

**TO:** Peter Whiting, Director of SAGES

**CC:** Kurt Koenigsberger, Director of Composition, English

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**SUBJECT:** SAGES Portfolio Faculty Evaluation Committee Report

**DATE:** 1 July 2010

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## **Introduction**

The SAGES Portfolio Faculty Evaluation Committee, consisting of university faculty from Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Psychology, Organizational Behavior, Nursing, Geology/Biological Sciences, English, and SAGES, read and evaluated 700 student writing portfolios submitted to the SAGES office between June 2009 and May 2010. 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 for SAGES and English Department writing program administrators regarding classroom instruction and the SAGES portfolio requirement.

Our chief findings are that the majority of students are writing "at expectation," or demonstrating sufficient preparation for upper division courses in their majors. We identified the following as students' major writing strengths: strong personal voice, quality self-reflection, and strong use of evidence and examples. Weaknesses involve self-editing for structure, mechanics and style. Yet, and as was the case with last year's committee, we found that students demonstrate significant weaknesses in their argumentative abilities, specifically in writing strong thesis statements.

Our major recommendations are that the program craft and communicate to students and SAGES instructors a clearer definition of "argument." Further, in addition to the research practices currently introduced in First Seminar, instructors should to some extent introduce students to academic argument. More specifically, the committee advocates modifying the current First Seminar writing outcomes to include at least a beginning familiarity with the modes of argument and/or thesis writing. Additional programmatic/classroom recommendations, as well as recommendations for modifying submission guidelines and future evaluation practices, follow at the end of this report.

## **Background**

Previous 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 submitting them as a graduation requirement (appendix 1). 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 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 in order to continue to provide programmatic feedback.

## **Methodology**

### *A. Overview*

Committee members followed a schedule drafted by coordinators (appendix 3). The first two days were spent discussing writing practices across disciplines, and familiarizing readers with last year's evaluation methods and grading criteria for the purposes of developing and testing a new rubric for evaluation. Our committee designed its rubric to identify strengths and weaknesses in writing and writing instruction, and to establish measurable benchmarks that could be retained for comparison in subsequent years.

### *B. Rubric Generation*

Our rubric allowed for evaluation of particular essays as well as for a holistic reading of the portfolios (appendix 5). The committee generated specific questions about three components: the reflective essay, composed to introduce readers to portfolio contents and to provide an assessment and discussion of perceived gains in writing; an essay from First Seminar; and the 10-12 page research paper requirement. These three essays, along with the other University Seminar essay, were considered in the holistic evaluation.

The first part of the rubric (addressing the reflective essay) focuses on students' perceived gains in SAGES and the quality of their discussion, including the use of specific examples. The second part of the rubric (addressing the essay from First Seminar) asks readers to classify the genre of the essay in order to reveal the extent to which academic argumentation is being taught in these courses. The third part of the rubric (addressing the research paper) measures ability in argumentative writing and use of evidence and sources. The last part of the rubric allows for a holistic evaluation of students' writing skills. Skills were identified by the committee as those in which students should demonstrate proficiency by the end of their second University Seminar. The criteria were generated from both a group discussion of disciplinary writing standards and the recommended writing outcomes for SAGES seminars developed by the English Department (appendix 2).

Our committee used the online survey system available through filer, which allowed us to attain more quickly the results of our data. Additionally, the filer survey allowed us to include an open

section for brief comments on the rated essays. Two members of the committee conducted qualitative analysis of the readers' comments in order to help further identify trends in the writing.

## Results

Our committee found that the expectations for essay requirements were apparently much clearer this time than for last year's committee. Most of the portfolios reflected "good faith" efforts to satisfy the requirements. In fact, approximately 82% of the portfolios were "standard" in that they included the requested materials without substitutions or variations; 17% contained a substitution or variation.<sup>1</sup> Only 4% of portfolios contained a multi-authored work.

### 1. Reflective Essay

The committee examined the reflective essay in regard to several criteria. Like last year, the committee tallied the number of students who attributed gains in their writing ability to their SAGES courses. Within these essays, we looked for quality discussion and self-reflection. We focused on three main points: the use of examples of strengths and weaknesses; self-reflection about development in writing as opposed to summarizing improvements; and the integration of specific examples from the essays chosen for the portfolio. The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Results of portfolio evaluation: Reflective Essay<sup>2</sup>

Criterion	% Yes	% Weak	% No	% Not Scored
Expressed gains	94 (73-90)	N/A: 3 (0-11)*	2 (1-5)	1 (0-4)
Used examples of strengths, weaknesses	70 (39-78)	25 (7-30)	5 (0-19)	0 (0-1)
Conducted substantial self-reflection	62 (27-77)	28 (11-34)	10 (1-29)	10 (0-1)
Integrates examples from essays	66 (34-80)	22 (8-36)	11 (0-23)	0 (0)

*\*This number refers to students who did not address gains.*

**Expressed Gains.** It is gratifying that 94% of students indicated that they experienced gains in their writing ability, and only 5% of students either reported that such gains did not occur through SAGES writing instruction and/or did not address gains. Many students expressed that the process of reviewing their essays for the portfolio was beneficial. Other gains mentioned by students include an increase in the following skills: organizing papers; citing detailed and meaningful evidence; crafting more focused arguments; writing more clearly and concisely;

<sup>1</sup>The most common substitution was for the research paper. These substitutions came from First Seminars, departmental seminars, multiple non-SAGES classes, and published articles. Frequently, two papers were included in the portfolio from the same SAGES class. In a very few cases, none of the papers were from a SAGES course.

