

FIQWS

Handbook for Faculty

May 2011

Dear Instructor,

Welcome to the FIQWS program. This handbook is intended as a teaching resource for instructors. In it are guidelines for the required elements of all FIQWSs, including explanations of Midterm Assessments, Library Instruction, and ways to maintain a strong collaboration between instructors. Please review this handbook while preparing your syllabus before the semester begins and return to it throughout the semester to make sure that the goals of FIQWS are being met.

Here's to a successful semester,

The General Education Committee

Table of contents

1. FIQWS overview.....	3
2. Collaborative teaching including:	4
Topic instructor responsibilities	
Composition instructor responsibilities	
Joint responsibilities	
3. Collaboration Models.....	6
4. Midterm Progress Reports.....	9
5. Library Visits.....	11
6. Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism.....	11
7. Film Viewing Policy.....	12
8. Support Services offered to students.....	12
9. Assessment in FIQWS and General Education.....	13
Appendix A: Assessment in results	
Appendix B: Assessment Rubrics and Checklist for Student Use	

FIQWS Overview

The Freshman Inquiry Writing Seminar (FIQWS) provides incoming freshmen at CCNY a communal learning experience where participation, discussion, and critical engagement with challenging material are encouraged—classroom elements that students don't always experience sufficiently in their beginning semesters. Close interaction among students and with instructors is an important part of each FIQWS.

Goals

The goals of the FIQWS are to provide students with:

1. A first major step in developing the reading and writing skills necessary for college study;
2. An environment to further their analytic writing and critical thinking;
3. Experience in researching and writing a research paper;
4. A “learning community” in the form of 6 hours spent with the same group of students and the same team of instructors;
5. An understanding of college readiness skills (attendance, handing in work on time, and academic integrity);
6. Close contact with full-time faculty (class size is usually capped at 22).

Collaborative Teaching

FIQWSs are taught in collaboration by a topic and a composition instructor. It is essential that instructors present a clear and shared understanding to students of how the two sections work together as one course with one final grade. It is strongly recommended that instructors meet regularly to discuss their sections, student performance, and upcoming assignments.

Topic Component

The topic instructor has primary responsibility for designing the topic (although both instructors should collaborate in designing the syllabus - or syllabi, if paired syllabi linking the two parts of the course are used - and all major writing assignments). The topic instructor should bear in mind that students will be doing a large amount of in-class and take-home writing assigned by the composition instructor in addition to any short assignments given in the topic section. The topic instructor should thus:

- Teach the class topic through a combination of lecture and seminar-style discussions of assigned readings;
- Dedicate class time to building critical thinking, communication, and participation skills through small-group and class discussions;
- Develop and assess students' communication skills through oral presentations, recitation of texts (in a FIQWS focusing on poetry, for example), performance of scenes (in a FIQWS class focusing on theater, for example), etc.;
- Guide students in identifying a topic for a research paper and in situating their own writing within a larger network of public discourse. This guidance should include providing, in collaboration with the writing instructor, small clusters or "kits" of research material that students can use as possible sources for the research paper.

Composition Component

In addition to collaborating in syllabus-design and the design of major assignments, the composition instructor designs smaller in-class and take-home writing assignments to guide students through the "scaffolding" process of building a longer essay. Composition deals with mechanics and grammar, but also, and more importantly, with the larger structural and rhetorical issues of writing—*invention, audience, diction and word choice, the appropriate use of source, the research process, paragraphing, etc.*—including how to construct an argument. The composition instructor should thus:

- Use the class topic to teach students the skills necessary for college-level analytical essay writing and critical thinking. This should include reviewing material presented in the topic section, as well as working incrementally with students on their assigned papers to make sure they develop a working understanding of the writing and scaffolding process, from identifying a topic and formulating a thesis, to developing an outline, to strengthening and polishing their working through the revising of drafts, to preparing a bibliography;

- Provide additional writing practice through both in-class and take-home journal writing, peer-editing, response papers, free writing, or other assignments.

Open forums for FIQWS composition instructors are held several times per semester. Although attendance is not required, it is encouraged, as these forums offer an opportunity to share experiences, ask questions, hear from one's colleagues, and receive guidance from experienced instructors. Specific meeting dates will be announced in the beginning of the semester. Instructors are compensated for attending.

