

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Detailed Assessment Report 2015-2016 Francophone Studies PhD

As of: 11/10/2016 04:07 PM CENTRAL

(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked *One-Time, Recurring, No Request.*)

Mission / Purpose

The French and Francophone Studies Program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, in accordance with the University's mission, is dedicated to achieving excellence in graduate education, in research, and in public service. Our graduate program seeks to develop scholars who will variously advance knowledge, cultivate aesthetic sensibility, and improve the material conditions of humankind. Further, our program is committed to diversity and integration, and seeks to promote regional, economic, and cultural development. In addition, students are encouraged to explore solutions to national and world issues, as well as advance scholarship in French and Francophone Studies. Overall, the program strives to introduce and further expose students to the diversity of the Francophone world, through literary, cultural, and cinematographic approaches. The program aims to develop interdisciplinary perspectives on the variety of issues pertaining to the Francophone world, through broad exposure to different areas and theories. Our goal is to provide students with effective tools to succeed both within and without academia, as well as become global, critical citizens. For students admitted with an assistantship, the program also provides guidance in preparing them for their future teaching profession. We also aim to show the transferability of their newly acquired skills.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

SLO 1: Language Competency

Students in the Ph.D. Program in Francophone Studies should demonstrate competence in three or four languages relevant to their research.

Connected Document

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

Related Measures

M 1: Language Competency

- (a) Competency in written French will be evaluated by the written examination committee during comprehensive exams and according to ACTFL guidelines.
- (b) Competency in oral French will be determined by the oral examination committee during comprehensive exams and based on ACTFL guidelines.
- (c) Competency in English for non-native speakers will be determined during an exit interview and based on ACTFL guidelines.
- (d) Competency in third and/or fourth languages will be measured either

through an exam administered by faculty with expertise in the language or through coursework in the language.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Connected Document

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

Target:

- (a) 80% of our Ph.D. students will attain a rating of Superior in written French, according to ACTFL guidelines on their comprehensive examinations.
- (b) 80% of our Ph.D. students will attain a rating of Superior in spoken French, according to ACTFL guidelines on their comprehensive examinations.
- (c) 80% of our Ph.D. students who are non-native speakers of English will attain a rating of Advanced High in spoken English, according to ACTFL guidelines, during an exit interview.
- (d) 100% of our Ph.D. students will fulfill the language requirement through either a written exam proving advanced competency in a third language or will successfully prove 202 equivalent in a third and fourth language.

Connected Document

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

100% of our Ph.D. students attained a rating of Superior in written French, according to ACTFL guidelines on their comprehensive examinations. (b) 100 % of our Ph.D. students attained a rating of Superior in spoken French, according to ACTFL guidelines on their comprehensive examinations. (c) 100% of our Ph.D. students who are non-native speakers of English attained a rating of Advanced High in spoken English, according to ACTFL guidelines, during an exit interview. (d) 100% of our Ph.D. students fulfilled the language requirement through either a written exam proving advanced competency in a third language or will successfully prove 202 equivalent in a third and fourth language.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

Develop a course on academic writing

Based on the assessment of Ph.D. dissertations written in French, we found that students need to be better equipped with academic writing skills. We intend to develop a course that will focus on academic writing in French. The course will be designed to address the fact that students are from various backgrounds (some are native French speakers, and some are not). The course will focus on the vocabulary and style appropriate to dissertation writing.

Starting Fall 2017, FREN 502 (Writing) will be offered to graduate students in order to address the aforementioned issues.

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Language Competency | **Outcome/Objective:**
Language Competency

Implementation Description: Our Graduate Faculty will make a reflection on the new course and make suggestions about the content, materials to use, etc. Then, a faculty member will be selected to implement and teach the course. Some portions of the course could be team-taught.

Projected Completion Date: 09/2016

Responsible Person/Group: Graduate Faculty

Develop a course on grammar and stylistics

After discussions with faculty and results on exams and dissertations, the graduate faculty determined a course was necessary to address grammar and stylistic components.

