TO: Peter Whiting, Director of SAGES
            Kimberly Emmons, Director of Composition
            Michael Householder, Associate Director of SAGES

CC: The 2014 Portfolio Review Committee: Joy Bostic (Religious Studies), Marc
            Buchner (Engineering), Corbin Covault (Physics), Georgia Cowart (Music),
            Malcah Effron (English), John Flores (History), Brian Gran (Sociology), Amy
            Przeworski (Psychological Sciences), Ron Oldfield (Biology), Jeffrey Ullom
            (Theatre)

FROM: Megan Swihart Jewell and Erika Olbricht, Committee Coordinators

SUBJECT: SAGES Portfolio Reader Review Committee Report

DATE: 30 June 2014

INTRODUCTION

The 2014 Portfolio Faculty Evaluation Committee, consisting of 12 faculty members from across
the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering, read and evaluated
approximately 920 student writing portfolios submitted to the SAGES office between June 2013
and May 2014. Ninety-two percent were standard portfolios (without substitutions). The
following report outlines the methodologies used during the evaluation process, provides the
results of the committee's assessment of student writing, and offers suggestions to administrators
and SAGES seminar leaders regarding the SAGES portfolio requirement and classroom
instruction.

Summary
This year, the committee's main conclusion was that CWRU students through SAGES First and
University Seminars develop facility with academic writing skills. The committee recognized
that the SAGES program intentionally and successfully builds students' capabilities in writing: a
majority (73%) of CWRU undergraduates were found to write at or above expectation (Table 10).

This year's committee spent the majority of its time discussing the effectiveness of thesis
statements and the use of evidence. As was the case last year, it found that while students are
engaging in more argumentative writing, they are not articulating clear argument statements in
their introductions or writing strong thesis statements. The committee therefore recommends
continued classroom emphasis on crafting compelling thesis statements.

Further, students' persuasive abilities were frequently below expectation, leading committee
members to argue for better audience awareness and use of evidence. The committee found that
students' use of evidence to support their arguments was lacking in terms of demonstrating a
critical understanding of and engagement with scholarly source materials. The committee
strongly recommends more focused instruction on how to engage with reliable, relevant sources.

Recommendations to classroom instructors and SAGES Administrators follow at the end of this report.

HISTORY

Faculty evaluation procedures during the SAGES pilot and first years of implementation (2002-2008) focused solely on assessing individual portfolios in order to provide feedback to students who submitted them as a graduation requirement. In June 2009, a new system of evaluating portfolios was instituted with the objective of providing programmatic feedback on student writing to SAGES and English Department Writing Program administrators.

- The first university faculty evaluation committee in 2009 read and evaluated 425 student portfolios over a two-week period determining that, while the majority of students were writing At Expectation, there was a clear need for further instruction in academic argumentation.
- The 2010 committee assessed 700 portfolios and determined that students continued to demonstrate significant weaknesses in their argumentative abilities, specifically in writing strong thesis statements. The major recommendations of the 2010 committee included suggesting that the Writing Program craft and communicate to students and SAGES instructors a clearer definition of "argument," and that it modify the recommended writing outcomes for SAGES First Seminars to identify thesis writing as a fundamental component of written argumentation.
- The 2011 committee assessed 900 portfolios and found that students demonstrated weakness in writing the kinds of thesis statements that are able to serve as strong controlling arguments throughout their essays. While students were adept at formulating supporting arguments—and while they demonstrated some facility with presenting evidence in a clear and coherent fashion—they did not illustrate the ability to express or carry out positions indicative of compelling academic argumentation.
- In 2012, the committee assessed 930 portfolios and recommended that students should focus on persuasive skills, critical thinking, and style, as these are the elements most closely aligned to argumentative writing.
- In 2013, the committee assessed 800 portfolios and noted that students needed to focus on the particular elements of argument writing: strongly articulated thesis statements with clearly identified significance, insightful claims, fully developed arguments and persuasive use of evidence.

METHODOLOGY

Committee members followed a schedule of three meeting days drafted by coordinators. The first day was spent familiarizing readers with evaluation methods and assessment criteria. As part of this process, we discussed the 2013 report, new SAGES learning outcomes (Appendix 1), and the portfolio submission guidelines for students. Three portfolios were randomly selected for the purpose of calibration, which occurred on the second day, during which the committee assessed one additional research paper. To assess reader reliability, the same sample portfolio was included in each reader's portfolios. With minor discrepancies, there was majority agreement in the assessment of the sample portfolio.

Readers had 12 days to read portfolios (an average of 77 per reader), and enter data into a Survey Monkey form created for the portfolio rubric. Readers then reconvened to discuss portfolios and the data generated. The coordinators drafted the report based on notes from the discussion and reader questionnaires; committee members were able to offer feedback on the report before it was made public.

