Office of Writing Assessment
Washington State University
Eleventh Findings (June 2013 – May 2015)

College of Medical Sciences Policy Brief

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College of Medical Sciences Average Student Hours At Portfolio Completion: 75.2

College of Medical Sciences Overall Student Portfolio Performance:
- Complete: 89.8%
- Complete with Distinction: 6.12%
- Incomplete: 4.08%

This policy brief highlights information from the Washington State University Office of Writing Assessment's Eleventh Findings (June 2013 – May 2015) report that is especially pertinent to the College of Medical Sciences. It also includes data that relates to the entire university to contextualize the college specific findings. For complete data and discussion, please see the complete Eleventh Findings at: https://writingprogram.wsu.edu/

Purpose. To date, more than 80,000 students have completed the Washington State University Writing Portfolio since it was first administered during Spring Semester of 1993. The Eleventh Findings, June 2013-May 2015, succeeds previous findings in an ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the Washington State University Writing Portfolio and examines progress made since 2007. This report describes and evaluates the Writing Portfolio and the Writing Assessment Program, and it highlights strengths and potential -weaknesses, so as to suggest possible amendments to the assessment process in ways that would best serve the Washington State University community. This report presents data on the Writing Portfolio the writing abilities of WSU undergraduates, data that can be used in decision making by current and future administrators of the examination; current and future composition program administrators and participants; campus-wide faculty; and those with greater oversight responsibilities.

Rationale. The Writing Program at Washington State University entails an evolving series of processes based on theory, years of research, and recognized best practices. Studies have been conducted biennially since 1993. Accordingly, readers are encouraged to consult previous biennial Writing Portfolio Findings for additional historical context, especially as this report includes university activities and programs that did not exist or had just begun in the 2011-2013. Historical comparisons made herein are intended to provide readers - with insights into the Writing Portfolio as it has evolved.

Executive Summary. The eleventh findings of the Writing Program's biennial self-study mark several stabilized trends from earlier reports. As well, this biennium saw significant changes to the timed writing portion of the portfolio assessment (referred to in the report as Tier I), in that several new prompts were added—including one infographic analysis prompt—and the four rhetorical frames traditionally used in the timed writing prompts have all been revised or rewritten.

Presented below are some of the major findings in this biennium's data, particularly as these data relate to historical trends. Additionally, this report provides some notes on the implications of -these data for future Writing Program activities. Finally, as writing- program activities (both at WSU - and writ large) have become a fruitful area of research for administrators, instructors, and graduate students, this report notes some areas in which qualitative analysis may yield useful insights into the WSU student population, suggesting ways in which the Writing Program can continue to serve this community.

Departmental Difference in Mean Credit Hours at Exam. See section IV.A.1.e in the Eleventh Findings report for more detail, analysis, and discussion. The table below examines the average credit hours of students completing their portfolios, sorted by major and its respective college. The 7461 transfer students during the respective period under consideration averaged just over 83 credit hours at time of portfolio submission, 8 hours behind their 2718 non-transfer peers. Due to reporting irregularities, the table below only represents 9925 of this biennium's 10706 students. Students note their current credit hours on their submission cover sheets, so while most are accurate, many fail to report or enter values such as "60+" or "100+." Those data are not included in this table.

Majors that contain highly-structured programs may have provided students greater guidance and support. As well, majors that attract a high number of transfer students may reflect higher average credit hours toward successful completion of the exam portion of the Writing Portfolio because transfer students may be transferring into WSU with more than 60 credit hours, though, as noted earlier, they do tend to finish within one semester of their non-transfer peers. The following table provides not only the average time (mean) but provides for the Standard Deviation (SD). These data are provided to inform further analyses in this report and advising practices for undergraduates.

