

# *POWERPREP PLUS*® Online

## Practice Test 1

### Scored Sample Essays with Rater Commentary for the Analytical Writing Issue Task

## Issue Topic – Practice Test 1

Colleges and universities should require all faculty to spend time working outside the academic world in professions relevant to the courses they teach.

Write a response in which you discuss your views on the policy and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider the possible consequences of implementing the policy and explain how these consequences shape your position.

**Note:** All responses are reproduced exactly as written, including errors, misspellings, etc., if any.

### Score 6

#### Essay Response

Requiring college and university faculty to spend time working outside the academic world in professions relevant to the courses they teach would yield many extraordinary benefits for students, for faculty members, and for the college or university at which they teach. Students would gain invaluable insight into “real” world applications of what they are taught, faculty would garner a new perspective on their research and create new professional relationships, and colleges and universities would be able to build stronger relationships with the communities they serve. The latter benefit is likely the most significant one: a faculty engaged in the community not only prepares students for work in the real world, but also contributes to improving life for all citizens of the community.

A common lament heard from students is that their teachers live in an “ivory tower” disconnected from the “real world” and its practicalities. Many students feel that professors in all fields, whether the humanities or the sciences, focus too narrowly on theoretical concerns rather than on practical career matters. That is to say, students often find their teachers’ pedagogy to be esoteric and unrelated to the practicalities that they will face upon graduating from college and launching their careers. For instance, a political science major might feel frustrated that her professor devotes a significant number of class hours to elaborating the rational actor model but little time to the particulars of actual statecraft. Requiring faculty to work in professions related to their field of study would help chip away at the image of the professor living in an “ivory tower;” their lessons would be more grounded in the “real world” and their in-class examples and scenarios would reflect actual experience in the field. The political science professor, for example, who had work experience in the government, whether local or at the state or national level, could relate to students the strategies she used in advocating for or negotiating policies with government officials. Faculty members would have greater first-hand experience in their academic discipline, which they could then relate to their students, thereby better preparing students for work in their field.

While yielding critical advantages for students, faculty members will also personally benefit from such a requirement. The expertise acquired from the professor’s work experience would complement her scholarly knowledge, thus providing her greater breadth of knowledge and also bringing a new perspective to her scholarly endeavors. A practical perspective gained

from work in the field would give faculty fodder for research questions and provide new insights as to how her subject matter applies to the everyday context of her field of study. To return to the example of the political science professor, her theories and her research could now be more informed by her experience working with governmental officials, perhaps increasing the likelihood that her research would make relevant contributions to the field. More pragmatically, working in the field would also allow faculty to network and to create relationships of professional import, now not only with their peers in the academy, but also with those in the work sector. Faculty would benefit from this by having a larger group of experts with whom to discuss research questions, while this new and expanded network would also benefit students, since professors would be in a position to create internship opportunities while in school and possibly even job opportunities upon graduation.

Perhaps most tellingly, such a requirement would benefit colleges and universities, as well as the communities they serve. A more practically savvy faculty is a faculty better equipped to contribute research findings and products that have a direct application to the community and to the greater context in which the academic institution exists. They are more likely to contribute to important endeavors such as the development of green energy, urban planning projects, or improving services for the community's citizens. College and university administrators constantly work to establish strong relationships with the communities in which they exist, with the government and its programs, and with corporate and not-for-profit businesses. They do this, not only to fund raise, but because they know that a college or university that teaches just for teaching's sake, or researches simply for research's sake, without any sense of contributing to the community or preparing their students to be informed, involved, contributing citizens of their communities, is a college or university with no true animating purpose. Boasting a faculty that is eagerly engaged in the work community, in a variety of ways, will only serve to demonstrate just how relevant and "plugged in" the academic community really is.