<sup>2</sup>The numbers in parentheses in this and all subsequent tables denote the ranges reported by readers; each number refers to the range of portfolios, not the range of percentages.

engaging in more frequent revision; thinking critically; writing in various styles and genres; establishing his/her own voice; critically reading other texts and his/her own work; portraying professionalism and sophistication; and utilizing other effective writing strategies. Several students mentioned that they had more confidence in moving away from the five-paragraph essay structure that they learned in high school. Many students attributed their gains to working with writing instructors.

Additional reviewer observations about the reflective essays follow:

- Sometimes students either over- or underestimated their writing ability, but overall students represented themselves as writers accurately.
- Some reviewers thought that most essays were well done, and reflected true progression by the students. Others felt several essays to be hastily composed, and, as such, were merely a nod to SAGES portfolio requirements.
- Most students reported growth. To some extent, they attributed it to more writing practice, or designated it as personal growth, not simply growth of writing skill. Some readers felt that a significant number of the representations of growth could be attributed to the simple fact that students are asked to discuss it in their reflection.
- Although not required to comment on their courses, most students seemed to have positive feelings about their SAGES courses. A few students, however, seemed to be on either end of the spectrum, providing either extremely negative or positive commentary.
- Students appreciated the “variety” offered by the SAGES model, noting that they enjoyed learning about a number of different subjects, writing in different genres, and interacting with students from different disciplines.

**Self-Reflection.** Compared with last year, this year's committee thought that students better understood the purpose of the reflective essay, and more successfully engaged in discussion about their own writing when introducing their work. Many committee members were impressed by the quality of such discussions. Reviewers determined that 70% of students identified specific strengths and weaknesses in their writing, and 62% conducted substantial self-reflection. The committee found some room for improvement in students’ integration of examples of their own work: while the fact that 66% of students integrated examples from their essays is favorable, 33% are either not doing this at all or doing this weakly.

Other comments concerning self-reflection include:

- Last year's change in page length (from 1-2 pages to 2-3 pages) for the reflective essay seemed to contribute to a deeper level of analysis and self-reflection. Readers noted that students took more time to describe their process and to express how their writing – and their perception of it – has changed. Several students looked ahead to how certain skills might translate professionally and personally. The committee saw interesting and thoughtful self-reflection in both the stronger and weaker essays, although, for the most part, the more proficient students illustrated the most accurate insight and assessment of their writing.

- While the newer guidelines instructing students to provide examples from their own writing resulted in slightly longer essays and, in many cases, more substantial reflection, many students did not fully integrate the quotations; therefore, their essays still seemed a bit rushed and/or lacking in depth.

### 2. *First Seminar Essay*

In an attempt to better understand the kind of writing that students do in First Seminar, and the extent to which they are currently engaging in researched argumentation in this class (although it is currently not a requirement), the committee developed a question focusing on whether the essay was a "researched argument." We defined "researched argument" as an essay that attempts to prove a claim and that contains secondary research. If the essay lacked either a thesis statement or research it was scored as a "no." The results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of Portfolio Evaluation: First Seminar Essay

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>% Weak</b>	<b>% No</b>	<b>% Not Scored</b>
Contains a researched argument	36 (6-56)	14 (0-31)	48 (8-77)	2 (0-7)

After reading the essays from First Seminar, committee members remarked generally that many essays demonstrated research, sometimes extensively, with well-crafted arguments. In fact, we found that 50% of students were doing this in some fashion, either strongly (36%) or weakly (14%). Roughly half of the students (48%), however, did not write researched arguments *or* did not submit such an essay. Though it is difficult to evaluate this data because the portfolio guidelines for the First Seminar essay are not prescriptive (students may have written an argumentative research essay, but did not choose to include it), the information does show us that research/argument is being required of students in at least one-third of these courses. Additionally, committee members serving as portfolio readers in the past noted that there were less non-traditional first seminar assignments (creative works, personal narratives) in this year's submissions, but more critical analyses or argument-based papers (with or without research).

### 3. *Research Essay*

**Table 3.** Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Research Essay

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>% Academic Argument</b>	<b>% Report</b>	<b>% Other</b>	<b>% No Answer</b>
Classified as	60 (16-82)	28 (9-58)	10 (1-27)	2 (0-10)

The term "academic argument" was defined by the group as an essay that presented an arguable claim that the rest of the paper attempted to prove. The term "report" was used to indicate that the essay was an overview or summary (with research) of a particular topic (such as the paintings of El Greco, the history of Conneaut, Ohio, etc.) and made no arguable claim about the topic. The term "report" was also used to classify essays of a particular genre, such as scientific lab

reports. The term "other" described research papers that were unable to fit neatly into either category, such as personal narratives and research proposals.

