

The Analytical Writing Program, or AWP

The Analytical Writing Program serves students enrolled at UC San Diego who have not completed the UC Entry Level Writing Requirement, or ELWR. The curriculum is intricately designed and carefully scaffolded with the aim of developing the critical reading, thinking, and writing skills of our underprepared students. Our courses are not remedial; rather, they are intellectually challenging, providing students a supportive learning environment in which they can engage in university-level work. For more information about our program, see <http://awp.ucsd.edu>.

Our student population is comprised mostly of California residents who attended under-resourced high schools, international students, and first-generation college students. The class size is 15. For the 2018-2019 academic year, the course load for full-time instructors is 3-2-2 or 3-3-1. In addition, instructors are currently granted a course equivalency in order to compensate them for program work not directly tied to the teaching contract. This work, which is required of all AWP instructors, includes scoring the Analytical Writing Placement Exam, or AWPE; scoring end-of-term portfolios; attending orientation and weekly professional development meetings in which we norm our instructional and assessment practices; and other program-supporting activities, as needed.

1. **Facilitating and scoring the Analytical Placement Exam, or AWPE.** Before matriculating, students who have not met the ELWR take the Analytical Placement Exam, or AWPE. Native Californians take this exam in May at regional high schools; the scoring of the exam is organized by the University of California. International students take the exam upon their arrival in September. These exams are proctored and scored by AWP instructors, who are trained and normed by our AWPE representative.
2. **Portfolio assessment.** In order to pass the course, students submit a portfolio of their work, which is assessed by their instructor and at least one additional faculty reader. Faculty convene on the first Monday after classes end in order to participate in the portfolio assessment. The portfolio is assessed according to the nine course objectives listed on our website. Students who do not demonstrate that they can meet these course objectives must re-take the course.
3. **Orientation and ongoing professional development.** In order to ensure that students receive consistent and excellent instruction, all AWP courses are taught by a common syllabus, using specific instructional methods. In order to ensure that students are fairly assessed, assessment practices are conscientiously normed. To support instructors as they master the instructional methods, and to ensure that our assessment practices are consistent and fair, the program requires instructors to attend an orientation before the term begins, and to participate in weekly professional development meetings.

While some instructors may find teaching a common syllabus to be restricting, we've found that our instructors consistently find creative ways to deliver the curriculum to their students. In fact, in observing four instructors teaching the same lesson on the same day, we found an impressive variety of inventive pedagogical approaches in play. The professional development meetings are helpful in this regard—they provide a platform for talented, innovative teachers of writing to share their ideas. While there is less freedom in this program than in others, no one teaches in isolation—which, our instructors report, is gratifying.

4. **Other activities.** AWP instructors engage in a variety of activities that support the mission of the program. For example, they participate in Community Office Hours, giving AWP students an opportunity to get feedback on their portfolios from a reader who is not their instructor. They engage in peer observations. They design and implement workshops to supplement classroom instruction. This spring, they will participate in working groups, on a variety of topics.