The 2014 Rubric
The 2014 committee used a modified version of the 2013 rubric. (See Appendix 2.) The differences can be summarized as follows:

- In order to focus reader assessment on the most significant elements in the essays, the Expectation charts included only critical thinking/sophistication of thought, and persuasive elements. Structure and style were included in the Holistic chart. This change brought the assessment of the essays more closely in line with the new SAGES outcomes (see Appendix 2).
- In previous years, mechanics and grammar were assessed on the expectation scale for all papers. However, readers had difficulty determining if student papers demonstrated a use of grammar that "Greatly Exceeds Expectation." Therefore, the following question was implemented and assessed only at the holistic level rather than for individual papers: *Did the portfolio's overall mechanics and grammar (punctuation, syntax, sentence structure) interfere with your ease of reading?*
- Finally, decision trees were replaced with questions meant to measure the quality of particular elements, especially in the Research Essay section, in order to help identify specific weaknesses.

See Appendix 3 for recommendations for the 2015 Rubric.

RESULTS

Reflective Essay

Last year, the committee deliberated about the usefulness of the three questions regarding the reflective essay on the rubric. Therefore, the questions and decision trees of the past rubric were replaced with one question regarding how well the student addressed the prompt (Table 2).

The percentage of students acknowledging positive change in their writing (88.55%, Table 1) is almost identical to last year's number (88.51%). The committee acknowledged that some students may claim to improve because they suspect that is what the prompt is asking them to do. The understanding of this percentage should be mitigated by the percentage of readers reporting improvement, which is somewhat lower than students' reported number (71%; see Table 13).

While student self-reporting is at best an indirect assessment measure, readers affirmed that the reflective essay is an important part of the portfolio because it contextualizes the submission for the reader and because it gives students an opportunity to re-read their papers. Indeed, some students expressed surprise to see that they had in fact improved once they read their papers.

Some students took the reflective essay as an opportunity to criticize the SAGES program and other aspects of their CWRU undergraduate education. Some readers suggested that if students were given an anonymous place to register their criticisms of SAGES, they might be inclined to more faithfully reflect on their writing development in their reflective essays.

See Appendix 4 for suggested changes to the prompt.

Table 1. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Student Perception of Growth

	Positive change	No change/ Negative change	Differences not addressed
Student perception of development in writing skills across SAGES	88.55%	9.81%	1.64%

Table 2. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Reflective Essay

	Definitely, with sophistication	Meets criteria	Meets criteria with superficial reflection and/or examples	No
Does the student address the prompt in good faith, meeting its criteria?	20.07%	50.05%	27.04%	2.84%

First Seminar Essay

Readers indicated the genre of writing represented by the First Seminar essay and assessed the critical thinking and persuasive elements demonstrated in each student's paper.

The majority of First Seminar essays that students submitted were classified as argument/analysis, similar to last year's submissions. This year, readers classified 69% of the essays as argument/analysis (Table 3) while last year this number was 75%. The committee discussed the slightly larger number of personal narrative and other non-argument genres this year, and concluded that while some of these essays displayed insight and thoughtfulness, others were too short to assess fully in terms of their quality of analysis or overall growth. The committee therefore discussed the potential benefits of requiring students to submit First Seminar essays that are at least three pages long.

The data demonstrate that the First Seminar essays show a somewhat greater facility with critical thinking than persuasion (Table 4). More than a third of essays are below or greatly below expectation in terms of persuasive elements. It should be noted that because there was not an evaluative mechanics question for this essay, some committee members used the category "persuasive elements" to register sentence-level concerns. Further, committee members noticed that students tended to convey ideas in an informal, conversational tone rather than make rhetorical moves appropriate to academic writing. The committee attributed these deficiencies to students transitioning from high school writing to more formal college writing, while also acknowledging the potential contradiction in that CWRU has been admitting students with higher entrance statistics.

Table 3. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: First Seminar Essay Genre

Argument/Analysis	68.59%
Exposition/Report	22.68%
Personal Narrative	5.34%
Other	3.38%

Table 4. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: First Seminar Essay Assessment

Criterion	Greatly Exceeds Expectation	Exceeds Expectation	At Expectation	Below Expectation	Greatly Below Expectation
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought	4.58%	22.90%	45.37%	25.41%	1.74%
Persuasive elements	4.74%	22.38%	37.38%	32.52%	2.98%

University Seminar Essay

Readers indicated the genre of writing represented by the University Seminar essay and assessed the critical thinking and persuasive elements demonstrated in each student's paper.