While the data reveals that 60% of students are engaging in academic argument, committee members still felt that several of these essays were not completely successful in proving their claims and that, in general, the number of researched reports (nearly one-third) identifies a significant area in need of attention for writing program administrators.

**Table 4.** Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Research Essay

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>%Weak</b>	<b>% No</b>	<b>% Not Applicable</b>	<b>% Not Scored</b>
Contains thesis statement	45 (22-66)	26 (7-47)	7 (0-18)	21 (0-43)	1 (0-2)

**Thesis statements.** In identifying and evaluating thesis statements, committee members focused on the presence of a specific introductory statement that set forth the claims of the essay as opposed to a just clear organizing structure or principle in the paper. Reviewer comments regarding thesis statements noted in many papers the absence of a thesis, a weak or poorly defined thesis, and “thesis drift” (or failure to prove the claims set forth). As one reviewer succinctly stated: “[a] pattern is becoming clear that students don’t write good thesis statements in most of the papers that have been submitted.”

While some reviewers noted that students emphasized gains in thesis making, the committee strongly feels that this element of academic argument requires more emphasis within the SAGES writing courses beginning in First Seminar.

**Table 5.** Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Research Essay

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>% Weak</b>	<b>% No</b>	<b>% Not Scored</b>
Appropriately uses evidence and examples	77 (39-85)	17 (3-30)	5 (0-15)	1 (0-5)
Appropriately attributes referenced materials	71 (31-84)	19 (5-32)	9 (0-21)	1 (0-2)

Despite students' weaknesses in crafting appropriate arguments, readers still found that the majority of students used evidence and examples appropriate to their discussions, whether they were argumentative papers or not. While the majority of students also demonstrate strengths in appropriate attribution of sources, readers' comments also identified in some essays an inconsistent or lax (i.e. citing only once at the end of each paragraph) use of formatting styles. Additionally, readers felt rather strongly that beginning in First Seminar, the issue of appropriate attribution must continue to be discussed and enforced.

#### *4. Holistic Evaluation*

The committee evaluated the overall portfolio quality in regard to four elements that underlie effective writing:

**Coherent Structure:** the purpose or principles of the writing are obvious, easy to follow, and are presented in such a way that makes clear sense to the reader

**Persuasive Abilities:** demonstrates ability to convince readers of a position by the use of appropriate evidence, rhetorical appeals, appropriate structure and/or presentation, appropriate evidence, and critical analysis

**Mechanics:** includes grammar, spelling, and usage

**Style:** includes language, sentence structure, and rhetoric appropriate to a general academic discourse community

The committee also evaluated the effectiveness of the portfolio. Each of these elements, and the overall effectiveness, were classified as:

**Above Expectation:** demonstrates overall excellence; equivalent to an “A”

**At Expectation:** demonstrates competence and adequate preparation; equivalent to a broad “B or C”

**Below Expectation:** demonstrates skill falling below “C-competence” level; in need of significant further development

**Table 6.** Holistic Evaluation: Comparison to Expectations

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>% Above Expectation</b>	<b>% At Expectation</b>	<b>% Below Expectation</b>	<b>% Not Scored</b>
<b>Coherent Structure</b>	33 (18-46)	57 (18-65)	9 (3-20)	1 (0-4)
<b>Persuasive Abilities</b>	26 (13-41)	60 (42-69)	14 (2-28)	0 (0-1)
<b>Mechanics</b>	32 (13-42)	60 (38-68)	8 (3-13)	0 (0-1)
<b>Style</b>	30 (14-42)	59 (44-67)	10 (3-24)	1 (0-3)
<b>Overall Ranking</b>	28 (16-45)	63 (43-65)	8 (4-13)	1 (0-2)

**Coherent Structure.** Readers determined that in terms of coherent structure – and despite the presence or absence of a strong thesis statement – students demonstrated a strong understanding of paper organization. Most of the papers illustrated that students understood the logic with which to proceed in their discussions.

**Persuasive Abilities.** In light of students' weaknesses in argumentation, readers were not surprised that 14% of students were considered below expectation in this category (the highest in

the holistic section.) Still, 60% were at expectation and 26% above expectation, largely due to strengths in appropriate structure/presentation and critical analysis.

**Mechanics.** While the readers determined that most of the students were at expectation regarding mechanics, in many cases it was clear that students failed to properly proofread their essays. Inappropriate capitalization and punctuation were frequently observed. More significant usage problems included failure to use transitions, errors in verb tense, and use of colloquial language.

**Citation Errors.** Readers noticed several instances of students' lack of proper attribution and other incorrect methods of citation. In a few cases, it was clear that students either did not cite their own papers or other texts. Both reference lists and in-text citations showed mistakes.

**Style.** While most students were at expectation (59%) or above expectation (30%) with regard to style, most did not demonstrate an overly sophisticated approach to writing. One strength involved awareness of audience and the ability to adjust language, tone, and structure accordingly.

