

EXAM
CODE **110**

CATALOG
NUMBER **ENGx110**

College Writing

CREDIT
HOURS

3

LEVEL

LOWER

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2020

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CONTENTS

Preparing for the Exam	1
Before You Choose This UExcel Exam	1
Uses for the Examination.....	1
Examination Length and Scoring.....	1
How Your Responses Are Rated.....	1
Computer-Delivered Testing.....	2
Score Reporting.....	2
Letter Grade Description.....	2
UExcel Exam Resources	3
Excelsior College Bookstore.....	3
Excelsior College Library.....	3
Online Tutoring.....	3
Preparing for UExcel Exams	3
Take Charge of Your Own Learning.....	3
How Long Will It Take Me to Study?.....	3
How Can I Create an Effective Long-Term Study Plan?.....	3
What Learning Strategy Should I Use?.....	5
Study Tips.....	5
Using UExcel Practice Exams.....	6
About Test Preparation Services.....	6
Exam Preparation Strategies	6
Content Guides.....	7
Prior Knowledge.....	7
Using this Content Guide.....	7
Download the Course Guide.....	7
Recommended Resources for the UExcel Exam in College Writing	7
Exam Verification Resources.....	8
Reducing Textbook Costs.....	8
A Word About Open Educational Resources.....	8
Choosing Open Educational Resources.....	8
Other Online Resources.....	9
Practice Exam: MY Access!® Learning Tool.....	9
Description of Questions	10
General Description of the Examination.....	10
Learning Outcomes.....	10
General Education Career Competencies Addressed in this Exam.....	10
Proposal Writing.....	11
Analysis and Response.....	11
Sample Questions	12
Proposal Writing.....	12
Analysis/Response.....	13
Taking the Exam	16
Registering for Your Exam	16
Register Online.....	16
Examination Administration.....	16
Computer-Delivered Testing.....	16
On the Day of Your Exam	16
Important Reminders.....	16
Academic Honesty Nondisclosure Statement.....	16
UExcel Grade Report.....	17
Information About UExcel Exams for Colleges and Universities.....	17
College Writing Exam Development Committee	17
Sample Grade Report	18



SECTION ONE

Preparing for the Exam

Before You Choose This UExcel Exam

Uses for the Examination

- Excelsior College, the test developer, recommends granting three (3) semester hours of lower-level undergraduate credit to students who receive a letter grade of C or higher on this examination.
- Other colleges and universities also recognize this exam as a basis for granting credit or advanced standing.
- Individual institutions set their own policies for the amount of credit awarded and the minimum acceptable score.

Exam-takers who have applied to Excelsior College should ask their academic advisor where this exam fits within their degree program.

Exam-takers **not enrolled** in an Excelsior College degree program should check with the institution from which they wish to receive credit to determine whether credit will be granted and/or to find out the minimum grade required for credit. Those who intend to enroll at Excelsior College should ask an admissions counselor where this exam fits within their intended degree program.

For more information on exam availability and actual testing information, see the [Exam Registration and Information Guide](#).

Examination Length and Scoring

The exam consists of two (2) extended response questions (writing prompts). You should expect to prepare college-level essays in response to these prompts. Essays that receive high ratings tend to have responses that are approximately 500–600 words in length. A long response is not automatically a good one. Ratings at the upper end of the scale require demonstration of higher-order analytical and evaluative skills, and the ability to work through complex rhetorical issues in writing. It is difficult to provide good evidence of these skills in few words. You should do your best to respond to all parts of each question. Your score will be reported as a letter grade. Unless your essays must be forwarded to human raters for scoring, you will receive your grade upon exiting the testing center. You will have two (2) hours to complete the examination.

How Your Responses Are Rated

Each College Writing response is submitted for rating as soon as you complete your exam. An electronic “scoring engine” called IntelliMetric™ analyzes each response according to a complex series of criteria based on artificial intelligence. IntelliMetric™ is calibrated to make the same judgments on the quality of your writing that a human rater would make, and has been proven to match human raters consistently. By using this electronic rating, we are able to provide most test takers with a grade report — including feedback on the dimensions of Focus & Meaning, Content & Development, Organization, Language Use & Style, and Mechanics & Conventions — before they leave the testing center. We expect, however, that a small number of responses will not receive an immediate electronic rating.

Factors that might lead a paper to be unscorable include:

- a. Too short
- b. Off topic
- c. Repetitious
- d. Insufficient development
- e. Too many unknown words
- f. Major syntax problems
- g. Copied prompt rather than responding to it
- h. Unknown (for example: paper written in a foreign language or in the form of a poem)
- i. Deleted response (be sure you have not inadvertently highlighted text in your essay and typed over it, deleting what you intended to add to)

By being aware of these scorability factors up front, you may be able to avoid submitting a paper that IntelliMetric™ cannot score. If this does happen, though, you will receive a Grade Report Information form indicating that your examination cannot be scored electronically. In this case, your responses are forwarded to expert human raters. Their ratings are then submitted to Excelsior College, and a grade report will be printed and mailed to you within approximately 30 days of your test date.

Computer-Delivered Testing

Your exam will be delivered by computer. The questions — including stimulus material such as the texts for analysis — will be presented on the computer screen. You will enter your answers on the computer, using a simple word processing function that is explained on a Directions screen before you begin. The system is designed to be as user-friendly as possible, even for those with little or no computer experience. On-screen instructions are similar to those you would see in a paper examination booklet.

