REQUEST FOR IMPROVING DISCIPLINARY WRITING (IDW) ACTION PROJECT PROPOSALS

To view past proposals and final reports, please visit: http://improvingwriting.wix.com/oduqep

DEADLINE
Proposals are due by 5:00 PM on February 1 of each calendar year or the first business day thereafter.

OVERVIEW
Old Dominion University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP): Improving Disciplinary Writing is intended to improve upper-division undergraduate students’ disciplinary writing – that is, writing that demonstrates a reasoning process supported by research and reflection on a problem, topic or issue. Writing is a critical skill that goes beyond demonstrating proficiency with the mechanics and structure of writing per se. Writing is a means to communicate what has been learned.

All Action Project Proposals must include improving upper-division undergraduate students’ disciplinary writing. As a result of Action Project initiatives, students will be able to produce written documents that demonstrate these six Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as measured by the IDW Writing Rubric (found at www.odu.edu/qep). That is, students will be able to:

- Clearly state a focused problem, question, or topic appropriate for the purpose of the task
- Identify relevant knowledge and/or credible sources
- Synthesize information and multiple viewpoints related to the problem, question, or topic
- Apply appropriate research methods, theoretical framework or genre to the problem, question, or topic
- Formulate conclusions that are logically tied to inquiry findings and consider applications, limitations, and implications, and
- Reflect on or evaluate what was learned

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
Funding is available for program activities related to the goal of engaging upper-division undergraduate students in disciplinary writing that demonstrates a reasoning process supported by research and reflection on the problem, topic or issue being studied. For example, programs might submit Action Projects to seek funds that could:

- Provide resources for a faculty members to improve the writing in a particular courses as a pilot test with the commitment of the program faculty to implement what was learned in other courses in the program
- Facilitate the development of a departmental workshop that will teach write-to-learn techniques to faculty across the department or program and assess the effectiveness of those techniques to help improve disciplinary writing in students
• Allow faculty members to re-design or streamline a core or ‘W’ course in their program by creating new assignments and exercises based on the IDW rubric and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)  
• Support faculty members by allowing them to attend a conference related to writing in their discipline, share what was learned with the other faculty in the program, and then plan a strategy to implement the best practices for disciplinary writing throughout their courses

In all cases, the goal remains: to improve upper-division undergraduate disciplinary writing. Academic programs impart knowledge through courses and so the focus is ultimately on the teaching and assessing of writing within courses. Academic program faculty know what the issues are within their own programs in terms of what is lacking, and they have the best sense of what is needed to improve upper-division undergraduate disciplinary writing within their specific program as a whole. The Action Project process provides the flexibility for them to design a strategy and request the funds needed to implement a plan to improve disciplinary writing in their programs.

Academic programs are encouraged to refer to the High Impact Practices (HIPs) identified by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) that have been demonstrated to enhance student engagement in learning (www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm). AAC&U identified ten HIPs but those most pertinent to the QEP and work with upper-division students are:
• Writing Intensive Courses  
• Collaborative Assignments and Projects  
• Undergraduate Research  
• Internships  
• Capstone Courses and Projects

All proposals must result in student writing from one or more upper-division undergraduate courses that will be uploaded into an electronic repository within one semester of proposal completion for assessment by the University Assessment office using the IDW Writing Rubric.

AWARDS
Grants will be awarded up to $20,000. Programs are expected to apply for different amounts depending on the scope of the project in which they plan to engage. Project length will generally be from three months to one year; multi-year projects will not be eligible initially, but may be reconsidered as the IDW program progresses.

ELIGIBILITY
Faculty members who teach upper-level (300 and 400-level) undergraduate courses, as individuals or teams, are eligible to apply as Principal Investigators (PIs) or Co-Investigators (Co-Is). All academic programs are eligible to apply and multidisciplinary proposals are welcome.

Faculty submitting Action Projects for their programs may have, but are not required to have participated in the IDW Faculty Workshops. The aforementioned Student
Learning Outcomes as well as many other write-to-learn principles are taught in-depth at the IDW Faculty Workshops that are offered each term.

OUTCOME
The lessons learned by Action Project grant recipients will be shared as an important step in fostering a campus-wide dialog on upper-division undergraduate disciplinary writing. The final reports will be published on the IDW website as a resource for the campus community.

All proposals must result in student writing from one or more upper-division undergraduate courses that will be uploaded into an electronic repository within one academic year of proposal completion for assessment by the IDW Office using the IDW Writing Rubric. (This is best accomplished by including this in the course requirements.)

Principal Investigators (PIs) will submit a final report that provides sufficient documentation of all activities to allow readers to replicate the activities in their home departments. Appendices are encouraged to provide example activities, papers, surveys, and the like that may have been used to implement and/or evaluate the plan deployed.

SUPPORT
Applicants must schedule an appointment with the Director of Writing and Faculty Development to discuss the Action Project BEFORE an application can be submitted. In addition, PIs and Co-PIs who have projects accepted will need to attend the IDW Action Project Summit during the summer before their project is launched.

PREPARATION
As you prepare for the proposal consider the questions listed below:
- What are the strategies you will be adopting to improve upper-division undergraduate students’ disciplinary writing?
- How will these strategies improve the SLOs across courses in the program?
- How do you plan to evaluate the impact of the strategies in your department?
- Are there other faculty in your department, college, or other colleges who may benefit from collaboration on this project or upon whom this project will have an impact?
- Will the project’s impact be sustainable?
- What is your timeline from award through evaluation plan? Is it reasonable to accomplish your goals?