## **Recommendations**

### *A. Recommendations for Classroom Instruction*

Writing Instruction: Last year's committee reported that their "most significant observation with regard to the research papers concerns the prevalence of report-style papers rather than argumentative papers." They recommended that "more attention should be paid to writing instruction addressing persuasive abilities and argumentation." Since our committee made some changes in the rubric for assessing the presence and quality of argument, we cannot make exact comparisons with last year's data. However, it seems clear that, while progress has clearly been made, the percent and quality of the argumentative and persuasive writing students are required to do in SAGES still deserves attention. Specifically, we recommend the following:

- Every attempt should be made to clarify for both students and SAGES instructors what is meant and implied by the terms "argument" and "academic argument." The final approved definition should include the idea of a strong and clearly stated thesis supported by appropriate evidence and examples or data supplied by research.
- Academic argumentation and thesis development must be introduced in First Seminar (and more explicitly mentioned in outcomes for First Seminar) and continued throughout University Seminars.
- Proper citation practices should be more strongly emphasized to students, beginning in First Seminar courses.
- Both instructors and students might benefit from a handout clearly spelling out the SAGES Program's expectations for the research requirement.
- There might be USEMs specifically dedicated to students with continuing problems—just as there might also be what in effect would be "Honors" USEMs for students doing work demonstrably above expectation.



- SAGES instructors not used to teaching writing in their regular courses should continue to be made aware of the writing support available to them.
- All University Seminar instructors should still be strongly encouraged to assign a 10-12 page research essay that contains an argument.

Finally, our committee is concerned about the number of portfolios with multiple substitutions of papers from other classes for SAGES papers which were made because the SAGES papers have been lost, computers have crashed, or students report that they were never required to write a research paper in SAGES. Until SAGES can implement an electronic submission system, an interim solution should be explored. One possibility is for SAGES to reserve an account on filer specifically for portfolio building. While the problem should be minimized by the proposed earlier submission date for portfolios, in the meantime we recommend that instructors strongly urge students to save their work on filer, Google docs, or other available external storage systems.

### *B. Recommendations for Portfolio Guidelines*

**Reshape Reflective Essay Prompt.** The reflective essays are better than in the past, but many students are not displaying significant self-reflection in their essays. Multiple reviewers commented on the wide variability of contents of the reflective essay. We would suggest posting a template with sample sentences or a brief outline to give students a better idea of the type of self-reflection we are seeking. We suggest changing the wording of the essay prompt to emphasize that this is the only new writing required for the portfolio, and that the substantial nature of the essay will require careful thought. We would like to see students write slightly longer essays, so would suggest a page length of 2-4 pages. Also, instructors for First Seminar should continue to be encouraged to emphasize reflective writing within the Writing Folder assignment.

**Encourage Submission of Best Papers.** At present, students have a great deal of discretion in choosing which papers they would like to submit. Some submit the only papers available, others submit their first writing in college to demonstrate growth, still others submit the papers they saw as most challenging to write. Our committee would like to students to submit what they see the best papers that students are writing for class. Thus, we would like the portfolio guidelines to instruct students to turn in their best papers from each class, but we would *not* like students to substantially revise papers beyond what they did in class.

**Formatting of Papers.** Our committee suggests more consistent formatting standards, such as double-spaced, dated, paginated papers with conformity in font and standard margins.

**Timing of Submissions.** It is our understanding that the SIS system will be modified so that students must turn in their portfolio during the semester after their last University Seminar in order to register for classes the following semester. We strongly support this policy as it will not only provide greater accuracy in program evaluation, (we evaluated portfolios with graduation dates ranging from December 2007 to May 2010), but also allow us to make those students who are in need of additional writing support better aware of the options available to them before they proceed with their upper division courses.

### *C. Recommendations for Future Evaluation Procedures*

The committee spent a significant portion of the first and second day establishing a ranking system and clarifying definitions of writing criteria for the purposes of evaluation. We have several suggestions to reduce the between-reader variability of portfolio evaluations.

**More Detailed Definitions for Rubric.** While we did have available a definition sheet for the various terms in our rubric, more detailed definitions of terms and conditions *for each question* will help with future reader reliability. For example, the committee should discuss and define what is meant by “academic argument” based on what SAGES determines as the characteristic attributes. In addition, there should be more discussion and agreement on the number and meaning of holistic categories. We used the same three categories as 2009 —above, at, and below expectation — but modified their definition. Future committees and/or writing program administrators might consider if making a finer distinction is feasible and useful. Eventually, consistent evaluation criteria must be used year-to-year to enable more direct comparisons.

**Group Calibration.** To better calibrate a common understanding of definitions and categories and insure reader reliability, we suggest: 1) joint scoring of (5-10) model essays (that range in quality) prior to evaluation of all portfolios; and 2) a read-then-reconvene session after an initial reading of the first 12-15 essays. These sessions will provide a more consistent, collective review of portfolios.

**Question(s) of Instructional Interest.** The 2009 committee suggested that each year the evaluators focus on a particular question of instructional interest to the SAGES program. Pending appropriate changes to portfolio submission requirements, one such question might address the accuracy of students' self-reflection (i.e. after reading the four portfolio essays, does the evaluator agree with the student’s assessment of his or her development as a writer?).

