

EXAM
CODE **110**

CATALOG
NUMBER **ENGx110**

College Writing

CREDIT
HOURS

3

LEVEL

LOWER

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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.

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

Examinees **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 45 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. 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 21, at the back of this content guide, for a sample UExcel Grade Report for Examinations.

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

Library services are available to students enrolled in a degree program at Excelsior College. 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. To access the Excelsior College Library, visit www.excelsior.edu/library (login is required). Access to the library is available 24/7.

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 students who take exams 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. If you have not studied the subject before, you should plan to budget approximately 45 hours of study time for every credit: 135 hours for 3 credits, 180 hours for 4 credits, 270 hours for 6 credits, and 360 hours for 8 credits. These hours are rules of thumb based on expectations for a student taking a course in the subject; it may take you more or less time, depending on how familiar you are with the material and how easily you absorb the information studying on your own. 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**
- **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! Success starts with establishing a relationship with your advisor.

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 does not endorse the products and services of any tutorial or test preparation firm. We do not review the materials provided by these firms for the content or compatibility of their material and resources with UExcel® exams or Excelsior College Examinations®. 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

Start preparing by downloading a copy of the [Course Guide for College Writing](#). It will help walk you through the writing process, help you to write a lot (key to success in this exam) and, with the textbooks, point you towards ways to get the needed feedback on your writing to help you successfully write the two specialized essay questions on this exam.

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.

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.

Recommended Resources for the UExcel Exam in College Writing

The resources listed below are recommended by The resources listed below were selected by the faculty members on the examination committee for use in developing this exam.

Resources listed under “Strongly Recommended” were used by the committee to verify all the questions on the exam. Please refer to the Content Outline to see which parts of the exam are cross-referenced to these resources.

Resources listed under “Optional” provide additional material that may deepen or broaden your understanding of the subject, or that may provide an additional perspective on the exam content. Textbook resources, both Strongly Recommended and Optional, may be purchased from the [Excelsior College Bookstore](#).

You should allow ample time to obtain the necessary resources and to study sufficiently before taking the exam, so plan appropriately, with an eye towards your own personal learning needs. See the sections in this guide on the Excelsior College Bookstore and the Excelsior College Library, and under Reducing Textbook Costs, to help you secure the Strongly Recommended resources successfully.

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 additional Strongly Recommended 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 open educational resources (OER) has been included in this guide to help you locate additional, possibly free resources to augment your study.

Strongly Recommended

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](#).

Free OER For College Writing

<https://idaho.pressbooks.pub/write/>

Optional Resources

The examination development committee did not identify any specific Optional resources for this exam. If you would like to explore topics in more depth, we encourage you to refer to available Open Educational Resources (OER).

Exam Resources

This content guide (and the content outline within it) is the first place to start to study for the College Writing exam. Excelsior's Library also has developed an [Exam Resources page](#) for the exam, based on this content guide. These [Exam Resource pages](#) provide additional materials that complement the resources in this guide.

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.

Library Resources for College Writing

This content guide is the first place to start to study. Excelsior's Library has also developed an [Exam Resources page](#) for the exam, based on this content guide. The [Exam Resources page](#) provides additional materials that complement the resources in this guide.

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.

Open Educational Resources

There are many resources available online free of charge that may further enhance your study for the exam. Known as Open Educational Resources (OER), these may be textbooks, courses, tutorials, or encyclopedias. Any additional OER that you find independently should be used to augment study—not as replacements for the Strongly Recommended resources.

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.

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.

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!

SECTION TWO

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.

Accessibility Services

Excelsior College is committed to the principle that every individual should have an equal opportunity to enroll in an Excelsior College degree program, to register for courses or examinations in order to demonstrate their knowledge and skills under appropriate conditions, and to complete a degree.

The Accessibility Services Office at Excelsior College is responsible for considering requests for reasonable accommodations for individuals with verifiable, documented disabilities. If you are requesting an accommodation due to a disability/condition, complete a [Request for Accommodation form](#).

Computer-Delivered Testing

The UExcel exams are delivered by computer. You can take this exam either in a [Pearson VUE testing center](#) or at your home or office with an online proctor. If you are interested in remote proctoring, visit [PearsonVUE OnVUE online proctoring](#).

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. You will use either the keyboard or the mouse to submit your answers, depending upon the type of question.

Before taking your exam, we strongly encourage you to go on a virtual tour of the testing center. To access this tour, click the What to Expect in a Pearson VUE test center at the following link: home.pearsonvue.com/test-taker/security.aspx

You also will receive a small, erasable whiteboard if you need one.

Breaks

Breaks are only permitted for exams taken at Pearson VUE Testing Centers, and are not permitted during exams delivered via online proctoring.

