

WRITING PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT (WPA)

SDSU is closely following the COVID-19 guidelines set forth by national, state and local public health and government officials as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All in-person testing has been suspended until further notice. SDSU continues to monitor the evolving situation around COVID-19 and will provide updates as soon as they become available.

The WPA will NOT be required for students who have achieved 60 units or who are achieving 60 units as of spring 2021. These students will be allowed to enroll directly into an appropriate upper-division writing class or take the WPA online using Respondus Monitor and LockDown Browser. Please review the WPA details below. If you still have questions, email staar@sdsu.edu or visit the [Testing Services zoom virtual front desk](#).

The California State University System (CSU) adopted the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), requiring that **all undergraduate students** demonstrate competency in writing skills at the upper division level as a requirement for the baccalaureate degree within the California State University System (CSU). (Students seeking a second bachelor's degree in nursing have satisfied the GWAR with their first baccalaureate degree from a college/university accredited by a regional accrediting association.) At San Diego State University, the GWAR begins with the **Writing Placement Assessment (WPA)**, a two-hour examination used to evaluate writing competency.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SATISFYING THE GWAR REQUIREMENT

- **Continuing students who have or will achieve 60 units by the end of spring 2021**

Due to COVID-19, since March 2020 the WPA has been temporarily suspended. Students have been allowed to enroll directly into an approved upper-division writing course. Beginning in March 2021, students have a choice to take the WPA online using Respondus Monitor and Respondus LockDown Browser if they choose and they are not already enrolled in an upper-division writing course. For the duration of COVID-impacted semesters, students can satisfy the GWAR requirement in one of two ways:

1. Enroll directly in one of the approved upper-division GWAR courses and earn a C or better to satisfy the GWAR

OR

2. Take the WPA exam and follow the placement requirements by enrolling in any required course or courses based on your test score (see scoring information below).

- **New Transfer Students for fall 2021.**

The WPA requirement has been waived for newly admitted transfer students for fall 2021. These students will be able to enroll directly into an appropriate upper division writing course to fulfill the CSU GWAR requirement. *The following majors require a specific upper division writing course: English, History, Journalism and Media Studies, Liberal Studies, Linguistics, Management Information Systems, Religious Studies, and Rhetoric and Writing Studies.* Please check your Major Academic Plan (MAP) or with your major advisor.

New transfer students for fall 2021 will be able to take the WPA after the fall 2021 schedule adjustment period. The fall 2021 WPA test dates will be available in early September 2021.

- **Students who transfer from another California State University campus** having fulfilled the GWAR will not be required to repeat it. However, a course listed below may be required for the major. **Contact the [Academic Advising Center](#) if you believe you have fulfilled this requirement at another CSU.**

Approved Upper Division Writing Courses

Accountancy 390W
Africana Studies 305W
Chicana and Chicano Studies 396W
Economics 449W
English 306W (Liberal Studies majors Only)
English 308W
English 508W (Required for English and Comparative Literature majors; open to other majors)
English 581W
English 584W
History 390W
Humanities 390W
Journalism and Media Studies 310W
Journalism and Media Studies 312W
Linguistics 305W
Management Information Systems 396W
Political Science 390W
Recreation, Tourism and Management 396W
Religious Studies 396W
Rhetoric and Writing Studies 305W
Rhetoric and Writing Studies 390W
Rhetoric and Writing Studies 392W
Rhetoric and Writing Studies 500W
Rhetoric and Writing Studies 503W
Rhetoric and Writing Studies 508W

FEE, REGISTRATION AND TEST TRANSFER INFORMATION

The exam fee is a non-refundable **\$45.00**. To register go to <http://testing.sdsu.edu>. The exam fee can be transferred to a different test date with advance notification. It may not be transferred to another individual or to a different exam. You must send an email to staar@sdsu.edu requesting a transfer to the new date. Please include your name and Red ID in the body of the email. You must request the date transfer prior to the registration deadline of the test for which you are already registered. You can also visit the Testing Services [virtual front desk](#) and show your RedID to request a date transfer.

Once you have registered and paid for the exam, you should review your Admission Ticket for details regarding the exam and prohibited items. You can access your Admission Ticket at the [Testing Services Student Login](#).

Exam Date	Times	Reporting Location	Registration* Deadline	Scores Released by [^]
Friday, March 12, 2021	2:00pm	Online Blackboard	Sunday, March 7, 2021	Friday, March 26, 2021
Friday, March 19, 2021	2:00pm	Online Blackboard	Sunday, March 14, 2021	Friday, April 2, 2021
Friday, April 2, 2021	2:00pm	Online Blackboard	Sunday, March 28, 2021	Friday, April 16, 2021

*** Sessions will be closed when testing capacity is reached regardless of registration deadline or posted times.**

[^] Score release information: Some test results may not be available prior to the next scheduled test date. Please plan your test date accordingly.

The WPA will not be offered during summer 2021. Once you enroll in an upper-division writing class for fall 2021, you will not have an opportunity to take the online WPA.

WPA SCORING INFORMATION

- Students who achieve a score of **10** on the WPA satisfy the CSU GWAR and do not have to take a writing course **unless an upper division writing course is required by the major**.
- Students who achieve a score of **8** are required to satisfy the GWAR by completing an approved upper division writing course with a grade of C or higher. See the list above.