The majority of First Seminar essays that students submitted were classified as argument/analysis, similar to last year's submissions. This year, readers classified 68% of the essays as argument/analysis (Table 5), while last year's number was 74%. Since not all University Seminar writing has to be argument-based, this percentage is not overly troubling. However, readers wondered if students should be required to submit argument papers in order to better demonstrate development. Indeed, some portfolios showed a lack of foundational argument skills in the University Seminar essay that could be correlated to poorer arguments in the research essays.

As was the case in the First Seminar essay, the University Seminar essays demonstrated higher levels of critical thinking than persuasive skill (Table 6). Committee members interpreted persuasive abilities in terms of students' making appropriate rhetorical moves, but had a strong sense that their writing style demonstrated very little positive change, even regression in some cases, from the quality of writing demonstrated in the First Seminar essay. Forty percent of students wrote below or greatly below expectation for this essay. The committee attributed this decline to increasing student workloads and to the assumption that University Seminars require writing about more complex topics; therefore, students may appear to regress in their abilities. However, it is also possible that students are not turning in work that best allows us to assess their persuasive abilities. It is the committee's opinion that they should be encouraged to do so.

Table 5. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: University Seminar Essay Genre

Argument/Analysis	68.48%
Exposition/Report	21.92%
Personal Narrative	5.23%
Other (no comment)	4.36%

Table 6. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: University Seminar Essay Assessment

Criterion	Greatly Exceeds Expectation	Exceeds Expectation	At Expectation	Below Expectation	Greatly Below Expectation
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought	4.38%	22.65%	41.25%	29.54%	2.19%
Persuasive elements	4.50%	21.41%	34.25%	37.87%	1.98%

Research Essay

Readers indicated the genre of writing represented by the First and University Seminar essays, and evaluated critical thinking and persuasive abilities. Readers also assessed the papers' thesis statements, structure, use of evidence and examples, and citation format (Table 8).

The SAGES portfolio committee has always been concerned with the genre of the research paper, preferring to see research presented in the form of an academic argument, which encourages stronger critical thinking and persuasion than a report or other genre. The data this year show that the number of argumentative research essays stayed the same as last year (85%; Table 7). The number of those classified as exposition/report rose only slightly from 12% last year to 14% this year. Clearly, our students are continuing to write researched arguments in their University Seminars, and the committee attributes this positive change to the increased instructional emphasis on argumentation as well as the revised portfolio guidelines, which now stress that the research paper should be argumentative.

While the number of argumentative essays is encouraging, the evaluative ratings continue to indicate that the quality of argumentation needs significant improvement. A large number of students scored below or greatly below expectation in the categories of critical thinking and persuasion. Twenty-eight percent of the essays were deemed below or greatly below expectation in critical thinking, while 36% were below or greatly below in persuasive elements. While it should be noted that critical thinking has improved from 64% at or above expectation last year to 73% this year—and this number is a significant increase from reports prior to 2013—the committee still views the number of those ranking below expectation as a concern. This year's committee believes that more emphasis needs to be placed on teaching students these and other elements of insightful academic writing.

Thesis Statements

Fifty percent of the research essay thesis statements were found to be argumentative, but superficial or lacking in some way (Table 9A). Committee members observed that many of the thesis statements were too broad in nature and that students had difficulties articulating more narrow research questions. When committee members were asked what they wanted to see in more students' thesis statements, they indicated the following: an early, debatable claim, a so-what element, relevance, insightfulness, and focused scope. Members would also like to see students more strongly and specifically assert the research question(s) that they are going to address, while also expressing a preference for early, explicitly stated and debatable claims.

The committee recommends more emphasis on the writing process, especially pre-writing, outlining, and drafting, to help students come to a central claim earlier in the writing process. *The Craft of Research*, the SAGES recommended writing text for University Seminars, addresses such issues.

Structure

The committee found that 48% of the research essays maintained a logical structure, but failed to maintain consistent coherence and transitions; yet, more than 28% of essays displayed a logical arrangement of paragraphs and sophisticated transitions (Table 9B). Therefore, 76% of research essays used mostly effective organization. One quarter of them, however, demonstrated those students' inability to organize logically, create paragraph coherence, and/or create transitions between ideas.

Evidence and Examples

Committee members found that 46% of students used evidence imperfectly, but in a way that still supported their papers (Table 9C). The committee noted that students did not fully demonstrate a deliberate use of specific sources, and that they did not engage fully with their sources. Instead, students merely presented sources in a way that assumed their credibility. Twenty-seven percent of research essays demonstrated significant problems with the use of evidence and examples.