Joint Responsibilities

As already indicated, effective collaboration between both instructors is a crucial part of a successful FIQWS. All major assignments should be read and graded by both instructors, either through agreement on a common grade, or through the assignment of a "topic" grade and a "writing" grade. While we recommend the former practice, we recognize that each collaboration has its own chemistry, and encourage instructors to explore what particular arrangements work best for them. It is recommended that instructors meet and/or confer frequently to discuss the course, graded assignments, and student performance. In this context, it is especially important for instructors to identify and reach out to students who are struggling in the course. Instructors must work together to:

- Submit a Midterm progress report to every student during weeks 6-8 of the semester. (See page 9 for more on Midterm progress reports.)
- Keep in email contact with students, communicating with them about missed assignments and attendance. Part of a student's experience of FIQWS is learning to be a college student. Instructors should help students make the transition to individual responsibility for their own success. The use of Blackboard to post assignments and other course information is particularly recommended for this reason.

Possible Collaboration Models

Presented here are possible models of collaboration and assignment-staging based on past successful experiences. (N.B. While paper lengths are here given in pages, assigning length by word count [e.g. 500-600 words for a two-page paper] is recommended.)

<u>MODEL I</u>			
Instructors can develop one course syllabus or two linked syllabi that make clear the connection between both sections (e.g. matching dates for joint assignments)			
When to Assign	Assignment	Elements	Who Assigns
<i>FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS</i>			
First class (in class)	<i>Diagnostic Assignment*</i>	Low-stakes, informal, ungraded	Composition instructor
First week	<i>Short Essay Assignment</i>	A short, 2-page intro to formal writing. Related to discussion in topic section	Composition instructor
Begin scaffolding by week 4	<i>1st Formal Essay</i>	Instructor's choosing (e.g. argumentative, compare/contrast, descriptive); possibly scaffolded with revision opportunity, 4 pages (min)	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade
Begin scaffolding by week 6	<i>2nd Formal Essay</i>	With embedded research components; scaffolded. MLA Style. 4 pages (min) + works cited page	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade
Begin scaffolding by week 9	<i>Final Research Paper</i>	With embedded research components; scaffolded. MLA Style. 7 pages (min) + works cited page	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade

**** Many students have some ESL issues; instructors need to encourage them to take advantage of ESL tutoring at the Writing Center. If severe ESL issues are suspected, and the student does not appear to possess the English language skills necessary to pass FIQWS, the instructor should notify Ana Vasovic avasovic@ccny.cuny.edu, who will follow up with the student's advisor.***

MODEL II

Instructors can develop one course syllabus or two linked syllabi that make clear the connection between both sections (e.g. matching dates for joint assignments)

When to Assign	Assignment	Elements	Who Assigns
FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS			
First class (in-class)	<i>Diagnostic Assignment*</i>	Low-stakes, informal, ungraded	Composition instructor
Week 2 or 3	<i>1st Formal Essay</i>	Instructor's choosing (e.g. argumentative, compare/contrast, descriptive); possibly scaffolded, with revision opportunity 4 pages (min)	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade
Week 5	<i>Short Research Assignment</i>	A short, 2-3-page introduction to research; writing related to discussion in topic section	Composition instructor—focus can be on structure/format of a research paper
Begin scaffolding by week 7	<i>Final Research Paper</i>	With embedded research components; assigned scaffolded. MLA Style. 7 pages + works cited page	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade
Week 12	<i>3rd Formal Essay</i>	Instructor's choosing (e.g. argumentative, compare/contrast, descriptive); possibly scaffolded, with revision opportunity 4 pages (min)	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade

One essay prior to the assigning of the Research Paper should include a research component, but should not be assigned until students have had at least the first of their library sessions.

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MODEL III

Instructors can develop one course syllabus or two linked syllabi that make clear the connection between both sections (e.g. matching dates for joint assignments)

When to Assign	Assignment	Elements	Who Assigns
FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS			
First class (in-class)	<i>Diagnostic Assignment*</i>	Low-stakes, informal, ungraded	Composition instructor
Week 2 or 3	<i>1st Formal Essay</i>	Instructor's choosing (e.g. argumentative, compare/contrast, descriptive); possibly scaffolded, with revision opportunity 3 pages (min)	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade
Begin scaffolding by week 5	<i>2nd Formal Essay</i>	Instructor's choosing (e.g. argumentative, compare/contrast, descriptive); scaffolded, with revision opportunity 3 pages (min)	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade
Begin scaffolding by week 7	<i>3rd Formal Essay</i>	With embedded research components; scaffolded. MLA Style. 3 pages (min) + works cited page	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade
Begin scaffolding by week 9	<i>Final Research Paper</i>	With embedded Research components; scaffolded. MLA Style. 7 pages + works cited page	Both instructors decide on the topic, one assigns, both grade