If you are used to analyzing or critiquing a text by marking it up, you will need to prepare yourself to handle text presented to you on a computer screen. You may want to develop a system for indicating what part of the text your note applies to, using screen number, location on screen, etc. If possible, spend some time reading from a computer workstation if this is not something you are accustomed to doing.

We strongly encourage you to use the online tutorial before taking your exam at Pearson VUE Testing Centers. To access the tutorial, go to www.pearsonvue.com/uexcel and click on the Pearson VUE Tutorial link on the right hand side of the page.

Score Reporting

For most of our examinations, based on performance, an examinee is awarded a letter grade of A, B, C, or F along with diagnostic information describing examinee performance in each of the major content areas in any given exam. A letter grade of D can be given, but credit is awarded for A, B, and C letter grades only. The letter grades reported to examinees indicate that their performance was equivalent to the performance of students who received the same letter grade in a comparable, on-campus course.

More specifically, the letter grade indicates the examinee's proficiency relative to the learning outcomes specified in the exam content guide. Following are general descriptions of examinee performance at each level:

Letter Grade Description

- A** Highly Competent: Examinee's performance demonstrates an advanced level of knowledge and skill, relative to the learning outcomes.
- B** Competent: Examinee's performance demonstrates a good level of knowledge and skill, relative to the learning outcomes.
- C** Marginally Competent: Examinee's performance demonstrates a satisfactory level of knowledge and skill relative to the learning outcomes.
- D** Not Competent (no credit recommended): Examinee's performance demonstrates weak knowledge of the content and minimal skill relative to the learning outcomes.^①
- F** Fail (no credit recommended): Examinee's performance demonstrates no knowledge of the content and no skill in the subject relative to the learning outcomes.

Credit is transcribed by Excelsior College for examinees who achieve letter grades of C or higher.

We encourage colleges and universities to use the Excelsior College letter grades of A, B, and C as acceptable standards for awarding credit.

^① In general, two hour exams do not award a D letter grade.

See page 18 for a sample UExcel Grade Report for Examinations, at the back of this content guide.

UExcel Exam Resources

Excelsior College Bookstore

The Excelsior College Bookstore offers recommended textbooks and other resources to help you prepare for UExcel exams.

The bookstore is available online at (login required): www.excelsior.edu/bookstore

Excelsior College Library

Enrolled Excelsior College students can access millions of authoritative resources online through the Excelsior College Library. Created through our partnership with the Sheridan Libraries of The Johns Hopkins University, the library provides access to journal articles, books, websites, databases, reference services, and many other resources. Special library pages relate to the nursing degree exams and other selected exams. To access it, visit www.excelsior.edu/library (login is required).

Our library provides:

- 24/7 availability
- The world's most current authoritative resources
- Help and support from staff librarians

Online Tutoring

Excelsior College offers online tutoring through SMARTHINKING™ to connect with tutors who have been trained in a variety of academic subjects. To access SMARTHINKING, go to www.excelsior.edu/smarthinking. Once there, you may download a copy of the SMARTHINKING Student Handbook as a PDF.

Preparing for UExcel Exams

Take Charge of Your Own Learning

At Excelsior College, independent, self-directed study supported by resources we help you find is not a new concept. We have always stressed to exam takers that they are acting as their own teacher, and that they should spend as much time studying for an exam as they would spend in a classroom and on homework for a corresponding college course in the same subject area.

Begin by studying the content outline contained in this content guide, at its most detailed level. You will see exactly which topics are covered, and where chapters on those topics can be found in the Recommended Resources. You will see exactly where you might need to augment your knowledge or change your approach.

The content outline, along with the Learning Outcomes for this exam and recommended textbooks, will serve as your primary resources.

How Long Will It Take Me to Study?

Study for a UExcel exam is comparable to an equivalent college-level course. As an independent learner, you should study and review as much as you would for the same subject in a campus-based college course. If you already have a background in the subject, you may be able to pass the exam successfully with fewer hours of study. It depends upon the learner as well as the subject, the number of credits (for example, a 6- or 8-credit exam will require more hours of study than a 3-credit exam), and the length of the exam. We strongly encourage you to create a long-term action, or study plan, so that you have a systematic approach to prepare for the exam. We've included guidelines for creating such a plan.

How Can I Create an Effective Long-Term Study Plan?

- 1. Determine the time you will require to complete your preparation for this exam.** As a rule, you should plan to budget approximately 150 hours of study time for this exam. About 135 of those hours should be spent on studying the content alone. Aside from the content review, you should then factor in time to search for and use other resources,

and to complete any projects and assignments in the study materials that will clarify your understanding of the topics in the content outline (that part in the content guide where the specific areas of study are spelled out). Spend more time on concepts and areas in which you feel you are weak. Totaled, this is approximately the amount of time you should expect to devote to a three-credit, campus-based course. The actual amount of time you require depends on many factors, and will be approximate. If your background is weak, you may need to set aside substantially more than 135–150 hours. If your background is strong, you may budget less time.

Take a few minutes to review the content outline to assess your familiarity with the content. Then, in the space below, write the number of hours you will allocate to complete preparing for the exam.