Specifically, the committee noted students' difficulties in making the evidence relate to the claim. Student writers tend to drop in quotations or references without either framing or truly engaging with the ideas in the research they are trying to incorporate. It also noted that some papers were able to express a debatable claim, but the papers nevertheless developed as though they were reports; i.e., evidence was not marshaled in support of the claim.

In general, the committee lamented students' reliance on non-credible and/or non-scholarly Internet sources in the research essays. The committee suggests that students need a better sense of what counts as a scholarly source and significantly more instruction in finding relevant, reliable scholarly sources that support their arguments.

Citation

Eighty-seven percent of research essays employed a consistent citation format, either without mistakes, or with only minor mistakes (Table 9D). The committee discussed whether SAGES should recommend the use of one format for students in First and University Seminars, but readers did not come to a consensus on this issue and made no recommendation other than making the required format explicit, perhaps through an author's guide. Some committee members expressed satisfaction with current practices whereby individual instructors determine the citation system of the course as most relevant to their discipline.

Table 7. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Research Essay Genre

Argument/Analysis	85.06%
Exposition/Report	13.96%
Personal Narrative	.44%
Other	.55%

Table 8. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Research Essay Assessment

Criterion	Greatly Exceeds Expectation	Exceeds Expectation	At Expectation	Below Expectation	Greatly Below Expectation
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought	6.54%	26.17%	39.37%	26.17%	1.74%
Persuasive elements	6.98%	22.25%	35.11%	33.04%	2.62%

Table 9. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Research Essay Elements

A. Research paper's thesis is …

An excellent argument thesis	20.07%
Argumentative, but superficial or lacking in some way	49.73%
Implicit or Buried	12.21%
Factual / Report oriented	13.09%
Missing	4.91%

B. Research paper's structure (organization, purpose, paragraph cohesion, transitions) is …

A logical arrangement of coherent paragraphs with sophisticated transitions	28.35%
Logical but missing consistent coherence and/or transitions	47.87%
Mostly logical with significant coherence and/or transition problems	15.16%
Lacking logical arrangement	6.11%
Significantly lacking logic, coherence, and transitions	2.51%

C. Does the research paper effectively use evidence and examples?

Evidence used with sophistication	26.72%
Evidence used imperfectly, but supports paper	46.46%
Not enough evidence or examples to support paper	20.39%
Evidence not appropriate for the paper	3.49%
No	2.94%

D. Does the research paper use consistently a citation format?

Yes	63.69%
Mostly, with minor mistakes	23.23%
Poorly, with some citations missing, but still shows an attempt at citing	8.18%
Few or no citations	4.91%

Holistic Evaluation

Readers determined an overall ranking for the quality of each portfolio employing a more detailed writing assessment grid than the one used to rate the individual First Seminar, University Seminar and research essays.

For the holistic evaluations, readers were asked to assess the portfolios as a whole, including the three papers as well as the reflective essay. Readers considered the overall effectiveness, impact, and quality of the combined whole as opposed to taking a simple average or sum of the individual parts.

While the writing assessment grid has been used since 2011 for holistic scoring, in contrast to prior years, instructions were given to the 2013 readers, as well as to this year's committee, to push outward from the center in borderline cases between point scores. In other words, if a portfolio rated very close to the line between at expectation and exceeds expectation, the reader was asked to select exceeds expectation. The purpose of this practice was to improve the granularity of the assessment by encouraging readers to select at expectation with less frequency. By encouraging a larger spread, we hoped to be able to measure relevant connections and correlations between different quantities more sensitively.

The committee found far fewer portfolios ranking greatly below expectation across all categories and in the overall ranking than last year—an encouraging outcome. In 2013, portfolios ranking greatly below were numbered at 4% while this year that number was less than 1 percent.

Table 10. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Holistic Evaluation

Criterion	Greatly Exceeds Expectation	Exceeds Expectation	At Expectation	Below Expectation	Greatly Below Expectation
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought	4.14%	23.66%	41.00%	29.01%	2.18%
Persuasive elements	4.58%	21.59%	37.30%	34.68%	1.85%
Structure	5.67%	20.72%	51.80%	21.48%	0.33%
Style	5.34%	22.14%	45.26%	25.41%	1.85%
OVERALL RANKING	4.47%	22.14%	46.35%	26.28%	0.76%

ESL Holistic Scoring

This year, readers evaluated 67 portfolios from students enrolled in a First Seminar for non-native speakers of English. We have been tracking such students for the past two years in order to see how they are performing overall and in relationship to native speakers.

