



Assessment Report:	Electronic Writing Portfolio Readings Report
Assessment Period:	Academic Year 2024
Submitted by:	Dr. Suzie Park, Interim Assistant VPAA

THE TEAM

Dr. Suzie Park, Interim Assistant VPAA, asked for volunteer readers for the AY 2024 Electronic Writing Portfolio Readings Report.

The readers, along with their academic affiliations, are as follows:

David Bell, Reference Librarian, Booth Library
Melissa Caldwell, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Karen Drage, Technology, Lumpkin College of Business & Technology
Terri Fredrick, Communication Studies, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Nichole Mulvey, Communication Disorders & Sciences, College of Health & Human Services
Rachael Ryerson, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Jeff Snell, Management, Lumpkin College of Business & Technology
Rashelle Spear, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Tim Taylor, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Gordon Tucker, Biological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Marjorie Worthington, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

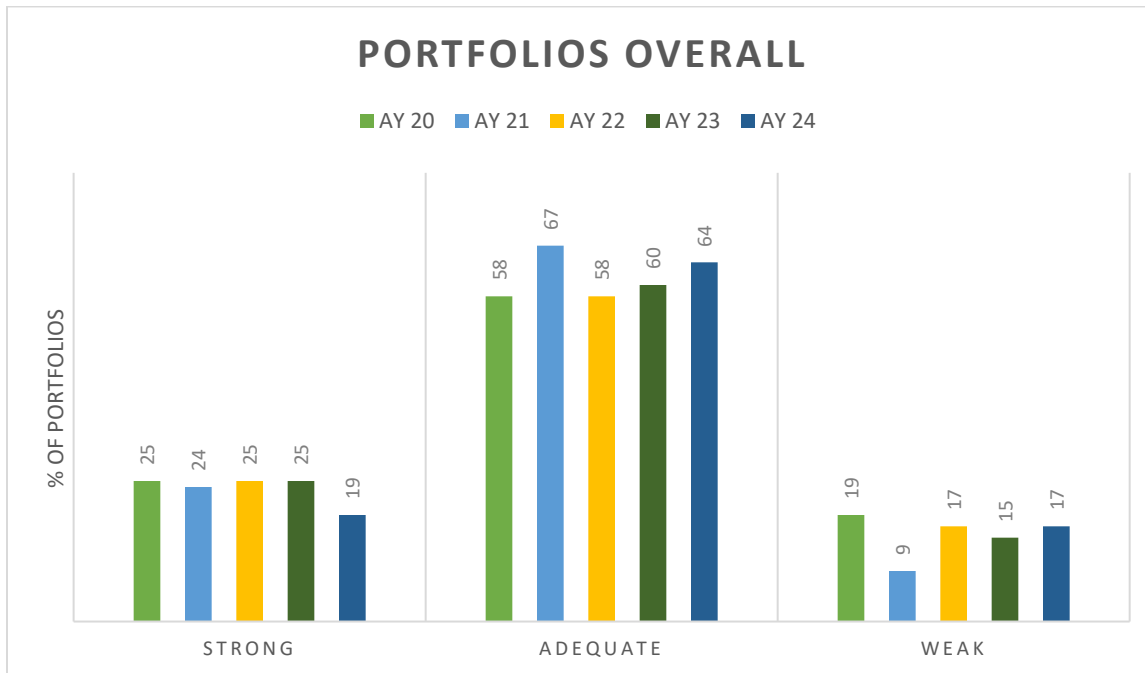
THE PROCESS

To assess student writing during Academic Year 2024, Suzie Park asked for volunteer readers, assigned 8 student writing portfolios to each of 11 readers, and requested complete reading reports of these 88 complete portfolios in May 2024. Since each complete portfolio is composed of 2 papers submitted by a student, chosen at random from complete portfolios only, each reader was assigned 16 papers. Readers conducted a total of 176 individual assessments. A major recent development in the review process is the full integration of reviews into the EWP (Electronic Writing Portfolio) interface for designated readers. Many thanks to Web Developer Lucas Lower for making this happen.