Starting Fall, FREN 502 (Writing) will include grammar and stylistic components to strengthen students' overall writing skills.

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Language Competency | **Outcome/Objective:**
Language Competency

Implementation Description: Graduate Faculty will determine the content of the course and the materials to use.

Projected Completion Date: 09/2016

Responsible Person/Group: Graduate Faculty

Reassessment of Fren 541

We intend to reevaluate course Fren 541 and see if we want to keep it as it is. We need to reassess how this course fits into our curriculum or how its content can be covered in other classes.

After consultation among the Graduate Faculty, it was decided to create FREN 500, a one-credit course, which is now offered at the beginning of Fall to provide incoming students with an introduction to graduate studies (detailed information about the program, guidelines, important dates...).

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Language Competency | **Outcome/Objective:**
Language Competency

Implementation Description: Determine if Fren 541 should be redesigned and articulated in a different way.

Projected Completion Date: 09/2016

Responsible Person/Group: Graduate Faculty

Discuss possible new format for Comprehensive exams

In light of students' performances during Comprehensive exams, the

Graduate Faculty will be discussing the possibility of new assessment exams. The hope is for the exams to be less redundant (i.e., just show they understood a course) and be more critical and analytical. Overall, students will be encouraged to meet with each faculty member to discuss their interests in the course and figure out a topic in accordance with future research and specialization.

Prospectus: Students are now asked to start thinking about their prospectus as soon as they join the PhD program. They must get in touch with possible mentors to discuss the feasibility and pertinence of their topic. They must also ensure that their specialties are represented among the faculty.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Language Competency | **Outcome/Objective:**

Language Competency

Responsible Person/Group: Graduate faculty

Job Market Preparation

As of Fall 2016, ABD students are encouraged to attend a new course (Number varies) to prepare them for the job market in and outside of academia. The course includes the developments of key materials as well as practice for a successful experience. This aims to increase our job placement and ensure that students find a profession after the program.

After 5 weeks, students' feedback is highly positive. This course, which they asked for, makes them aware of their skills; they are overall stronger candidates.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Language Competency | **Outcome/Objective:**

Language Competency

Implementation Description: New course

Responsible Person/Group: Graduate Faculty

New Orientation Meeting

The first graduate orientation meeting was organized early in Fall 2016 with a new format:

- all faculty members were present (not just the DGS)
- DGS presented information about program expectations
- Informal conversation between students and faculty
- share tips and experience, provide practical strategies for research and graduate life at large

This meeting should take place every year in the fall semester.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Language Competency | **Outcome/Objective:**
Language Competency

Implementation Description: Mandatory meeting for all

Responsible Person/Group: Graduate faculty

SLO 2: Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

Doctoral students should demonstrate both breadth and depth of knowledge in multiple areas of Francophone Studies.

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

[PhD Comprehensive Exam Rubric](#)

Related Measures**M 2: Comprehensive Examinations**

Students who have completed the MA in French at ULL will take comprehensive exams in three areas of French and Francophone Studies which include a written exam on each area and an oral exam with the examination committee. Students who completed the MA in French elsewhere will take comprehensive exams in five areas of French and Francophone Studies which include a written exam on each area and an oral exam with the examination committee. All members of the examination committee rate the students' performance on the exams using the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Rubric.

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

[PhD Comprehensive Exam Rubric](#)

Target:

Beginning in Fall 2010, we will consider successful attainment of results when 80% of our Ph.D. students achieve an average score of 3.10 or higher on the Ph.D. in Francophone Studies Comprehensive Examination Rubric.

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

[PhD Comprehensive Exam Rubric](#)

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

100% of our Ph.D. students achieved an average score of 3.10 or higher on the Ph.D. in Francophone Studies Comprehensive Examination Rubric.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**Assessment of Comprehensive Examinations**

Previously, we assessed the Ph.D. comprehensive exams only as pass, pass on second try, or fail. We will begin in Fall 2010 to use a rubric to evaluate each Ph.D. comprehensive examination that measures 8 dimensions of the written exam and 5 dimensions of the oral exam.