No ESL portfolio scored in the greatly below expectation category as an overall ranking, which is a marked improvement over last year's 12% (8 portfolios). In addition, the numbers of portfolios are strikingly low in the greatly below expectation category across all criteria. Since the ESL curriculum began in AY 2008-9, and since most of the portfolios this year were from students who matriculated in 2010, this improvement can be attributed to both the effectiveness of the SAGES ESL curriculum as well as to the increasing TOEFL scores of admitted students for whom English is a second language. Nevertheless, 39% of ESL students write below expectation.

Table 11. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Holistic ESL Evaluation

Criterion	Greatly Exceeds Expectation	Exceeds Expectation	At Expectation	Below Expectation	Greatly Below Expectation
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought	1.49%	22.39%	46.27%	25.37%	4.48%
Persuasive elements	1.49%	14.93%	38.81%	44.78%	0%
Structure	1.49%	19.40%	43.28%	34.33%	1.49%
Style	1.49%	13.43%	32.84%	49.25%	2.99%
OVERALL RANKING	1.49%	14.93%	44.78%	38.81%	0%

Mechanics and Grammar

Given that in past years, portfolios have generally displayed clear proficiency in terms of their mechanics and grammar and that committee members had difficulty ranking students' abilities in this area according to an expectation chart, committee coordinators removed this category from the holistic chart and included it in the rubric as a separate question.

A significant majority of our students (81%) demonstrate proficiency in terms of their mechanics and grammar (Table 12). While the committee was generally pleased with these results, several readers affirmed the importance of mechanics, grammar, syntax, and style. Some members expressed concern that students were not writing with fundamental correctness. As would perhaps be expected, 18% of ESL portfolios showed persistent grammatical and mechanical errors that interfered with ease of reading, while another 39% somewhat interfered with ease of reading.

Readers also expressed a desire to further disaggregate "somewhat/in particular papers" and suggested changes to the question and its responses. (See Appendix 3.)

Table 12. Did the portfolio's overall Mechanics and Grammar (punctuation, syntax, sentence structure) interfere with your ease of reading?

	All Portfolios	ESL Portfolios
No	81.13%	43.28%
Somewhat/in particular papers	15.38%	38.81%
Persistently	3.49%	17.91%

Reader Perception of Development in Writing Skills

Traditionally, this question has functioned as a check on students' self-perception of development. Unlike previous years' data for this question, which tended to show more of a disparity, this year's readers seemed to be more in agreement with students that they had shown positive development, with 71% of portfolios demonstrating positive change from the reader's standpoint (Table 13), compared to 89% of students reporting positive change (Table 1). Additionally, this year students were asked to indicate on the cover page the semester and year during which they wrote the submitted papers; therefore, readers were able to determine the order in which papers were written.

Readers noted that often their assessment of development hinged on the quality of the research essay because of the length, substance, and quality of argumentation it is expected to demonstrate. They also wished to be able to note when a student's portfolio showed exceptional growth over the essays as well as to indicate when it showed regression.

Table 13. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Reader Perception of development in writing skills

	Positive change	**No change/ negative change**
Reviewer perception of development in writing skills across SAGES	70.88%	29.12%

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Writing Instruction

As noted in the Introduction to this report, the main finding of this committee was that the use of evidence in students' portfolio papers is lacking. Therefore, attention to effective use of evidence should be stressed. More instructors should employ the Writing Program's recommended writing texts for First and University Seminars respectively, *They Say/I Say (*Graff and Birkenstein) and *The Craft of Research (*Booth, Colomb, and Williams) to promote persuasive rhetorical moves and their relationship to the effective use of evidence.

Instructors should attend SAGES pedagogy seminars that provide resources for teaching writing.

Instructors should give students a handout with course-specific guidelines on citations, similar to an author's guide for course writing.

Recommendations to SAGES Administrators

Administrators should consider requiring that 1/3 of class time be devoted to writing instruction in all three SAGES seminars rather than only 1/6 in University seminars in which students are engaging in more complex critical reading and argumentation.

The committee members expressed enthusiasm about the new SAGES outcomes and encourages the SAGES program to widely distribute and advertise them to SAGES instructors at all levels, from First Seminar to the Senior Capstone.

SAGES administrators should consider creating a series of webinars given by various professors to first-year students, asserting the importance of effective communication across university disciplines. It was also proposed that specific topics would focus on the role of writing in the professor's field and its relationship to SAGES writing outcomes.

Recommendations for Portfolio Guidelines and Submission

The committee discussed various ways of encouraging students to complete the portfolio in a more timely fashion: one suggestion was to make portfolio submission a pre-requisite for registering in departmental seminars. However, the committee strongly calls for the implementation of an administrative solution this year.

The committee finds it unacceptable that portfolios cannot be electronically submitted. It is not necessary to wait until an e-portfolio platform is decided upon; we can simply accept them as PDFs. See Appendix 5 for suggested instructions for submitting portfolios as PDFs.

