

IDC 1 / APC Document 26 (PWR):

**Add a minor in Professional Writing and Rhetoric
to be administered by the English Department**

Effective Date: Fall 2020

- Add:** On page 140-141, following the entry for the Creative Writing minor:

Minor in Professional Writing and Rhetoric

At least 20 hours, including: LANG 354, 395; 2-4 hours of LANG 340; 10-12 hours from ANTH 336, CLAS 498, DRAM 213, HWP 335, LANG 260, 311, 312, 350, 366, 396, LIT 240, LL 313, MCOM 201, RELS 312, 313. A minimum of 18 hours of LANG/LIT courses is required for the minor. Special topics courses in LANG may be substituted with the approval of the department chair. Note that some of the courses for the minor have prerequisites that may increase the total number of hours needed for the minor.

University-wide minimum requirements for a minor: 1) one-half of the hours required for a minor must be completed in residence at UNC Asheville, to include at least 6 hours at the 300-400 level; 2) students must have a cumulative grade-point-average of at least 2.0 on minor courses taken at UNC Asheville.

Impact: Given that all of the required courses listed here are already offered every year, we do not anticipate that this proposal would bring immediate labor or resource implications to the English department or the Writing Program. We do, of course, hope that a Professional Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) minor would attract more students to our courses, so it is certainly possible that student demand for these classes could outpace our capacity to accommodate them, perhaps even within the next couple of years. Otherwise, the principal resource implication would be an increase in the number of advisees. We would, however, welcome increased demand for what we're offering.

We have concurrences from Mass Communication, Health and Wellness Promotion, Classics, Religious Studies, Drama, Sociology and Anthropology, and Languages and Literatures for inclusion of the eight courses listed from outside our department. We expect that once the word gets out about this minor, other departments may identify additional appropriate classes to include, such as those formerly designated as Writing Intensive.

Finally, we have considered the need for a 200-level course (akin to LIT 240 and LANG 260) that would more directly introduce PWR and writing across a variety of disciplines and professions—and which would, of course, carry resource implications. For the moment, however, we anticipate that the “core” combination of LANG 354 (Professional Writing), 395 (English Grammar), and 340 (Internship in Writing), building on the basics explored in LANG 120 and supported by the work of advising, would provide students with sufficient grounding, guidance, and opportunities for reflection and integration. (Although LANG 120 is a prerequisite for many of these courses, we have not included it among the minor requirements because, as a part of the LAC, it is required of all students anyway.)

Rationale: This proposal is one modest step in a larger effort to formalize—and make more explicit—what already exists in our departmental and Writing Program course offerings, beginning with LANG 120. In short, we anticipate that a PWR minor would (1) attract more students into the wider orbit of the English department; (2) widen and deepen potential collaborations with other departments and a range of community partners; (3) continue to call more attention, university-wide, to the relevance of writing to a variety of academic and professional fields; and (4) help to call attention to the importance of the work we do and the skills we teach in the English department and the Writing Program.

Indeed, we see this proposal as deeply resonant with all three of the university's core values: (a) diversity and inclusion, in large part through the very nature of rhetorical education's attention to language variation across situations and cultures; (b) innovation, through the very effort to reframe and rethink much of what we're already doing to support the teaching and learning of writing across our curricula; and (c) sustainability, through our efforts to build and strengthen alliances with other departments and community partners (already nurtured through internships and service-learning designated courses like LANG 354, 396, and a sprinkling of LANG special topics).

This proposal was also inspired, in part, by hearing from colleagues in the English department at Queens University of Charlotte about their success in creating a new [PWR major concentration](#)—a concentration that, by their account, is going “gangbusters.” Their experience (of significant student interest in a PWR program of study) seems to match national trends ([as reported by *Inside Higher Ed* in July of 2018](#); see especially the section titled “Tracks to Success?”). Indeed, we have also been encouraged to learn that ten other UNC campuses and fourteen COPLAC members have comparable professional writing or closely related minors.

The courses we have included so far, then, are those offered by our department and a few others that focus explicit attention on rhetoric (understood as the study of how we use language and other symbols and modalities to create, organize, and communicate information) or writing in particular disciplines or professions. Examples of the latter include HWP 335, focusing on communication in health fields; MCOM 201, on writing in journalism; LANG 366, on creative nonfiction (memoirs and other essays); ANTH 336, on writing ethnographies; LIT 240, which introduces writing in literary studies; and RELS 312 and 313, which both emphasize the writing of critical book reviews. Courses like DRAM 213 (public speaking and presentations) and LL 313 (Languages and Contexts), while they may not use the term “rhetoric,” nonetheless focus on questions related to effective communication—choices and effects—across a range of compositional modalities.

Should a PWR minor indeed attract students from a variety of majors, we would hope (as already noted above) that additional departments might suggest courses to include among the PWR electives—and, indeed, one department chair has already suggested they might consider creating a new writing-focused course, and a handful of faculty in other departments have suggested courses that might also fit with this minor. Such possibilities bode well for writing instruction across the University.