Readers were asked to look at writing patterns across the portfolios rather than focus on each individual document submitted to the portfolios. The reading guide asks readers to provide an assessment of writing ability for complete portfolios across seven aspects of writing: **focus/purpose, organization, development, audience, style, mechanics, and use of sources**. Readers completed a reading guide for each of the portfolios they read. Readers also completed a summative Reader Observations sheet, in which they assessed the whole set of portfolios they reviewed.

THE RESULTS

The “Portfolios Overall” chart covers the last 5 years of EWP data collection and assessment. After this chart covering overall results, the remaining charts align with the 7 categories assessed by readers. Note that each chart captures readers’ assessment of the portfolios as a whole. This report quotes directly from the readers’ comments to lend evidence for our larger assessment. Percentages correlate with the portion of portfolios rated in the 7 categories.



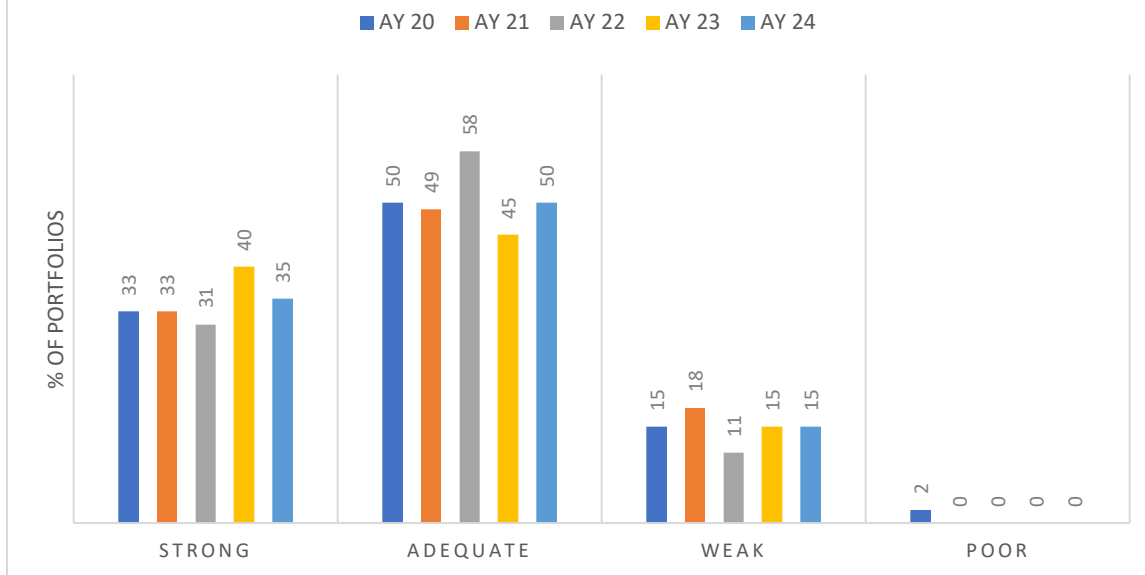
Strong Portfolios: 17%

Adequate Portfolios: 56%

Weak Portfolios: 15%

Comparing AY 24 over AY 23, the percentage of portfolios rated “strong” dipped from 25% to 19%. The majority of portfolios rated “adequate” rose, from 60% to 64%. “Weak” portfolios stayed rose slightly, from 15% to 17%. Even with the reduction in total required submissions from students, the overall ratings of portfolios have remained relatively consistent from year to year.

