

Task

Read the two source extracts and then write a short essay in answer to the task:

Describe two differences between the Semester 1 RWAC course and the Semester 2 ESAC course at UNNC. Make a recommendation for a student who is preparing to move from RWAC to ESAC study.

Directions for candidates

Do NOT write more than 500 words. Words after 500 will not be marked.

You **must**:

- cite both sources in your answer
- use the source information provided below each source extract to create a two-item reference list that is formatted as you have been taught throughout the RWAC course

You **may** incorporate your own ideas if you want to but doing so is not a requirement of the task.

You should type your answer in the Answer Booklet with the formatting: Verdana 11pt, 1.5 line spacing, and use a double space to indicate paragraph breaks.

Your two-item reference list should be provided after the essay and headed 'References' or 'Reference list'.

Source Extract 1

The RWAC course at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China is one of the largest courses in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) offered anywhere in the world, having over 2000 students and delivered by more than 70 teaching staff (University of Nottingham, 2020). This first-semester course is presented as 'one-size-fits-all': studied by all students irrespective of their major and intended to introduce the foundational academic literacies needed for reading and writing tasks in the British higher education context.

For some students, RWAC comes as a surprise. They might have anticipated that they would continue to learn English as they had done at school, with the aim only of improving general communication skills. If that had been the expectation, this course and its counterpart OCSa might seem strangely narrow: there is none of the English for visiting the hairdresser or the hospital. Indeed, teaching on these EAP courses might seem to require students to 'unlearn' some of the (*often very good*) general English acquired at school, as this is considered too casual for use in university contexts. Early RWAC lessons introduce students to this need for formal language well as the importance of responsibility in managing source material. As reported by Bulwell and Bulwell (2012), other commonalities taught in such very general courses in EAP include library searches, classroom language, and the avoidance of plagiarism, all required for any future course of university study.

In general-EAP courses of this type, the teaching material used is often what is called 'carrier content', which means it is provided largely because there must be *something* (Meadows, 2017). For example, a reading text might serve chiefly to allow students to practice the skill of paraphrase and then to show that they know how to cite the source. A yearly challenge for the RWAC course designer is the need to find a topic for the short descriptive coursework essay, the 'IWA', such that it can be understood as relevant to all without favouring students who are going into any one of the different faculties. In recent years, these topics have included Life Expectancy and Wellbeing (Radford, 2022), presumably with the justification that everyone has a life and would want to be content while living it.

Despite those well-intended efforts, such topics seem more obviously suited to those who will be studying in the humanities and social sciences than in mathematics or engineering. Ultimately, any general EAP course will be too broad to fully provide for all students' future needs. For example, a would-be chemist will have a need to describe the stages of a laboratory experiment and will need the subject-specific vocabulary 'pipette' or 'volumetric flask'. By contrast, a student headed for the department of International Studies, has no more need of these terms than that Chemistry student has of understanding 'coalition government' or 'diplomatic relations'. While there are common points that can usefully be taught across disciplines, there surely comes a point beyond which a university has to cater for different future needs.

Source information*: Source Extract 1 is from an article called Let's Get Specific. It was published in 2022 by Professor Allegra Mapperley on pages 99-109 of volume 8 of the academic journal 'New Directions in EAP'.

* 'Excerpt' texts have been created by CELE for teaching and testing purposes

Source Extract 2**Ready for ESAC?**

Congratulations: you've completed the RWAC course. However, you shouldn't think the skills taught in RWAC can now just be forgotten. These are basic skills you'll need throughout your time at UNNC, and longer than that if you progress to further study at another Western university. But there'll be no more RWAC in semester 2 and you might be sad to say goodbye to your classmates and RWAC tutor. Yes, there'll be new classes, new tutors, and new challenges as you progress from RWAC to begin your studies in ESAC: English in Specific Academic Contexts.

You might need to form a new study-group too. If you've been relying on the help of your dorm-mate, she possibly won't be able to help you in Semester 2. You see, ESAC isn't really a single course but a suite of related but different courses. Depending on your dorm-mate's major and yours, it might be that your IWAs are on completely different topics. Business students might be evaluating a management theory, for example, while students in the social sciences could be debating the advantages and disadvantages of citizen journalism and engineers are weighing up alternative sustainable energy sources.

You might even think your friends have started learning a second foreign language when you hear them talking about their ESAC classes. That happens because the lesson content, as well as the readings for those different IWAs, will be introducing what's called 'subject-specific vocabulary', the language commonly used in business, for example. You'll be acquiring a new vocabulary, too, and that might seem a challenge. However, many students report to us that they feel newly motivated as they begin in ESAC to develop not just new skills but also new concepts and vocabulary that they can see as obviously applicable to their future studies. Better that than "but I'll *never* have to write about wellbeing!"

But why is your Engineering student friend putting sub-headings in her IWA? That's surely wrong because your own ESAC tutor said you shouldn't have subheadings in your business essays and should rely only on your topic sentences to guide the reader. That kind of surprise awaits because it isn't just topics, concepts and vocabulary that differ between disciplines: the types of writing might be importantly different too. It seems you've been asked to write a traditional discursive essay while what your friend is producing is something much more like a *scientific report*. There are special conventions or guidelines for how the information in such reports should be organised and presented.

If you've tried some preparatory reading in your discipline (a journal article... *have you?*) or have asked the students in Year 2 or Year 3 about what they do in their different faculties, you might already have an understanding that there are differences between types of writing commonly seen in particular disciplines and consequently in the expectations for written tasks across the schools of the university. RWAC helped with **the basics**, yes, but now things are getting more complicated.

Source information*: Source Extract 2 is from a short book called 'Success in CELE', written by Susie Carrington in 2019. The publishing company is Duck, based in Ningbo.