Beginning in Fall 2010, we will redefine our criteria for success as a percentage of students (80%) who attain a score of 40/52 or higher on the comprehensive exam.

In Spring 2010, we implemented new policies concerning comprehensive examinations, which cover the timing of the exam relative to coursework in fields, evaluation of exams, procedures when students fail a portion or all of the written exams, timing of retake exams, and ineligibility to continue in the program due to failure of exams.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Comprehensive Examinations |

Outcome/Objective: Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

Projected Completion Date: 05/2011

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

[PhD Comprehensive Exam Rubric](#)

Course Credits for entering PhD students

Given the difficulty that students entering the PhD program having completed an MA elsewhere have in completing enough coursework in Francophone areas, we have been exploring the efficacy of requiring 9 additional hours of coursework for those students, with additional assistantship support for those who have an assistantship. This should allow them to have a well-rounded background in a variety of different areas.

We are currently experimenting this new format with a current new PhD student who will be required to take additional coursework. After two semesters in our program, we feel confident that this model and the extra classes will prove beneficial and provide the tools for a successful dissertation.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Comprehensive Examinations |

Outcome/Objective: Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

Measure: Dissertation Prospectus | **Outcome/Objective:** Original Research Design

Measure: Doctoral Dissertation | **Outcome/Objective:** Original Research

Projected Completion Date: 05/2017

Responsible Person/Group: French Graduate Faculty

SLO 3: Original Research Design

Doctoral students should demonstrate the ability to design a research project

that has the potential to contribute new knowledge to the field.

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)
[PhD Dissertation Prospectus Rubric](#)

Related Measures

M 3: Dissertation Prospectus

Doctoral students will produce a detailed prospectus of their dissertation topic and will discuss their proposal with their dissertation committee at the prospectus defense. All members of the dissertation committee will rate the students' prospectus and ability to defend it, using the Dissertation Prospectus Rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)
[PhD Dissertation Prospectus Rubric](#)

Target:

We will consider successful attainment of this result when 80% of Ph.D. students attain an average score of 3.10 or higher on the Dissertation Prospectus Evaluation Rubric.

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)
[PhD Dissertation Prospectus Rubric](#)

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

100% of our Ph.D. students achieved an average score of 3.10 or higher on the Ph.D. in Francophone Studies Prospectus Evaluation Rubric.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

Implementation of Dissertation Prospectus Rubric

This is a new learning outcome. In Spring 2010, we changed our criteria for success to attainment by a percentage of Ph.D. students (80%) who attain a score 22/28 or higher on the Dissertation Prospectus Evaluation Rubric. In Spring 2009, we implemented the new policy that requires Ph.D. students to prepare a Dissertation Prospectus within a month of successful completion of the Oral Comprehensive Exam.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Dissertation Prospectus | **Outcome/Objective:**
Original Research Design

Projected Completion Date: 12/2010

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)
[PhD Dissertation Prospectus Rubric](#)

Course Credits for entering PhD students

Given the difficulty that students entering the PhD program having completed an MA elsewhere have in completing enough coursework in Francophone areas, we have been exploring the efficacy of requiring 9 additional hours of coursework for those students, with additional assistantship support for those who have an assistantship. This should allow them to have a well-rounded background in a variety of different areas.

We are currently experimenting this new format with a current new PhD student who will be required to take additional coursework. After two semesters in our program, we feel confident that this model and the extra classes will prove beneficial and provide the tools for a successful dissertation.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Comprehensive Examinations |

Outcome/Objective: Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

Measure: Dissertation Prospectus | **Outcome/Objective:** Original Research Design

Measure: Doctoral Dissertation | **Outcome/Objective:** Original Research

Projected Completion Date: 05/2017

Responsible Person/Group: French Graduate Faculty

SLO 4: Original Research

Doctoral students should demonstrate the ability to conduct original research.