Committee members expressed difficulty in assessing essays shorter than three pages and recommends that students be required to submit essays of at least three pages in length.

See Appendix 4 for Suggested Revisions to the Submission Guidelines.

Recommendations for Future Evaluation Procedures

In addition to the changes to the rubric (see Appendix 3), committee members urge that model papers should be used to demonstrate the Expectation categories. Such models should be available to readers before calibration.

Committee members frequently suggested that having the prompts for the assignments would make assessment of the portfolio's papers easier and more accurate.

If letters are sent to students who need more writing support, those letters should be sent from SAGES and copied to the student's advisor and dean.

SAGES administration should continue to examine ways to include departmental seminars and capstones in the evaluation process.

Administrators should continue to move toward the sampling of portfolios, especially considering the cost of convening the committee.

Program Mission	Level Objectives	Course Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to…)
SAGES uses seminar-based instruction to teach students how to use the skills of academic inquiry, to think critically and ethically, and to communicate their ideas in writing effectively. Its sequence of courses builds core academic skills, introduces discipline-specific concepts and methods, and then culminates in a capstone experience that demonstrates students' ability to apply what they have learned. This mission is achieved through a commitment to five core skills: ACTIVE LEARNING (AL) ACADEMIC INQUIRY (AI) CRITICAL THINKING (CT) ETHICAL DELIBERATION (ED) EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION (EC)	**(First Seminar)** To enable students to contribute to general academic conversations by establishing facility with core academic skills.	• Participate in an academic conversation by contributing insightful, relevant ideas. (AL, AI, CT, EC) • Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically and deliberate ethically. (AL, AI, CT, ED) • Read, summarize, and apply scholarly concepts and information. (AL, AI) • Write clearly and persuasively. (AL, AI, CT, EC) • Effectively communicate information orally and/or through new media. (CT, EC)
	(University Seminar) To enable students to contribute to general academic conversations by establishing expertise with core academic skills, including the ability to do independent research.	• Participate in a variety of academic conversations by contributing insightful, relevant ideas. (AL, AI, CT, EC) • Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to questions/problems. (AL, AI, CT, ED, EC) • Research and apply scholarly concepts and information. (AL, AI, CT) • Write clear, insightful, persuasive, research-based, and appropriately documented argumentative essays. (AL, AI, CT, EC) • Effectively communicate information through oral and/or new media presentations. (CT, EC)
	(Departmental Seminar) To enable students to contribute to discipline-specific academic conversations by establishing facility with the specific concepts and methods of their chosen discipline.	• Participate in disciplinary conversations by contributing insightful, relevant ideas. (AL, AI, CT, EC) • Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to discipline-specific questions/problems. (AL, AI, CT, ED, EC) • Research and apply discipline-specific scholarly concepts and information. (AL, AI, CT) • Write clear, insightful, persuasive arguments using discipline-appropriate forms. (AL, AI, CT, EC) • Effectively communicate information through discipline-appropriate oral and/or new media presentations. (CT, EC)
	(Capstone) To enable students to apply their scholarly skills and knowledge in a capstone experience that contributes to the solution of a pressing question or problem.	• Complete a capstone project that articulates insightful, relevant ideas that contribute to the solution of a pressing question or problem within a discipline. (AL, AI, CT, EC) • Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to a question/problem within a discipline. (AL, AI, CT, ED, EC) • Perform original, independent, discipline-appropriate scholarship and apply it to a question/problem within a discipline. (AL, AI, CT) • Use a discipline-appropriate form to write a clear, insightful, persuasive, research-based, and appropriately documented argument that justifies a response to a question/problem within a discipline. (AL, AI, CT, EC) • Effectively communicate information to a public audience about one's scholarship through discipline-appropriate oral and/or new media presentations. (AL, AI, CT, EC)

The Five Core Skills of the SAGES Curriculum (Draft 2.3, Saved 3/4/14 3:30 PM)

SAGES uses seminar-based instruction to teach students how to use the skills of academic inquiry, to think critically and ethically, and to communicate their ideas in writing effectively. It uses a sequence of courses that progresses from foundational academic skills to discipline-specific concepts and methods, culminating in a capstone experience that demonstrates students' ability to apply what they have learned. This mission is achieved through a commitment to five core skills:

ACTIVE LEARNING (AL): Active learners attain knowledge by participating in, or contributing to, the construction of that knowledge. They wrestle with problems, questions, or issues that serve as a point of entry into a subject and a source of motivation for sustained inquiry. They gather information by reading critically and testing their thinking in conversation with others, and use that information to respond to problems, questions, or issues, rather than simply acquiring it for its own sake. They articulate and justify their ideas in writing or other appropriate modes. They reflect on and assess their own learning.

