

Recommended GVAR Learning Outcomes

This document provides a brief history of the development of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GVAR) at SF State and suggests student learning outcomes to help guide faculty who are developing a GVAR syllabus and curriculum. These student learning outcomes (SLOs) are meant to be contextualized within an academic field and can be adapted and tailored to the rhetorical aspects of specific kinds of writing within each discipline.

Brief History of GVAR: Between 2004 and 2005, in response to deep concerns about student writing expressed by SF State faculty and external, nationally recognized writing consultants, SF State proposed a new comprehensive plan to improve student writing.¹ Key to this writing plan was committing institutional and administrative support for Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Discipline (WAC/WID) on campus as well as changing the upper division writing requirement called Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GVAR). The Junior English Proficiency Essay Test (JEPET), which used to fulfill this requirement, was replaced with a writing-intensive course in a student's major discipline. With Writing across the curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) as models, the intent was that GVAR would focus on improving writing within a student's respective field, providing opportunities for students to use writing to develop understanding about, analyze, and apply disciplinary content while gaining familiarity with relevant conventions, standards and genres.

While some GVAR learning outcomes, particularly those that are consistent with program outcomes or competencies required by accrediting bodies, may be discipline-specific, GVAR outcomes relevant to WID principles and the general goals described in the 2005 Task Force Report apply across the disciplines. The student learning outcomes below are also consistent with criteria in the Written Communication VALUE Rubric (a rubric developed by a national task force convened by the Association of American Colleges and Universities), which was successfully adapted and used in the spring of 2016 by an inter-disciplinary committee of SFSU faculty to assess student writing in GVAR courses across the university. The learning outcomes below may assist faculty and departments with GVAR course design and with the more intentional scaffolding of writing skills within a department's curriculum.

- Understand and apply rhetorical knowledge (consider audience, purpose, and context in writing) relevant to the writing task
- Comprehend, analyze, and apply disciplinary course content
- Apply conventions of the discipline and produce important disciplinary genres
- Skillfully use scholarly and credible sources to develop ideas and arguments relevant to the discipline and genre.
- Use language that is clear and relatively free of grammatical errors
- Effectively use feedback and self-assessment to revise and improve academic writing skills

¹ See 2005 Writing Task Force Report