While it is true that there would be practical challenges--including adjusting faculty teaching loads and coordinating faculty leave time--that would need to be addressed, the overall benefits of implementing this policy cannot be overstated. It is also true that some disciplines may lend themselves more readily to direct work application than others; for those disciplines that do not, more creative work opportunities will need to be devised. These issues, however, should not deter colleges and universities from pursuing this otherwise promising idea, and are matters that the deans and administrators could easily resolve with some creative thinking. For the reasons cited above, students, faculty, and their colleges and universities would do well to require all faculty to spend time working outside the academic world in professions relevant to the courses they teach.

### **Rater Commentary**

This response receives a 6 for its cogently reasoned and skillfully argued analysis of the policy proposal stated in the prompt. The response follows the specific task instructions by explicitly considering potential consequences of the policy's implementation. Taking the position that numerous benefits would accrue to students, faculty, and colleges and universities that support and adopt the requirement that all faculty spend time working outside the academic world in professions relevant to the courses they teach, the writer presents insightful descriptions of these benefits. Students, for example, would receive instruction that relates abstract course content to career matters in ways that equip as well as inform; while the faculty themselves would not only

acquire skill in providing “real” instruction of this sort, a “new and expanded network” of professional contacts would also greatly improve the quality of career guidance they could offer their students. These reasons are thoroughly developed and provide compelling support for the claim that this policy is both necessary and workable. Particularly persuasive is the manner in which the response addresses the interrelated ways that this policy would benefit students, faculty, the academy and the community. Organization of these points is handled logically and effectively, beginning with the career benefits to students, then moving to the practical benefits to faculty instruction and research, and finally to the creation of strong relationships between the academy and the community through an “engaged” faculty. Ideas are expressed with fluency and precision throughout the essay. Superior facility with language is in evidence as well, as this sentence demonstrates: “They do this, not only to fund raise, but because they know that a college or university that teaches just for teaching’s sake, or researches simply for research’s sake, without any sense of contributing to the community or preparing their students to be informed, involved, contributing citizens of their communities, is a college or university with no true animating purpose.”

## Score 5

### Essay Response

The question of balance between well-roundedness and expertise has received increased attention in the recent decades. Educators, those who impart knowledge and skills, are especially coming under greater scrutiny. The idea that educators should be well-educated in the field that they teach but also able to impart knowledge gained from exposure to other fields and professions is gaining increased support and validation. In the case of university professors, there is the growing thought that it is not enough for them to impart 'textbook knowledge,' so to speak, it should also be incumbent upon them to impart the relevant experiences gained in the professions related to their academic discipline. For them to be able to do this, it can be argued that they need to spend some time in the relevant fields, since they are directly involved in preparing young people to go out into the job market and other professions, academic or non-academic. However, though there could be benefits to having a professors who are well-rounded in this way, the requirement that they spend time working outside the academic world would be unnecessarily burdensome.

Firstly, not every professor is going to have interest working outside the academic world. For example, a professor of statistics might be very well-equipped and knowledgeable to work at a business firm as a risk analyst or as a financial consultant of some kind. However, this does not mean that he or she would have great enthusiasm for the profession, though her knowledge of mathematics gives her the perspicacity to discern certain trends better and make better future predictions. If such a professor is required to work outside the academic world, when her interests are solely limited to the academic profession of professor of mathematics, this could have the inadvertent effect of dissuading her from academia altogether. Here, there would be a great risk of depriving young students of a great professor of mathematics who would help them prepare for a mathematics-related field. Professorship is a profession in its own right, albeit an academic one, but this does not mean that a professor would necessarily need to have worked in a field related to his or her discipline to be an effective educator.

Secondly, given that professorship is a full-time job, and a particularly demanding one, it does not at all seem reasonable to require professors to spend time working outside academia. In fact, this could lead professors to give less attention to students and more attention to the second profession, which would actually have the inadvertent effect of reducing the educational well-being of his or her students. It is one thing to make the pedagogic requirement that professors be informed about the profession outside of an academic discipline and that they try to instill in students the sense that it is not enough to just have 'textbook knowledge.' It is quite another, however, to ask professors to actually be immersed somewhat in a relevant profession itself. The thought here might be that their teaching would be more 'genuine' but there is no reason to think this. A professor could be a good educator in a field regardless of his experience in a non-academic profession.