ACADEMIC INQUIRY (AI): Academic inquiry uses qualitative and quantitative skills to acquire the knowledge needed to answer questions and solve problems. These skills include understanding academic conversations; identifying problems and formulating relevant questions; finding and evaluating information/data through research/observation; interpreting, analyzing, and synthesizing information/data; proposing creative/innovative answers or solutions; using logical reasoning and evidence to support claims; and communicating ideas with an awareness of genre and audience. Some of these skills may be defined by the accepted values, methods, and genres of a specific discipline. In addition, academic inquiry is attended by certain attitudes: passion for learning, a sense of agency, and an appreciation of deep rather than surface knowledge.

CRITICAL THINKING (CT): Critical thinkers raise vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely. They gather and assess relevant information, making sure they identify the assumptions that frame their thinking and determine their actions, as well as gauging the degree to which those assumptions are accurate and valid. They look at ideas and decisions from multiple perspectives, and consider open-mindedly the assumptions, implications, and practical consequences of alternative systems of thought. Based on this information, they derive well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards, and communicate them to others.

ETHICAL DELIBERATION (ED): Ethical deliberation begins with awareness of one's own values and assumptions, combined with a rich appreciation of the different perspectives of others. These insights are then developed into a coherent ethical framework through careful academic inquiry and critical thinking. It furthermore considers the likely consequences of a proposed solution as viewed by different value systems. Ethical thinkers make justified, autonomous choices about matters of the human good, of social justice, or of natural value, and do so with self-awareness and clarity.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION (EC): Effective communicators express their ideas with an awareness of purpose, an ability to engage audiences both within a discipline as well as workplaces and/or civic spaces, and a facility with disciplinary-appropriate media (e.g., writing, discussion, oral presentations, posters, websites, multimedia presentations, mobile apps) and genres (e.g., technical reports, funding proposals, ethnographies, journal articles, reviews). In an academic setting, all effective communicators are able to express their ideas in writing. Although there may be variations in disciplinary conventions, effective academic writing typically responds to a question or problem by articulating its answer or solution as a controlling thesis statement that is supported by a structured presentation of persuasive reasons and evidence.

Appendix 2. 2014 Rubric

Student's CWRU ID _____ (e.g., abc123)

Reviewer's Initials _____

Expected graduation date _____ (use 5/14 format)

___ Standard portfolio

___ Contains substitutions/variations

ESL?

___ Enrolled in ESL FSEM (noted on cover page)

___ Self-Identified ESL, not enrolled in ESL FSEM

Reflective Essay

Student perception of development in writing skills across SAGES:

_____ positive change _____ no change/negative change _____ differences not addressed

Student addresses the prompt in good faith, meeting the prompt criteria.

Definitely, with sophistication	Meets criteria	Meets criteria with superficial reflection and/or examples	No

First Seminar Essay

___ Argument/Analysis ___ Exposition/Report ___ Personal/Narrative ___ Other: _____

Element	Greatly exceeds	Exceeds Expectation	At Expectation	Below Expectation	Greatly Below
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought					
Persuasive elements (audience, evidence, rhetorical moves)					

USEM Essay

___ Argument/Analysis ___ Exposition/Report____ Personal/Narrative ___ Other: _____

Element	Greatly exceeds	Exceeds Expectation	At expectation	Below expectation	Greatly below
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought					
Persuasive elements (audience, evidence, rhetorical moves)					

Research Essay

___ Argument/Analysis ____ Exposition/Report ____ Personal/Narrative ___ Other: _____

Element	Greatly exceeds	Exceeds Expectation	At expectation	Below expectation	Greatly below
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought					
Persuasive elements (audience, evidence, rhetorical moves)					

Research paper's thesis statement is …

An excellent argument thesis	

Argumentative, but superficial or lacking in some way	
Implicit or Buried	
Factual / Report oriented	
Missing	

Research paper's structure (organization, purpose, paragraph cohesion, transitions) is …

A logical arrangement of coherent paragraphs with sophisticated transitions	
Logical but missing consistent coherence and/or transitions	
Mostly logical with significant coherence and/or transition problems	
Lacking logical arrangement	
Significantly lacking logic, coherence, and transitions	

Does the research paper use effectively evidence and examples?

Evidence used with sophistication	
Evidence used imperfectly, but supports paper	
Not enough evidence or examples to support paper	
Evidence not appropriate for the paper	
No	

Does the research paper use consistently a citation format?