Average Hours at Portfolio Completion by Major, 2013-2015

	Average Credit Hours (SD)	Count of Students*
All University	80.2 (SD 16.5)	9839
College of Medical Sciences	**75.2 (SD 22.1)**	**49**
Speech And Hearing Sciences	75.2 (SD 22.1)	49

Annual Change in Portfolio Assessment Participation for L2 and Transfer Students. See section IV.A.2.b in the Eleventh Findings report for more detail, analysis, and discussion. The following table shows the proportion of L2 and transfer students to overall portfolio participation between 2007 and 2015. The raw numbers and accompanying percentages reflect trends by academic year and show that the number of portfolios assessed from L2 students has risen steadily since 2007 until recently. The 2010-2011 academic year shows a slight decrease in the raw number of L2 students assessed, with 45 fewer than the previous year. However, the percentage based on total students retained the upward trend, increasing by 1.4%. The second decrease in L2 portfolio assessment occurs in the 2012-2013 academic year where we see a 0.7% decrease in the percentage but a 5 portfolio increase from the year before. Thereafter, L2 portfolios assessed continued to increase, reaching a peak in 2013-2014 with the raw number of portfolios increasing to 926 and the corresponding percentage increasing to 18.1%. There is a clear decline in 2014-2015 with 149, or 4.2%, fewer L2 portfolios during the 2014-2015 academic year.

The number of transfer students participating in the Writing Portfolio has also seen mostly increases in numbers. The raw number of transfer student portfolios followed a steady increase until AY 2010-2011, when they decreased slightly. The raw numbers continued to increase for two academic years, until 2013-2014 when there was another dip in raw numbers but an increase in percentage of total students. Thus, although the 2012-2013 period has the highest raw number, at 3899, the 2013-2014 reporting period shows a higher percentage of transfer-students participation, with transfer students accounting for 72.5% of all portfolios examined. The most recent reporting period, 2014-2015, has an increase in raw numbers but also shows the lowest trend in percentage of transfer students examined in an academic year.

L2 and Transfer Student Portfolio Completion Percentages, 2007-2015

Academic Year	L2 Students	Percentage of all Examined	Transfer Students	Percentage of all Examined
2007-2008	395	8.1%	3352	68.3%
2008-2009	542	10.8%	3465	69.2%
2009-2010	745	13.6%	3867	70.3%
2010-2011	700	15.0%	3495	69.9%
2011-2012	804	15.5%	3747	72.1%
2012-2013	809	14.8%	3899	71.3%
2013-2014	926	18.1%	3706	72.5%
2014-2015	777	13.9%	3747	67.0%

Performance According to Gender. See section IV.A.3.d in the Eleventh Findings report for more detail, analysis, and discussion. The following tables examine performance on the Junior Writing Portfolio according to gender in both the previous biennium and the previous four biennia. To provide a more accurate account of the performance of female and male students, both tables provide statistics for the full WSU population in their respective time period. All percentages are referenced by gender categories.

Writing Portfolio Results by Gender, 2013-2015

Tier I	Acceptable					Distinction			Needs Work			
Tier II		Simple Pass	Complete	Distinction	Incomplete		Revert to Complete	Distinction		Revert to Complete	Incomplete	Total Students
Female	64.22% (3598)	50.65% (2838)	11.28% (632)	2% (124)	0.11% (6)	10.55% (591)	5.51% (309)	4.94% (277)	25.2% (1412)	17.06% (956)	7.82% (438)	4826
Male	58.57% (2988)	48.84% (2492)	8.17% (417)	1% (63)	0.31% (16)	9.19% (469)	5.41% (276)	3.7% (189)	32.2% (1643)	20.29% (1035)	11.74% (599)	4354
Total Pop.	**61.53% (6587)**	**49.79% (5331)**	**9.8% (1049)**	**2% (187)**	**0.21% (22)**	**9.9% (1060)**	**5.46% (585)**	**4.35% (466)**	**28.54% (3055)**	**18.6% (1991)**	**9.69% (1037)**	**10706**

While male performance on the Junior Writing Portfolio has traditionally been slightly behind female performance, the most recent biennium saw a widening of the gap (look to previous Office of Writing Assessment findings for historical data). Female students saw a slight increase in the number of Complete with Distinction ratings overall. The largest portion of this increase was in the confirmation of Distinction ratings. Both genders saw increases in this area – females at nearly 1.7% overall and males at nearly 1.4% overall.

