

FAQs about WAC Certification Work

What do faculty do during the winter WAC certification seminar?

They revise a course that they have taught at KCC at least once, and preferably twice, to make it more reading and writing-intensive for students.

What is expected from the course revision?

Of course it varies by discipline. However, we are looking for a writing assignment-driven syllabus that gives students the opportunity to revise their work on the basis of your feedback. Students write in both informal and formal modes; reading is supported by writing; writing (all sorts) counts for at least 30% of the final course grade.

How is the certification seminar organized?

It's a reading/writing course that models the ways in which you might use writing to support learning in your course. You will have the opportunity to think more deeply about your course goals and how to reach them in a 12-week semester. Our textbook is John Bean's book, Engaging Ideas; additional articles and chapters from books are also assigned as readings.

How do we structure and support faculty learning in this course?

We ask faculty to write regularly in three or four modalities: to reflect on their previous experience and existing knowledge; to respond to the thoughts of others in assigned readings; to solve problems when revising an assignment or syllabus; and to take stock of their learning experience using metacognition about learning processes. The ongoing focus of concern will be your own course. In light of your reading in the seminar, what aspect of your course might you tweak? During this course construction process, the seminar provides opportunities to share thoughts with other faculty and to respond to their interests and concerns, either on campus or online (or both).

What determines if I receive WAC certification?

Both process and product count. You need to complete all the writing assignments of the certification seminar. If you are working online, they will all be posted on your course blog. If you work on campus, you may post on a blog or compile a folder of your work. In both cases, your goal is to also create a course portfolio that documents the ways you will be teaching your course on a reading/writing intensive basis

By when do I have to complete this course portfolio?

In accordance with good WAC practice, we collect the portfolio twice, first on February 16th and then on June 30th. We call the first submission a provisional course portfolio and the second the final course portfolio. Between February and June, you have the opportunity to revise on the basis of your experience piloting and feedback you receive from the Coordinators and/or your Writing Fellow.

Three Options for Becoming WAC Certified at KCC

Whether you choose option A, B, or C, your goal is to revise one of your KCC courses to make the teaching of the material more reading and writing intensive and to assemble a course portfolio documenting your practice. Course portfolios are due on February 16th (provisional) and June 30th (final). Option C candidates submit on Feb. 16th for a Fall certification/W section.

Faculty who choose option A or B work with a Writing Fellow and pilot their revised course as an experimental W section in the Spring. The course you pilot in the Spring must be offered Mon – Thur between the hours of 8 and 5 so that a Fellow can attend class once a week. After you are certified, with the permission of your Chair, you may offer any of your courses on a W basis.

Faculty who choose Option C may opt to work with an assigned Fellow, but are not required to do so, and they do not pilot their work before becoming certified.

The online community is open to all candidates.

Upon successful submission of the final course portfolio, faculty who choose Option A or Option B are eligible for 3 hrs of release time or cash payment @ 60% of their hourly rate. All writing intensive (W) sections they offer are capped at 25. Option C candidates do not receive payment but upon becoming certified are eligible for a course cap of 25 for every W section offered.

After becoming certified, and with the permission of their Chair, faculty may offer any of their courses on a writing intensive basis (not just the one they revised for certification).

Option A: The On-Campus Workshop Series

Nine sessions, Mondays and Thursdays, 1 – 3:30 PM, In the Tapestry Room (A212) January 7, 10, 14, 17, 24, 28, 31; February 4, and 7. Coffee and tea served. Bring your lunch if you like.

The on campus WAC Seminar offers faculty a community of fellow course constructors and Writing Fellows who come together twice a week to share ideas about course materials. The medium, a workshop (not a “meeting” or lecture), is a large part of the message. Central to the pedagogy will be a task-based syllabus, personal reflection on process, and active listening. Ours is a model of knowledge construction that puts language at the center of learning. Of course this is what we advocate as an approach in a W section, as well.

Each certification candidate will be assigned a Writing Fellow partner who will serve as coach and interlocutor. Fellows will attend the on-campus seminar to help in the development of your thinking about course revision. In the Spring, your Fellow will attend class, help your students with their writing assignments, and consult with you on the course.

