



# University Summary Report

## Assessment of Written Communication Student Learning

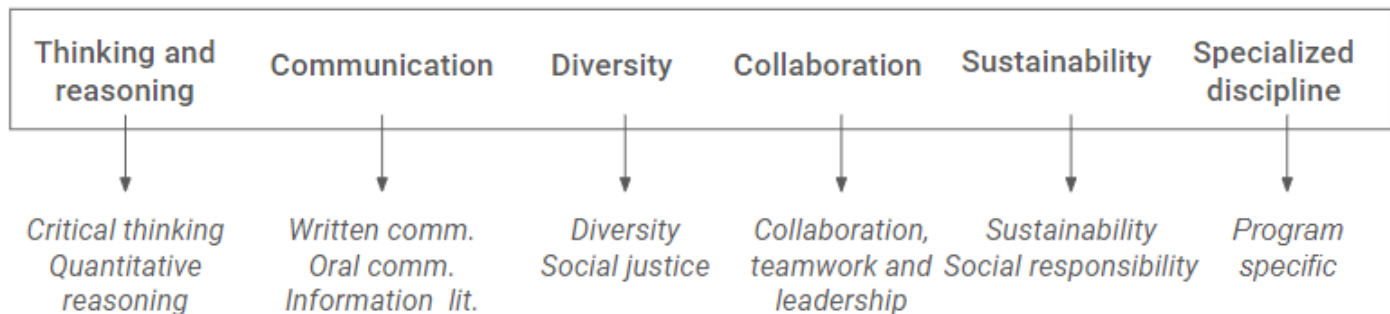
August 6, 2024 v1

### INTRODUCTION

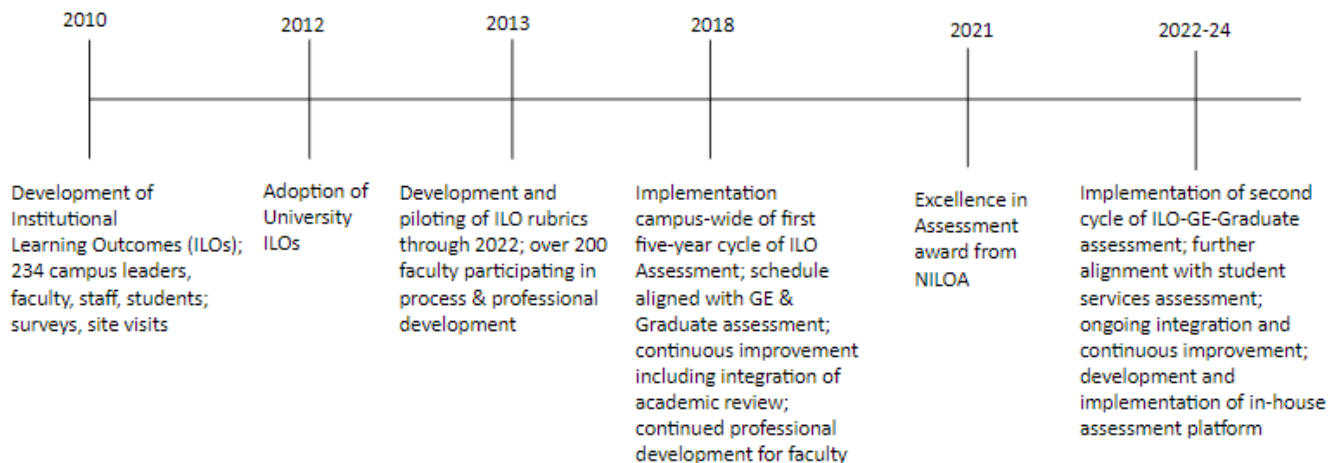
#### Purpose of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

[Institutional Learning Outcomes](#) (ILOs) are the expected learning achievements for all CSUEB graduates, both undergraduate and graduate, and align closely with General Education and program requirements. Developed collaboratively by campus leadership, faculty, staff, and students, ILOs express the unique identity of a CSUEB degree, including core competencies in thinking, reasoning, and communication, as well as outcomes related to diversity, social justice, sustainability, and specialized disciplines.