Hours Required =

2. Determine the time you will have available for study.

In self-study, you need structure, as well as motivation and persistence, and a methodical approach to preparation. There is no set class to keep you on task. You have to do that yourself. Construct a time-use chart to record your daily activities over a one-week period. The most accurate way to do this is to complete the chart on a daily basis to record the actual amount of time you spend eating, sleeping, commuting, working, watching television, caring for others and yourself, reading, and everything else in an adult's life. However, if your schedule is regular, you might prefer to complete the chart in one sitting and, perhaps, by consulting your appointment book or planner.

After you have recorded your activities, you will be ready to schedule study periods around these activities or, perhaps, instead of some of them. In the space below, write the number of hours you will be able to set aside for study each week.

Hours Required =

3. Divide the first number by the second number.

This will give you the number of weeks you will need to set aside for independent study. For example, if you think you will require 170 hours of study and you have 10 hours available to study each week,

divide 170 hours by 10 hours and you will get 17. This means that you will need about 17 weeks to complete this course of study. However, you will also need to allow about a week for review and self-testing. Moreover, to be on the safe side, you should also add two weeks to allow for unforeseen obstacles and times when you know you will not be able to study (e.g., during family illnesses or holidays). So, in this case, you should allot a total of 18 to 19 weeks to complete your study.

4. Schedule your examination to coincide with the end of your study period.

For example, if you plan to allow 18 weeks for study, identify a suitable examination date and begin study at least 18 weeks before that date. (The date you begin study assumes that you will have received all of your study materials, particularly textbooks, by that time.)

5. Format a long-term study plan.

You will need to use a calendar, planner, or some other tool to format and track your long-term study plan. Choose a method that is convenient and one that keeps you aware of your study habits on a daily basis. Identify the days and exact hours of each day that you will reserve for study throughout your whole independent study period. Check to see that the total number of hours you designate for study on your long-term study plan adds up to the number of hours you have determined you will need to complete this course of study (Step 1).

6. Record in your long-term study plan the content you plan to cover during each study period.

Enter the session numbers, review, and examination preparation activities you will complete during each study period. While it is suggested that approximately 160–170 hours of study is required for this exam, each and every student may require different timelines based on their comfort with, and comprehension of, the material.

You now have a tentative personal long-term study plan. Keep in mind that you will have to adjust your study plan, perhaps several times, as you study. It is only by actually beginning to work systematically through the material, using the content outline, that you will be able to determine accurately how long you should allow for each unit.

What Learning Strategy Should I Use?

The following guidelines are intended to help you acquire the grounding in the knowledge and skills required for successful completion of this examination.

1. Approach learning with a positive attitude.

Most students are capable of learning subject content if they devote enough time and effort to the task. This devotion will give you a positive edge and a feeling of control.

2. Diligently complete the exact work you specified in your study plan.

Your study plan is being designed for the specific purpose of helping you achieve the learning outcomes for this exam.

3. Be an active learner.

You should actively engage in the learning process. Read critically, take notes, and continuously monitor your comprehension. Keep a written record of your progress, highlight content you find difficult to grasp, and seek assistance from someone in your learning community who can help you if you have difficulty understanding a concept.

4. Be patient: you may not understand everything immediately.

When encountering difficulty with new material, be patient with yourself and don't give up. Understanding will come with time and further study. Sometimes you may need to take a break and come back to difficult material. This is especially true for any primary source material (original letters, documents, and so forth) that you may be asked to read. The content outline will guide you through the material and help you focus on key points. You will find that many concepts introduced in earlier sessions will be explained in more detail in later sessions.

5. Apply your learning to your daily life.

Use insights you gain from your study to better understand the world in which you live. Apply the learning whenever you can. Look for instances that support or contradict your reading on the subject.

6. Accommodate your preferred way of learning.

How do you learn best? Common ways to learn are reading, taking notes and making diagrams, and by listening to someone (on video or live). Others learn by doing. Do any of these descriptions apply to you? Or does your learning style vary with the learning situation? Decide what works for you and try to create a learning environment to accommodate your preferences.

Study Tips

Become an active user of the resource materials. Aim for understanding rather than memorization. The more active you are when you study, the more likely you will be to retain, understand, and apply the information.

The following techniques are generally considered to be active learning:

- **preview or survey** each chapter
- **highlight or underline text** you believe is important
- **write questions or comments** in the margins
- **practice re-stating content** in your own words
- **relate what you are reading** to the chapter title, section headings, and other organizing elements of the textbook
- **find ways to engage** your eyes, your ears, and your muscles, as well as your brain, in your studies
- **study with a partner or a small group** (if you are an enrolled student, search for partners on MyExcelsior Community)
- **prepare your review notes** as flashcards or create recordings that you can use while commuting or exercising

When you feel confident that you understand a content area, review what you have learned. Take a second look at the material to evaluate your understanding. If you have a study partner, the two of you can review by explaining the content to each other or writing test questions for each other to answer. Review questions from textbook chapters may be helpful for partner or individual study, as well.

Study smart for your UExcel exam, and succeed with our [Student Success Guide](#).

Using UExcel Practice Exams

The official UExcel practice exams are highly recommended as part of your study plan. They can be taken using any computer with a supported Web browser such as Google Chrome.

A practice exam package containing two forms is available for this exam, for \$75. To register for the practice exam, visit www.excelsior.edu and log into your MyExcelsior account. Please note: You must be registered for the corresponding credit-bearing exam first, before you can register for the practice exam.

Practice exams are not graded. Rather, they are intended to help you make sure you understand the subject and give you a sense of what the questions will be like on the exam for credit. Ideally, you would check any questions you got wrong, look at the explanations, and go back to the textbook to reinforce your understanding. After taking both forms of the practice exam, you should feel confident in your answers and confident that you know the material listed in the content outline.

