

## QI Summary Report – 2014 Syllabi Analysis

Course syllabi were solicited from faculty across NMSU. Three hundred forty-eight (348) syllabi were collected and coded, (most from the Fall 2013-Spring 2014 school year) representing 72 departments across six NMSU colleges.

One hundred thirty (130) of the courses (37.4%) showed no evidence of writing. This proportion was highest in the Engineering (75%) and Business (55%) colleges and lowest in the Honors (0%) and Education (11%) colleges.

College	# Courses Sampled	# Courses w/ Writing	% Courses w/ Writing	# Courses w/o Writing	% Courses w/o Writing
Agricultural, Consumer, and Env. Sci.	44	31	70	13	30
Arts and Sciences	185	114	62	71	38
Business	40	18	45	22	55
Education	53	47	89	6	11
Engineering	24	6	25	18	75
Honors	2	2	100	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>37</b>

From the 218 courses that did show evidence of writing (62.6%), a total of 1,423 assignments were coded. Of the categories employed by coders, the most common types of assignments were Personal Reaction (41.6%), Paper (20.1%), and Report (15.6%), although 23.8% of assignments had components that did not fit in any of the utilized categories. (Assignments were frequently coded as belonging to more than one category.)

Component type	Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences	Arts and Sciences	Business	Education	Engineering	Honors
Journal	4	45	16	4	0	0
Bibliography	4	14	0	0	0	0
Personal Reaction	8	316	58	210	0	0
Handout	4	50	1	3	0	0
Project	20	26	11	22	3	0
Proposal	6	15	0	0	2	0
Presentation	13	46	6	20	5	1
In-class exam	8	60	1	15	0	0
Essay	1	101	14	23	0	2
Paper	23	197	10	53	1	2
Creative	0	2	0	0	0	0
Take-home exam	1	4	0	3	0	2
Report	36	82	31	46	11	16
Other	26	201	32	59	2	18

Thirty-one percent (31.7%) of assignments with a stated length asked for 250 words of writing or fewer; however, this trend was not followed in the Business College, where 16 out of 19 assignments with specified length were in the 251-500 word range, and the Engineering College, where 13 out of 14 assignments with specified length were in the 1000+ word range. In total, 68.4% of all assignments within the sample of the Engineering College were 1000 words or greater in length.

Only 5.1% of assignments were nested within larger assignments. 57.7% of assignments for which a mark value (i.e., percentage of the overall course grade) could be determined had a mark value of 5% or less. 5.6% of overall assignments were course finals. 6.2% of assignments permitted collaboration.

Twenty-eight percent (28.5%) of assignments were not described at all within the syllabus, and only 18.8% of assignments were described extensively within the syllabus. (The syllabus made reference to more information on 24.2% of assignments.)

Elements that have predicted successful student writing in previous studies were largely absent within the present sample.

- 14.5% of assignments explicitly stated a learning goal or objective tied directly to the assignment
- 24.9% of assignments offered students a chance to choose what to write about
- 22 out of 1,423 assignments (1.5%) specified a target audience
- 3.4% of assignments were accompanied by mandatory formative feedback
- 7.0% of assignments required references
- 12.4% specified a style manual
- 18.3% suggested writing resources
- 2.4% suggested research resources (and 4.8% provided research constraints)
- 8.1% provided writing specifications
- 11 (0.8%) assignments came with an exemplar sample text
- Formal explicit criteria for grading were unmentioned for 86.8% of all assignments
- Rubrics were unspecified for 90.7% of all assignments.