

2019 SAGES Writing Portfolio Assessment Committee Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The 2019 SAGES Writing Portfolio Assessment Committee, consisting of 14 faculty members from across the university, read and evaluated 1136 student portfolios submitted between May 2018 and May 2019. The committee's **overall holistic assessment** this year was in line with previous years' findings: 74% of portfolios were assessed at Proficient or Acceptable, the two highest categories on the rubric (table 14; 2018: 69%; 2017: 76%; 2016: 73%; 2015: 68%).*

For the first time, the committee focused on the first seminar paper included in each portfolio and made the following recommendations for first-year writing.

The committee recommends that students compose in a variety of genres and write in response to a range of assignments in their first seminars. While it has no wish to mandate specific assignments, it does recommend that **student writers in first seminars have the opportunity to:**

- Write to particular audiences for specific purposes;
- Articulate a clear thesis statement;
- Develop that thesis statement thoroughly and logically;
- Write from a conceptual or theoretical framework;
- Contribute an insight / demonstrate independent thinking;
- Write papers that work closely with a small number of curated sources, rather than a longer, independently-researched essay characteristic of university seminars;
- Differentiate between genres of source material (peer-reviewed journal article, news/magazine feature, government website, etc.) and explain and use them accordingly;
- Integrate evidence from those sources in ways that acknowledge the academic conversations in which they and their sources participate rather than simply mining sources for facts.

***The committee's major recommendations are** that SAGES should continue to refine and articulate the appropriate goals and expectations for first-year writing at CWRU; that writing instruction in FSEMs should emphasize the analysis and integration of appropriate (especially scholarly) source material; and that first-year writers should be given opportunities to use evidence to communicate their own insights (i.e., to demonstrate the relevance of their analyses/arguments and to display their independent thinking).*

The complete 2019 report (as well as previous years' reports) can be found at writing.case.edu.

The 2019 Portfolio Assessment Committee: Joy Bostic (Religious Studies), Jennifer Butler (Psychological Sciences), Colin Drummond (Engineering), John Flores (History), Michael Householder (SAGES), Justine Howe (Religious Studies), Denna Iammarino (English), Caitlin Kelly (English), Kristine Kelly (English), Shaofei Lu (English), Erika Olbricht (English; committee coordinator), Vasu Ramanujam (Weatherhead), Luke Reader (History), Jeffrey Ullom (Theater)