In conclusion, though it cannot be denied that professors' experience in a profession outside of academia would have salutary effects on his or her students, the requirement that they spend time outside academia is burdensome. The requirement could have the inadvertent effect of dissuading bright prospective professors away from academia due to the foreseeable workload that requirement means. And if current professors are made to work outside academia, this could lead to their being unable to give due academic attention to their students. Its benefits are clearly outweighed by these disadvantages. For this reason, the recommendation of spending time in a relevant profession should at best be an option that professors can choose to pursue, but not a stringent requirement.

### **Rater Commentary**

This response presents a thoughtful and well-considered position on the issue, arguing that to require all college and university faculty to spend time working in professions outside the academic world would not only impose an unnecessary burden on them, it could also lead to certain "inadvertent effects," or unintended negative consequences, for faculty and students alike. The response develops this position with reasons and examples that provide solid support for its conclusion that the policy's advantages are "clearly outweighed" by its potential disadvantages. This response is especially strong in maintaining focus on the specific task direction that asks writers to consider and explain how possible consequences of implementing the policy have shaped their views on it. In paragraph two, the writer uses the detailed example of a "well-equipped and knowledgeable" math professor who is compelled to work "as a risk analyst or as a financial consultant" at a business firm—performing with little enthusiasm tasks that are relevant to her field but irrelevant to her real interests. This picture then leads to thoughtful analysis of possible consequences: "This could have the inadvertent effect of dissuading her from academia altogether. Here, there would be a great risk of depriving young students of a great professor of mathematics who would help them prepare for a mathematics-related field." Other examples of "inadvertent effects" are linked to similarly negative consequences, contributing both to the thoughtfulness of the response and its effective organization. The response demonstrates facility with language throughout and vocabulary and sentence types are appropriately varied ("However, this does not mean that he or she would have great enthusiasm for the profession, though her knowledge of mathematics gives her the perspicacity to discern certain trends better and make better future predictions"). For clarity of expression and organization as well as quality of analysis, this response merits a 5.

## Score 4

### Essay Response

I agree with the position that colleges and universities should require all faculty to spend time working outside the academic world in professions relevant to the courses they teach. Although this may be more necessary for some than for others, this would be important for every professor to experience at least occasionally. Allowing faculty to take the time to experience the real world applications of their subjects would be beneficial not only to the professors, but it would also benefit the students.

Faculty would maintain expertise in their fields and expands their views and knowledge in their given areas. Just as those who are learning a subject need context and examples to solidify the material in their minds, teachers should keep up to date with their subjects to keep the material fresh in theirs. Having an experience first hand is drastically different from reading about it in an academic journal. This would also allow professors to be the most accurate and helpful they can be when they prepare students to enter a certain field. As disciplines change over time, it is important for faculty to understand the new needs and aspects of a particular profession. Their students would have the opportunity to learn from someone who is currently experiencing the profession which they are studying. This would give those anticipating a career in a given field access to a better understanding and a more insightful view of what to expect.

Some might argue that this requirement of time and energy on the part of the faculty would actually be detrimental. Professors would lose time that they might normally give to students in order to fulfill this necessity. However, I think the benefits of learning from someone who understands every aspect of the field outweigh the anticipated results of this fear. Working outside the academic world may even afford professors more time to spend on their students as they may now have a better grasp of what they are teaching, so they won't have to spend countless hours researching their own field in articles and journals.

If schools of higher learning choose this approach I believe that it would improve the institutions enormously. Having significant and relevant experience in a subject one teaches is an important and necessary step toward a great education.

