

English 280 Proficiency Exam Handout
Fall 2019 and Spring 2020

Students who believe they have mastered the goals and objectives of ENG 280 without taking the class may be able to earn proficiency credit.

Course Goals and Objectives

English 280 is the second in a series of required writing courses at Western Illinois University. In English 280, you will continue to learn about writing as a social activity with the goal of approaching inquiry as disciplinary.

Writing Processes

- Students will adjust their writing processes to various research writing situations. Students will also acquire strategies for formulating and articulating research questions and several methods for conducting primary and secondary research.

Discourse Communities

- Students will identify and describe different discourse communities, with emphasis on analyzing how community shapes writing in disciplinary and professional contexts.

Rhetorics

- Students will analyze and interpret the rhetorical situation (exigence, audience, and context) as a social construct, with emphasis on assessing how discourse communities shape rhetoric.

Genres

- Students will understand genre sets and systems and assess how they function in professional and disciplinary discourse communities.

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Research

- Students will use critical thinking, reading, and research strategies to compose texts that participate in disciplinary and professional conversations with emphasis on conducting primary research, selecting secondary sources, and integrating information from these sources with the writer's ideas.

To receive Proficiency Credit for English 280, complete the following steps:

1. Pick up an application form in Simpkins 129. Check to see that it has been signed by the Director of Writing. Note that you **cannot** take the proficiency exam for ENG 280 if you have already taken the course. You may not take the ENG 280 proficiency exam unless you already have credit for ENG 180.
2. Follow the directions on the form. You must submit this form to the Registrar prior to taking the proficiency exam.
3. Create a portfolio of your writing using the directions below. Familiarize yourself with the goals and objectives of ENG 280 as well as its place within the writing sequence at WIU. For more information on the writing sequence, please see our website: <http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english/writing/index.php>.
4. Bring your portfolio (in a pocket folder), notebook paper and a writing implement, and your student ID to Simpkins 129 on the second Tuesday of the semester at 3:30 pm (**Fall 2019: August 27; Spring 2020: January 21**).
5. If you are enrolled in ENG 280, you should attend class and submit work in class until notification that you have passed the proficiency exam. If you are force-enrolled in ENG 280, you will not be given permission to drop until you have passed the proficiency exam.

THE PORTFOLIO

The Proficiency Exam for English 280 requires you to prepare a portfolio of writing that shows you have mastered the goals and objectives of ENG 280. You are to submit a folder containing the following:

1. At least two papers, each approximately 6-10 pages long, written for college or community college classes other than English 180. Professional writing you have done is also acceptable as long as it adheres to the length and content requirements. Both papers should use secondary research, and at least one of the papers should use primary research. The two papers should represent different kinds of writing (i.e., they should not both be arguments or reports). The most successful portfolios will provide papers from at least two different classes or

professional contexts. Any pre-writing that you did for each paper may also be included. Copies with your teacher's comments are preferred. You are also welcome to revise either paper. If you choose to revise, please provide the original version in addition to the revised version.

2. A letter addressed to the English Department Writing Committee explaining why you feel you should be given proficiency credit. Include as much background as appropriate about yourself as a writer. Discuss your processes of writing and your experience as a writer. The question to be answered is, "Why should you be given credit for English 280 without having taken the course?"

A note on tone: You will need to make a strong case for yourself, so this is not a time to be overly modest. On the other hand, it won't serve you well to sound arrogant or self-righteous. Write honestly about your processes, background, and experiences.

The Writing Committee, your audience for this letter, is made up of English Department faculty members. They will want to know as much as they can about you as a writer and a student. It will also help if you indicate an understanding of the goals and objectives of ENG 280.

THE EXAM

During the proficiency exam period (the second Tuesday of the semester from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.*) you will be required to write responses to a series of questions about the writing you have included in your portfolio and how that writing demonstrates mastery of the goals and objectives of ENG 280. Specific questions will be given to you at the time of the exam.

Come to Simpkins 129 at 3:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the semester (**Fall 2019: August 27; Spring 2020: January 21**) to learn where this part of the exam will be given. Bring your portfolio with you as well as paper and a writing implement. You will also be required to show your WIU ID when checking in. At the end of the exam period, you will submit a folder containing your portfolio and your exam answers.

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

We will e-mail you to let you know if you have earned ENG 280 credit as soon as possible, definitely before the last day to drop a course and receive a full refund.

Questions about the proficiency exam should be directed to the Writing Program Secretary, Tiffany Dimmick (tr-dimmick@wiu.edu).

* Only if you have a verifiable time conflict will you be allowed to schedule a different exam time. You must provide our office with proof of time conflict at least one week prior to the exam time in order to schedule an alternate exam time.