#### CSUEB ILOs



#### ILO Timeline



## Assessment Schedule

Following the [2022-2028 ILO Long term Assessment Schedule](#), which aligns the assessment schedule for undergraduate, graduate, and general education assessment, Cal State East Bay gathered recent student learning data to support the assessment of the University's Written Communication Institutional Learning Outcomes. These data are intended to provide additional context for existing "Closing the Loop" continuous improvement discussions, analysis, and decision making to improve student learning.

## Overview of Student's Development of Writing at CSUEB

At Cal State East Bay, students develop their writing courses throughout their university experience in courses to meet university requirements and those aligned to program outcomes in their major. These courses include:

- *Lower division GE (A2)*: An introduction to writing for academic purposes, critical analysis, and argumentation.
- *Second Composition*: A lower division breadth area requirement focused on developing strategies of developing strategies of composition and revision of writing.
- *Upper division GE*: Courses in Science, Arts and Humanities, and the Social Sciences with a writing requirement.
- *University Writing Requirement*: The CSU requires that all undergraduate students must take an upper division writing intensive course to demonstrate competency in writing to receive a baccalaureate degree.
- *Disciplinary outcomes*: Written communication is aligned to both undergraduate and graduate degree program outcomes throughout the university.

## METHODS

Relevant data and university sources for upper division written communication were gathered from several relevant sources (Table 1). Additionally, colleges will integrate relevant program review data into fall 2024 "Closing the Loop" college discussions as appropriate.

Table 1. Key data, sources, and dates of collection for ILO Written Communication Assessment

Data and University Sources	Date
Assessment of undergraduate student work for senior level (300-400) written communication from upper division GE, Undergraduate Writing Requirements, and program/capstone courses.	2023-24
Assessment of lower division GE (A2) and Second Composition courses	2023-24
Assessment of graduate level student work for Written Communication courses	2023-24
Faculty assessor feedback for upper division written communication courses being assessed.	April, 2024

Professional development support from ILO Subcommittee including coaching on assignment design and <a href="#">Assignment Guides</a> for upper division courses; Office of Faculty Development providing pedagogical support through programs and services.	2023-24
Student Center for Academic Achievement	2023-24

**Selection and Assessment of ILO Written Communication Course Sections**

*Selection:* As part of refining the selection and assessment of courses to be assessed (a closing the loop action from previous ILO assessments), college associate deans and the GE Director worked together identifying the following criteria to select course sections to be assessed.

*Alignment to GE:* Aligned to upper division GE, areas B, C, and D with writing characteristics.

- *Dimensions addressed:* Aligned to the rubric categories being assessed.
- *Reach:* Numbers of different majors typically taking this course and numbers of students taking this course.
- *Commitment:* Level of commitment of the faculty member scheduled to teach the course/section such as level of understanding of and willingness to contribute to the assessment process.
- *Support:* Level of support including the training and professional development the faculty teaching this course will need to participate in the assessment process.

**Assessment of Undergraduate Student Work for Written Communication 2023-24**

*Faculty Assessed Student Work:* 5 participating faculty representing each of the five colleges assessed 200 student work samples from 20 course sections after receiving [Assessment and Calibration Training](#). Student samples were randomly selected from the sections identified in Table 2.

*Table 2. Numbers of course sections assessed by college for upper division Written Communication 2023-24.*

College	Departments Represented	# sections
CBE	Management	4
CEAS	Kinesiology Recreation	4
CLASS	English History Human Development Sociology	3 1 1 2
CSCI	Chemistry Public Health Math Physics Psychology	1 1 1 1 1
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>

*Faculty Assessed Student Work:* 5 participating faculty and lecturers from English and HRT CEAS representing each of the five colleges assessed 230 student work samples after receiving *Assessment and Calibration Training*. Student samples were randomly selected from the sections identified in Table 3.

