

2017-2018 Assessment Cycle COLA_English PhD

Mission (due 12/4/17)

University Mission

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette offers an exceptional education informed by diverse worldviews grounded in tradition, heritage, and culture. We develop leaders and innovators who advance knowledge, cultivate aesthetic sensibility, and improve the human condition.

University Values

We strive to create a community of leaders and innovators in an environment that fosters a desire to advance and disseminate knowledge. We support the mission of the university by actualizing our core values of equity, integrity, intellectual curiosity, creativity, tradition, transparency, respect, collaboration, pluralism, and sustainability.

University Vision

We strive to be included in the top 25% of our peer institutions by 2020, improving our national and international status and recognition.

College / VP and Program / Department Mission

Mission of College or VP-area

Provide the mission for the College or VP-area in the space provided. If none is available, write "None Available in 2017-2018."

The College of Liberal Arts is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The College teaches students to think critically, applying scientific principles and intellectual schema to understand human behavior and society in a diverse world, to express ideas and ideals in a variety of forms, and to understand themselves and others as members of regional and global communities. The intellectual and creative foundations of this enterprise are written and oral communication, analytical and reasoning skills, and the ability to solve problems creatively. Each departmental curriculum presents perspectives from the past, provides an understanding of the present and directs attention to the challenges of the future. As active researchers, faculty in the College work to advance the frontiers of knowledge and our understanding of humanity and the world we live in, and to use that knowledge and understanding to improve the human condition.

Mission of Program / Department

Provide the program / department mission in the space provided. The mission statement should concisely define the purpose, functions, and key constituents. If none is available, write "None Available in 2017-2018."

All doctorates in English have a foundation in studies of British and American language and literature. Thus, Ph.D. students receive a broad education in the discipline that prepares them to teach effectively at any college level and provides the background for advanced research in their areas of particular expertise.

With the help of faculty mentors, students have the flexibility to fashion a course of study, comprehensive examinations, and dissertation research both in these concentrations and in such specialized areas as critical theory, African American literature, women's folklore and literature, and children's literature.

Attachment (optional)

Upload any documents which support the program / department assessment process.

Assessment Plan (due 12/4/17)

Assessment Plan (Goals / Objectives, Assessment Measures and Criteria for Success)

Assessment List

Goal/Objective	Students will demonstrate knowledge of a variety of sub-fields of English language and literature through their minor comprehensive exams.(Imported)		
Legends	SLO - Student Learning Outcome/Objective (academic units);		
Standards/Outcomes			
Assessment Measures			
	Assessment Measure	Criterion	Attachments
	Direct - Comprehensive Exam (graduate level)	90% of students will successfully complete their minor exams with a grade of "pass" or "pass with distinction" within 2 semesters.	

Goal/Objective	Students will develop their professional identities through such activities as attending/presenting at conferences, publishing, performing academic/community service, and seeking external training.(Imported)		
Legends	PO - Program Objective (academic units);		
Standards/Outcomes			
Assessment Measures			
	Assessment Measure	Criterion	Attachments
	Indirect - Survey - students	70% of students will report at least one significant professional development each year.	

Goal/Objective	Students will demonstrate the ability to execute a research project and communicate its results in oral and written formats associated with presentation and publication of original research in the area of the student's specialization.(Imported)		
Legends	SLO - Student Learning Outcome/Objective (academic units);		
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	Direct - Thesis	Each student will complete a written dissertation. A committee of at least three faculty members will evaluate the dissertation and, in a public meeting, ask candidates questions to evaluate their understanding of the nature of the research. The committee will vote to determine if the student has passed or failed this assessment. At the time of the oral exam, committee members will complete a rubric that covers both the written and oral activities. We hope that 25% of students will achieve average scores of greater than 2 (meets expectations) in more than one category. We expect fewer than 25% of students will achieve averaged scores of below 2 (meets expectations) in more than one category.	
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Goal/Objective	Students will demonstrate depth of knowledge in their primary area through their major field comprehensive exam.(Imported)								
Legends	SLO - Student Learning Outcome/Objective (academic units);								
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Program / Department Assessment Narrative

The primary purpose of assessment is to use data to inform decisions and improve programs (student learning) and departments (operations); this is an on-going process of defining goals and expectations, collecting results, analyzing data, comparing current and past results and initiatives, and making decisions based on these reflections. In the space below, describe the program's or department's overall plan for improving student learning and/or operations (the "assessment plan"). Consider the following:

- 1) What strategies exist to assess the outcomes?
- 2) What does the program/department expect to achieve with the goals and objectives identified above?
- 3) How might prior or current initiatives (improvements) influence the anticipated outcomes this year?
- 4) What is the plan for using data to improve student learning and/or operations?
- 5) How will data be shared within the Program/Department (and, where appropriate, the College/VP-area)?

Assessment Process

In order to assess the above outcomes, we conduct comprehensive exams twice a year and a survey of ABD students twice a year. Faculty members fill out rubrics at each student's defense.

Over the last year and a half we have been rolling out new options for comprehensive exams that we hope will improve students' success rates in their weakest area, and will improve the value of their major field exam to their dissertation

research. Previously, we had required that all PhD students take one comprehensive exam in their major field, and three comprehensive exams in minor fields of their choice; all four of these exams were timed in-house exams. Given the diversity of fields in our department, we have changed the structure to allow for flexibility on the major exams; most major exams are now portfolios. We have also just implemented a new option whereby students can opt to replace one of their minor exams with an extra six hours of coursework in the field. We anticipate that this will reduce the number of failing exams we receive in students' weakest areas, and it will enable them to turn what was a weakness in their scholarship into a strength by completing extra coursework in the field. This should not increase time-to-degree because a significant portion of our students were already taking or auditing extra classes to prepare for exams, and students who do not need the extra coursework can still take the all-exam route. The data collected will help us determine if these major structural changes are improving student learning outcomes.

