will be a non-credit workshop, and will not assign outside writing, but we WILL be asking students to make a commitment to attend a regular weekly meeting, beginning in the 3rd week of the semester and continuing to the end. Workshops will be taught by experienced writing instructors who will be developing techniques to support Writing Intensive courses in the disciplines. One workshop will be taught during a free period, and another in the evening, to allow maximum student access. New: We are open to developing workshops specific to the needs and requirements of individual departments. Please contact the WAC Coordinator to begin formulating a plan ASAP.

WAC Workshop

Practice in analytical writing skills based on short nonfiction readings from various disciplines. Emphasis on in-class writing, and on the development of arguments and the ability to write about readings in relation to one another.

Limited to 10 students each section. Meets once a week.

Population:

1) Students enrolled in a Writing Intensive course who self-identify as wanting more help with their writing.

2) Students enrolled in such a Writing Intensive course who are recommended for the workshop by their Writing Intensive course instructor based on a first-week diagnostic, and who accept the opportunity.

Course activities:

1) Grammar review and sentence level development (10%)
2) Practice in critical reading skills with short readings from various disciplines (30%)
3) In-class writing practice, focusing on sentence and paragraph level (10%)
4) Detailed work on writing projects from the co-enrolled course (50%)

Course Procedures:
1) Workshops will begin to meet in the third week of the semester, and so will meet 12 times.
2) Mid-term evaluation: Workshop instructors will fill out a brief mid-term evaluation form for each student that will be forwarded to the instructor of the co-enrolled course and then returned with comments. This exchange will help instructors to adjust their approach to individual students.
3) Last meeting of the term will be devoted to taking stock with each student of what has been accomplished in terms of improving the student’s writing, and what remains to be done in the future.
Requests to Writing Intensive Course Instructors

Fall 2005 will mark the beginning of the second academic year in which the WAC Program offers support services for students enrolled in Writing Intensive courses. Our primary purpose is to provide regular weekly support, all semester long, to students who need extra help with their writing and critical reading skills in order to meet the basic standards of your writing intensive course. We may also be able to offer some “drop-in” tutoring for students who need help with a particular project, depending on enrollment and resources, but the most effective way of improving writing is for students to work with our tutors or workshop leaders every week, starting very early in the semester.

In order for that to happen, we need your help, as a Writing Intensive instructor, to identify students during the first week of the semester who would benefit from WAC support services, and to refer them to the program. Tutoring and workshops will begin during the third week of the semester and continue on a regular weekly basis until the end, so we need your referrals right at the beginning so that students may get maximum benefit from the program.

Specifically, we request that participating instructors follow as many of these steps as your situation permits:

1) **Distribute the “Letter to Students” during the first week of class and announce the availability of WAC workshops and tutoring.** Encourage students to seek extra help if they need it; make clear that you look favorably on this as a sign of seriousness and initiative. Students are sometimes hesitant to use support services, apprehensive that the instructor will not approve; anything that you can do to allay this fear would be a great help.

2) **Duplicate the “Student Information Sheet” and have all students fill it out.** It asks them for general information about their writing background, allows them to express preferences about their willingness to participate in support services, and requests that they sign a waiver allowing instructors, tutors, workshop leaders, and the staff of the WAC Program and the Writing Center to exchange information concerning a student’s progress over the course of the semester.

3) **Give a diagnostic essay during the first week of the semester.** Either at your second class meeting (probably better) or else at the first, we ask that you assign a 30-40 minute essay to your students to help gauge their readiness to write at the level that you will expect in your course. The essay should be analytical in nature, and, in order to call upon appropriate critical reading skills, should be focused in response to a short (probably one or two paragraphs) excerpt from a text related to your course material.

   The WAC Program will provide sample prompts for diagnostic essays which instructors may either use as they come, or else (better) use as a paradigm for constructing your own question based on the specific objectives and content of your course. (The WAC Coordinator is also available to consult on this.) If used in this latter way, the diagnostic essay will not be an added-on class-time-user, but rather the first writing-to-learn exercise of your semester, a way of getting students actively engaged in writing about your course material right from the beginning, as well as giving you an immediate handle, as their writing teacher for the semester, about the level of their writing skills.

4) **Refer students from your class for extra help.** Please read and comment on the diagnostic essays promptly. For those students in your class who in your opinion would most benefit from weekly workshops or tutoring, fill out the “Instructor Recommendations and Comments” area at the bottom of the “Student Information Sheet.” (Note that this evaluation will be shared with the student later on, by the tutor or workshop leader, so it should be written in student-friendly language.) Forward the student’s diagnostic essay with the stapled to it as soon as possible, but certainly during THE 2ND WEEK OF CLASSES.
Which Students Should You Refer to WAC Workshops or Tutoring?