CATEGORY 1: FOCUS/PURPOSE

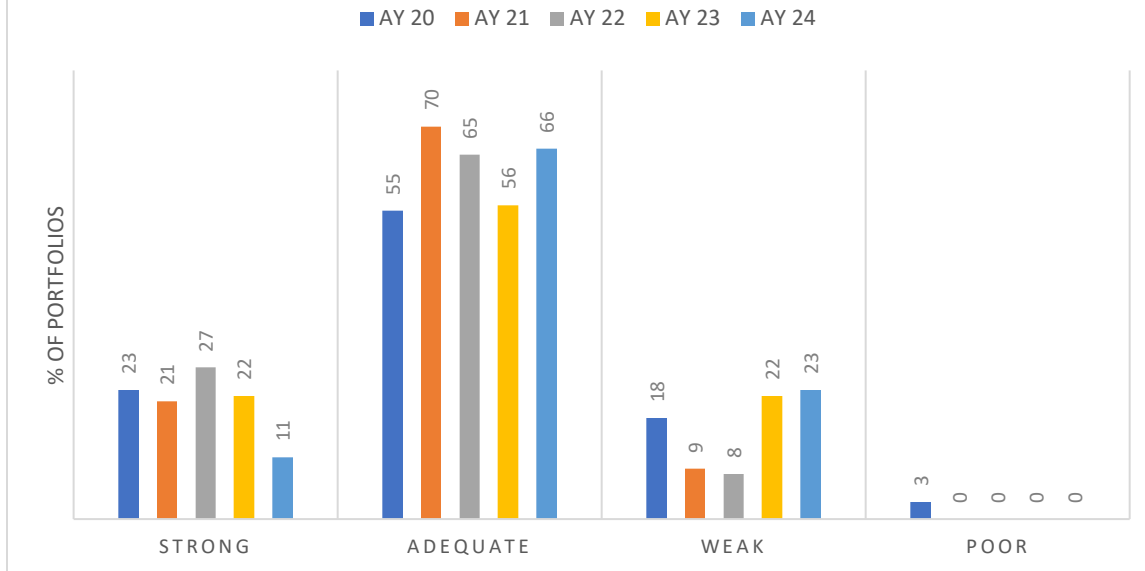


35% Strong consistently strong sense of focus/purpose throughout
50% Adequate clear focus/purpose in most or all submissions
15% Weak some evidence of ability to focus on a purpose
0 Poor very little or no evidence of focus

FOCUS/PURPOSE: Comparing AY 24 over AY 23, the percentage of portfolios rated “strong” fell, from 40% to 35%. The majority of portfolios are still rated “adequate,” a group that rose, from 45% to 50%. “Weak” portfolios stayed flat at 15%. “Poor” portfolios stayed flat at 0.

The majority of portfolios ranked in the “adequate” range, with the strongest submissions having “clearly defined” focus and a demonstrated ability to follow the assignment prompts, when they were available.

CATEGORY 2: ORGANIZATION



11% Strong

Consistent use of structure enhancing presentation of ideas/information

66% Adequate

Logical organization and/or clearly identifiable structure

23% Weak

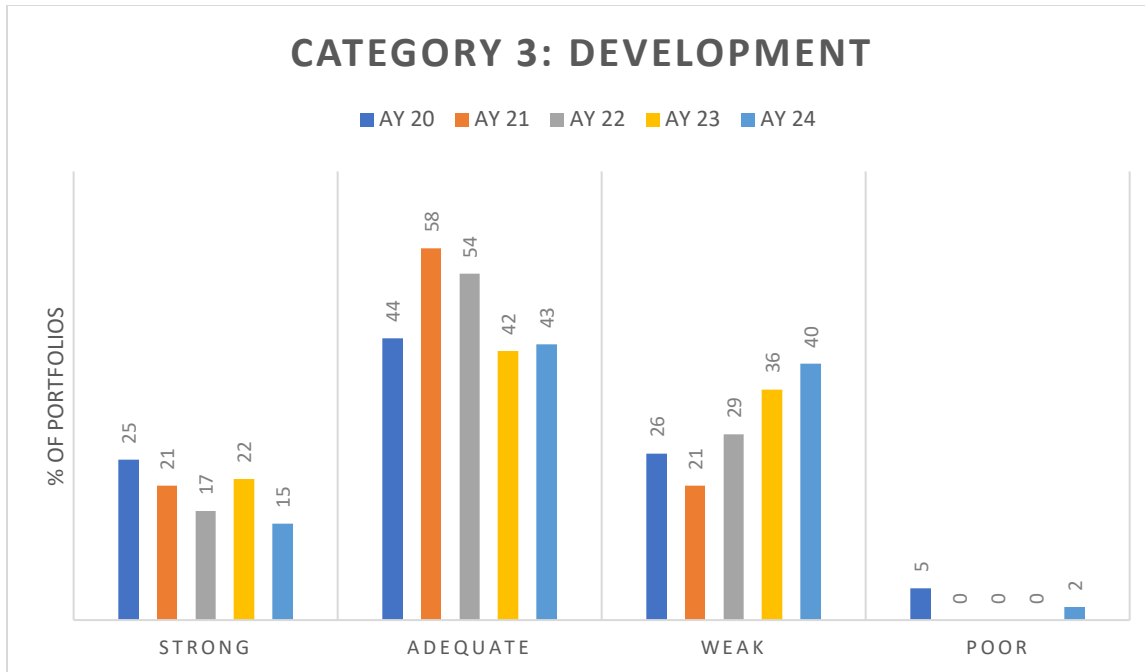
Inconsistent sense of structure and/or lapses in organization

