

**SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE  
SAN JOSE, CA 95192**

**S15-4, University Policy, Prerequisite for Writing Skills Test (WST)**

**Legislative History:**

**Amends S14-5**

At its meeting of April 6, 2015, the Academic Senate approved the following policy recommendation presented by Senator Brada-Williams for the Curriculum and Research Committee. This policy is meant to clarify the WST prerequisite in the GE Guidelines.

**Action by University President:**

**Approved and signed by  
President Mohammad Qayoumi  
on April 29, 2015**

**University Policy  
Prerequisite for Writing Skills Test (WST)**

**Rationale and Background**

In the "Implementation of the General Education Guidelines" section (page 5) of *Guidelines For General Education (GE), American Institutions (AI), and the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)* approved through S14-5 and put into effect Fall 2014, the fourth bullet of "2. Minimum Units, Grades, and GPA's" reads "Registration for the Writing Skills Test (WST) requires completion of a Critical Thinking course (A3) with a C or better (C- not accepted)." And under the SJSU Studies: Written Communication II (Z) A. Goals "Written Communication II should reinforce and advance the abilities developed in Written Communication I (A2) and Critical Thinking and Writing (A3) courses" and under prerequisites a. "A grade of C or better (C-not accepted) in Area A3 (Critical Thinking and Writing)" This is factually inaccurate because many of our majors have a waiver of the A3 category and will be taking a writing intensive C2 course (i.e., English 1B) in lieu of the writing intensive A3 requirement. Also, transfer students coming in with approved lower division GE packages (such as those covered by the STAR Act-SB 1440) are not required to take what used to be called Area C3 or English 1B on this campus. This policy is meant to clarify the WST prerequisite in the GE Guidelines.

- Whereas transfer students who take their lower division GE Certification (either CSU GE Breadth, or CSU IGETC completed, CSU GE or CSU IGETC for STEM) cannot legally be required to take any lower division GE requirement in addition to what their community college has required.
- Whereas all upper division transfer students admitted to SJSU must complete CSU GE Areas A1, A2, A3 and B4 earning grades of C or better prior to being admitted to SJSU (unless they have applied to a major which has an approved A3 waiver); and
- Whereas the CSU approved transfer courses for GE Area A3 do not require an intensive writing component with any minimum word count (nor do the courses the CCCs and CSUs are allowed to pass along as certified for A3 from other regionally accredited institutions); and
- Whereas some degree programs having a waiver for Area A3 need a WST prerequisite specifying completion of a second semester composition course outside of Area A3; and
- Whereas SJSU will continue to advise all transfer students and transfer advisors via the articulation websites and outreach/advising opportunities that it is to their best interest to complete an equivalent second English composition course within their CSU transfer GE package (and STAR Act-SB 1440 degree programs) prior to transferring to SJSU for the greatest success in passing the WST<sup>1</sup>; and
- Whereas the Testing Office does not have the ability to check for this prerequisite for all students who take the WST, both because transcripts often are not yet available and because the volume is too great to review available transcripts manually to verify the prerequisite for each student; and
- Whereas the advising workload would be greater than can be managed to verify which students completed the A3 with the intensive writing component and which had not, and which students in majors that had an approved A3 waiver and took a second intensive writing course or not prior to taking the WST; therefore be it
- Resolved that the following replace the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet of the “Implementation of the General Education Guidelines” section (page 5) of *Guidelines For General Education (GE), American Institutions (AI), and the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)* approved through S14-5 and put into effect Fall 2014: “Registration for the Writing Skills Test (WST) requires completion of an Area A2 course (e.g., ENGL 1A with a C or better (C- not accepted).”; be it further

Resolved that the following sentence be inserted immediately after the previous statement: "Completion of a second semester composition course (e.g. Area A3 courses or English 1B at SJSU) offers students the opportunity to further develop the skills tested by the WST and thus it is strongly recommended for students prior to taking the WST."

Approved: March 16, 2015

Vote: 11-0-1

Present: Ardalan, Blaylock, Brada-Williams, Branz (designee for GUP), Brown, Buzanski, Heil, Mathur, Matoush, Muller, Ng, Sibley

Absent: Schultz-Krohn, Stacks

Financial Impact: Minimal

Workload Impact: Staff time to update articulation information and WST website information, and to advise students on the changes.