Practice exams are one of the most popular study resources. Practice exams are typically shorter than the credit-bearing exam. Since the questions are drawn from the same pool of questions that appear on the credit-bearing exam, what you will see when you sit for the graded exam will be roughly the same. Used as intended, these practice exams will enable you to:

- Review the types of questions you may encounter on the actual exam.
- Practice testing on a computer in a timed environment.
- Practice whenever and wherever it is convenient for you.
- Take two different forms of a practice exam within a 180-day period. (We highly recommend that you take the first form of the practice exam as a pretest, early in the study period. Use the results to identify areas to further study and carry out a plan. Then take the second form as a post-test and see how much you have improved.)

Although there is no guarantee, our research suggests that exam takers who do well on the practice exams are more likely to pass the actual exam than those who do not, or who do not take advantage of the opportunity. Note that since the practice exams are not graded (calibrated) the same way as the scores on the credit-bearing exam, it will be hard for you to

use the practice exams as a way to predict your score on the credit-bearing exam. The main purpose of the practice exams is for you to check your knowledge and to become comfortable with the types of questions you are likely to see in the actual, credit-bearing exam.

About Test Preparation Services

Preparation for UExcel® exams and Excelsior College® Examinations, though based on independent study, is supported by Excelsior College with a comprehensive set of exam learning resources and services designed to help you succeed. These learning resources are prepared by Excelsior College so you can be assured that they are current and cover the content you are expected to master for the exams. These resources, and your desire to learn, are usually all that you will need to succeed.

There are test-preparation companies that will offer to help you study for our examinations. Some may imply a relationship with Excelsior College and/or make claims that their products and services are all that you need to prepare for our examinations.

Excelsior College is not affiliated with any test preparation firm and does not endorse the products or services of these companies. No test preparation vendor is authorized to provide admissions counseling or academic advising services, or to collect any payments, on behalf of Excelsior College. Excelsior College does not send authorized representatives to a student's home nor does it review the materials provided by test preparation companies for content or compatibility with Excelsior College examinations.

To help you become a well-informed consumer, we suggest that before you make any purchase decision regarding study materials provided by organizations other than Excelsior College, you consider the points outlined on our website at www.excelsior.edu/testprep.

Exam Preparation Strategies

Each learner is different. However, all learners should read the content outline in the exam's Content Guide and ensure that they have mastered the concepts. For someone with no prior knowledge of the subject, a rule of thumb is 135 hours of study for a three-credit exam—this number is just to give you an idea of the level of effort you will need, more or less.

Content Guides

This content guide is the most important resource. It lists the outcomes, a detailed content outline of what is covered, and textbooks and other study resources. It also has sample questions and suggestions for how to study. Content guides are updated periodically to correspond with changes in particular examinations and in textbook editions. Test-takers can download any of the latest free UExcel content guides by visiting the individual exam page or from the list at www.excelsior.edu/contentguides.

Prior Knowledge

A familiarity with precalculus topics including algebra, trigonometry, and functions is assumed.

Using this Content Guide

Are you thinking about taking the College Writing exam? If you have already registered, begin with this Content Guide, which provides a high-level, ready reference of the exam's main points. The Content Guide explains how the exam is structured, and includes an Effective Long-Term Study Plan to help you systematize your study for the exam.

How much time you spend studying will depend upon how much formal college English writing practice you have had. Even if you are experienced, you will need to study and practice writing. Get copies of the recommended textbooks (*The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* and *A Writer's Reference*) as well as this content guide. The textbooks are essential to your successful study for this exam.

Download the Course Guide

Studying for the College Writing exam also begins by downloading the [College Writing Course Guide](#). It provides a coherent, detailed course of study to follow, contains even more sample essays, and is also designed to be used with the recommended textbooks. The course guide is broken out into three parts:

- Part I: Preparing for Study
- Part II: Learning the Content and Foundations of Writing: Developing Your Own Writing Process
- Part III: Preparing for and Taking the Examination

Once you think you understand the various types of writing called for on the exam, try writing each type of prompt in a timed environment. Write a lot of them. (Writing while being timed can sometimes feel awkward, at first, so it's important to practice so you don't run out of time in the actual exam.)

Last, but not least, you will need to seek feedback on your writing from someone who is experienced in formal analysis and argumentation. This feedback will be essential to your success on the exam.

Recommended Resources for the UExcel Exam in College Writing

The resources listed below are recommended by the examination development committee for use preparing for this exam. Resources listed under “Exam Verification Resources” were used to verify all the questions on the exam. Please refer to the Content Outline to see which parts of the exam are covered by which of the Exam Verification Resources. Resources listed under “Supplemental Resources” provide additional material that may deepen or broaden your understanding of the subject, or that may provide an additional perspective. Textbook resources, both Exam Verification and Supplemental, are available for purchase at the [Excelsior College Bookstore](#).

You should allow ample time to obtain resources and to study sufficiently before taking the exam, so plan appropriately and with care.