0 Poor

Very little or no sense of structure or organization

ORGANIZATION: Comparing AY 24 over AY 23, the percentage of portfolios rated “strong” dipped significantly, from 22% to 11%. The majority of portfolios are rated “adequate,” a sector that rose, from 56% to 66%. “Weak” portfolios stayed flat, from 22% to 23%. “Poor” portfolios stayed flat at 0.

Readers’ ratings of portfolios show marked attention to the positive flow of ideas (“organization of ideas made sense and easy to follow/predictable”) and assistive use of headings and “clear statements of purpose at the paragraph level” when submissions are strongly organized. Ratings also note the folly of submissions lacking organization when they present “one big chronological paragraph” and a list of bullet points rather than an organized presentation of ideas.



15% Strong: Ideas consistently developed in depth and supported with rich and relevant details

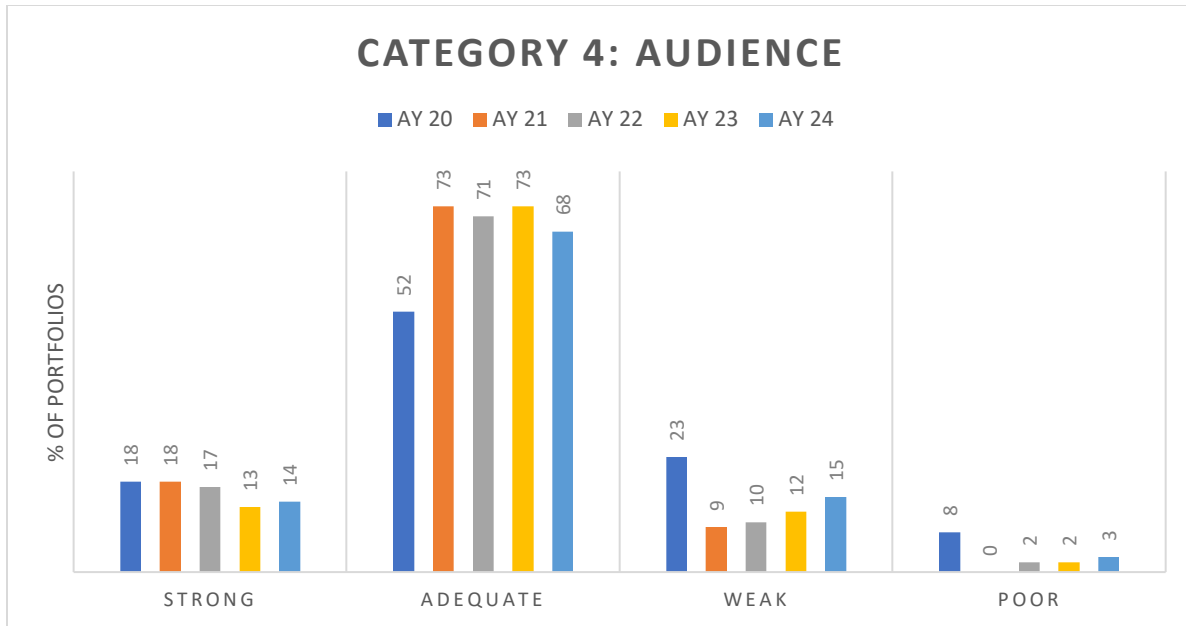
43% Adequate: Ideas developed in depth with appropriate supporting evidence/details

