

## Who May Apply

Students eligible to apply for First-Year Writing exemption include the following:

- Students who transfer in 3 credit hours of First-Year Writing from another institution.

OR

- Students with the following test scores.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| AP English Language & Composition                                | 4           |
| AP Capstone Research   | 4           |
| AP Capstone Seminar  | 4           |
| IB Extended Essay + Higher Level English Language 1A             | 6 or better |
| Cambridge International A Level Global Perspectives and Research | A or B      |

Students who come to the college with no prior college-level writing experience and students who earn scores lower than those listed may not apply for exemption and will be placed in English 110. Students admitted to the Honors College are not eligible for exemption and will be placed in Honors 110.

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## How to Apply

Email the English department Associate Chair, [Professor Bill Russell](#), a portfolio of your academic writing, formatted as a single pdf file, that includes

1. At least 10 pages of formal writing that demonstrates your ability to make an argument that draws from and cites relevant credible sources.
2. A 2-3 page cover letter that provides detailed answers to the following questions about the writing collected in your portfolio:
  - What were your purposes as a writer? What did you want your writing to accomplish beyond completing the assignment?
  - Who was your intended audience?
  - What specific choices did you make as a writer to successfully meet your purpose and address your audience?

Portfolios are reviewed on a rolling basis and may be submitted on or before the following dates:

| To Be Considered for Exemption In... | Portfolios Must Be Submitted By... |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Fall 2019                            | August 1st, 2019                   |
| Spring 2020                          | December 5th, 2019                 |
| Fall 2020                            | August 1st, 2020                   |
| Spring 2021                          | December 5th, 2020                 |

Once a portfolio is submitted, two members of the First-Year Writing Committee will review it and notify the Associate Chair of their decision. If the two readers should disagree, a third reader will review it and cast the deciding vote. The decision of the First-Year Writing Committee is final and cannot be appealed.

When submitting a portfolio, enroll in the appropriate writing course for the next semester as if your portfolio will not pass. This will ensure you a seat in the course should you not be granted an exemption. Once a decision has been reached, you will be notified by the Associate Chair of the English Department, typically within 3 to 4 weeks after submitting your portfolio.

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## Tips For Creating Your Portfolio

On average, approximately 65% of the portfolios submitted each year are awarded exemption. Below are suggestions to keep in mind when creating your portfolio.

- The cover letter's purpose is to demonstrate in 2-3 pages your rhetorical awareness--that is, your ability to understand how a piece of writing is shaped by purpose and audience. Provide detailed information about your purpose as a writer and your intended audience, referencing outside materials (i.e., assignment sheets, personal experience, etc.) if necessary. When explaining the choices you made as a writer, quote and analyze specific passages from your writing.
- The 10+ pages of formal writing may consist of more than one piece. However, since English 110 requires students to complete at least one substantial writing project, portfolios are judged more favorably if they demonstrate a student's ability to complete a longer, more sustained writing project.
- Include in your portfolio writing that showcases your ability to make an argument using sources, which might include books, articles, images, films, song lyrics, experimental data, interviews, or ethnographies. Avoid submitting creative writing, personal narratives that do not engage with sources, 5-paragraph essays that offer a cursory examination of a topic, or research papers whose primary purpose is to report on a topic.

- Make sure the writing conforms to an accepted standard of documentation, even if the original assignment didn't require you to cite sources. The most commonly used documentation styles are MLA, APA, or Chicago.
- All writing submitted for the portfolios should meet the College of Charleston's [Honor Code](#) for academic integrity. Submissions suspected of violating the Honor Code will be referred to the Honor Board.