**Identifying Trends in Writing.** We are not currently in a good position to confidently make statements about trends over time in student writing. While we preserved intact large parts of the 2009 evaluation rubric, we also significantly modified parts of it. If there is interest in temporal trends—and we are not all sure this is either feasible or necessary—there likely should be developed over time a portion of the evaluation rubric that does not change from year to year. Also, some felt that the SAGES program might consider changing portfolio committee membership to rotating multi-year terms. This would provide a balance between diversity of faculty participation via turnover and institutional memory that would enhance our qualitative ability to see long-term change in the portfolios.

**Providing Comments to Students.** The portfolio review process does not currently include the provision of feedback to students, which some members of the group found unfortunate. Others, however, thought that this practice would compromise the ability of the committee to provide timely programmatic review. While all committee members acknowledge the importance of program assessment, members also felt that students might greatly benefit from either/both a) minimal comments, and/ or b) an acknowledgement letter/email confirming that their portfolio was read and considered for program assessment. A few thought that such "feedback" should consist of the evaluation sheet describing each student’s ratings from the holistic categories accompanied by reviewers' brief comments. In this scenario, for those students receiving a

“below expectation” holistic rating, the portfolio might be reviewed by an additional faculty member for secondary assessment.

**Collaborative Essays.** Committee members found it difficult to evaluate collaborative papers within a portfolio of otherwise individual work. Future committees need to determine how to better evaluate collaborative work. Some of this year's committee members do not think we should allow collaborative papers because it is difficult to identify, much less evaluate, the student's individual contribution, despite the guidelines specifying a need for reader's notes. We suggest that the holistic evaluation not include the group paper unless it is possible to identify the student's individual contribution.

**Online Survey Tool.** In order to streamline the committee review process, we suggest that a better online survey tool (e.g. Survey Monkey) be used for input of evaluations. The reviewers should have the ability to go back and check their inputted data, and even make corrections, if feasible. The tool should warn evaluators if boxes are left blank to prevent omissions and mistakes.

## Appendix 1: SAGES History

“*Portfolio* should designate, at least, an ordered compilation of writings.... A portfolio ideally should be a deliberate compilation, gathered according to some plan, for use by an identified reader or readers for specific needs or purposes.”

Larson, Richard L, “Using Portfolios in the Assessment of Writing,” Pat Belanoff and Marcia Dickson, eds., *Portfolios: Process and Product*, (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1991), 138.

### **SAGES Pilot & First Years of Implementation (2004-2008)**

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Portfolios served a “gatekeeping” function to certify that students wrote proficiently, based on the pre-SAGES “C-Competence” statement:

**C COMPETENCE:** A “C” grade, the minimum for competence in English 150, means that the student has demonstrated in the course of writing seven thousand words (approximately 28 pages) that he or she can consistently produce an original paper that has, prior to revisions suggested by the instructor, the following characteristics, listed under three major criteria for evaluating compositions:

**STYLE:** The “C” paper is generally clear and moderately concise. Vocabulary and sentence structure are suitable for the subject matter and the intended audience.

**ORGANIZATION:** The “C” paper delineates a reasonably limited thesis on a subject appropriate to the assignment and develops the idea with some supporting detail, footnoted where necessary. Division into sections is logical, with fairly smooth transitions from one part to the next.

**MECHANICS:** The “C” paper is neat and for the most part free of errors in spelling, verb and pronoun form, agreement, sentence completion, punctuation, and capitalization.

#### **Problems with this model:**

- Cost of portfolio reading each summer (in time, money, and writing program resources)
- “Gatekeeping” function arrives too late – students should be receiving more feedback on their writing earlier in their college careers – and implies that writing will be assessed outside of SAGES seminars
- Appearance of contradictory assessments (SAGES Seminar Leader gives a student an “A” and the student’s portfolio is not passed)
- Power differential (portfolios read largely by graduate students and non-tenure-track faculty)

### **Portfolios for Program Assessment (2008-2009 Revisions)**

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1. Certify Composition Requirement after “good faith” portfolio submission (all documents are complete and show at least acceptable effort in terms of content, length, and mechanics).
2. Use portfolio reading time in the summer to read for *program* review rather than student review, feeding back suggestions for what students are achieving and what they are missing in their first two years of SAGES instruction.
3. Find a way to recognize outstanding portfolios and to recommend additional support to students whose portfolios are deemed extremely problematic.

## Appendix 2: SAGES Outcomes

**Resources for Teaching Writing** from <http://www.case.edu/sages/fellows.htm#write>

### **English Department Recommended Writing Outcomes**

#### **By the end of First Seminar, students should be able to:**

- Engage critically and considerately with the written ideas of peers.
- Identify and summarize the main points of a published piece of writing supplied by the instructor.
- Respond critically in writing to scholarly ideas from a variety of perspectives or positions.
- Craft a specific question that can form the basis for sustained inquiry on a topic.
- Identify representative University and University Circle resources to support writing projects.
- Write in a consistent, clear, and grammatical personal voice.
- Reflect critically on their own ideas.
- Describe Case's Academic Integrity Policy.
- Explain the role of and significance of differences among various citation formats (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.).
- Refine phrasing and ideas through directed revision.

