

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
**of the**  
**UNIVERSITY WRITING COMMITTEE**  
**concerning a**  
**POLICY ON USING NON-UMASS COURSES**  
**TO SATISFY THE JUNIOR YEAR WRITING REQUIREMENT**

**Presented at the**  
**762<sup>nd</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate**  
**November 10, 2016**

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**ACADEMIC MATTERS AND**  
**UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCILS**

**Both Councils endorsed this proposal. It was submitted as Proposal #2724 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.**

**MOTION: That the Faculty Senate approve the Policy on Using Non-UMass courses to  
04-17 Satisfy the Junior Year Writing Requirements, as presented in Sen. Doc.  
No. 07-014.**

Policy on Using Non-UMass Courses to Satisfy the Junior Year Writing Requirement

The university's policy is that students must fulfill the junior year writing requirement (JYW) by taking an approved JYW course at UMass. All JYW courses should be upper-level courses in the discipline (i.e., equivalent to major courses offered at the 300-level or above) and meet the university-wide requirements for junior-year writing courses; see [www.umass.edu/writingprogram/jy/expectations.html](http://www.umass.edu/writingprogram/jy/expectations.html). JYW courses do not only *assign* writing; more so, as a Gen Ed *and* major requirement, JYW courses ought to *teach* writing—more specifically, *advanced writing in the major*—by engaging students in regular writing and revision based on peer and instructor feedback.

Under exceptional circumstances, a non-UMass course may be approved as fulfilling the JYW requirement at UMass. For example: A student who majors in a modern language may make the case for a writing-intensive, upper-level course offered in a study abroad program, especially if an equivalent course is not offered at UMass. A student who is no longer in residence at Amherst and who must complete his/her degree remotely may need to find a non-UMass course that satisfies the requirements above if returning to UMass is not possible. Or a student pursuing a second bachelor's degree may request to waive the JYW requirement if his/her first bachelor's degree included upper-level courses that taught writing relevant to his/her current major at UMass.

Regardless of extenuating circumstances, the following courses would not satisfy the JYW requirement: lower-level (equivalent to our university's 100- or 200-level) undergraduate courses; upper-level courses that *only assign* writing but do not *teach* writing and thus do not meet university-wide requirements; upper-level courses that teach writing but not writing relevant to the student's major.

To request that a non-UMass course fulfill the JYW requirement at UMass Amherst:

1. A student must submit the following to the Undergraduate Program Director or Chief Undergraduate Advisor in his/her major: (a) rationale for why it is necessary to take a non-UMass course to fulfill the JYW requirement, (b) syllabus for the proposed JYW course substitution and other relevant documents as needed, and (c) an explanation of how the course meets the [university-wide JYW requirements](#).
2. If supporting the request, the UPD/CUA should then indicate his/her approval and forward the student's request to his/her School or College Academic Dean for final approval.
3. The Academic Dean should notify the Registrar and University Writing Committee ([uwritingcommittee@acad.umass.edu](mailto:uwritingcommittee@acad.umass.edu)) about approved JYW course substitutions. To notify the Registrar, please attach the Dean's approval letter to either a Registrar Prior Approval Form or the Senior Year in Absentia Form (whichever is appropriate) and forward to the Registrar's office.

The expectation is that requests for JYW course substitutions from departments will be rare.