On Campus Workshop Policies

Attendance: Do not sign up unless you are sure you can attend all the sessions. Note: The Mon/Thur schedule is not compatible with every Winter teaching assignment. Make sure it will work for you.

Participation: There will be homework for each session (at least 2 hours for each workshop). Active participation, using the homework, will be key to the success of the group's learning process and so you need to have the time to complete it each week. For the same reason, you need to be able to arrive on time and stay until the end of each session. Tardiness or early departures would be disruptive to our common work.

Completing Seminar Assignments: Each session involves thinking about one aspect of your course and often involves revision of actual course documents. Option A candidates may do their reflective writing and posting of draft documents on a specially designed course construction blog (like the ones used by Option B candidates). Alternatively, they may collect all their homework assignments in a folder to be handed in periodically during the workshop series.

Successful completion of the seminar involves the submission of this folder (or completing all the work on the blog), along with a provisional course portfolio, on February 16th. We will experiment this year with online submission of the course portfolio so stay tuned for more information about where and how to post it by February 16.

Option B: Online Tutorial Using A Word Press Blog

In Winter 2012, what used to be a wiki on Blackboard migrated to a Word Press blog with individual course construction blogs for each Option A and B certification candidate. The blogs will be linked into a closed certification community with access denied to anyone outside it. At the same time, all members of the 2013 WAC community – Coordinators, Fellows, and faculty candidates – will be able to read and respond to each other on each of the networked blogs, creating an active community of practice. You will be able to receive feedback on your work on your own blog, and you will be able to read and respond to the work and ideas of others on their blogs and on the mother blog, where everyone will convene.

Faculty who choose Option B will be able to work from home on nine online “modules,” each of which is dedicated to a different topic from John Bean’s Engaging Ideas, the textbook you will receive during the orientation session. Each module consists of a series of prompts and a predictable sequence of writing assignments. You will write reflectively about your previous experience with the topic. You’ll write in response to the reading assignment. You’ll be asked to turn your attention to the course you are working on and to write about how the reading has impacted your thinking about your teaching of your material/course. After you have worked on your course materials and perhaps posted a revised document of some sort, you will be asked

to write about the entire process of doing the work of the module (“going meta”). What has stood out for you in completing the work for this module? What are the most interesting implications for you? What will you take with you? Then, looking back at all the writing you have done, you’ll be invited to share some piece of your experience with others on our mother blog.

The medium is, of course, also a large part of the message here. We invite you to put yourself in the student position in using writing to learn and we advocate for ongoing reflection on the question, How might writing like this fit in to my teaching of my W section?

Each online certification candidate will be assigned a Writing Fellow partner who will serve as coach and interlocutor. Your Fellow will respond to you regularly on your blog to help in the development of your thinking about course revision. In the Spring, your Fellow will attend class, help your students with their writing assignments, and continue to consult with you on the course.

Online course policies

Experience and discipline: Doing all your work on your own using online resources can be challenging. We therefore ask that you have some experience with online work and that you be an enthusiastic online reader/writer. Faculty report that it can otherwise be a truly overwhelming process.

Make sure you have the time: Each module will take at least 3 hours to complete, sometimes more, depending on how much course revision you undertake. In addition, do note that we will require you to pace yourself and so you need to have time to work throughout the 6-week winter module.

Meeting Deadlines (January 19, February 1st, and February 16th): Of course we cannot have an online community without your active participation. In addition, it is not possible to pilot a W section until you have designed one. These are the primary reasons we ask you to adhere to the deadlines outlined in the *Timeline for WAC Certification* document. You need to have your work completed and posted on your blog by these dates. If for some reason that becomes difficult, we’ll ask you to come back next year and will remove the W from your Spring semester course.

Completing the Process: Getting credit for completion of the certification seminar online requires the posting to your blog of all the assignments for each of the 9 modules in a timely fashion. In addition, you are required to work with your Fellow and respond to the work of others, both on individual faculty blogs and the mother blog. And finally, you need to compile and submit a provisional course portfolio, including an inquiry question, by February 16th.