#### **By the end of a University Seminar, students should be able to:**

- Identify, summarize, and respond critically to an array of scholarly ideas and texts gathered through independent research.
- Develop a focused, informed, and specific research question (appropriate to the topic of the course and to the context of a scholarly problem).
- Define a scholarly position in a clear, grammatical voice that is characteristic of an academic community.
- Draft persuasive and/or analytical arguments of appropriately delimited scope for a 10-12 page paper. These arguments should include strong and clear claims, appropriate presentation and interpretation of evidence, and substantial exploration of the warrants/backings that authorize them.
- Cite consistently and comprehensively a variety of print and electronic resources using a citation format appropriate to the area of inquiry.
- Demonstrate a facility with the sentence structures and rhetorical moves most common to academic writing.
- Demonstrate a capacity for self-directed revision of writing for effective argumentation and for stylistic clarity.

## Appendix 3: 2010 Reading Schedule

**2010 Summer Portfolio Reading Schedule-Overview****June 9, 9:00-4:00:** Orientation & Workshop on Portfolios**June 10, 9:00-4:00:** Workshop on Portfolios; Student Portfolios Distributed for Reading**June 11-16:** Portfolio Reading (completed on readers' own schedules; no group meetings)**June 17, 9:00-4:00:** Reporting on Reading **DATA DUE TODAY by 9 a.m. (e-mail to Ashley)****June 18, 9:00-4:00:** Reporting on Reading & Drafting of Final Report**June 21, 9:00-4:00:** Creation of Final Summary Report**June 22, 9:00-4:00:** Final Summary Report Completed & Published**Wednesday – June 9**

**9:00** Introductions  
**9:45** Background and current procedures  
**10:15** Coffee break  
**10:30** Group discussion:

What role does writing play in your (SAGES or non-SAGES) course(s)?  
 What writing skills do you emphasize w your students?  
 How do you teach and evaluate those skills?

**12-1:00** Working Lunch – Introduction to portfolios  
**1:00** 2010 Rubric development.

Elements – grading criteria  
 Last year's rubric  
 Emphasis on argument/thesis (handout)  
 SAGES outcomes

**3:00** Finalize rubric  
**3:30** Data entry procedures  
**3:45** Pick up portfolios

**Thursday – June 10**

**9:00** Data Sheets due to Ashley (ask58@case.edu); Discuss reading/evaluation  
**9:45** Discuss/make changes to rubric/data entry system  
**10:30** Discuss reading process for report generation  
**11:15** Comparison with last year's report  
**12-2:30** Lunch; Review process for indentifying outstanding portfolios and those that may indicate a need for additional writing support.

Appendix 4: Ranking System, Writing Skills and Definitions

**2010 Ranking System and Writing Skills Criteria Definitions**

**Ranking**

**Above Expectation:** demonstrates overall excellence; equivalent to an “A”

**At Expectation:** demonstrates competence and adequate preparation; equivalent to a broad “B or C”

**Below Expectation:** demonstrates skill falling below “C-competence” level; in need of significant further development

**Descriptions for Writing Elements**

**Style:** includes language, sentence structure, and rhetoric appropriate to a general academic discourse community

**Persuasive Abilities:** demonstrates ability to convince readers of a position by the use of appropriate evidence, rhetorical appeals, appropriate structure and/or presentation, appropriate evidence, and critical analysis

**Coherent Structure:** the purpose or principles of the writing are obvious, easy to follow, and are presented in such a way that makes clear sense to the reader

**Mechanics:** includes grammar, spelling, and usage

Appendix 5: 2010 Rubric

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Initials of Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

1. How would you classify this portfolio?

Standard \_\_\_\_\_ Contains substitutions/variations \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does this portfolio contain a multi-authored paper?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**▽ Reflective Essay**

3. Student perception of gains in writing skills:

Student reports gains \_\_\_\_\_ Student reports no gains \_\_\_\_\_ Student does not address gains \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does student include specific examples of strengths and weaknesses in writing?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Weak \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does student reflect on his/her development as a writer as opposed to only summarizing?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Weak \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. Does student integrate specific examples from his/her essays in the discussion?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Weak \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**▽ First Seminar**

7. Does this essay contain a researched argument?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Weak \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



**▽ Research Essay**

8. How would you classify this essay?

Academic argument \_\_\_ Report \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

9. Is there a thesis?

Yes \_\_\_ Weak \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Not applicable \_\_\_

10. Does the student appropriately use evidence and examples?

Yes \_\_\_ Weak \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

11. Does the student appropriately attribute referenced material?

Yes \_\_\_ Weak \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**▽ Holistic Evaluation**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Above Expectation</b>	<b>At Expectation</b>	<b>Below Expectation</b>
Coherent Structure			
Persuasive Abilities			
Mechanics			
Style			
Overall Ranking			

Does this student deserve an award or need remedial attention? Award \_\_\_ RA \_\_\_

