POLICY 1436
GRADUATION WRITING TEST (GWT)

In May of 1976, the Board of Trustees determined that every person who receives a degree from the California State University (CSU) system must demonstrate competence in writing. After careful and extended study, the Cal Poly Pomona Academic Senate in 1978 decided that writing would be assessed by means of a written examination. All students subject to degree requirements listed in the 1977-78 and later general catalogs must therefore demonstrate competency in writing skills as a requirement for graduation. Writing competence at Cal Poly Pomona is assessed primarily by means of a written test. All persons who receive undergraduate, graduate, or external degrees from Cal Poly Pomona must pass the Graduation Writing Test (GWT).

The test is available to undergraduate students at the completion of 60 semester units and must be taken by the completion of 75 semester units. Newly enrolled transfer students will receive notification of GWT requirement during their second term at Cal Poly Pomona. If the GWT is not taken by this time, a hold will be placed on a student’s registration. While a student’s records are on hold, registration may not be allowed nor will transcripts be released. A student who has passed the GWT as an undergraduate at Cal Poly Pomona will not be required to take it again if they subsequently enroll in a graduate degree program at this university.

Exemptions from the GWT requirement are granted to students who do not plan to receive a degree at Cal Poly Pomona (e.g., enrollment in a credential or certificate program), or to undergraduate and graduate students that have passed an equivalent writing-competency exam or course at another CSU campus. Students who have satisfied an equivalent writing-competency exam or course at another CSU campus may submit documentation for review to the Test Center. In addition, the Test Center will provide certification of writing competency to another CSU campus if requested.

Graduate students are eligible to take the GWT upon admission and are required to take the GWT by the completion of 6 semester units. Exemptions from the GWT are granted to post-baccalaureate students who have previously received a degree from an accredited college or university in the United States, or received a degree from an accredited non-US where instruction is conducted in English; or received a score of 4 or higher on the analytical writing portion of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT).

Post-baccalaureate students who are not exempt from the requirement, may complete the requirement in one of the following ways:

1. Complete the course ENG 3151: Writing for the Professions with a B- or better; OR
2. Complete and pass the Graduate Writing Test (GWT)
After attempting the GWT twice, undergraduate students may apply for enrollment in CPU 4010, a class in which students’ writing is assessed on a portfolio basis. Successful completion of CPU 4010 as an undergraduate student can be used to fulfill the GWT requirement of a graduate program at Cal Poly Pomona. Information regarding enrollment in CPU 4010 is available from The Learning Resource Center.

After four failed attempts of the GWT an undergraduate student may submit a waiver petition to the Office of Student Success. Sometime before a final attempt at the test, the student should contact The Learning Resource Center to inquire about the petition process to waive the GWT. Students who have had the test successfully waived as an undergraduate (either for continuous enrollment or by special consideration in order to receive their bachelor's degree) will be required to take and pass the GWT or CPU 4010 before a graduate degree may be awarded. The GWT cannot be waived for a second time. The waiver in undergraduate status applies only for the baccalaureate degree. Credential candidates may waive the GWT, but will need to take and pass CPU 4010 if they choose to pursue a degree at Cal Poly Pomona.