PROPOSAL OUTLINE
Proposals should have eight sections and each of the sections outlined below should begin on a new page. Proposals are limited to a total of 10 pages (single-spaced, 12 pt. font). References should be included and will not be included in the page count. To be eligible for consideration, each proposal must include the following sections and should address, with as much detail as possible, the following key issues:
SECTION ONE: TITLE PAGE

1.) A cover page for the proposal and should include the following information: project title, first and last name/department/college of each PI and Co-PI, and requested grant amount.

SECTION TWO: ABSTRACT

1.) A brief 1-3 sentence description of the project being proposed. This description will be used in advertisements, if the project is funded.

SECTION THREE: APPROACH

1.) A statement about the need to improve upper-division undergraduate students’ disciplinary writing – that is, writing that demonstrates a reasoning process supported by research and reflection on a problem, topic or issue – in your academic program.

2.) A detailed description of the proposed activities outlining how they relate to improving disciplinary writing.

3.) The specific original strategies to be used during the grant period to develop or discover strategies to improve upper-division undergraduate students’ disciplinary writing and the rationales for these efforts.

4.) A statement of the overall vision that underlies the management and implementation of the plan including a timeline for implementation and assessment.

SECTION FOUR: PROJECT IMPACT

1.) A clear statement of which of the proposed activities, if successful, would be expected to be institutionalized by the end of the grant period and reproduced along with which of the proposed activities, if successful, would require further sources of support in order to be continued.

2.) An estimate, based on the proposal approach, of the number of students (based on the average enrollment of students in classes/programs that will be involved in the project) who would be impacted by the project.

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSMENT PLAN

1.) The project’s assessment plan should outline the methods that will help determine how benchmarks are met, for example how strategies were effectively implemented (process), the impact they made on student learning (i.e., initial assessments of how writing influenced learning; outcomes), and how specific strategies may be altered in the future to enhance effectiveness.
2.) All proposals must result in student writing from one or more upper-division undergraduate courses that will be uploaded into an electronic repository (such as Blackboard) within one academic year of proposal completion for assessment using the IDW Writing Rubric.

3.) As the IDW Writing Rubric will be used to assess student learning, your proposal must explain how your project will utilize and employ the SLOs the IDW Writing Rubric outlines. This assessment is independent of a student’s course grade. Faculty involved in the Action Projects should be willing to participate in confidential surveys for assessment purposes as well. All proposals must include an explanation of how this will be done; that is, in which courses this will occur.

SECTION SIX: BUDGET

1.) The proposal budget should be a table that indicates the amount of funds requested to embark on the project and outlines how those funds will be used throughout the duration of the grant period.

2.) Requested items must be necessary to address the goal and funding should be appropriate for the scope of the project. Allowable budget items include, for example, release time, graduate student support, travel cost for faculty to attend conferences or bring experts to ODU, and supplies. The roles for all personnel included in the budget should be clearly defined. In addition to funds requested, indicate any matching funds the applicant’s department or program is willing to contribute. Matching funds are not required for submitting a proposal; however, the sustainability of the activities is important (i.e. once IDW funding ends, is there the possibility for the department to have built effective activities into its standard procedures?). Matching funds, of any amount, help demonstrate a commitment to sustainability.

SECTION SEVEN: MULTIDISCIPLINARY

1.) A delineated list of the names of each college along with the departments involved in the project.

SECTION EIGHT: LETTER OF SUPPORT

1.) A brief letter of support from the Department Head, Associate Chair, Chair or College Dean from the lead faculty member’s (PI) department.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

Once proposals are received, they will be checked for completion by the Director of Writing and Faculty Development. **Incomplete proposals or proposals that do not**
follow the aforementioned guidelines will be disqualified. Complete proposals will go on to be reviewed by the IDW Advisory Board using the following selection criteria. Any member of the Advisory Board that is named in an Action Project proposal will not be included in deliberations for the grant cycle. Action Project award decisions will be based on the quality and impact that the proposal will make towards the overall goal of improving upper-division undergraduate students’ disciplinary writing.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

✓ All sections of the proposal are completed.

**Approach – 30%**

1.) Approach is appropriate  
2.) Approach is well-defined  
3.) Approach is innovative  
4.) Approach is practical/feasible

**Project Impact – 25%**

1.) Project is reproducible  
2.) Project affects a significant number of students (based on average annual enrollment)

**Assessment Plan – 20%**

1.) Assessment plan is well-defined  
2.) Assessment plan is relevant to the learning outcomes  
3.) Assessment plan is feasible

**Budget Plan – 10%**

1.) Budget plan is well-defined  
2.) Budget plan is feasible

**Multidisciplinary – 15%**

1.) Project includes more than one academic discipline or program. Special consideration will be given to those projects that include members from several university colleges.

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

After meeting with the Director of Writing and Faculty Development, applications must be submitted as one Microsoft Word or PDF document via e-mail to ImprovingWriting@odu.edu with the subject “IDW Action Project Proposal.”


## SCHEDULE FOR PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED

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<tr>
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<td>Request for Proposals Begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1, 2016</td>
<td>Proposal Due Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1, 2016</td>
<td>Announce Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>IDW Action Project Summit</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1, 2016 – May 30, 2017</td>
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## INQUIRIES

Please visit [www.odu.edu/QEP](http://www.odu.edu/QEP) for more information on ODU’s QEP. Please visit [improvingwriting.wix.com/oduqep](http://improvingwriting.wix.com/oduqep) for detailed information about previous Action Project grants. General inquiries regarding this program should be sent to Remica Bingham-Risher, Director of Writing and Faculty Development, at ImprovingWriting@odu.edu.