We will experiment this year with online submission of the course portfolio so stay tuned for more information about where and how to post it by February 16.

Option C: Special Option for Faculty with Experience Teaching Writing

With permission from their Chair and the WAC Coordinators, faculty who have had a lot of experience teaching their discipline using writing may opt to just hand in a WAC certification course portfolio without completing a training session at KCC. Often such candidates have become WAC certified on another campus, have served as a Writing Fellow at CUNY, or are teachers of literature in the English Department who also have a background in the teaching of writing.

Such candidates have used informal writing-to-learn activities to help students learn course material. They have required students to write in drafts and know how to support the revision process with feedback on writing. They always have students write in response to their reading assignments and know that you don't have to read every word of informal writing to make it count toward the final grade in a course.

Option C candidates who apply by the October 15th deadline may have the support of an assigned KCC Writing Fellow (optional) and access to the certification community during the winter.

Application deadline: Option C candidates have greater flexibility in applying to become WAC certified. They may apply in the Fall, by October 15, or they may apply at any time during the year.

Submit a course portfolio: Option C candidates need to familiarize themselves with KCC's WAC course portfolio requirements. See the WAC Faculty Handbook for important documents and descriptions.

Sample student work: We prefer to receive portfolios for courses you have experience teaching at KCC, and we prefer for it to include all the elements, including sample student writing in response to your assignments, informal and formal. If you have not yet taught the course at KCC and/or do not have sample student work, you may request exemption from this requirement.

Course portfolio submission deadlines:

By February 16th for Fall certification. You will receive a certification decision by the first day of classes, Spring term. Any requested revisions must be received by early April for you to be certified in time to teach a W section in the Fall.

By June 30th or the first day of classes in September: These submission dates allow you to be considered for certification in time to offer a W section the following Spring.

Remuneration for Option C: None. Upon becoming certified, you will receive a course cap of 25 for each course you are able to offer on a writing intensive basis. Please check with your Chair each semester.

Timeline for WAC Certification

October 15: Application deadline, Options A or B. Courses for spring piloting are designated W.

Mid November: Orientation for certification candidates. Required introduction to the process.

January, February: Certification training, either online or on campus.

Please notify the Coordinators immediately if you are experiencing difficulty completing course revision work in a timely fashion. The following are the official deadlines:

January 19th: Online and on campus candidates need to have completed the work for at least Modules 1 – 4 of the WAC Seminar. If not, the candidate needs to consider withdrawing from the program for this cycle.

February 1st: Online and on campus candidates must have completed at least Modules 1 – 7 of the WAC seminar. If not, the candidate will be asked to come back the following year and the Spring W designation and course cap will be removed.

February 16th: Provisional course portfolios due by 5 PM. Candidates missing complete portfolios/training materials will be asked to come back the following year and the Spring W designation and course cap will be removed.

Option C. Final course portfolios are also due from Option C candidates by February 16th for consideration for Fall certification; revisions, if any, due in April.

Spring Semester: Piloting of re-designed courses with the help of a Writing Fellow (Option A and Option B candidates).

Late May: Farewell to the Writing Fellows gathering with final course portfolio orientation, sharing of experiences, and program assessment.

June: Revise your course based on feedback you received on your provisional course portfolio and your experience piloting it with the support of your Writing Fellow.

June 30th: Final course portfolios are due by 5 PM. Failure to submit a complete portfolio will result in removal of the W designation and course cap for Fall sections.

July/August: Final course portfolios are read by the WAC Team and faculty are contacted regarding their status. Designations -- Certified, Provisionally Certified, or Resubmit.

September: Portfolios requiring revision must be resubmitted by the first day of classes in the Fall for faculty to be assigned a Spring W section. If you have been certified, put 3 hours of release time on your horizontal form or collect cash payment for 3 hours at 60% of your hourly rate. **Receive a letter from the Provost for your tenure and promotion file.**