

Writing Across the Curriculum Program



APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY®

Writing About Sustainable Development

I. General Purpose and Audience

Sustainable Development, according to the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainable Development is an inherently interdisciplinary field and can overlap with biology, chemistry, building science, social science, business, international business, political science, ecology, agriculture, economics, philosophy, the creative arts, and agro-ecology. Students and professionals in this field will likely collaborate and communicate with specialists in a variety of fields as they seek to communicate their message about sustainability to the rest of the world. Writers in Sustainable Development examine environmental, societal, and economic qualities in creating an awareness and development of sustainable societies. Writers also seek to lessen their ecological footprint as they research initiatives that will educate others about natural ecosystems, while embracing principles of health, diversity, tolerance, and human rights. **Audiences** include lawmakers, government agencies, politicians, business people, environmental scientists, educators, artists, children, and the general public.

II. Types of Writing

As evidenced from the list above, the type of writing encountered in SD varies widely. Often the focus of the writing has its roots in social justice, both international and domestic environmental law, poetry and other arts, regional studies (such as Appalachian studies), anthropology, and agro-ecology. Writers should remain open to multiple genres and be prepared to collaborate regularly with others from divergent home disciplines.

III. Types of Evidence

The type of evidence used is dependent on the specialty and focus of individual disciplines. See individual Writing About Guidelines for specifics about various fields

on the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) website:

<https://wac.appstate.edu/writing-disciplines/writing-about-disciplines-guidelines>

- Primary sources
- Secondary sources
- Information from research
- Quantitative evidence
- Qualitative evidence
- Facts, statistics
- Anecdotes, narratives
- Case studies
- Historical data
- Case law
- Archaeological evidence
- Empirical evidence

IV. Writing Conventions

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the field of sustainable development, writers preparing to enter this academic conversation should maintain a high level of audience awareness. Often writers will act as liaisons between academic disciplines, requiring them to adjust their voice and expectations to fit the needs and knowledge base of a given audience. Writers should also be prepared to translate their work into layman's terms, define specialized terms, and communicate with ELL and ESL populations. (See WAC's guidelines above for writing in different fields.)

V. Vocabulary / Terms / Jargon

- Sustainability
- Carbon neutral
- Local to Global
- Ecological footprint
- ACUPCC
- Renewable energy
- Agro-ecology
- Ecosystem
- AASHE

VI. Citation Style

As sustainable development requires students to interact with a variety of subject areas, students of sustainable development should be familiar with a variety of citation styles and be prepared to read and write in all four of the major citation styles: **MLA**, **APA**, **Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)**, and **Council of Science Editors (CSE)**.

Sources consulted

International Institute for Sustainable Development. "What is Sustainable Development?" iisd.org. 2013. 8 October 2014.

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