*Table 3. Numbers of course sections assessed for lower division written communication courses with a writing requirement*

College	Departments Represented	# Course sections Assessed
CLASS	English 101 (A2, GE first-year composition )	4
CLASS	English 102 (A2, GE first-year composition )	9
CLASS	English 103 (feeder course for English 104; not GE)	3
CLASS	English 104 (A2, GE first-year composition )	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>18</b>
CLASS	English 200 (Breadth requirement, second composition)	2
CLASS	History 200 (Breadth requirement, second composition)	1
CBE	Engineering 200 (Breadth requirement, second composition)	1
CSCI	Physics 200 (Breadth requirement, second composition)	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>

### Professional Development and Support

- *Faculty Peer Coaching:* In the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 terms, faculty whose course was being assessed were offered the option of receiving feedback on their course assignment from the ILO Subcommittee to strengthen their assignment to further align it to the written communication criteria being assessed. Six faculty participated.
- *Assignment Guides:* All faculty instructing an upper division course to be assessed were provided a Written Communication Assignment Guide.
- *Office of Faculty Development:* The [Office of Faculty Development](#) provides workshops, programs, and services that include improving student writing and equitably aligning outcomes to assessments.

### Student Center for Academic Achievement (SCAA)

The [SCAA](#) provides a range of academic support services including writing tutoring.

# RESULTS

## Assessment of ILO Written Communication Undergraduate Student Work 2023-2024

View the 2023-2024 Cal State East Bay ILO Assessment Results for ILO Written Communication Dashboard [here](#). The range of ILO assessment scores for "Meeting" or "Exceeding" competency levels increased from 82-95% in 2018 to 90-96% in 2024. (First-year Written Communication scores improved significantly from 49-59% in 2018 to 74-88% in 2024.)

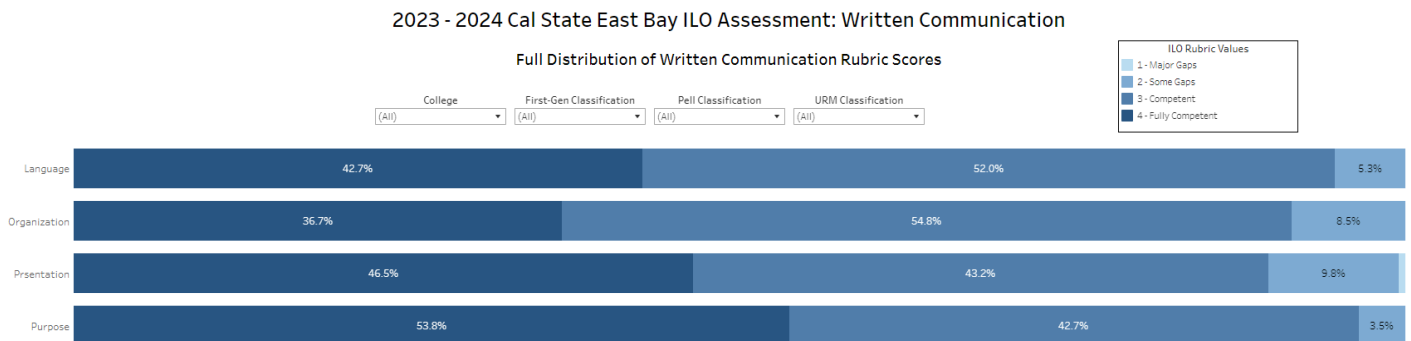


Figure 1. Assessment results for student performance of the 4 ILO Written Communication rubric categories/criteria of

CSUEB Revised ILO Written Communication Rubric Approved by Academic Senate 10-11-22				
Description: Written communication is the expression of ideas developed through diverse iterative writing experiences across the curriculum. It involves writing for different audiences and purposes, as well as using varied techniques and sources.				
	4	3	2	1
<b>Purpose, thesis or controlling idea(s)</b>	Clearly states a central idea(s), appropriate to the assignment and/or audience.	Adequately states a central idea(s), generally appropriate to the assignment and/or audience.	Inconsistently states a central idea(s), minimally appropriate to the assignment and/or audience.	Lacks statement of a central idea, or states central idea(s) inappropriate to the assignment and/or audience.
<b>Organization, cohesion, and clarity</b>	Clearly structured around the central idea(s). Uses a range of transitions to connect ideas, and is easy to follow.	Adequately structured around the central idea(s). Uses some transitions to connect ideas, and is generally easy to follow.	Has minimal and/or inconsistent structure. Uses few transitions to connect ideas, and is somewhat difficult to follow.	Lacks structure. Lacks transitions that connect ideas, and/or is difficult to follow.
<b>Presentation of supporting ideas</b>	Presents evidence and ideas that clearly support and develop the central idea(s).	Presents evidence and ideas that generally support and develop the central idea(s).	Presents evidence and ideas that minimally support and develop the central idea(s).	Does not present evidence or ideas that support or develop the central idea(s).
<b>Language and Mechanics</b>	Demonstrates appropriate language and/or mechanics choices. Errors, if any, are minimal and do not interfere with meaning.	Generally demonstrates appropriate language and/or mechanics choices. Few errors that tend not to interfere with meaning.	Minimally demonstrates appropriate language and/or mechanics choices. Errors sometimes interfere with meaning.	Does not demonstrate appropriate language and/or mechanics choices. Frequent errors that interfere with meaning.

