

# Skill Development and Proficiency Requirements

## Skill Development Requirements

The skill development program at Principia College is designed to provide foundational competencies in thinking and communicating.

### *First Year Experience (FYE) Program*

All first-time college students and non-exempt transfer students (see below) must enroll in a First Year Experience Program. An FYE program consists of either a "1+1" FYE program that consists of one LADR course and one Integrated Learning Course (ILC) or three courses: two thematically-linked LADR content courses from different disciplines and one Integrated Learning Course (ILC) that embeds skill development within the content of the two LADR courses. This program is designed to enable students to enter the academic conversation, focusing on the goals and outcomes below.

#### Overarching Goals of FYE

1. Transition to college
2. Character unfoldment
3. Academic rigor
4. Thematic curriculum
5. Development of learning skills

#### Outcomes for FYE/ILC

Students who complete Principia College's FYE program will understand the deep connections between reading, writing, thinking, and speaking, as well as the recursive nature of these various skills. They will be able to make intentional choices about the ways they interact and approach their subsequent work in college. Students will:

1. Use academic research strategies.
2. Use criteria for evaluating information sources.
3. Understand how to use information in an ethical manner, including the proper citing of sources and the avoidance of plagiarism.
4. Identify key concepts in reading texts.
5. Summarize the development of ideas in texts, speeches, and/or other media (dance, music, art, etc.).
6. Use evidence to make conclusions and/or take positions.
7. Use appropriate discipline-specific conventions in writing and speaking.

Transfers who have completed at least two terms of full-time coursework with a cumulative GPA of 2.000 or higher are exempt from FYE. International enrichment students may participate in FYE on a space-available basis.

## Proficiency Requirements

The proficiency requirements at Principia College are designed to provide training in fundamental, specific, rule-based competencies expected of college graduates.

### **Proficiency Requirements (B.A. and B.S. degrees):**

All students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:

- Second Language
- Writing

#### Second Language

This proficiency requirement is designed to enable students to attain a basic proficiency level in a language other than their own as defined in the outcomes.

#### Outcomes for Second Language

1. Ask and respond to questions in spoken or written form in the target language.
2. Communicate about present, past, and projected (future) situations in the target language.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of the world regions and cultures of the different target languages, and how language and culture are linked.
4. Demonstrate the skills of the language learning process.

#### Second Language Proficiency Requirement (B.A. and B.S. degrees):

Students may fulfill the second language requirement in one of the following ways:

- Placement beyond 105/110 level on a placement test administered by the Languages and Cultures faculty
- Test score of 3 or greater on Advanced Placement language test other than English
- Native language competency other than English
- Passing grade in a Principia College course with a GE2L attribute (105 or 110 level)
- Grade of C– or higher in the final course of an eight-semester-hour or more first-year language sequence from an accredited college

Should students wishing to take additional course work in a language offered on campus not qualify at the level indicated by their transfer work, the transfer credit must be rescinded in order for them to be eligible to register for a Principia course at the same skill level as a transferred course. Placement testing does not affect completion of the second language proficiency requirement unless a student requests rescinding of the transfer credit.

#### Writing

This proficiency requirement is designed to enable students to attain a basic proficiency level in writing in their work throughout the curriculum. Students will demonstrate the ability to use writing for both thinking and communicating.

1. Students will demonstrate their understanding that writing is a tool for thinking by:
  - Using writing strategies to discover their own ideas.

- Using writing strategies to understand and respond to concepts and texts.
  - Maintaining a distinct voice and viewpoint in academic writing while ethically incorporating material from other sources.
  - Using claims and evidence to answer questions, solve problems, or take a position.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding that writing is a tool for communicating by:
- Providing logical support for arguments and interpretations.
  - Using discipline-appropriate writing conventions and genres to provide guidance for readers.
  - Writing with an understanding that academic research involves entering an ongoing conversation among experts in a field.

### Writing Proficiency Requirement

All students will fulfill the writing proficiency requirement by submitting the following:

- Baseline Writing Sample
- Writing Fundamentals Portfolio
- Writing Major Portfolio

### Writing Program Policy

1. During orientation or within the first week of the first term, first-time college students and transfer students will complete a writing activity designed to assess their Baseline Writing Skills. These writing samples will be evaluated to determine the level of writing support needed.
2. First-time college students and transfers who take FYE are required to submit a Writing Fundamentals Portfolio during their FYE program their first term on campus to demonstrate their level of competence in basic research and writing skills before beginning intensive writing in their majors. Transfer students who are exempt from FYE must submit their Writing Fundamentals Portfolios within their first two terms on campus. It is each student's responsibility to enroll within this timeframe in a course that will provide the opportunity to produce the required writing samples and to submit the portfolio by the end of that term. The Writing Fundamentals Portfolio may be submitted only once.

A student whose Writing Fundamentals Portfolio does not demonstrate an acceptable level of competence or who fails to submit during the required term will be required to meet with his or her advisor(s) and the writing specialist to work out a writing plan designed to address the student's unique needs and to prepare the student to meet the demands of upper division work. The writing specialist, in conjunction with the advisor(s), will have the prerogative to direct the registrar to enroll the student in up to three credit hours of academic work in a writing-intensive course or courses appropriate to the student's needs. To meet this requirement, the course work must be successfully completed by the student. At the end of each subsequent term, the student, the advisor(s), and the writing specialist will meet, as needed, to review the student's progress with writing. Further course work may be recommended in these meetings. The meetings will cease when the advisor(s) and the writing specialist determine that the student has demonstrated a satisfactory level of competence in writing required by the student's discipline.

3. Students must complete the Major Portfolio for each of their majors. When a student has multiple majors and the major faculty determine that it is appropriate, the requirements for these portfolios can be coordinated and consolidated to avoid duplication.