Online Proctoring

As of spring 2021, Excelsior is offering an [online delivery option for UExcel exams](#), using OnVUE, Pearson VUE's online delivery and proctoring service.

You must use a personal (vs. an employer's) computer if you want to take the exam online and not in a testing center, so the exam can be effectively delivered to you.

Breaks are not allowed during an exam taken online from home. You may not leave your seat during an online-proctored exam, so be prepared to sit for two or three hours. If you need extra time, the exam will have to be taken at a PearsonVUE Testing Center, and an accommodation formally requested.

NOTE: English Composition, Spanish, Music, and College Writing will NOT be available for online proctoring.

*correct answer

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.

Academic Integrity Nondisclosure Statement

- All examinees must agree to the terms of the Excelsior College Academic Integrity 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 examinee agrees to the terms of the Academic Integrity Nondisclosure Agreement (NDA), 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. See the [sample UExcel Grade Report](#) in this content guide.

Grade Appeals

If you believe that your score grade is incorrect, you may appeal your grade to examcredit@excelsior.edu. Details about the appeals process are in the [Student Handbook](#).

What If I Miss My Appointment?

If you don't cancel or reschedule your testing appointment 24 hours before your test appointment, you will have to pay the full fee of the exam, even if you don't show up.

Late Arrivals

You will also forfeit the exam fee if you arrive to the test center more than 15 minutes late.

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

B. Cole Bennett, PhD (University of Southern
Mississippi, Composition and Rhetoric, 2002)
Assistant Professor of English and Writing Center
Director, Abilene Christian University

Joel B. Henderson, MS (Harding University,
English, 1993)
Assistant Professor of English, Chattanooga
State Technical Community College

Sample Grade Report for Extended Response Exams

UExcel®

GRADE REPORT FOR EXTENDED RESPONSE AND MIXED FORMAT EXAMINATIONS



TEST, TPQA

**5601 Green Valley Drive
Bloomington, MN 55437
USA**

UExcel ID: 99999999

Registration ID: 6649330

Test Date: 11/8/17

Validation ID: 302227314

Letter Grade: B

Examination Code and Title: 110 College Writing

**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 retake this examination, refer to the examination's content guide for recommendations on study resources and for a copy of the Official Rating Scale on which the feedback statements below are based. For information on obtaining the content guide, see the paragraph below.

If you plan to take another examination, you may download content guides and exam registration material free by visiting our web site at www.uexceltest.com.

If you need an Excelsior College official transcript to document the credit you have earned for this examination for another organization, the request can be made online by accessing the UExcel web site (www.uexceltest.com) and following the onscreen instructions. You will need the UExcel ID above to complete the transcript order.

Score Report Descriptions

Proposal Writing (Persuasive Writing) Scoring Guide

Description of Prompt

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 the position.

Score Point Descriptions

- 6 In the 6 response, the writer shows originality in creatively employing personal knowledge and experience to engage the audience's interest and to solicit support for a proposed resolution or plan of action. The writer uses rhetorical strategies such as examples, narratives, descriptions, reasons and/or arguments designed for the specific audience identified in the prompt. The writer's voice is engaging and the response contains vivid language. Paragraph development, sentence structure, and word choice are sophisticated and reveal the writer's command of these elements. The response contains few errors in grammar, punctuation, or usage.
- 5 In the 5 response, the writing is focused, interesting, and even lively; however, it lacks the originality and creativity of the 6 response. The proposal is fully developed and the writer uses personal knowledge and experience to support her or his persuasive intent. The writer uses rhetorical strategies (examples, narratives, descriptions, reasons and/or arguments) in ways that are appropriate to the purpose of the proposal, but may do so in a formulaic way. While the voice is appropriate to the subject and intent of the proposal, it is somewhat flat and does not add to the persuasive force. The structural development of paragraphs and sentences indicates the writer's command of these elements. The proposal may contain a few errors in grammar, punctuation, and/or usage, but they do not interfere with readability.
- 4 In the 4 response, the writer adequately responds to the prompt and is somewhat successful at using personal knowledge and experience persuasively.

The material included in the proposal addresses the audience, but the writing lacks grace and consistency. The writer makes limited use of rhetorical strategies in support of the proposal. The writer may occasionally shift or blur the proposal's focus or fail to select or maintain an appropriate tone. While the paragraphs may lack sufficient detail, the overall organization and the development of paragraphs and sentences show more than rudimentary knowledge of these elements. Word choice and errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling may occasionally interfere with readability and weaken the persuasiveness of the proposal.