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

[PhD Dissertation Rubric](#)

Related Measures

M 4: Doctoral Dissertation

Each student will complete a written dissertation. A committee of at least three faculty members will evaluate the dissertation and, in a public meeting, will ask candidates questions to evaluate their understanding of the nature of the research. The committee will evaluate the dissertation using the Ph.D. Dissertation Rubric. The rubric will be implemented in Fall 2010.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

[PhD Dissertation Rubric](#)

Target:

In Fall 2010, we will implement the Dissertation Evaluation Rubric, and we will consider successful attainment of this learning objective when 80% of Ph.D. students attain an average score of 3.10 or higher on the

rubric.

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

[PhD Dissertation Rubric](#)

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: **Not Reported This Cycle**

No report available.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

Implementation of Dissertation Rubric

Previously, we assessed the success of this learning goal primarily through the satisfactory writing and defense of a doctoral Dissertation. Beginning in Fall 2010, we will begin to use a Dissertation Evaluation Rubric to evaluation attainment of this learning objective. We are changing our criteria for success from a pass/fail option to attainment by a percentage of Ph.D. students (80%) who achieve either a score 28/36 or higher on the Dissertation Evaluation Rubric.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Doctoral Dissertation | **Outcome/Objective:**
Original Research

Projected Completion Date: 05/2011

Connected Documents

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

[PhD Dissertation Rubric](#)

Annual student reports

Starting Spring 2016, graduate faculty meet to provide written feedback (individual annual reports) to each student on their overall progress in the program. Faculty also make recommendations regarding future expectations. Each report addresses their individual performance as students and teaching assistants. The goal is to lead them to successful and timely completion of their dissertation work.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Doctoral Dissertation | **Outcome/Objective:**
Original Research

Responsible Person/Group: Graduate Faculty

Course Credits for entering PhD students

Given the difficulty that students entering the PhD program having completed an MA elsewhere have in completing enough coursework in Francophone areas, we have been exploring the efficacy of requiring 9 additional hours of coursework for those students, with additional assistantship support for those who have an assistantship. This should allow them to have a well-rounded background in a variety of different

areas.

We are currently experimenting this new format with a current new PhD student who will be required to take additional coursework. After two semesters in our program, we feel confident that this model and the extra classes will prove beneficial and provide the tools for a successful dissertation.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Comprehensive Examinations |

Outcome/Objective: Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

Measure: Dissertation Prospectus | **Outcome/Objective:** Original Research Design

Measure: Doctoral Dissertation | **Outcome/Objective:** Original Research

Projected Completion Date: 05/2017

Responsible Person/Group: French Graduate Faculty

Higher admission standards for the Ph.D. program

Since Fall 2010, the standards for admission to our Ph.D. program have become more rigorous. We expect that these higher standards will produce the result of better dissertations beginning in 2013-2014.

Since Fall 2015, the Graduate Admission Committee has established higher standards when considering graduate applications. Applicants are asked to provide a more detailed description of their research project, as well as name potential dissertation committee members. When assessing students' application, we further investigate the students' linguistic and analytic competencies, as well as their overall knowledge of the Francophone world. Faculty members are dedicated to finding promising new students.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Doctoral Dissertation | **Outcome/Objective:** Original Research

Implementation Description: The higher admission standards have been implemented.

Projected Completion Date: 05/2017

Responsible Person/Group: Graduate Coordinator and members of the Graduate Admissions, Retention, and Appeals Committee

Additional Resources: Higher stipends for assistants in the doctoral program.

Tracking of Job Placement

Tracking our PhD graduates for the first five years post-degree will provide us useful information about how we are preparing our students for the job market and their professional careers. A survey sent each summer asking for information about current employment, job

satisfaction, and whether the former student is actively seeking employment elsewhere will help us gather this data.

Given the new options afforded by the new website, we are implementing a new way of tracking our graduates, which includes keeping contact with them and asking for a short paragraph of their accomplishments since graduations. These will be featured on our new departmental website.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: Doctoral Dissertation | **Outcome/Objective:**
Original Research

Implementation Description: Update survey yearly and send to PhD recipients going back five year.