40% Weak: Some development of ideas and use of supporting evidence/details

2% Poor: Very little or no development of ideas or use of supporting evidence

DEVELOPMENT: Comparing AY 24 over AY 23, the percentage of portfolios rated “strong” fell, from 22% to 15%. The majority of portfolios are rated “adequate,” with this group rising slightly, from 42% to 43%. “Weak” portfolios rose, from 36% to 40%. “Poor” portfolios rose to 2%.

The majority of portfolios were once again placed in the “adequate” category for Development. However, readers identified the common problem of students’ lack of demonstrated ability to develop claims, to go beyond the listing of opinions and details that ultimately do not cohere into a larger argument.



14% Strong: Sophisticated sense of audience—e.g., distinctive voice and/or appropriate tone

68% Adequate: Some awareness of and/or attempt to communicate with audience

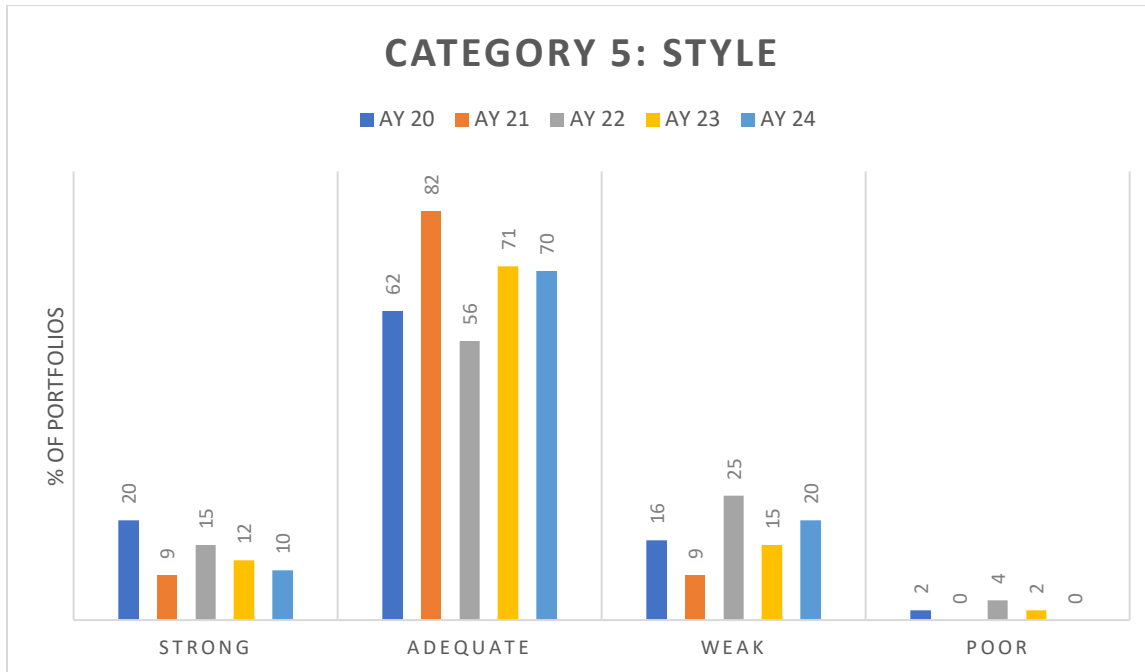
15% Weak: Little or no awareness of audience

3% Poor: No sense of writing for an audience

AUDIENCE: Comparing AY 24 over AY 23, the percentage of portfolios rated “strong” rose slightly, from 13% to 14%. The majority of portfolios are rated “adequate,” which fell, from 73% to 68%. “Weak” portfolios rose slightly, to 15%. “Poor” portfolios stayed nearly flat at 3%.