### Rater Commentary

This response meets all the requirements of a the 4 score point. In response to the task directions, it presents a clear position on the issue, arguing that “Allowing faculty to take the time to experience the real world applications of their subjects would be beneficial not only to the professors, but it would also benefit the students”. It supports this position with relevant reasons, discussing anticipated benefits to faculty and students as possible consequences of the policy’s adoption. Ideas progress logically as the response develops, moving from the benefits to faculty to those they would pass on to students and then to a potential counterargument which it seeks to rebut. This response highlights the scoring guide distinction between adequate and generally thoughtful development. For instance, the writer’s initial endorsement of the policy includes a

caveat-- “Although this [policy] may be more necessary for some than for others...” -- but in what ways and for whom this may be the case is not addressed further. The second paragraph includes a similar lapse. In this instance, the response seems to argue that working outside the university will allow faculty to update their knowledge and “maintain expertise in their fields” because hands-on experience is a better way of acquiring knowledge than “reading about it in an academic journal.” Rather than elaborate the benefits of hands-on experience, or offer an example of “real world applications” to reinforce the claim and strengthen the analysis, the writer simply reasserts the superiority of “currently experiencing the profession” and moves on. The use of language in this response is also adequate. The conventions of standard written English are sufficiently controlled; errors are incidental and do not interfere with the clarity of the ideas expressed.

## **Score 3**

### **Essay Response**

Higher education is very important for today's youth to succeed in their lives; most of the youngsters of this generation understand the value of a proper education, for the world is getting more and more competitive by the minute. In order for the students to get the most out of their college experience, it is a must for the faculty to work "outside the academic world in professions relevant" to their respective discipline, so that they can guide their students to achieve the right path that will add value to the student's professional life.

Faculty members who have been teaching in universities for a long period of time, usually tend to focus tremendously on their course materials solely. Although they have adequate experience in their discipline, they do not prepare the students to face the contemporary corporate world. Most professors load their students with assignments and exams in the chemical engineering department during the senior year, which takes about seven hours on a daily basis for the average student to complete. Senior year is a very crucial year especially for engineering students, for this is the prime time that students tend to look for job opportunities. Such behavior hinders many opportunities such as the student's attendance in various career fairs held across the country. Moreover, the fact that most faculty members repeat the same curriculum for their respective courses year after year, makes the whole college experience less challenging, and outdated. Most of the students in engineering programs tend to acquire exam materials from the previous years, which makes a loop-hole for incompetent students. Furthermore, the fact that the course materials are recycled through the years, indicate that the material is probably outdated. Hence, it is important for a faculty member in a university to stay updated with the current problems faced in their respective pr

### **Rater Commentary**

This response shows some competence in presenting a position on the issue, but its overall development is marked by an inconsistency of focus that gives undue attention to reasons and examples that are not directly relevant to the task. The response does attempt to address the specific task instructions, taking the position that requiring faculty to work outside the university is essential: the experience will equip them to provide their students with valuable professional guidance as they prepare for their own careers in a competitive work environment. However, the development provided in support of this position is not clearly related to this claim. The point

that veteran teachers are so immersed in their own fields of study that they have lost touch with the practical needs of their students is clearly relevant, and suggests a possible benefit of outside work. However, instead of developing this point in a logically persuasive way, the writer shifts attention to the daily work load of a chemical engineering major (“assignments and exams...which takes about seven hours on a daily basis for the average student to complete”) and how this can hinder the search for job opportunities during the student’s senior year. Similarly, the response asserts the importance of faculty members “staying updated with the current problems” in the discipline instead of recycling the same curriculum “year after year,” but the accompanying discussion emphasizes the disservice done to students (“make the whole college experience less challenging, and outdated”) rather than on how faculty working outside the university may help to remedy this problem. This response, then, earns a score of 3 primarily because of problems with focus and failure to provide relevant support for its claims.