Additionally, both genders saw an increase in the confirmation of the Incomplete rating (formerly "Needs Work") and substantial gains in the "Simple Pass" Tier II rating, the latter at the expense of a Complete rating following an Acceptable Tier I performance.

Performance According to Race or Ethnicity Description. See section IV.A.3.e in the Eleventh Findings report for more detail, analysis, and discussion. Since the production of the 2007-2009 Biennial Report, the Writing Program Biennial Report has investigated correlations between portfolio performance and race or ethnicity identification. The findings contained herein continue this practice, using demographic data supplied by the WSU Registrar's office. These data are generated from student-generated self-reports, used here to assess possibilities of bias. However, due to changes in self-reporting options since 2012, these data are not compared

to their historical counterparts. Since 2012, students have more options in reporting race or ethnicity, including the possibility of identifying with two or more races or ethnicities.

Tier I and II Results, 2013-2015

Tier I / Tier II	Acceptable	Simple Pass	Complete	Distinction	Incomplete	Distinction	Revert to Complete	Distinction	Needs Work	Revert to Complete	Incomplete	Total Students
American Indian/Alaska Native	64.15% (34)	47.17% (25)	13.21% (7)	3.77% (2)	0% (0)	5.66% (3)	1.89% (1)	3.77% (2)	30.19% (16)	13.21% (7)	15.09% (8)	53
Asian	52.63% (290)	44.1% (243)	6.35% (35)	2% (11)	0.18% (1)	6.9% (38)	3.99% (22)	2.9% (16)	40.47% (223)	26.32% (145)	14.16% (78)	551
Black/African American	55.18% (165)	47.49% (142)	6.69% (20)	0.33% (1)	0.67% (2)	2.01% (6)	1.34% (4)	0.67% (2)	42.81% (128)	26.42% (79)	16.05% (48)	299
Hispanic/Latino	59.57% (638)	48.74% (522)	9.43% (101)	1.12% (12)	0.28% (3)	8.31% (89)	4.39% (47)	3.64% (39)	32.12% (344)	19.79% (212)	12.04% (129)	1071
International	31.85% (172)	28.52% (154)	2.41% (13)	0.37% (2)	0.56% (3)	3.52% (19)	2.96% (16)	0.56% (3)	64.63% (349)	21.85% (118)	42.78% (231)	540
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	65.79% (25)	47.37% (18)	18.42% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.89% (3)	5.26% (2)	2.63% (1)	26.32% (10)	21.05% (8)	5.26% (2)	38
Not Reported	53.11% (222)	47.61% (176)	8.61% (36)	1.67% (7)	0.72% (3)	10.77% (45)	5.26% (22)	5.26% (22)	36.12% (151)	18.18% (76)	17.94% (75)	418
Two or More Races	64.03% (477)	51.01% (380)	10.87% (81)	2.01% (15)	0.13% (1)	11.14% (83)	6.04% (45)	5.1% (38)	24.7% (184)	18.12% (135)	6.58% (49)	745
White	65.28% (4564)	52.51% (3671)	10.71% (749)	1.96% (137)	0.13% (9)	11.07% (774)	6.09% (426)	4.91% (343)	23.6% (1650)	17.32% (1211)	5.96% (417)	6991
University Avg.	61.53% (6587)	49.79% (5331)	9.8% (1049)	1.75% (187)	0.21% (22)	9.9% (1060)	5.46% (585)	4.35% (466)	28.54% (3055)	18.6% (1991)	9.69% (1037)	**10706**

Possible performance rate exaggerations due to differences in population size should be checked using the total number of students in a particular category. For instance, although students identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native score a possible distinction rating at Tier I at half the rate of the university average, the total number of students in this category totals less than half a percent of the university population.

Given this caveat, it is worth noting the similarity of performance rates among each group. With a few exceptions, Distinction ratings are confirmed at Tier II in roughly half of each group's Tier I Distinction portfolios. The exceptions to this trend occur in the American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and International Student populations, but the data may be skewed by these groups' small population sizes. Likewise, roughly half of students in nearly all categories receive a "Simple Pass" rating.