- 3 In the 3 response, the writer may develop a scenario or problem and reveal the intent to use personal knowledge and experience persuasively, but is not entirely successful in doing so. Appropriate details and supporting evidence may be presented; however, the writer may simply list points or details without showing how they support the resolution or plan of action if one is stated. Rather than developing an argument, the writer may depend on emotional appeal or may assume the audience's agreement or support without eliciting it. The overall organization or development of paragraphs may be weak or confusing, but the writer demonstrates a basic competency in these areas. Errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word use may interfere with readability and detract from the writer's persuasive intent. Conversely, the response may demonstrate command of these features but lack substance and/or depth.
- 2 The 2 response may present appropriate and even interesting personal knowledge and experience, but not in such a way as to support the proposal. The response may lack purpose, focus, and/or development, or consist only of inadequately illustrated recommendations or recommendations that are not directed toward a clear purpose. The writer's points may be insufficiently developed and the response may not be structured so that it leads readers from point to point. The writing style may suggest that the writer had difficulty constructing sentences and selecting appropriate words, and errors in mechanics may often interfere with readability and seriously detract from the writer's persuasive intent.

- 1 The 1 response may lack a clear purpose and not sufficiently develop the points it makes through appropriate rhetorical strategies. Some relevant personal knowledge and experience may be incorporated, but the response may not develop connections among points or clearly reveal a purpose. Simplistic syntax and diction suggest inadequate command of basic elements of writing. Mechanical errors and the absence of structural control seriously hamper communication with the reader.
- 0 Not ratable. The essay cannot be rated because it ignores the writing prompt, or is blank, completely illegible, or written in a language other than English.

Analysis and Response Scoring Guide

Description of Prompt

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.

Score Point Descriptions

- 6 The 6 essay is rhetorically engaging, syntactically sophisticated, and skillfully arranged. The essay summarizes accurately, responds effectively, and uses sources inventively and responsibly. The writer paraphrases and/or quotes from texts, establishing the nature of the controversy with insight and fairness to both authors. The essay concludes with a cogent response that follows from the analysis, that adopts one of the strategies mentioned in the prompt, and that anticipates objections to the writer's claims, dealing with them gracefully and effectively. The essay contains few errors of grammar, punctuation, and usage and uses the MLA citation style correctly, including quotation marks around quoted material, titles of passages, publications where passages first appeared, and page numbers.
- 5 The 5 essay is focused, skillfully arranged, and even rhetorically engaging, but lacks the syntactic sophistication of the 6 essay. Through paraphrasing and/or quoting from the texts, the writer shows a good grasp of the controversy. The writer concludes with a cogent response, but may not connect this response very skillfully with the analysis. In addition, the writer may not anticipate nor deal with objections to the response. The essay may have a few errors of convention or violation of MLA style, but not such as to constitute plagiarism nor to distract the reader.
- 4 The 4 essay is focused and organized, and the writer may be somewhat successful at summarizing and analyzing each author's position and in offering a cogent response, but these three elements may not be closely connected. In addition, the analysis and/or the response may be competent, but not demonstrate depth and/or insight. The writer may fail to maintain an appropriate tone. While the paragraphs may lack sufficient detail, the overall organization and the development of paragraphs and sentences show more than rudimentary knowledge of these elements. Word choice and errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling may occasionally interfere with readability and weaken the effectiveness of the essay. While the writer may use the MLA citation style, he or she may not incorporate quotations or paraphrases smoothly into the essay.
- 3 The 3 essay contains both analysis and response sections, but overall the essay exhibits one or more major errors of comprehension, logic, or tone. The summary, analysis, and response, while they may be present, are likely to be weak, inaccurate, or superficial. The overall organization and development of paragraphs may be weak or confusing, but the writer reveals a basic competency in these areas. Errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or usage may interfere with readability, and the writer may not be

able to paraphrase or quote from the texts in a responsible manner. Conversely, the essay may demonstrate command of these features but lack substance and/or depth. MLA citation style may be seriously flawed.

- 2 The 2 essay may contain both analysis and response sections, but one or the other may be significantly weak because of a failure to comprehend the texts or to respond appropriately. The writer may have difficulty referring to the texts: he or she may misquote them, misrepresent them, cite them incorrectly, or fail to refer to them at all. The tone of the essay may be seriously inappropriate. While the essay may contain over-personalized or other immature remarks, the remarks do not dominate the essay. The writing style may suggest that the writer had difficulty constructing sentences and selecting appropriate words, and errors in mechanics often interfere with readability. MLA citation style may be absent.
- 1 The 1 essay may show that the writer understands the nature of the prompt's requirements but lacks competence in summary, analysis, and response. The essay may be over-personalized or immature. Inadequate paragraphing, simplistic syntax, inaccurate diction, and serious mechanical errors indicate inadequate understanding of basic elements of writing. The writer's inability to use quotation and/or MLA citation competently enough to avoid plagiarism compromises her or his responsibility toward the texts.
- 0 Not ratable. The essay cannot be rated because it ignores the writing prompt or is blank, completely illegible, or written in a language other than English.



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