A word about textbook editions: Textbook editions listed in the UExcel content guides may not be the same as those listed in the bookstore. Textbook editions may not exactly match up in terms of table of contents and organization, depending upon the edition. However, our team of exam developers checks exam content against every new textbook edition to verify that all subject areas tested in the exam are still adequately available in the study materials. If needed, exam developers will list supplemental resources to ensure that all topics in the exam are still sufficiently covered. Public libraries may have the textbooks you need, or may be able to obtain them for you through interlibrary loan to reduce textbook costs. You may also consider financial aid, if you qualify, to further help

defray the steep cost of textbooks. A section on OER has been included in this guide to help you locate additional resources to augment your study.

This exam has a Course Guide. It provides a coherent course of study to follow, contains sample essays, and is designed to be used with the textbooks listed below. Download the Course Guide/Study guide at https://my.excelsior.edu/documents/78666/245056/Course_Guide_College_Writing.pdf/ca6c51df-044c-711a-944f-badb397f5a25

Exam Verification Resources

Axelrod, Rise B. and Charles R. Cooper. *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's.

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's.

These study materials may be purchased from the Excelsior College Bookstore.

Reducing Textbook Costs

Many students know it is less expensive to buy a used textbook, and buying a previous edition is also an option. The Excelsior College bookstore includes a buyback feature and a used book marketplace, as well as the ability to rent digital versions of textbooks for as long as students need them. Students are encouraged to explore these and the many other opportunities available online to help defray textbook costs.

A Word About Open Educational Resources

Open educational resources (OER) are educational materials available for study at no cost on the Web. Some OER are available for anyone to access any time. Others, such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), require sign-up and are only available during certain windows. Please note that some MOOC providers offer certificates of completion or other products or services for a fee. No MOOC or other OER is a complete substitute for the content guide and officially Recommended Resources listed here in this content guide. However, by definition, MOOCs are essentially free of charge and include access to a main body of learning materials that may help you in your learning.

Being an independent learner preparing for credit by exam, you may not need any of the fee-based options that are offered elsewhere online. But if you are looking for a coherent academic course for self-study, lectures on specific topics, or audio or visual materials that fit your learning style better than print materials alone, a MOOC or other type of OER may be your answer. Keep in mind that none of these OER were designed by Excelsior, nor are they guaranteed to match the exam content outlines completely. They are simply another tool available in your study kit.

We highly encourage using the Recommended Resources. In the content outline, you will see that the topics in the exam are referenced to specific portions of recommended textbooks. Using OER alone will not ensure you've completely covered the content in the exam, or it may not cover some topics in sufficient-enough depth without the use of the formal, recommended textbooks.

If the OER course you choose does not include a textbook for reference and you do not have significant practical theory-based experience in the field of study, use a college textbook to ensure adequate preparation for the exam, and use the exam's content outline as a guide.

Combined with comparable college textbooks, OER provides you with a variety of choices in knowledge sources and learning experiences, to enhance your understanding of the subject matter.

Choosing Open Educational Resources

The following college writing course at the Study.com website may prove to be further useful towards your learning. <https://study.com/academy/course/college-composition-writing-course.html>

Most sites for university-based OER can be searched through www.ocwconsortium.org and/or www.oercommons.org.

Sites that specialize in Web courses designed by college professors under contract with the website sponsor, rather than in Web versions of existing college courses, include:

www.education-portal.com

www.opencourselibrary.org (abbreviated as OCL)

We have included specific courses that cover material for one or more UExcel® exams from the sites in the listings above. It's worth checking these sites

frequently to see if new courses have been added that may be more appropriate or may cover an exam topic not currently listed.

In addition, sites like Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.com) and iTunes U feature relatively brief lessons on very specific topics rather than full courses. Full courses are also available on iTunes U (<http://www.apple.com/education/ipad/itunes-u/>). We have chosen a few courses and collections for this listing.

Other Online Resources

This section of the OER Guide is provided to allow learners to independently search for resources.

Open Online Textbooks

BookBoon

<http://bookboon.com/en/textbooks-ebooks>

Flatworld Knowledge

<http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/#our-catalog>

College Readiness

Khan Academy

<http://www.khanacademy.org/>

Hippocampus

<http://www.hippocampus.org/>

Open Course Library

<http://opencourselibrary.org/collg-110-college-success-course/>

Study Aids

Education Portal

<http://education-portal.com/>

Khan Academy

<http://www.khanacademy.org/>

Annenberg Learner

<http://www.learner.org/>

OpenCourseWare

<http://ocwconsortium.org/en/courses/search>

OER Commons

<http://www.oercommons.org/>

Open Course Library

<http://www.opencourselibrary.org/>

To achieve academic success, rate yourself at Excelsior College's Self-Regulated Learning Lab. Visit the Diagnostic Assessment & Achievement of College Skills site at <https://srl.daacs.net/>

It's free!

Practice Exam: MY Access!® Learning Tool

Students may prepare for the College Writing examination by purchasing the practice test that is offered by Vantage Learning (for a \$30 fee). The MyAccess! College: UExcel Edition is “an award-winning, instructional writing program used by hundreds of thousands of students in every state across the country. Over the course of 20 years and hundreds of millions of essays, our users have achieved an average improvement rate of 20 percent in as few as three engagements.”