## Appendix 6: Committee Results with Ranges

**2010 Committee Results with Individual Ranges****Number of portfolios each person reviewed:**

ask: 89                      msj: 92                      ara: 90                      wrs: 90  
 pm: 88                      ssc: 86                      cah: 80                      jb: 80

**Table 1. Results of portfolio evaluation: Reflective Essay**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>% Yes (73-90)</b>	<b>% Weak (0-11)</b>	<b>% No (1-5)</b>	<b>% Not Scored (0-4)</b>
Expressed gains	<b>94 (73-90)</b> ask: 87 msj: 90 ara: 73 wrs: 89 pm: 84 ssc: 81 cah: 77 jb: 74	<b>3 (0-11) N/A</b> ask: 0 msj: 1 ara: 11 wrs: 0 pm: 2 ssc: 2 cah: 1 jb: 1	<b>2 (1-5)</b> ask: 1 msj: 1 ara: 5 wrs: 1 pm: 1 ssc: 2 cah: 2 jb: 1	<b>1 (0-4)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 1 wrs: 0 pm: 1 ssc: 0 cah: 0 jb: 4
Used examples of strengths, weaknesses	<b>70 (39-78)</b> ask: 68 msj: 78 ara: 63 wrs: 83 pm: 39 ssc: 54 cah: 51 jb: 49	<b>25 (7-30)</b> ask: 19 msj: 14 ara: 23 wrs: 7 pm: 30 ssc: 28 cah: 25 jb: 26	<b>5 (0-19)</b> ask: 2 msj: 0 ara: 3 wrs: 0 pm: 19 ssc: 4 cah: 4 jb: 5	<b>0 (0-1)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 1 wrs: 0 pm: 0 ssc: 0 cah: 0 jb: 0
Conducted substantial self-reflection	<b>62 (27-77)</b> ask: 58 msj: 58 ara: 77 wrs: 72 pm: 27 ssc: 41 cah: 45 jb: 44	<b>28 (11-34)</b> ask: 29 msj: 23 ara: 11 wrs: 17 pm: 32 ssc: 34 cah: 31 jb: 17	<b>10 (1-29)</b> ask: 2 msj: 1 ara: 2 wrs: 1 pm: 29 ssc: 10 cah: 4 jb: 18	<b>0 (0-1)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 0 wrs: 0 pm: 0 ssc: 1 cah: 0 jb: 1
Integrates examples from essays	<b>66 (34-80)</b> ask: 72 msj: 59 ara: 80 wrs: 72 pm: 34	<b>22 (8-36)</b> ask: 15 msj: 19 ara: 8 wrs: 19 pm: 36	<b>11 (0-23)</b> ask: 2 msj: 14 ara: 2 wrs: 0 pm: 18	<b>0 (0)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 0 wrs: 0 pm: 0

	ssc: 60 cah: 41 jb: 43	ssc: 23 cah: 28 jb: 14	ssc: 9 cah: 11 jb: 23	ssc: 0 cah: 0 jb:
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**Table 2. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: First Seminar Essay**

Criterion	% Yes	% Weak	% No	% Not Scored
Contains a researched argument	<b>36 (6-56)</b> ask: 26 msj: 24 ara: 56 wrs: 51 pm: 26 ssc: 6 cah: 31 jb: 32	<b>14 (0-31)</b> ask: 31 msj: 9 ara: 23 wrs: 10 pm: 0 ssc: 1 cah: 9 jb: 4	<b>48 (8-77)</b> ask: 32 msj: 59 ara: 8 wrs: 22 pm: 50 ssc: 77 cah: 40 jb: 44	<b>2 (0-7)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 3 wrs: 7 pm: 0 ssc: 2 cah: 0 jb: 0

**Table 3. Research Paper**

Criterion	% Academic Argument	% Report	% Other	% Not Scored
Classified as	<b>60 (16-82)</b> ask: 60 msj: 82 ara: 61 wrs: 43 pm: 72 ssc: 16 cah: 30 jb: 53	<b>28 (9-58)</b> ask: 22 msj: 9 ara: 16 wrs: 19 pm: 13 ssc: 58 cah: 42 jb: 12	<b>10 (1-27)</b> ask: 7 msj: 1 ara: 3 wrs: 27 pm: 2 ssc: 12 cah: 8 jb: 12	<b>2 (0-10)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 10 wrs: 1 pm: 1 ssc: 0 cah: 0 jb: 3

**Table 4. Research Paper**

Criterion	% Yes	% Weak	% No	% Not Applicable	% Not Scored
Contains thesis statement	<b>45 (22-66)</b> ask: 34 msj: 22 ara: 56	<b>26 (7-47)</b> ask: 26 msj: 47 ara: 13	<b>7 (0-18)</b> ask: 2 msj: 18 ara: 1	<b>21 (0-43)</b> ask: 27 msj: 5 ara: 18	<b>1 (0-2)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 2

	wrs: 66 pm: 44 ssc: 38 cah: 23 jb: 29	wrs: 7 pm: 19 ssc: 29 cah: 13 jb: 25	wrs: 0 pm: 9 ssc: 18 cah: 1 jb: 2	wrs: 16 pm: 15 ssc: 0 cah: 43 jb: 22	wrs: 1 pm: 1 ssc: 1 cah: 0 jb: 2
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**Table 5. Research Paper**