However, there are some notable differences among categories. Students identifying as white or as comprising two or more races or ethnicities perform better than the university average (and, in most cases, better than all other groups) at Tier I. At Tier II, these students perform at rates similar to the total population.

While students identifying as Asian, Black/African American, or Hispanic/Latino, along with International students and those not reporting an ethnic identification, tended to perform below the university average at Tier I, these differences were less pronounced (though still significant) when examining only the final performance of students:

Tier II Performance by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-2015

Race Identification	Complete	Complete with Distinction	Incomplete
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	92.11%	2.63%	5.26%
White	86.64%	7.18%	6.18%
Two or More Races	86.17%	7.11%	6.71%
Grand Total	83.66%	6.35%	9.99%
Hispanic/Latino	82.35%	5.04%	12.61%
Black/African American	81.94%	1.34%	16.72%
Asian	80.76%	4.90%	14.34%
American Indian/Alaska Native	75.47%	9.43%	15.09%
Not Reported	75.13%	8.29%	16.58%
International	55.74%	0.93%	43.33%

Summary of Overall Performance by College. See section IV.A.4.a in the Eleventh Findings report for more detail, analysis, and discussion. The following analysis of academic areas—colleges and majors—is based on data from 2007-2015. Students are asked to report their current choice of major at the time of Writing Portfolio submission. As noted in other areas, self-reporting can result in data that are difficult to categorize, leading to discrepancies in reported populations. For instance, students reporting a major in "Agriculture" are within the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, but cannot be classified further within a particular major**.**

The table below shows the 2013-2015 performance within individual colleges as compared to the 2007-2013 average. Each cell reports the number of students in that category, the percentage of students in that category between 2007 and 2015, and the degree of change that this current biennium represents.

Overall Writing Portfolio Performance by College 2007-2015

College	Language Status	Complete	Complete with Distinction	Incomplete	Total N
College of Medical Sciences	1	19 (67.86%, +17.7%)	2 (7.14%, -2.14%)	1 (3.57%, +2.54%)	28
	2	6 (85.71%, -4.46%)	0 (0%, +3.13%)	0 (0%, +12.5%)	7
	Unreported	6 (42.86%, +17.85%)	0 (0%, +7.14%)	0 (0%, +3.57%)	14
	Total	31 (63.27%, +18.81%)	2 (4.08%, +0.92%)	1 (2.04%, +4.63%)	49
All University	1	4464 (67.46%, -14.34%)	364 (5.5%, -1.38%)	389 (5.88%, -1.11%)	6617
	2	949 (55.69%, -9.74%)	52 (3.05%, -0.48%)	325 (19.07%, -5.38%)	1704
	Unreported	1129 (47.34%, -13.78%)	91 (3.82%, -1.49%)	113 (4.74%, -2.61%)	2385
	Total	6542 (61.11%, +16.49%)	507 (4.74%, +1.53%)	827 (7.72%, +1.68%)	10706

The tables below show the Tier II performance rates for all university programs. The table above is provided as a quick reference to the performance rates of all students

Overall Portfolio Performance: College of Medical Sciences, 2013-2015

	Complete	Complete with Distinction	Incomplete	Total N
College of Medical Sciences	89.8% (44)	6.12% (3)	4.08% (2)	49
Speech and Hearing Sciences	89.8% (44)	6.12% (3)	4.08% (2)	49

The College of Medical Sciences is poised to make significant changes in the next biennium as they work toward accreditation and begin admitting students for Fall 2017. For the 2013-2015 biennium, the one undergraduate program in the College of Medical Sciences was six percentage points above the all university average for portfolios rated as Complete, on par with the -university average for Distinction ratings, and five percentage points below average for Incomplete ratings. As reported in section IV.A.1.e, students in the Speech and Hearing Sciences program are completing their portfolio process between 53 and 97 credit hours, which is with the reasonable range based on the Writing Program recommended 60-72 credit hours.