In making the decision of which students to refer, you should consider the following factors:

1) First of all, the most obvious category that you should refer are those students who volunteer on their “Student Information Sheet”–specifically, those who check the option “I know I need help: I definitely want to enroll in a workshop or tutoring (circle one or both) whether my instructor recommends it or not.” Students who self-refer are more motivated, and more likely to show up regularly for support services.

2) Don’t refer students who check “I’m not interested in any workshops or tutoring this semester.” We’ll take them at their word, especially since resources are limited.

3) For students who check “I might make use of drop-in tutoring”–but nothing else--you don’t need to forward their essays, but please indicate a tally, to help us with our planning. Just include a note with the essays you do forward, saying that “4 other students indicated interest in drop-in tutoring.”

4) That leaves us with students in the middle: those who check the first two options, expressing their willingness to enroll in a workshop or tutoring if you, the instructor, recommend it. Which students, exactly, should you refer?
   The primary criterion must be the general level of the student’s writing skills. You are looking for students who need significant improvement in order to bring them into the mainstream of your course.
   We should remember that the purpose of these support services is to bring students up to where they should be as they begin upper-level writing courses: at least the level of the end of English 102/122. Therefore, one approach would be to apply the same standards to this essay that the Writing Program uses as exit criteria for those courses. I attach the holistic grading scale that is used in such grading sessions. It’s a 4-point scale, where 3 and 4 are passing, and 1 and 2 are not passing. I would say that you should definitely refer all “1” essays, and most “2” essays, unless you think that the student just had a bad day.

Another way to think of this would be in terms of traditional letter grades. In 102/122, “C” is a passing grade, so the line between a 2 and a 3 would be the line between a solid C–as opposed to a charity C–and a D. So anyone who is not writing at least a solid C essay would be a candidate for referral.

5) Another population of which you should be aware is transfer students. In the past, most transfer students had to take a writing placement exam, and many were then required to enroll in English 122 or 121/122. In recent years, this requirement has increasingly been eroded due to agreements with various community colleges to accept their composition courses–when, frankly, many of these courses are not truly equivalent to Rutgers-Newark composition courses. One purpose of this support services program is to get these students the help that they need.
   I certainly don’t mean to over-generalize about transfer students; many of them are perfectly well-prepared to write at an appropriate level at Rutgers. But you should at least take a close look at anyone who lists only “Non-Rutgers writing courses” under “Previous Writing Courses Taken.” Again, let their essays be your guide.

6) Finally, for those students you decide to refer, should you recommend tutoring or workshop? If they checked one but not the other, then you should honor that preference. If they checked both, then it depends on what you found in the essay.
   Generally, if the problems are specifically language-related–grammar and usage issues, sentence structure, especially ESL issues–they probably would do better in tutoring. If, however, it seems to have more to do with critical reading skills, organizational strategies, transitions, argument, etc., then workshops might be a good place. If you’re not sure, you always have that “Either Workshop or Tutoring” box.

Please send the cover sheets and diagnostic essays of those students you’re referring for possible support services ASAP to the campus mail address: Patricia Bender, WAC Support Service Coordinator, Writing Center, Conklin Hall.
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM SUPPORT SERVICES

Student Information Sheet

Writing Intensive Course Department, Number, and Title: ________________________________________________

Student Name _____________________________

E-mail ___________________________________________ Telephone _____________________________

Year in School _____________________________

Major or Possible Major __________________________

I am a _____ Full time student _____ Part time student

Is English your first language? ____ Yes ____ No (give first language) ______________

In general, how would you rate your own college writing skills at this time?

___ Good to Excellent  ___ Fair ___ Need improvement  ___ I’m struggling

Previous Writing Courses Taken (check all that apply):

___ Communication Skills 142  __________ English 102
___ Communication Skills 143  __________ English 121
___ English 101  __________ English 122

___ A Writing Intensive course before this one (specify) ________________________________

___ Non-Rutgers-Newark writing course(s) (specify course(s) and institution) ________________________________

Have you ever made use of the following services in the Writing Center or Writing Program (check all that apply):

___ Weekly tutoring  ___________ Drop-in tutoring
___ Attended Writing Center workshop  ___________ English 100 weekly workshop attached to English 101
___ None of the above

Student Preferences:

The purpose of this diagnostic essay is to give your instructor an idea of the way that you write now, so that he or she can help you to improve your writing during this course. As part of this process, instructors may recommend to students that they make use of the following additional support services. Please indicate your preferences (check all that apply):

___ I would enroll in a once-a-week WAC workshop if my instructor recommends it. This workshop would help students work on their writing in this course, and review general writing skills.

___ I would attend regular weekly tutoring sessions in the Writing Center with a WAC tutor to work on my writing in this course and review general writing skills if my instructor recommends it.

___ I might make use of “drop-in tutoring” (discuss a particular assignment with a Writing Center WAC tutor).

___ I know that I need some extra help: I definitely want to enroll in a workshop or tutoring (circle one or both) whether my instructor recommends it or not.