Audience seems to be the perennially problematic—and most difficult to gauge—category. The greatest problem seems to be that there is no clear identification of who constitutes the ideal or targeted “audience,” and therefore what constitutes “sophisticated sense of audience.” Is the audience the faculty member who assigned the paper? Is it the general educated academic reader? Is it an assumed professional colleague?

Perhaps asking students to specify the audience would address this persistent inconsistency in the rating of the Audience category. One reader usefully commented on a problem of audience recognition in submissions. It is a vague and sweeping overstatement to write that “everyone likes” anything.



10% Strong: Sophisticated use of language (sentence structure, word choice) enhances presentation of ideas/information

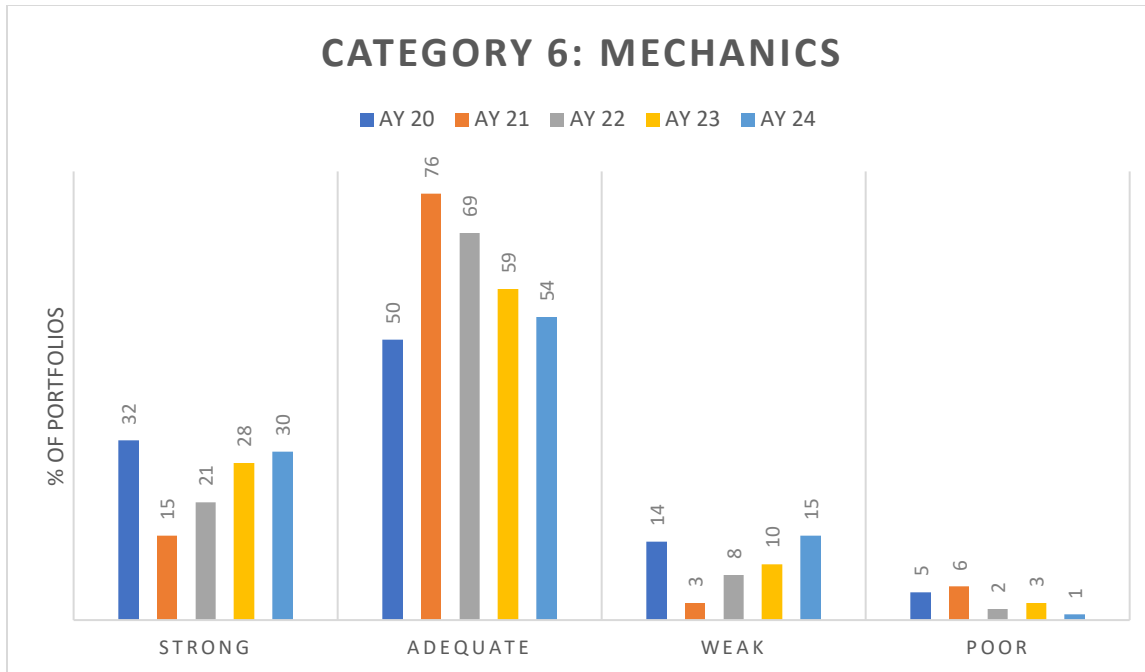
70% Adequate: Appropriate use of language effectively conveys ideas/information

20% Weak: Use of language is awkward, unnecessarily complex and/or overly simplistic

0 Poor: Use of language is highly inconsistent or indeterminate

STYLE: Comparing AY 24 over AY 23, the percentage of portfolios rated “strong” dipped, from 12% to 10%. The majority of portfolios are rated “adequate,” which stayed flat at 70%. “Weak” portfolios rose, from 15% to 20%. “Poor” portfolios fell, from 2% to 0.

We could see style as the invisible enhancer—or detractor—for many of the other categories. The lack of “sophisticated use of language” may be the result of a disconnect between the students’ ability to integrate and engage with source materials and students’ comprehension of assignments. One reader noted that an English-language learner would understandably have more difficulty with style: “style adequately conveys information but lacks sophistication and exactness of a native English-language writer.”