Responsible Person/Group: French Graduate Faculty

Additional Resources: None

Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)

Assess Competency in All Languages

Previously success was measured only through coursework for competency in French, through the initial TOEFL score for competency in English (for non-native speakers), and through the Graduate Reading Examination for the third language. We realized that we needed to assess students' capacity in French in a more consistent way, and we chose to use the ACTFL standards, which are nationally accepted standards, to categorize the results more effectively. For non-native speakers of English, we realized that the TOEFL score, required for admission, did not reflect students' current competency in English, which ideally improves during the program. We elected to require M.A. students completing the degree to be interviewed, and those results will be categorized according to ACTFL standards. We will be collecting this new data beginning in Spring 2010. We now will define our criteria for success as a percentage (80%) of Ph.D. students who achieve the ACTFL designation of "Superior" in spoken and written French, and for non-native speakers of English, a percentage (80%) who achieve an ACTFL rating of "Advanced High" in spoken English.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Projected Completion Date: 05/2011

Connected Document

[ACTFL Language Proficiency Guidelines](#)

Comprehensive Examination Policies

In Spring 2010, we implemented new policies concerning comprehensive examinations, which cover the timing of the exam relative to coursework in fields, evaluation of exams, procedures when students fail a portion or all of the written exams, timing of retake exams, and ineligibility to continue in the program due to failure of exams.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Projected Completion Date: 05/2010

Implementation of Dissertation Prospectus

In March 2009, we implemented a new policy requiring doctoral students to produce a dissertation prospectus and pass a defense with all members of their dissertation committee, as the final part of their comprehensive examination. In addition, we produced a rubric to evaluate the results and used this rubric in annual assessment.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Implementation Description: Prospectus policy implemented in March 2009

Projected Completion Date: 03/2009

Revision of Graduate Reading List and Areas of Specialization

In order to improve the efficacy of the comprehensive exam process and students' performance, we undertook revision of the Graduate Reading List, and in doing so, redefined several areas of study to engage more fully with trends in the discipline and account for new research. Areas to receive the greatest attention included bandes dessinées, îles créoles, and linguistics.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Implementation Description: The new areas and reading list went into effect in Spring 2012.

Projected Completion Date: 01/2012

Redesigned Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Process

In order to ensure that PhD examinations favor more depth than MA examinations, we decided to redesign the process for doctoral students. To provide students having completed their MA with us in French at ULL a greater opportunity to expand and refine their knowledge in their chosen fields of study and to enhance their professional profiles, we focused their exams onto three areas of scholarship, two of which must be different from the ones they completed at the MA level.

For students who completed their MA in French elsewhere, the doctoral exam will remain five areas of expertise.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012

Implementation Status: Finished

Priority: High

Projected Completion Date: 12/2012

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

How were assessment results shared and evaluated within the unit?

Results are discussed during faculty meetings and shared with students in the form of a progress report sent to them once a year in the spring semester.

Identify which action plans [created in prior cycle(s)] were implemented in this current cycle. For each of these implemented plans, were there any measurable or perceivable effects? How, if at all, did the findings appear to be affected by the implemented action

plan?

We have a graduate course designed to help students with research and writing strategies. The course existed in our curriculum, but it was redesigned to better fit the needs of our current graduate students. It also includes training on various aspects of job search (cover letter, job interviews, CV, etc.). The purpose of this course is to better prepare our students for a competitive professional career. As a result of this course revamping, we could already see some successful outcome as some of our most recent graduates obtained faculty positions right after their graduation with us.

What has the unit learned from the current assessment cycle? What is working well, and what is working less well in achieving desired outcomes?

We discovered that students need more customized and individual coaching throughout their progress towards graduation. In this respect, the individual progress report provided to each student is effective and useful as it helps track their progress and keep them focused on their work.

The letters provided to students prove to be very helpful, both for students and faculty in providing a realistic evaluation of students' progress.

The approach that we previously had was to offer students the freedom to plan their writing according to their own pace. This approach turned out to be a bit problematic with certain students who had a tendency not to be very structured and rigorous. They often had time management problems which resulted in delaying them in the defense of their dissertations. Therefore, the new approach ensures that they keep on track and complete their work in a timely manner.