___ I’m not interested in any workshops or tutoring this semester.

Team Teaching Agreement:

The Writing Across the Curriculum support services network will work best when instructors, workshop leaders, and tutors can exchange information about a student’s progress. Your signature below will give us permission to do so.

I give my permission for my course instructor to share information about my progress in writing with WAC and Writing Center personnel, for purposes of assigning support services. If I enroll in a workshop or tutoring, I authorize the workshop instructor or tutor to exchange information with my course instructor concerning my progress in writing.

Signature _____________________________ Date _____________________________

Instructor Recommendations:  [ ] Weekly Workshop  [ ] Weekly Tutoring  [ ] Either Workshop or Tutoring

Comments: (use back if necessary) __________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
WRITING INTENSIVE SAMPLE FIRST WEEK ESSAY QUESTION

**Directions:** Because you are enrolled in a Writing Intensive course, it is important for your instructor to get an idea early in the semester of the way that you write. Please fill out first the “Student Information Sheet,” giving information about your previous writing courses and your preferences regarding student support services.

You have 40 minutes to write a response to the following question. Keep in mind that your answer should be coherent, that it should be grammatically correct, that it should clearly respond to the question, and that it should support its position with specific evidence, including effective quotations.

**WRITING INTENSIVE FIRST-WEEK ESSAY**

In an article entitled “Jefferson’s Cop-out,” Joseph J. Ellis writes:

> Thomas Jefferson was many things, but mostly he was a creature of paradox: the wealthy Virginia aristocrat who wrote the most famous statement of equality in American history; the sincere advocate of agrarian simplicity who worshipped the art and architecture of Paris; above all, the fervent believer in human freedom who lived his entire life as a slave owner. The last paradox has always seemed the most poignant, in part because Jefferson himself acknowledged the massive gap between his principled ideals and his personal reality, and in part because the paradox Jefferson lived was emblematic of the larger disjunction in American society—now generally regarded as the central dilemma of American history—between the promise of liberty and the fact of racial discrimination.

According to Ellis, why is it important to us today that a man who has been dead for nearly two hundred years was “a creature of paradox”? Why shouldn’t we just praise Jefferson unreservedly for writing “the most famous statement of equality in American history” and leave it at that? Why do Jefferson’s personal beliefs, experiences, and internal struggles in the 18th century still matter to us today in the 21st?
To Students in Writing Intensive Courses:
Re: Student Support Services for Fall 2005

You probably know that every Rutgers-Newark student who enrolled in Fall 2001 or later is required to complete two courses designated “Writing Intensive,” one in the department of your major, in order to graduate—but you may not know why. This “Writing Across the Curriculum” requirement is designed to help you develop what is probably the most valuable skill that will help you succeed during your college education, and one which you will need to use constantly throughout your life, no matter what field or occupation you go into after you leave Rutgers. The ability to write analytically—clearly, logically, concisely, showing an understanding of complex issues, applying specific knowledge to new situations—is one that is valued not only in an academic setting, but in the worlds of business, law, medicine, government: anywhere that requires identifying problems, comprehending causes, formulating solutions, or making specific plans for implementing them.

“But,” you may ask, “didn’t I already do that, back in freshman composition?” Yes, freshman composition was the beginning. For many of you, it may have been the first time that you were asked to pay serious attention to your writing process. But writing is not a simple skill that can be learned in a year’s time. It’s a lifetime project, which has sometimes been compared to learning to play golf: after freshman composition, you know what each of the clubs in the bag is for, you know the basic rules of the game, you’ve had some lessons on the proper swing, and you’ve hit some balls on the driving range and the practice putting green. But now you’ve got to get out on the course and learn the game by playing it. That’s a process that never ends, and neither does the need to work on your writing.

Your writing intensive course is partly designed to help you improve your writing, but it’s also a course that covers specific content in an academic discipline. You will need to pay close attention to improving your reading process, too, because deciphering complex texts is the beginning of analysis; you can’t write well about something you can’t understand. In fact, that’s the premise of writing intensive courses: writing will help you learn the course material, and writing about the course material will help you improve your writing.

The instructor in your writing intensive course will help you to improve your writing by assigning multiple writing assignments throughout the semester, giving you constructive feedback on your writing, and offering you opportunities for revision. But if writing is something that comes hard to you, or that causes you anxiety, or that you feel you need help with beyond what a course instructor with many students can supply, the Writing Across the Curriculum Program can offer you some additional help. For a limited number of students enrolled in Writing Intensive courses, we can offer the following options:

**WAC workshops.** These group meetings, held once a week, will be led by an experienced writing instructor, who will be in touch with your course instructor in order to assure that the materials in the workshop will be relevant to what you’re doing. Much of the workshop time will be spent, in fact, in helping you to work on the specific writing assignments from your WI course. In addition, the workshop instructor will focus on helping you to develop your ability to read complex texts, such as those assigned in your upper-level courses, analytically. These workshops will not involve extensive homework—they are designed to supplement and support the writing component of your current course, so they will not be giving additional writing or outside reading assignments of their own, though they will ask you to do some in-class writing. These workshops will be limited to 10 students, will carry 1 N-credit, will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. We hope to offer both day and evening sections.