MY Access!® College: UExcel® Edition is an on-line learning tool for students wishing to improve their academic writing skills. MY Access! College: UExcel Edition uses the same “scoring engine” — called IntelliMetric™ — that is used in scoring your exam at the testing center, but you can use it again and again to practice different aspects of writing and receive detailed diagnostic feedback that will help you to improve. MY Access! College: UExcel Edition will truly enable you to be your own writing teacher! While the prompts provided in the MY Access! College: UExcel Edition program are not exactly like those on the College Writing examination, studies have shown that the more guided writing you do, the better your writing becomes. In addition to the prompts and five categories of feedback (focus and meaning, content and development, organization, language use and style, and mechanics and conventions), MY Access! College: UExcel Edition provides a complete suite of writer's tools like grammar and spelling checkers, a thesaurus, and a writing portfolio. All of this is housed on the Web, so it is available to you 24/7, wherever you can log on to the MY Access! College: UExcel Edition website. You can also use MY Access! College: UExcel Edition to practice writing tasks you may face in other courses.

Find out more information at the following link. Login is required. www.vantageonlinestore.com/product.php?productid=16312&cat=249

Description of Questions

General Description of the Examination

The UExcel College Writing examination is based on material typically taught in a one-semester, three-credit, introductory course in college writing. The examination measures the ability to persuade a reader to pursue a specified course of action by using personal knowledge and experience to support a proposal and to analyze and respond appropriately to written texts that represent opposing viewpoints, using the Modern Language Association (MLA) style of citation. In general, the examination measures the ability to organize knowledge, ideas, and information; to use rhetorical strategies such as narration, illustration, explanation, and description in appropriate ways; to adopt and maintain a tone and point of view appropriate for a specified audience and rhetorical situation; to develop and maintain a controlling idea and a coherent organization; and to write within the rhetorical, syntactical, and mechanical conventions of Standard Written American English.

Learning Outcomes

After you have successfully worked your way through the recommended study materials, you should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

1. Develop and organize knowledge, ideas, and information in support of a thesis or proposition. (Aligns with GECC 1.2)
2. Recognize rhetorical strategies and modes (narration, description, and persuasion) and use them in appropriate ways. (Aligns to GECC 1.2)
3. Establish and maintain a tone and a point of view appropriate for a specific audience and rhetorical situation. (Aligns to GECC 1.2)
4. Write within the rhetorical, syntactical, and mechanical conventions of standard written American English. (Aligns to GECC 1.2)
5. Propose a solution to a problem and argue effectively for that solution. (Aligns to GECC 1.2)
6. Summarize, analyze, and respond to arguments that take opposing positions on a controversial issue. (Aligns to GECC 1.2)

General Education Career Competencies Addressed in this Exam

GECC-1: Oral and Written Communication: Deliver written communication with appropriate content, organization, syntax, mechanics, and style for the audience and purpose.

The examination includes two questions representing the types of writing prompts described below. Each type of prompt requires you to demonstrate a number of interrelated writing abilities.

Proposal Writing

This type of prompt tests your ability to persuade a reader to pursue a specified course of action, using your knowledge and experience to support your position. It tests your ability to select and effectively use such rhetorical strategies as narration, illustration, explanation, and description to support your position.

Criteria for rating your response include appropriate use of personal knowledge and experience in constructing your argument; variety of rhetorical strategies employed; voice, focus, and tone; structural elements such as paragraph development that advance the thesis of your argument; and the degree to which any errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling interfere with readability or weaken the persuasiveness of the argument.

Analysis and Response

This type of prompt tests your ability to summarize and analyze two texts that present opposing viewpoints; to respond to a controversy inventively and responsibly by quoting and/or paraphrasing; to use the Modern Language Association (MLA) style of citation when referring to the words and/or ideas of others; and to write within the rhetorical, syntactic, and mechanical conventions of Standard Written American English. You are directed to read two texts presented in the prompt and to write an essay in which you identify each author's position on an issue, analyze and evaluate these positions, and respond to the issue. You are asked to assume that your audience does not have access to these texts, so that part of the task is to summarize the arguments in such a way that your audience will understand them. You may choose how to respond to the issue. You may, for instance, defend the position of one of the authors, find a compromise position between them, explain why the controversy cannot be resolved, or suggest a way to resolve the controversy.

Criteria for rating your response include appropriate citation of the stimulus texts; effective use of summary and paraphrase; correctness and depth of analysis of the material presented; completeness of response to the issue, including recognition of competing positions; variety of rhetorical strategies employed; voice, focus, and tone; structural elements such as paragraph development that advance the thesis of your argument; and the degree to which any errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling interfere with readability or weaken the persuasiveness of the argument.

SECTION THREE

Sample Questions

The questions that follow will not be on the exam. These questions (writing prompts) illustrate those typically found on this examination. These sample questions are included to familiarize you with the types of questions you will find on the examination. Space has been left after each question for you to practice writing or organizing an answer if you wish to do so. The course guide in the guided learning package includes scoring guidelines and examples of student answers for each type of prompt, as well as a detailed study plan for using all the materials to prepare for the examination.

Proposal Writing

Your community's planning committee has set aside funding for the renovation of a vacant building or lot to be used for the whole community. The goal is for this new public space to be used frequently and by as many people as possible. The committee is asking people to suggest a site in their community and recommend a use for it.

Write a letter to the community planners. Be sure that you:

- explain carefully and in detail why your proposal should be accepted;
- make a clear and specific argument for the purchase of a specific vacant building or lot, explain why it is the best location for a community space, and describe how it should be used to achieve their goals;
- identify the disadvantages of likely competing proposals and counter them;
- explain carefully and in detail why your chosen site and use should be accepted;
- using a tone appropriate to the identified audience, argue persuasively to the community planners that the plan you have suggested is a wise investment.

