

Criteria for Papers

1. Intellectual Engagement/Quality of Ideas

- 1 Does the paper offer interesting, important, and fresh ideas on its topic?
- 2 Does the paper reveal a writer who is curious and involved, a writer who questions, investigates, and reflects?
- 3 Does the paper acknowledge and investigate complexities, rather than oversimplifying the subject or glossing over difficulties?
- 4 Does the paper reveal a writer who uses language subtly, who sees deeply into ideas, who draws connections fruitfully, and who reasons logically?
- 5 Is the writer's style appropriate for the audience and the occasion?

Organization and Development

- 1 Can the reader discern a central claim (a thesis, a research finding, an interpretive claim, an argument) which is supported with appropriate evidence?
- 2 Does the paper maintain a consistent focus on this central claim?
- 3 Does the opening of the paper indicate the question or problem to be considered, and does it establish an appropriate rhetorical mode between the writer and the implied audience?
- 4 Does every part of the paper advance the central claim in a discernible and effective way? Do the sentences and paragraphs form an effective sequence, drawing the reader along through a logical and reasonable argument?
- 5 Does the paper develop its ideas with effective examples, analysis, comparisons, evidence, or other convincing explanations?
- 6 Does the conclusion leave the reader with a sense of why the central claim is important, why it matters? If appropriate, does it suggest ways the central ideas can be applied, or what the implications of the idea might be?

3. Conventions

- 1 Does the paper conform to the conventions of Standard Written English in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics?
- 2 Is the manuscript presented in appropriate form?
- 3 If present, do quotations and citations conform to MLA guidelines?