Criterion	% Yes	% Weak	% No	% Not Scored
Appropriately uses evidence and examples	<b>77 (39-85)</b> ask: 71 msj: 79 ara: 75 wrs: 85 pm: 39 ssc: 65 cah: 66 jb: 46	<b>17 (3-30)</b> ask: 14 msj: 11 ara: 3 wrs: 5 pm: 30 ssc: 6 cah: 14 jb: 23	<b>5 (0-15)</b> ask: 4 msj: 2 ara: 0 wrs: 0 pm: 15 ssc: 5 cah: 0 jb: 6	<b>1 (0-5)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 2 wrs: 0 pm: 2 ssc: 0 cah: 0 jb: 5
Appropriately attributes referenced materials	<b>71 (31-84)</b> ask: 65 msj: 76 ara: 75 wrs: 84 pm: 31 ssc: 61 cah: 64 jb: 34	<b>19 (5-32)</b> ask: 20 msj: 13 ara: 10 wrs: 5 pm: 32 ssc: 13 cah: 16 jb: 23	<b>9 (0-21)</b> ask: 4 msj: 3 ara: 2 wrs: 1 pm: 21 ssc: 12 cah: 0 jb: 21	<b>1 (0-2)</b> ask: msj: 0 ara: 1 wrs: 0 pm: 2 ssc: 0 cah: 0 jb: 2

**Table 6. Holistic Evaluation: Comparison to Expectations**

Criterion	% Above Expectation	% At Expectation	% Below Expectation	% Not Scored
<b>Coherent Structure</b>	<b>33 (18-46)</b> ask: 27 msj: 31 ara: 46 wrs: 18 pm: 18 ssc: 27	<b>57 (18-65)</b> ask: 52 msj: 59 ara: 37 wrs: 65 pm: 18 ssc: 48	<b>9 (3-20)</b> ask: 9 msj: 2 ara: 6 wrs: 3 pm: 20 ssc: 10	<b>1 (0-4)</b> ask: 1 msj: 0 ara: 1 wrs: 4 pm: 0 ssc: 1

<b>Coherent Structure</b>	<b>33 (18-46)</b> ask: 27 msj: 31 ara: 46 wrs: 18 pm: 18 ssc: 27 cah: 26 jb: 35	<b>57 (18-65)</b> ask: 52 msj: 59 ara: 37 wrs: 65 pm: 18 ssc: 48 cah: 49 jb: 38	<b>9 (3-20)</b> ask: 9 msj: 2 ara: 6 wrs: 3 pm: 20 ssc: 10 cah: 4 jb: 6	<b>1 (0-4)</b> ask: 1 msj: 0 ara: 1 wrs: 4 pm: 0 ssc: 1 cah: 1 jb: 1
<b>Persuasive Abilities</b>	<b>26 (13-41)</b> ask: 22 msj: 19 ara: 41 wrs: 18 pm: 13 ssc: 25 cah: 24 jb: 19	<b>60 (42-69)</b> ask: 50 msj: 62 ara: 45 wrs: 69 pm: 47 ssc: 51 cah: 50 jb: 42	<b>14 (2-28)</b> ask: 17 msj: 11 ara: 4 wrs: 2 pm: 28 ssc: 7 cah: 5 jb: 19	<b>0 (0-1)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 0 wrs: 1 pm: 0 ssc: 1 cah: 1 jb: 0
<b>Mechanics</b>	<b>32 (13-42)</b> ask: 38 msj: 33 ara: 42 wrs: 18 pm: 13 ssc: 29 cah: 24 jb: 25	<b>60 (38-68)</b> ask: 38 msj: 54 ara: 45 wrs: 68 pm: 67 ssc: 47 cah: 51 jb: 46	<b>8 (3-13)</b> ask: 13 msj: 5 ara: 3 wrs: 4 pm: 8 ssc: 9 cah: 5 jb: 9	<b>0 (0-1)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 0 wrs: 0 pm: 0 ssc: 1 cah: 0 jb: 0
<b>Style</b>	<b>30 (14-42)</b> ask: 25 msj: 26 ara: 42 wrs: 17 pm: 14 ssc: 23 cah: 26 jb: 32	<b>59 (44-67)</b> ask: 49 msj: 58 ara: 44 wrs: 67 pm: 49 ssc: 53 cah: 50 jb: 43	<b>10 (3-24)</b> ask: 15 msj: 8 ara: 4 wrs: 3 pm: 24 ssc: 8 cah: 4 jb: 5	<b>1 (0-3)</b> ask: 0 msj: 0 ara: 0 wrs: 3 pm: 1 ssc: 2 cah: 0 jb: 0
	<b>28 (16-45)</b> ask: 28 msi: 21	<b>63 (43-65)</b> ask: 51 msi: 65	<b>8 (4-13)</b> ask: 10 msi: 6	<b>1 (0-2)</b> ask: 0 msi: 0