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Timing and Spacing Assignments

Particularly in a writing course, timely feedback is essential for student progress; in short, the student needs to receive paper A back with comments and a grade before embarking on paper B (with the possible exception of the research paper, the early stages of work for which may overlap with work on other assignments). Although it is tempting to leave students a few weeks to “settle in” before beginning with the major assignments, this usually results in insufficient time for the work planned for the latter part of the course. It is therefore recommended that the first formal essay be assigned no later than the third week of class (except, as in “Model 1,” where it is preceded by a briefer, more informal essay).

Midterm Progress Reports

The Midterm reports are a chance for students to meet with instructors and discuss their progress within the course. Instructors have an opportunity to commend students on their good work, discuss with students where they are struggling in the course, and recommend or require tutoring if they feel it will benefit students. While it is important to reach out to a struggling student as early as possible, it is also important that enough coursework / homework has been assigned to provide an accurate gauge of the student’s performance thus far in the semester. Therefore, we ask that the midterm progress reports are conducted during the **weeks 6-8** of the semester. Instructors can alert Ana Vasovic avasovic@ccny.cuny.edu at any point earlier in the semester if a student is endangering his/her successful completion of the course by not attending, not doing the work, doing poorly, etc.

Midterm progress reports are available online: <https://enrollment.ccny.cuny.edu/midterm/admin/> Instructors should work together to fill out the form online (discussions between the instructors can be held in person or over the phone; only one instructor can access the forms at a time). Reports are then printed out and given to each student individually during the Midterm meetings, held with both instructors present. The instructors should also retain a copy, and both copies should be signed and dated by student and instructors alike to help impress on students the importance of these discussions. Classes can be canceled on the day that Midterm evaluations are held.

The report will invite you to recommend interventions. Any number of recommendations can be selected; instructors have an option to require students to follow through. *Referral to tutoring* is for any student who may benefit from it not only those in danger of failing. *ESL support* is for students struggling with ESL issues. *Seeing an advisor* is for students in danger of failing the course. The college will follow up with flagged students (Writing Center staff for those referred to tutoring and/or ESL, and advisors for those who need to see them).

Midterm Progress Report – sample

Student Name:

Course & Section: FIQWS 100XX; section XXXX

Instructors: _____

Estimated grade to date: _____

Number of Absences to date: _____

Class participation:	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	NA
Performance on exams/quizzes:	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	NA
Performance on written assignments/homework:	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	NA
Time Management and Attendance:	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	NA

- Recommendation:
- Attend tutoring sessions
 - ESL support
 - Improve attendance
 - Keep up the good work
 - No recommendation
 - See academic advisor
 - Your work is satisfactory but could be improved (see comment section for specific information)

Comments/Concerns/Recommendations:

Date:

Library Workshops

Each FIQWS will have 2 library workshops during the semester—one in each section.

Instructors will receive an email from the library instruction coordinator, Jacqueline Gill: jgill@ccny.cuny.edu to schedule a date and should respond promptly with two preferred dates because the e-classroom calendar tends to fill up quickly. If you do not hear from the librarian you may contact her directly. The first session is typically held 4 weeks (approximately) after the beginning of the semester and the second session is held 2 to 3 weeks after the first session.

The library coordinator will confirm class reservations and assign a library instructor familiar with the subject of the class. Instructors are encouraged to send their syllabi and establish contact with the library instructor to discuss any concerns or requests they may have.

Instructors are required to accompany the class to the library workshop as experience indicates that students are more attentive when the instructor is present. (The topic instructor should accompany the class for one session and the writing instructor for the other.) The first workshop typically provides a general introduction to the library and its services. Students receive instructions on finding journals and books and complete a short practice quiz that reinforces these skills. The second workshop is tailored to the research question(s) the students are working on and these research problems should be conveyed to the library instructor before the second session. Again, experience indicates that the second session is beneficial to students only if they are actively pursuing a research problem.