In constructing your response, be sure that you:

- provide an effective introduction that prepares the reader for the structure you have chosen for your argument;
- use a thesis statement and appropriate topic sentences, transitions, and paragraph structure as you present your judgment on the issue or problem;
- include specific citations from external sources you are able to recall, rather than relying solely on personal opinion and experience
- conclude with an authoritative statement on the problem at hand.

Analysis/Response

Read the two texts presented on the following pages. The texts give different opinions on the language that college students and professors use when speaking to each other, and whether or not their speech should be regulated. The first text is taken from the editorial page of a newspaper; the second is a letter to the editor.

Write an essay for an audience of college students in which you:

- identify each author's position on the issue "university speech codes." You should assume that your audience does not have access to these texts, so part of your task will be to summarize the arguments in such a way that your audience will understand them;
- analyze and evaluate these positions;
- respond to the issue. You may choose how to respond to the issue. You may, for instance, defend the position of one of the authors, find a compromise position between them, explain why the controversy cannot be resolved, or suggest a way to resolve the controversy.

In constructing your response, be sure that you:

- provide an effective introduction that prepares the reader for the structure you have chosen for your analysis;
- use a thesis statement and appropriate topic sentences, transitions, and paragraph structure as you present your judgment on the controversy;
- include specific citations from the articles and any other resources you are able to recall, rather than relying solely on personal opinion and experience
- conclude with an authoritative statement on the issue at hand.

Be careful to avoid plagiarism. These texts represent sources, so when paraphrasing or quoting from them, you should use the Modern Language Association (MLA) system of citation. You do not need to prepare a list of works cited.

P.C. University Goes Too Far

If you are heading for college or graduate school and are sensitive about being male, female, black, white, Asian, young, old, married, unmarried, gay, straight, Catholic, Jewish, evangelical Protestant or a veteran, think about going to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. You will be protected there against offense to your group sensibilities. That is the purpose of a new code of behavior proposed by the university's administration and its union of graduate student employees. It would punish as "harassment" a wide range of speech by faculty members or students — including "epithets, slurs and negative stereotyping" — that may offend groups. ...The proposed code, circulated at the Amherst campus last month, would ban speech that offends "on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, veteran status or disability." The graduate students' union said it would add to that list "citizenship, culture, HIV status, language, parental status, political affiliation or belief and pregnancy status." Orwell is the name that comes to mind as one reads this proposal. It would create a totalitarian atmosphere in which everyone would have to guard his tongue all the time lest he say something that someone finds offensive. (The code would let anyone who heard a doubtful remark about some group bring a complaint, even if he was not a member of the group.)

Do the drafters have no knowledge of history? One wonders. No understanding that freedom requires, as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "freedom for the thought that we hate"? And if not, what are they doing at a university? ...The chancellor at the Amherst campus, David K. Scott, responded to criticism by suggesting that a code was required by federal Department of Education regulations. They threaten to withhold federal aid from any university with a "hostile environment" in terms of race — and similar gender rules are being prepared. If so, the federal regulations need revision. It is time to stop letting the elastic concept of a "hostile environment" menace freedom of speech, at universities of all places.

(Lewis, Anthony. "P.C. University Goes Too Far." *The Oregonian* 28 Nov. 1995: C7.)

Response to “P.C. University Goes Too Far”

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to Anthony Lewis’s recent editorial regarding the University of Massachusetts at Amherst’s proposed speech code. Anthony Lewis is wrong. Such a speech code is not an “Orwellian” or “Nazi” tactic. Rather, it is a directive asking that people speak with politeness and consideration for others. How can that be wrong? I am a female student at Astoria State University, and I have quite often felt the stings of harassment in the speech of others. I once had a professor say to me, “Why don’t you stay home and have children? That’s all you’re suited to do.” Maybe he was joking — he said it with a laugh — but I was devastated. More than once I have heard male students refer to females using terms that your newspaper wouldn’t print.

I have heard other students refer to African Americans using racial epithets. Because this speech was not corrected or checked, fraternities have also engaged in outright racist behavior, such as dressing in white sheets imitating the Ku Klux Klan. What does it take for the administration to see that there is a problem — a lynching? A college campus should provide a safe environment for learning. If students feel that they are hated by others or that their presence is not wanted, how can that student begin to learn and grow as a person?

We are all entitled to an education in the United States, not just white males who resemble Anthony Lewis. Student retention at universities like UMass is usually worse for students who are minorities of one type or another. Perhaps it is time to create a safe place for all of us to learn.

—Nadine Williams
Astoria, Oregon

(Williams, Nadine. *Astorian Journal* 2 Dec. 1995: B12.)

SECTION FOUR

Taking the Exam

Registering for Your Exam

Register Online

www.excelsior.edu/examregistration

Follow the instructions and pay by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover Card.

Examination Administration

Pearson Testing Centers serve as the administrator for all Excelsior College computer-delivered exams. The Disability Services office at Excelsior College is responsible for considering requests for reasonable accommodations (exceptions for individual students with documented disabilities). If you are requesting an accommodation due to a disability, download and complete a Request for Accommodation form that can be accessed by visiting the Excelsior College website at www.excelsior.edu/accessibility-services.

Computer-Delivered Testing

You will take the exam by computer, entering your answers using either the keyboard or the mouse. The system is designed to be as user-friendly as possible, even for those with little or no computer experience. On-screen instructions are similar to those you would see in a paper examination booklet.

