WRIT 465 Guidelines and Rubrics for Instructors

WRIT 465 focuses on the preparation of oral and written reports appropriate in a professional environment. It is one of a small number of Winthrop courses that have both the writing intensive and oral communication designations. Most of us who teach this course find it rewarding because students are usually excited about and committed to the projects they pursue. We have also found that classroom workshops, frequent conferences, group work, and peer editing are very effective techniques to use with these students. A notebook of useful WRIT 465 materials is available in the Writing Center.

Students must have junior status and must have passed CRTW 201 with a C- or better in order to take WRIT 465. Any sophomores on your rolls should be told to drop the course, unless they can prove that they actually have junior status.

Types of Writing Assignment
The major assignment is a semester-long project (usually a feasibility study). Written components of the project MUST include:
-- proposal
-- letter of inquiry
-- survey or questionnaire
-- audience analysis
-- progress report
-- the formal report or feasibility study, including letter of transmittal

Other documents covered in the course SHOULD include:
-- instructions (may be a group-produced manual)
-- technical description
-- correspondence

-- résumé
-- application letter

In addition, students should learn to access technological data and use internet sources. Some sections of this course are taught as a hybrid format, with one weekly in-class meeting and an online component, and students in these sections will work with Blackboard. All students should learn to appropriately use email and students should use presentation software like PowerPoint, SlideRocket, or Prezi to present their final projects. They should also learn to interpret and design various types of graphics and to integrate them into written text with appropriate labels or captions.

Types of Oral Communication Assignments
At least three graded oral presentations are required in WRIT 465 (most instructors require four), and you must provide students with detailed instruction on oral communication skills. Oral presentations may include such assignments as "how-to" demonstrations, progress reports, and group reports. A formal oral report on the major project is required. Students should gain experience preparing and using visual aids for these oral reports.

You should provide written feedback to students about their oral presentations, and peer evaluation should also be included (this is a requirement of the oral communication competency). In a group presentation, for example, students can critique other members of the group, or the entire class can fill out evaluation sheets for individual presentations.

Research and Documentation Skills
Students should gain experience gathering information from library and non-library sources, including interviews and surveys, and they will need to know the difference between primary and secondary research. If your students need more advanced instruction about library materials, you will have to provide such instruction.
Students should learn an appropriate form of documentation. Please spend some time discussing the correct use of borrowed information, for students may not remember the MLA format used in WRIT 101 and CRTW, or you may want them to use another form of documentation. Review with them the college-wide policy on academic dishonesty.

Computer Use
Computers are available in a number of campus computer labs. Students must provide their own disks for the computers, and they must apply for a computer account in Tillman 015. All WRIT 465 documents should be typed or processed on a computer, and you should consider requiring students to submit all assignments to Turnitin.

Revision Policies
Strict standards of correctness should be applied in WRIT 465. For example, in order to receive a C, a document should be relatively error-free and acceptable for use in a professional environment. Documents may be revised for a new grade, but you should establish a revision policy to be included in your syllabus. You may allow up to two revision opportunities for each major written assignment, but you must review a draft of the major project before it is revised for a grade. This is typically a thirty minute conference with each student on his or her rough draft.

Rubrics
The rubrics for WRIT 465 written and oral communication are found at http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/cas/english/WRIT465Rubrics.pdf.

Texts
The standard textbook is William Pfeiffer’s A Pocket Guide to Technical Communication, 5th edition. Any other textbook used in this course must be approved by the Department Chair.