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense; however, FIQWS instructors are encouraged to show understanding with FIQWS students, who may be unfamiliar with academic norms. Students should have the school's policy on plagiarism/cheating made clear to them during the first week of class. A student brochure on academic integrity is available from the Office of Academic Standards, and students may also be directed to review the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity on the college website (<http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/upload/academicintegrity.pdf>). A recommended course of action for a first offense would be to address the matter with the student, and to determine if the violation was intentional or due to the student's lack of understanding. If the student acknowledges violating the policy, the instructor may either permit the student to redo the assignment or decide to fail the student on the assignment (or in extreme cases, for the class) and file a report with the Office of Academic Standards, using the Faculty Report Form (FRF) available at (http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/facultystaff/provost/policies_integrity.cfm). A student's second offense should be reported to Academic Standards. If, in any alleged instance of plagiarism, the student does not concede error, the instructor must complete the FRF and refer the student to appeal to the Office of Academic Standards before administering any kind of academic sanction (such as a lowered or a failing grade). If a student disputes an allegation of Academic Dishonesty, and the dispute involves the final work of the semester, he or she must be assigned a final grade of "PEN" while the matter is appealed. The College-wide Committee on Academic Integrity meets to resolve disputed allegations of academic misconduct several times a semester. Guidance on academic integrity issues can be sought from a department Chair or from the Office of Academic Standards (NAC 5/216).

Film Viewing Policy

Instructional time should not be used for the screening of full length films though it is appropriate to screen brief excerpts for purposes of discussion or illustration. iMedia (NAC 5/220) can assist with setting up screenings at other times. The Library also has a large collection of CDs and videos that can be placed on reserve for student use. Students also have access to films through Netflix, Itunes, Amazon, etc., often at reasonable or no cost.

Support Services offered to students

There are a number of Support Services available for CCNY students (visit http://www1.cuny.cuny.edu/current/tutoring_services.cfm for a complete list):

1. *Gateway Advising Center*, NAC 1/220 – students without a declared major receive academic advising through the Gateway Center.
2. *Samuel Rudin Writing Center*, NAC 3rd floor plaza – offers writing assistance to all CCNY students through one-on-one tutoring and group workshops. ESL tutoring is also available through the Writing Center.
3. *AccessAbility Center Tutoring Services*, NAC 1/218 – provides one-on-one tutoring and workshops to all registered students with learning or physical disabilities.
4. *SEEK Peer Academic Learning Center*, Harris 08 – offers counseling and peer tutoring for students in need of academic and financial support who have registered for the SEEK Program.
5. *SSSP Academic Resource Center*, Harris 03 – offers tutoring in most core subjects and group workshops in Math and Biology for students who meet financial qualifications and have interviewed for the program.

Assessment in FIQWS and General Education

FIQWS is the first of a series of writing intensive courses that are part of the General Education Requirement. Following FIQWS, students take 4-6 additional (depending on their major) writing intensive courses (from among the Perspective offerings). All of the “W” courses are designed to develop the mastery of key General Education proficiencies: Writing and Communication Skills, Critical Thinking Skills and Information Literacy Skills. Learning outcomes and scoring rubrics have been created to assess student development in these areas as well as the overall effectiveness of the General Education Curriculum.

General Education Program Learning Outcomes for Writing Intensive Courses (including FIQWS)

Writing, Communication and Critical Thinking skills

The student will be able to:

- formulate a clear thesis
- provide coherent, unified and effective organization of a paper
- develop abundant details and examples that provide evidence in support of sound logic
- use standard diction, grammar and mechanics of English
- identify and critically examine assumptions, with attention to the contextual factors that may influence perspectives
- ground conclusions in evidence drawn from a variety of sources, with attention to disparate viewpoints

Information literacy skills

The student will be able to:

- demonstrate a clear understanding of information needs and ability to search efficiently
- effectively evaluate information sources
- articulate credibility of sources
- use information ethically

In addition to the General Education Program Learning outcomes, students in every FIQWS course should achieve the following **FIQWS Course Learning Outcomes**:

- Show familiarity with the essential steps in the writing process (note-taking, prewriting, organizing, composing, revising and proof-reading).
- Show familiarity with basic rhetorical strategies and patterns, including argument, exposition, comparison and contrast, and narrative.
- Demonstrate the ability to synthesize materials drawn from multiple sources using critical reflection and independent judgment.
- Demonstrate an intermediate level of information literacy, including the ability to locate and critically evaluate relevant library and on-line resources.
- Demonstrate the ability to write a research paper of 2,500 words that develops a central thesis coherently and in detail.