**Weekly peer tutoring.** For students who need to work extensively on their writing, we have a limited number of slots available for standing weekly appointments with a trained peer tutor in the Writing Center. These will be upper-level students who are ready to help you to work on your specific writing assignments from your Writing Intensive course assignments, as well as to address any general writing issues that may arise. Tutoring is available both to day and evening students, at no cost to the student.

“Drop-in” tutoring. Depending on demand for weekly tutoring, we hope to have available a limited number of slots for students who want to talk to a tutor about an assignment on a one-time basis. Although we call it “drop-in” tutoring, you actually will be making an appointment with a specific tutor by contacting the
Writing Center in advance; we will make every effort to match you with a tutor who has a background in the general subject area of your writing intensive course (Social Sciences, Humanities, or Natural Sciences).

How can you sign up for this extra help? There are several ways.

First of all, you can request it yourself. In the first week of class, most writing intensive sections will have been asking you to write an in-class essay, and there will be a “Student Information Sheet” that will include a place for you to request to enroll in a workshop or weekly tutoring.

Second, you can walk in to the Writing Center and fill out a request for tutoring or workshops, or you can contact the WAC Program directly (see contact information below).

Third, your instructor may recommend, based on that in-class essay, that you enroll in a workshop or weekly tutoring. We hope that you will seriously consider that invitation to get help with improving your writing. We realize that attending a workshop or regular tutoring sessions requires a time commitment on your part, but if you are willing to make that commitment, then we are also committed to providing first-class support services to help you develop a skill that will be important to you for the rest of your life.

Workshops and weekly tutoring will begin during the third week of classes and continue throughout the semester. “Drop-in” schedules will be announced. If you have any questions about these services, ask your instructor, or contact the WAC Program.

We wish you a productive and enlightening semester in your Writing Intensive course.

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http://www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~nwc
In holistic grading, readers rate each essay according to its dominant characteristic. The categories below describe typical essays at four levels of performance. They take into account the fact that students are writing under time constraints.

4 (Pass): The broadest category. A 4 essay is clearly competent but may range from competent to excellent. It shows an adequate if not a precise understanding of the reading, and it responds clearly to the question asked. It backs up generalizations with at least some support. The essay is coherent, although at times the connections between parts could be more explicit. It may have a few distracting problems of mechanics or diction. It has a competent, readable style (a reader doesn’t have to back up). All in all, the writer shows adequate control of the essay.

3 (Low Pass): A 3 essay is marginally competent. It may show a loose, approximate understanding of the reading, and it may respond somewhat indirectly (though not irrelevantly) to the question asked. It establishes a point of view, though at times that point of view may waver. It backs up generalizations with at least some support. The essay is coherent, although at times the connections between parts could be more explicit. It may have a few distracting problems of mechanics or diction. It has a competent, readable style (a reader doesn’t have to back up). All in all, the writer shows adequate control of the essay.

2 (High No Pass): A 2 essay is approaching competence, but seriously flawed in at least one respect. It may not demonstrate an adequate understanding of the reading, or it may not effectively address the question asked. It may not establish a clear point of view or back up its generalizations with effective support. The essay may lack coherence at either the paragraph or sentence level. It may have problems of mechanics or diction that interfere with a reader’s understanding. It may lack a clear style. All in all, the writer shows little control of the essay.

1 (No Pass): A 1 essay is inadequate in some way or seriously flawed in more than one. It may demonstrate an inadequate understanding of the reading or inadequately address the question asked. It may not establish a clear point of view or support its generalizations. The essay may lack coherence at either the paragraph or sentence level. It may have problems of mechanics or diction that interfere with a reader’s understanding. It may lack a clear style. All in all, the writer shows little control of the essay.
The purpose of this progress report is to facilitate communication between the student, the tutor or workshop leader, and the writing intensive course instructor. The tutor/workshop leader and the course instructor have different roles, but they need to work together to make sure that the plan of study that the student is pursuing in support services is relevant to the writing intensive course.

The procedure will be: 1) Tutor/Workshop Leader fills out section a). 2) Send this form to the WAC Program, which will forward it to the course instructor. 3) Course instructor responds in section b) and sends it back to WAC Program, and it is then returned to the tutor/workshop leader. 4) Tutor/Workshop Leader shares feedback with student, and adjusts individualized plan of study. Student fills out section c.