Yes	
Mostly, with minor mistakes	
Poorly, with some citations missing, but still shows an attempt at citing	
Few or no citations	

Holistic Evaluation of the Portfolio

Element	Greatly exceeds	Exceeds Expectation	At expectation	Below expectation	Greatly below
Structure (organization, purpose, transitions, cohesion)					
Persuasive elements (audience, evidence, rhetorical moves)					
Style (tone, voice, word choice)					
Critical thinking / sophistication of thought					
Overall Ranking					

Did the portfolio's overall Mechanics and Grammar (punctuation, syntax, sentence structure) interfere with your ease of reading?

No	
Somewhat/in particular papers	
Persistently	

Reviewer perception of development in writing skills across SAGES based on the criteria above:

___ positive change   ___ no change/negative change

Special consideration?

_____ This portfolio should be considered for recognition

_____ This portfolio potentially indicates a need for further writing support

General comment (optional):

Appendix 3: Suggested Changes to the 2015 Rubric.

Committee members suggested the following changes be made to the assessment rubric:

- Use a rubric that better defines Expectation categories, i.e.:
  Evidence (amount and quality and define what evidence is)
  Critical Thinking (organization and what you do with the evidence)
  Persuasion (if the whole makes a compelling case)
- There are two instances of the word "sophistication" on the rubric, which should be changed to either "thoughtfully" or "effectively."
- Allow for neutral categories rather than going from superb to flawed, as in the case of the thesis statement question.
- Better define genre categories
- Finer gradation for the thesis statement (i.e., debatable claim, relevance to field, etc.)
- Suggested re-wording of two assessment points:

  Now that you have read the portfolio, did you notice/do you remember grammatical, mechanical, and syntactical errors?
  No
  Few
  Many
  Yes, so many that they interfered with my reading

  Reader perception of development
  Strong improvement
  Some improvement
  No change
  Regression

Appendix 4: Suggested Revisions to Submission Guidelines

Prompt

<u>Current version:</u>
Reflecting on the essays included in your portfolio, discuss how your writing has developed across your first-year and university SAGES seminars. Provide evidence and examples from your essays and/or your writing process to demonstrate your development.
(2-3 pages)

Portfolio readers are genuinely interested in your own thinking about the writing you did in SAGES as well as the writing you do or plan to do outside of SAGES. They are most interested in what you have learned about the relation of writing to ideas and to your own critical thinking.

<u>Proposed version:</u>

Portfolio readers are genuinely interested in your own thinking about the writing that you did in SAGES, especially in what you have learned about the relation of writing to course content and to your critical thinking. Now that you have assembled your portfolio, read through your papers and reflect on the differences and similarities that you see. **In your reflective essay, explain why you have included these papers and what they show about your writing over time. (2 pages, minimum)**

Cover Page
Students need to be given categories so that they denote what genre they were asked to write for each assignment.

Appendix 5: Instructions for Submitting Portfolios Electronically

Be sure to read the entire SAGES Portfolio Submission Guidelines webpage, as some information there will not be repeated here.

Instructions for turning in your SAGES portfolio electronically

1. Create _**one**_ PDF that contains the following, in this order:

- Cover Sheet [link]
- Reflective Essay
- First Seminar paper with works cited page (if works cited page is appropriate)
- University Seminar paper with works cited page (if works cited page is appropriate)
- Research paper with works cited page

2. The PDF file must be saved as your CWRU network ID. For example: **abc123.pdf**

3. Email your portfolio to the Portfolio Coordinator: SAGESportfolio@case.edu

If any item is missing, you will need to turn in the entire PDF again, not just the missing portion, so double check your file before sending it.

To create a PDF:

Put all the documents into one Word file and save as a PDF as follows. First, ensure that you have the most recent version of Adobe that will let you save files as a PDF (you can get it from the CWRU software center online if you don't have it).

1. Download the SAGES portfolio cover page and fill it out completely.
2. Put your cursor at the bottom of the page.
3. On the Insert menu, click "file" and add your reflective essay. Do the same for the other essays to be included, ensuring that you've included works cited pages when appropriate.
4. Make sure that each essay starts on a new page.
5. Add page numbers to the document.
6. Save first as a word document (in case you need to make changes).
7. On the File menu, click "save as." Under "format" in the dialogue box, choose .pdf. Remember to name the file with your CWRU network ID: abc123.pdf
8. Email the PDF to the Portfolio Coordinator: SAGESportfolio@case.edu

You can also create a PDF by scanning the pages into one PDF. If you have a scanner, you already know how to do this. If you don't have a scanner, you can bring a hard copy of all the pages to a library copier and create a PDF following the instructions on the copier.

Remember that you can also turn in your portfolio as a hard copy to the SAGES office, Crawford 110.