Submitted Papers by Academic Level. See section IV.B.1.a in the Eleventh Findings report for more detail, analysis, and discussion. The following section provides information that validates the Writing Portfolio as an assessment of undergraduate writing ability. The Writing Portfolio was designed to provide diagnostic feedback regarding the preparedness of undergraduate students to write in their upper-division Writing in the Major courses. These areas of study were established in previous reports.

The Writing Portfolio requires students to submit three papers initially evaluated by course instructors for one of two categories: Outstanding or Acceptable. Faculty may decline to sign off on a paper. When the original course instructor is unavailable to rate the paper, the Writing Assessment Office assigns a third category of "Okay," indicating that the paper appears to be the student's own work because it contains features to authenticate it. An Okay rating does not evaluate the quality of the writing.

The total number of papers submitted by course level was tabulated for the 2013-2015 biennium. The numbers below represent coursework submitted by all WSU students completing their junior writing portfolio. However, because students may submit work from outside WSU, non-transfer papers have been tabulated separately; the numbers in parentheses represent the total amount of papers submitted, while the other number represents work from WSU.

Papers by Academic Level, 2013-2015

Course Level	Papers Submitted[1]	Percent of Total	Change from Last Biennium[2]
100-level	6707 (12643)	36.9% (39.4%)	-3% (-0.5%)
200-level	2853 (5917)	15.7% (18.4%)	-3.7% (-1%)
300-level	5832 (9112)	32.1% (28.4%)	4.9% (1.2%)
400-level	2569 (3908)	14.1% (12.2%)	0.70% (-1.2%)
500-level	27 (70)	0.1% (0.2%)	0.06% (0.16%)
Total		18182 (32118)	+2.02%

[1] The first number indicates the number of submissions that originate from WSU. The second number indicates the total number of submissions.

[2] These percentages indicate the overall change from the number of submissions in the last biennium. They are meant to be compared most directly to the percentage in parentheses in the "Percent of Total" column. Because previous reports have not differentiated between WSU and non-WSU work, we determined it unnecessary to indicate change from WSU-originating work and other work. Future reports should examine these numbers.

Although the proportion of papers by academic level has not changed appreciably, it is worth noting that between one-third and one-half of papers submitted by course level are from other institutions. While the

"Okay" rating exists for students unable to contact a previous instructor, just over 4000 submitted papers were both reported by students as coming from outside WSU and marked as Acceptable or Outstanding.

Portfolio Performance by Major and Language Status. See Appendix B in the Eleventh Findings report for more detail, analysis, and discussion. The following information is listed by college and major. L1 indicates English as the self-reported primary language. L2 indicates that the student is multi-lingual. Students who reported neither are listed as UR.

Tier I / Tier II	Acceptable	Simple Pass	Complete	Distinction	Incomplete	Possible Distinction Complete	Complete	Distinction	Needs Work Distinction	Complete	Incomplete	Total
College of Medical Sciences	61.22% (30)	57.14% (28)	61.22% (30)	0% (0)	0% (0)	24.49% (12)	8.16% (4)	6.12% (3)	24.49% (12)	20.41% (10)	4.08% (2)	49
L1	61.22% (30)	57.14% (28)	61.22% (30)	0% (0)	0% (0)	24.49% (12)	8.16% (4)	6.12% (3)	24.49% (12)	20.41% (10)	4.08% (2)	49
L2	53.57% (15)	50% (14)	3.57% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (7)	14.29% (4)	10.71% (3)	21.43% (6)	14.29% (4)	7.14% (2)	28
Unreported	57.14% (4)	57.14% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	42.86% (3)	42.86% (3)	0% (0)	7
Speech And Hearing Sciences	61.22% (30)	57.14% (28)	4.08% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	24.49% (12)	8.16% (4)	6.12% (3)	24.49% (12)	20.41% (10)	4.08% (2)	49
L1	53.57% (15)	50% (14)	3.57% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (7)	14.29% (4)	10.71% (3)	21.43% (6)	14.29% (4)	7.14% (2)	28
L2	57.14% (4)	57.14% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	42.86% (3)	42.86% (3)	0% (0)	7
Unreported	78.57% (11)	71.43% (10)	7.14% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	21.43% (3)	21.43% (3)	0% (0)	14

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