We are also implementing a new way of gathering data for the professional development objective. Spring 2017 was the first term we attempted the ABD survey, and we had limited buy-in from students. This term, we have switched the format from a paper form to a Moodle survey and have been sending out periodic reminders with a link to the survey, and our participation rate has already increased even though the term is not yet over (the survey is not due for another week as of this report). We hope to see some effects of our "Workplace Wednesdays" series of workshops reflected in the professional development reports, and we will also tailor future workshops in the series to address some of the gaps that we identify in our students' professional activities.

The English Graduate Committee, which consists of all graduate faculty in English, meets once a month to discuss various graduate program issues and initiatives. Overall data from exam results is discussed first with our PhD Exam Committee and then with the full English Graduate Committee. Professional development assessment is taken directly to the English Graduate Committee.

Results & Improvements (due 9/15/18)

Results and Improvement Narratives

Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for Students will demonstrate knowledge of a variety of sub-fields of English language and literature through their minor comprehensive exams.(Imported)

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Assessment Findings	Assessment Measure	Criterion	Summary	Attachments of the Assessments	Improvement Narratives
	Direct - Comprehensive	Has the criterion 90%	In the Fall 2017-Spring		- Curricular Change : The graduate faculty

	Exam (graduate level)	of students will successfully complete their minor exams with a grade of "pass" or "pass with distinction" within 2 semesters. been met yet? Not met	2018 academic year, of the 19 students who took minor exams, 10 of them passed in 2 semesters. The remaining 9 took longer. That means 52% of students passed minor exams in 2 semesters, short of the 90% criterion.		in English decided to allow students to do six hours of extra coursework in lieu of one of the minor comprehensive exams. So far, this change has been very popular, with almost all students opting to use the coursework option. We expect this change to improve exam performance because students are having to take fewer timed exams -- without compromising quality, because students are still having to do as much, if not more, work to demonstrate their expertise in the secondary area completed through coursework.
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Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for Students will develop their professional identities through such activities as attending/presenting at conferences, publishing, performing academic/community service, and seeking external training.(Imported)

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	Indirect - Survey - students	Has the criterion 70% of students will report at least one significant professional development each year. been met yet? Met	I have a small sample for this, but it is dirty data, as they say. Only 14 students responded to a survey asking for this activity, and all of them had at least one professional development experience as described in the language of the goal/objective.	- Assessment Process: Data Collection changed: Only students who had completed comprehensive exams and were all-but-dissertation were asked to complete this survey. I think "students" needs to be defined more clearly in the goal/objective statement, or we need a better way of gathering data from all students at all stages of the program. I will ask our student association, the EGSA, for assistance in gathering the data for the next cycle.
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Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for Students will demonstrate the ability to execute a research project and communicate its results in oral and written formats associated with presentation and publication of original research in the area of the student's specialization.(Imported)

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Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for Students will demonstrate depth of knowledge in their primary area through their major field comprehensive exam.(Imported)

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Assessment Measures	Assessment Measure		Criterion		
	Direct - Comprehensive Exam (graduate level)		90% of students will pass their primary exam on their first attempt.		
Assessment Findings					
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	Direct - Comprehensive Exam (graduate level)	Has the criterion 90% of students will pass their primary exam on their first attempt. been met yet? Not met	In the 2017-2018 academic year, 16 students took their primary field comprehensive exam. Of those, 12 passed and 4 failed, giving an overall 75% of students who passed the primary exam on the first attempt.		- Assessment Process: Continuous monitoring: We would like to continue gathering data through the next cycle in order to have more comparison, and we will continue holding preparation workshops to help prepare students for primary exams, especially with the aim of having students work with faculty to get feedback on early drafts of parts of the portfolio-format exams.

Reflection (Due 9/15/18)

Reflection

The primary purpose of assessment is to use data to inform decisions and improve programs and operations;

this is an on-going process of defining goals and expectations, collecting results, analyzing data, comparing current and past results and initiatives, and making decisions based on these reflections. Recalling this purpose, respond to the questions below.

1) How were assessment results shared in the program / department?

Please select all that apply. If "other", please use the text box to elaborate.

Distributed via email

Presented formally at staff / department / committee meetings (selected)

Discussed informally

Other (explain in text box below)

2) How frequently were assessment results shared?

Frequently (>4 times per cycle)

Periodically (2-4 times per cycle) (selected)

Once per cycle

Results were not shared this cycle

3) With whom were assessment results shared?

Please select all that apply.

Department Head (selected)

Dean / Asst. or Assoc. Dean

Departmental assessment committee (selected)

Other faculty / staff (selected)

4) Consider the impact of prior applied changes. Specifically, compare current results to previous results to evaluate the impact of a previously reported change. Demonstrate how the use of results improved student learning and/or operations.

It is too soon to assess the impact of recent changes we have made to the secondary-area exams, so we will continue to monitor pass rates of secondary exams in the next cycle to compare numbers. As for the primary exams, data from the first semester of the current cycle are encouraging. We are continuing to offer professional development workshops to students every week, which have been well attended, and which will be offered in both semesters of this cycle.

5) Over the past three assessment cycles, what has been the overall impact of "closing the loop"? Provide examples of improvements in student learning, program quality, or department operations that are directly linked to assessment data and follow-up analysis.

The change allowing students to substitute extra course work for one of the three secondary exams is a very positive pedagogical change; it allows for more sustained and substantive engagement with the secondary area. Also, professors are informally encouraging students to take secondary exams first, and then turn to the primary exam as a transition into the dissertation. We hope that with the additional time, students will be in a better position to pass the primary exam on the first attempt.

Attachments (optional)

Upload any documents which support the program / department assessment process.