30% Strong: Few, if any, errors in mechanics relative to length and complexity of documents

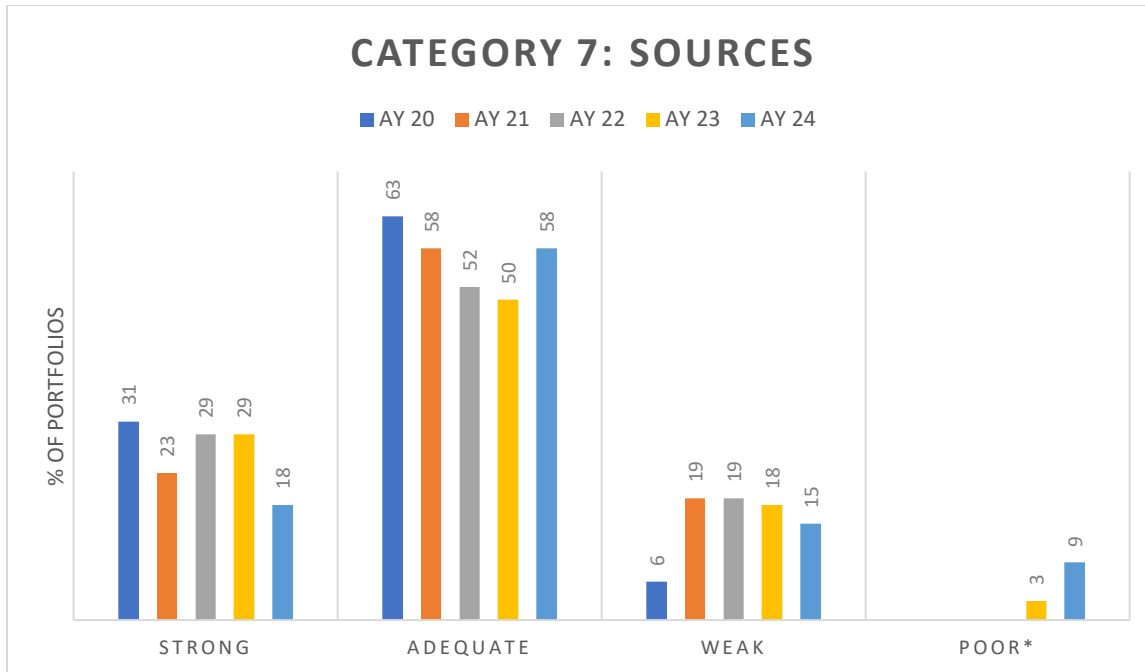
54% Adequate: Some errors in mechanics that do not interfere significantly with communication

15% Weak: Patters of errors in mechanics that affect clarity and/or credibility of writing

1% Poor: Large numbers of errors in mechanics affecting almost all aspects of writing

MECHANICS: Comparing AY 24 over AY 23, the percentage of portfolios rated “strong” rose, from 28% to 30%. The majority of portfolios are rated “adequate,” which fell from 59% to 54%. “Weak” portfolios rose, from 10% to 15%. “Poor” portfolios fell, from 3% to 1%.

Mechanics of a paper determines the ease and quality of the reading experience. Readers noted that there is often a mismatch between conveying complex ideas (using “attempts at complex sentences”) and the simplistic and syntactically incorrect structures of sentences.



18% Strong: Ability to integrate ideas/information from sources into own writing in meaningful and appropriate ways

58% Adequate: Some effective integration of ideas/information from sources

15% Weak: Inappropriate/ineffective integration of ideas/information

9% Poor*: No sources

SOURCES: Comparing AY 24 over AY 23, the percentage of portfolios rated “strong” fell, from 29% to 18%. The majority of portfolios are rated “adequate,” which rose, from 50% to 58%. “Weak” portfolios dipped, from 18% to 15%. *“Poor” was introduced recently as a rating option for standard marking, although we should note that we do not REQUIRE sources to be used in any paper submission.

Readers noted a sporadic and wide range of the actual use of sources in submissions, some with none (because the writing assignments did not require sources or because the assignment captures opinions only) and some with “very good use and integration of sources.”