## Score 2

### Essay Response

As colleges and universities role increase rapidly in those days due to the major effect on the society , and in guiding the future student to lead the nation to the right way ; from this point colleges are considered as the backbone to the society.

now adays the colleges are competing to reach the hieghest place in education so that it can achieve the hieghest ranks around the world.

in modren countries like USA the colleges strated encouraging students to participate in the society activities for example the college made one day for the arts departement to share thier skills and abilties of drwaing by making student who live in the same area or around each other to make groups and start removing the bad sights on the wall and draw pictuers with nice view. also physiscs department started sharing thier projects with local community i.e the physiscs department started for example providing electricty through solar energy.

the colleges also started encouraging thier stuff of lectuers to go to schools and give some lectuers regards thier field.

The increased demands of life and economy require from the man to search for more than one job so the profession which revelant to the courses the man can use that even to earn more money as just hitting two birds by one stone,in one hand he can achieve something good to the society by supportting issues that brings beinfits to all and in the other hand he can get some more money.

Working outside the colleges aslo give chance to the lectuers to deal and interact with local community and also to see the problems of other people and more than that to see by direct eye which the society lacking and which the things it needs to get improved so that the can carry those problems and issues to their academy and discuss it together and find sulotions for it for example my uncle told me "one day when we were painting on the walls we found one teenager one to share us drwaing i told him he can and once he finished i was shocked from his talent i told him why dont you come and study in our college he said because my father dont have enough money to let me study" from this by working outside our colleges we cand find talents and skillfull student who need just support from us to achieve thier dreams.

conclusion is that i think its good from the colleges and universities to spend some time outside thier offices so that not just they can find professions revelant to thier jobs but also to help the



society to improved and share the issues which tough all local community beacuse they are considered the menors for current students..  
the mentor who can guide the student to the right way by giving advices ,instruction so that he can see the light from the dark sky.

### **Rater Commentary**

The language is the feature most decisive in assigning a score of 2 to this essay, although focus in the first half of the response also contributes to the score. While the first half makes references to “students...participat[ing] in society,” “physics department...sharing their projects with local community” and “colleges...encourging thier stuff of lectuers to go to schools and give some lectuers,” the response’s position remains unclear and unfocused. There are moments of (dim) clarity in the second half that provide evidence of the writer’s basic grasp of topic and task, but here the essay continues to be weakened by serious errors of grammar, usage, and mechanics that frequently interfere with meaning. For example, the penultimate paragraph of the response addresses the prompt directly and attempts to describe benefits of the policy requiring college faculty to work outside the academic world: “Working outside the colleges aslo give chance to to the lectuers to deal and interact with local community and also to see the problems of other people...to see by direct eye.” But errors accumulate at a rapid pace as the response loses control of sentence boundaries, obscuring a reference to a practical consequence of implementing the policy: “...the things it needs to get improved so that the can carry those problems and issues to their academy and discuss it together and find sulotions for it for example my uncle told me ‘one day when we were painting....’” Thus, in spite of some evidence of understanding the issue and attempting to develop a response, poor focus and serious language problems keeps the score in the 2 range.

## **Score 1**

### **Essay Response**

We are considered that everyone must live for other people. Many people thought surely that it is correct something. However, everything of failere are happened for other people. I don"t agree to spend time working outside the my acadimic world.

Consequently, in developed something, we cannot be developed until we get many knowledge. We must take over many limits for developing. That is why this is needed, but it is not meaning for us, unless we know limits of surraunding developed.

We must know limits before developing. I am not this side to spend time working outside the academic world in professions relevant to the courses they teach.

### **Rater Commentary**

This response receives a score of 1. The response indicates it disagreement, but beyond that there is no evidence that the writer has understood the policy issue addressed by the prompt or is able to develop a response that presents a discernible position on it. In addition, the response shows fundamental deficiencies in the use of language. Sentences do not cohere, and grammatical errors are pervasive enough to interfere with meaning throughout the response:

e.g., “Consequently, in developed something, we cannot be developed until we get many knowledge. We must take over many limits for developing.”