For a simulation of the testing experience at a Pearson testing center, go to the following link, *What to Expect*: home.pearsonvue.com/test-taker/security.aspx

On the Day of Your Exam

Important Reminders

On the day of your exam, remember to:

- dress comfortably: the computer will not mind that you're wearing your favorite relaxation outfit
- arrive at the test site rested and prepared to concentrate for an extended period
- allow sufficient time to travel, park, and locate the test center
- be prepared for possible variations in temperature at the test center due to weather changes or energy conservation measures
- bring your ID, but otherwise, don't weigh yourself down with belongings that will have to be kept in a locker during the test.
- You will receive a small, erasable whiteboard if you need one.

Academic Honesty Nondisclosure Statement

- All test takers must agree to the terms of the Excelsior College Academic Honesty Policy before taking an examination. The agreement will be presented on screen at the Pearson VUE Testing Center before the start of your exam.
- Once the test taker agrees to the terms of the Academic Honesty Nondisclosure Statement, the exam will begin.

If you choose not to accept the terms of the agreement

- your exam will be terminated
- you will be required to leave the testing center
- you will not be eligible for a refund. For more information, review the Student Policy Handbook at www.excelsior.edu/studentpolicyhandbook.

Student behavior is monitored during and after the exam. Electronic measures are used to monitor the security of test items and scan for illegal use of intellectual property. This monitoring includes surveillance of Internet chat rooms, websites, and other public forums.

UExcel Grade Report

After you complete the exam, you will be issued a UExcel Grade Report for Examinations. In this report, you will receive your grade and an explanation of how you performed in each of the Content Areas in the exam, in the Detailed Score Report, in percentages. See the [sample UExcel Grade Report](#) in this content guide.

Information About UExcel Exams for Colleges and Universities

A committee of teaching faculty and practicing professionals determines the learning outcomes to be tested on each exam. Excelsior College Center for Educational Measurement staff oversee the technical aspects of test construction in accordance with current professional standards. To promote fairness in testing, we take special care to ensure that the language used in the exams and related materials is consistent, professional, and user friendly. Editorial staff perform systematic quantitative and qualitative reviews to ensure accuracy, clarity, and compliance with conventions of bias-free language usage.

Excelsior College, the test developer, recommends granting three (3) semester hours of lower-level undergraduate credit to students who receive a letter grade of C or higher on this examination. Other colleges and universities also recognize this exam as a basis for granting credit or advanced standing. Individual institutions set their own policies for the amount of credit awarded and the minimum acceptable score.

College Writing Exam Development Committee

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Sample Grade Report

UExcel®

GRADE REPORT FOR EXAMINATIONS

	Exam Taker	Contact ID:	54321
	123 Any Street	Test Date:	1/1/19
	Any Town, NY 12345	Letter Grade:	A
	USA		
Examination Code and Title: 123-456 UExcel Financial Accounting			
Recommended Credit:			
3 Lower Level			

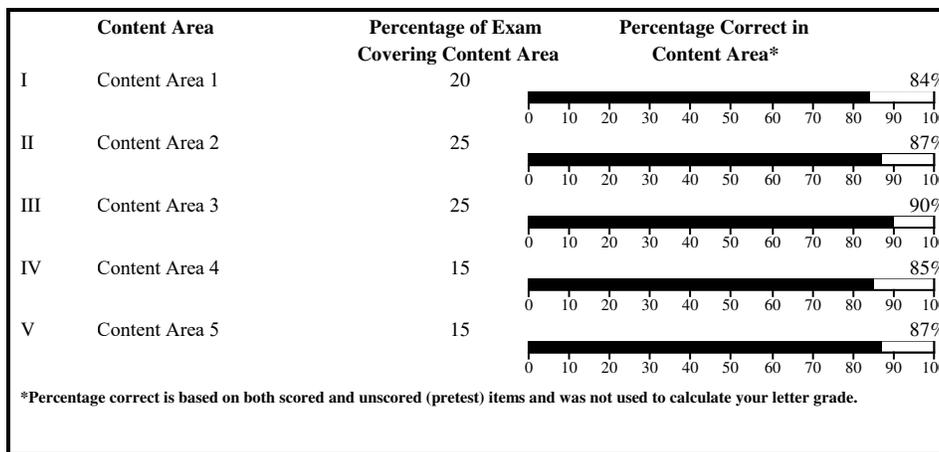
Your examination results are expressed as a Letter Grade of A, B, C, or F. Your results are automatically verified when they are received at Excelsior College. If an error is detected, you will be notified immediately.

Recommended Credit is the number of semester hours credit that Excelsior College awards and recommends for your grade. Excelsior College awards and recommends credit for letter grades of C or better.

If you plan to take another examination, you may download free content guides and the User's Guide by visiting our Website at www.excelsior.edu and then clicking on the Downloadable Documents link at the bottom of the page.

If you need an Excelsior College Official Examinations Transcript to document the credit you have earned for this examination for another organization, the request can be made online by accessing the Excelsior College website (www.excelsior.edu), logging into your MyExcelsior account, clicking the MyDetails tab, and scrolling down to the Exams box and clicking on the "Exam Transcript request" link. If you do not already have a MyExcelsior username and password, you can obtain one at no cost by accessing the Excelsior College website, clicking the 'Log In to MyExcelsior' button, and then clicking the link 'Create a MyExcelsior User Account'.

DETAILED SCORE REPORT





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