- Students who earn a score of **6 or lower** are **required** to complete Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280 (or Linguistics 281 if English is your second language) with a grade of C or higher before enrolling in one of the approved upper division writing courses. **Students who earn a 6 or lower are required to register for the required course in the semester immediately following the test date.** Once students are enrolled in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280 or Linguistics 281, they may not take the WPA to test out of an upper division writing course or to enroll directly into an upper-division writing course.
- Students are allowed to attempt the WPA twice within the time-frames and restrictions described above. Students may not drop a course in which they are registered if test results are received after the schedule adjustment deadline. Students must pay the required fees for the examination each time it is taken. Fees are non-refundable.
- As a point of information, the majority of students who take the WPA place into one course, with smaller percentages of students placing into two or no courses.

Preparation for the Writing Placement Assessment

Students are **strongly encouraged** to prepare in advance for attempting the Writing Placement Assessment. In addition to the general testing information found here, the **WPA Information & Preparation Site** contains study materials, test-taking strategies, and sample essays.

Students Requesting Accommodations

Students with accommodations already authorized by the SDSU Student Ability Success Center (SASC), **and placed on the SDSU Testing Services reservation system by SASC**, should contact Testing Services prior to registering for the WPA. You should contact Testing Services prior to the registration deadline for the test date you wish take to allow for approved accommodations to be arranged. SASC information can be found at http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/sds/.

How to Access the WPA Online Exam

Please read through the following information very carefully to make sure you are prepared in advance of your test date and time.

1. **Required Respondus Monitor** – Respondus Monitor will record you during an online, non-proctored exam. You will be required to take a photo of yourself and your valid identification (make sure your valid ID is close enough to the camera that we can clearly see your name and photo on your ID to verify the person taking this exam is the person who registered to take the WPA). You will be required to take a video of your testing area. Please show your work area (desktop/table top) and the area behind your computer. This is to confirm you do not have access to any prohibited items while you are testing. If you choose to use a single sheet of paper to write your outline, you will need to show the front and back of the paper before and after you submit your exam. **Your computer must have a functioning webcam and**

microphone to use Respondus Monitor. If you need a webcam and/or microphone, you can contact the [SDSU Emergency Crisis Response Team \(ECRT\)](#) for assistance. **Mac users must have Adobe Flash Player installed to Safari, even if a different browser is normally used. A broadband connection is also required.**

2. **Required Respondus LockDown Browser** - This version of the Respondus LockDown Browser is required for the online Writing Placement Assessment exam <http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/information.pl?ID=469641291>. LockDown Browser is a browser to replace what you may currently be using (e.g. Chrome, Firefox, Edge, etc). It locks down your screen so that you will not be able to access other resources on your computer during the exam. **You cannot use Respondus LockDown Browser on a Chromebook, cell phone or tablet and cannot take the exam using these devices.**
3. **After Downloading Respondus Lockdown Browser** - After downloading the version of Respondus LockDown Browser from the link above, double click on the LockDown Browser shortcut icon on your desktop. You will be asked which server. Click the dropdown menu and select Blackboard. If you have any programs open, you will be asked to close them. Click the Close Process button. Please note that you may have to click multiple times to move forward. Next, click the Agree & Continue button. You will then be asked to log into Blackboard with your SDSUid. Follow the instructions listed below in "Accessing and Starting the online exam."
4. **Recommended Practice Prior to the Exam Date** - It is highly recommended that you test Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor the DAY PRIOR to your actual exam date. You will not want to run into any technical issues the day of the exam as problems could affect your performance on the exam. You can practice using Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor by completing the "Practice Test to Make Sure You Can Utilize Respondus LockDown Browser & Monitor." Log into Blackboard and click on the link under Exam Instructions on the top left. Be proactive and check your system in plenty of time to troubleshoot issues if you have any and to make sure you feel comfortable with the tools.
5. **SDSU Instructional Technology Student Resources** - It is recommended that you review the [Respondus LockDown Browsers Student Guide](#). If you need additional technology assistance please click on the Technology tab on this website <https://virtual-academic-help.sdsu.edu/>
6. **Exam Restrictions** – Once you start the exam, you must complete the exam in one sitting. You will have no longer than 2 hours to submit your essay. You must take the exam alone and without assistance. The person taking this exam must be the person who registered for the exam. You may not access, view, or use the following items throughout the test: dictionaries, notes, reference materials, books and reading materials, cameras (excluding webcam used for Respondus Monitor), electronic devices including but not limited to calculators, cellphones, second computers, fitness trackers, and music players.
7. **Accessing and Starting the online exam** - Log into Blackboard (blackboard.sdsu.edu). Under "My Courses", click on **SDSU-TESTING CENTER-WPA-HR:Testing Center WPA HR**. Click on Writing Proficiency Assessment

Exam (WPA) on the left side under Exam Information. Click on the folder with the date of your exam. Next click on the test. Read the instructions and click Begin. You will have 2 hours from the start of the exam to complete the exam and submit your essay.

Students with Approved Accommodations

Students with accommodations already authorized by the SDSU Student Ability Success Center (SASC), **and placed on the SDSU Testing Services reservation system by SASC**, should contact Testing Services prior to registering for the WPA. You should contact Testing Services prior to the registration deadline for the test date you wish take to allow for approved accommodations to be arranged. SASC information can be found at http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/sds/.

Information contained herein is subject to change without notice.