Figure 2. ILO Written Communication Rubric

## **Faculty Assessor Feedback for Assessment of ILO Written Communication**

Faculty representing each of the five academic colleges assessed student work from ILO Written Communication assignments after receiving comprehensive calibration and assessment training. [Here](#) is a summary of their feedback and recommendations. Below are the themes followed by representative faculty quotes:

1. *There were a range of suggestions to improve student learning for written communication.*

“Asking for more writing means giving feedback, which is time consuming, but I do think that is the best way to improve student writing.”

2. *“Presentation of Supporting Ideas” had the most assessor feedback and lowest scores compared to other criteria with 90% of students meeting or exceeding competency.*

“ I thought that students could improve more on the supporting evidence. I think this needs to be an important aspect of written communication given the unfortunate trajectory of mass media and disinformation. Students will need to be better trained to use “good” evidence to support their statements and this may be more challenging in the future.”

3. *Consistent with every previous ILO assessment conducted, clear instructions normally resulted in stronger student work.*

“The better the assignment instructions are at guiding students, the better they perform on the assessment.”

4. *The ILO Written Communication Rubric worked well for assessor scoring.*

“The revised rubric is good; it is easy to understand and to use for scoring student work.”

## **Assessment of GE A2 (First-Year) and Second Year Composition 2023-2024**

Refer to the General Education Assessment of Student Learning Area A2 Written Communication dashboard and report which will be posted on the [GE Assessment website](#).

## **Assessment of Graduate Level ILO Written Communication Student Work 2023-2024**

Graduate programs have been asked to submit the assessment data that they collected in 2023-24 as part of their annual reports to CAPR, due October, 2024. That data will be compiled and summarized to provide college-level and university level views. These views will be made available by late October to prompt

discussions by the departments, colleges, and the university at large. In particular, discussions will be initiated within the Graduate Advisory Council.

### **Student Center for Academic Achievement (SCAA)**

The SCAA's 2023-24 [Impact Report](#) includes data demonstrating primarily higher success rates for students who receive writing tutoring.

## **COLLEGE DISCUSSIONS**

### **Trends for Discussion**

- What are faculty doing right that can be strengthened? Student writing has improved compared to the 2018 first-year and upper division writing assessments. Changes in student learning are attributed to a range of improvements including updates to outcomes, rubrics, curriculum refinements, faculty retreats sharing curriculum and assignments, and English faculty conducting peer-to-peer classroom observations for first-year English.
- The "Presenting of Supporting Ideas" criteria (presenting evidence and ideas that clearly support and develop the central idea) had the lowest scores compared to other criteria with 90% of students meeting or exceeding competency.
- First Generation students showed no difference in learning, pell-eligible students showed 3% lower scores for the "language" criteria, while URM students showed 3% lower scores in 3 of the 4 criteria - except purpose. How can we continue to close the equity gap in learning?

### **College/Committee Discussions**

Led by associate deans, each college/unit will decide their own approach to conducting continuous improvement discussions. ILO continuous improvement discussions will also be conducted in the ILO Subcommittee, CAPR, Senate, and the Writing Skills Subcommittees.

### **Possible Meeting Format**

- Brief overview and purpose of large-scale assessment
- Presentation of key written communication results for the college/unit
- Discussion in large or smaller groups: consider questions that fit your college/unit and record discussion results:

*First discuss results:*

- How does this information fit with our experience of students' development of writing skills throughout their learning at Cal State East Bay?
- What are our students' strengths?
- What are the most noticeable gaps?

*Next, discuss possible/tentative course of action*

- What seems to be working well that we can further support for building student competency for written communication?
- What can we do to improve?

- How can we better meet students' needs for building written communication at critical junctures for their learning?
- Summarize key topics and possible action steps and review next steps.