

**Academic Program**  
**Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
The University of New Mexico

**A. College, Department and Date**

1. College: Arts and Sciences
2. Department: English
3. Date: 12/09/2016

**B. Academic Program of Study\***

MFA in Creative Writing, English Language and Literature

**C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan**

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**D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

**1. Broad Program Learning Goals for this Degree/Certificate Program**

- A. Composition/Presentation: Students will demonstrate a high level of ability to write and complete an original book-length work of literature that is of publishable quality in a primary genre concentration (poetry, creative nonfiction, fiction).
- B. Knowledge/Research/Practice: Students will locate their work in the context of contemporary literary practice. They will be able to discuss critically the structure, craft, and literary tradition of their own work and the work of various published authors.

**2. List of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this Degree/Certificate Program [Your program should have at least 3 and these should be aligned with the program Goals (as indicated by A, B, C, etc.) and UNM's broad learning goals]**

- A.1. *Book length creative work:* Students will produce a book-length manuscript (length should be appropriate for the genre: poetry, creative nonfiction, fiction).  
UNM Goals (  Knowledge     Skills     Responsibility)
- A.2. *Originality, creativity:* Students will produce a manuscript that demonstrates originality and creativity in the genre.

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\* Academic Program of Study is defined as an approved course of study leading to a certificate or degree reflected on a UNM transcript. A graduate-level program of study typically includes a capstone experience (e.g. thesis, dissertation, professional paper or project, comprehensive exam, etc.).

- UNM Goals (  Knowledge       Skills       Responsibility)
- A.3. *Quality of Writing*: Students will produce a manuscript of publishable quality.  
 UNM Goals (  Knowledge  Skills  Responsibility)
- B.1. *Knowledge of Literary Tradition and Practice*: Students will demonstrate knowledge of contemporary literary practice and tradition and be able to place their work in the context of these.  
 UNM Goals (  Knowledge  Skills  Responsibility)
- B.2. *Knowledge of Theory and Craft*: Students will demonstrate knowledge of theory and craft of genre.  
 UNM Goals (  Knowledge  Skills  Responsibility)
- B.3. *Mastery of Writing Style*: Students will demonstrate an ability to write clearly and coherently  
 UNM Goals (  Knowledge  Skills  Responsibility)
- B.4. *Oral Communication*: Students will demonstrate facility in oral communication.  
 UNM Goals (  Knowledge  Skills  Responsibility)

## **E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan**

All programs are expected to measure some outcomes and report annually and to measure all program outcomes at least once over a three-year review cycle.

### **1. Timeline for Assessment**

Year/Semester	Assessment Activities
Year 1, Fall	
Year 1, Spring	assess: all SLOs
Year 2, Fall	discuss data from previous academic year
Year 2, Spring	assess: all SLOs
Year 3, Fall	discuss data from previous academic year
Year 3, Spring	assess: all SLOs

### **2. How will learning outcomes be assessed?**

- A. *What*:
- All SLOs will be assessed in four ways:
    - the completion of the comprehensive exam, an essay (about 20 pages) which forms the foundation of the preface of the dissertation. In this essay, students discuss their writing and place it in a literary tradition, analyzing writers and schools of thought that have influenced their work.
    - the completion of the dissertation, a book length creative work of publishable quality (appropriate length varies by genre: poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction)
    - the dissertation defense, a public event typically lasting 60 minutes, during which time the Dissertation Committee members, including any outside reader(s),

- evaluate the candidate's dissertation and general knowledge of the genre and literary tradition, along with the candidate's professionalism.
4. an exit survey in which the students share their thoughts on their experiences in the program, providing an indirect measure of all SLOs.
    - ii. The MFA comprehensive exams and the composition and defense of the dissertation directly measure all of the listed SLOs. The exit survey indirectly assesses all the SLOs.
    - iii. Our criteria for success is for 90% of our graduate students to achieve at least a satisfactory level on all student outcomes.
- B. Who: Since MFA students complete their dissertations and defenses at different times during the academic year, the assessment instruments will be completed by the committee members immediately following each defense. The committee chair will collect the completed assessment forms and deliver them to the department administrator. The MFA program will officially assess all measurements in the Fall for all students who defended in the previous academic year. The Associate Chair for Graduate Studies also monitors student performance on a yearly basis so as to flag any possible problems as soon as possible.

### **3. What is the unit's process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?**

#### *MFA Comprehensive Exams:*

The members of the Committee on Studies (COS) read MFA comprehensive examinations and grade them "Pass" or "Fail," based on the Student Learning Outcomes listed above. The committee members complete an "Outcomes Assessment Form" in which they numerically rank a set of rubrics (criteria) correlated with the SLOs; in addition, the form asks for evaluator comments to describe the strengths and weaknesses of each examination and offer suggestions or recommendations that the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies (ACGS) or COS chair may review with the examinees. In the Fall semester of each academic year the ACGS and the chair or a subcommittee of the creative writing program will compile and compare the data from the Outcomes Assessment forms as a direct measure of student performance. The committee looks for trends in the data, and if it notices a deficiency in a particular student outcome, the committee will make a recommendation to the Graduate Committee to ascertain what, if any, action should be taken to remediate the problem.

#### *Dissertation:*

The members of a student's MFA Dissertation Committee read and evaluate its demonstration of the student's mastery of the SLOs listed above. This process can take place at the very end of the student's writing time, but more often committee members are in frequent contact with the student, reading drafts and providing guidance along the way. When the MFA dissertation is complete, the committee members complete an "Outcomes Assessment Form" in which they numerically rank a set of rubrics (criteria) correlated with the SLOs; in addition, the form asks for evaluator comments to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the dissertation and offer suggestions or recommendations that the ACGS or

COS chair may review with the examinees. In the Fall semester of each academic year the ACGS and the chair or a subcommittee of the creative writing program will compile and compare the data from the Outcomes Assessment forms as a direct measure of student performance. The committee looks for trends in the data, and if it notices a deficiency in a particular student outcome, the committee will make a recommendation to the Graduate Committee to ascertain what, if any, action should be taken to remediate the problem.

*Dissertation Defense:*

The student gives a reading and public presentation of about twenty minutes followed by questions from both Dissertation Committee members and any members of the faculty or public who wish to participate, concerning the ideas, methods, and significance of the dissertation. The four members of the Dissertation Committee evaluate the dissertation and its defense and recommend “Pass,” “Pass with minor revisions,” or “Fail” on the “Report of Exam” form. In the Fall semester of each academic year the ACGS and the chair or a subcommittee of the creative writing program will compile and compare the data from the forms as a direct measure of student performance. The committee looks for trends in the data, and if it notices a deficiency in a particular student outcome, the committee will make a recommendation to the Graduate Committee to ascertain what, if any, action should be taken to remediate the problem.

*Exit Survey:*

Graduating students complete an exit survey regarding their experience in the program. In the Fall semester, the ACGS and the chair or a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee will compile the responses and evaluate them as an indirect measure of student performance. The committee looks for trends in the data, and if it notices a deficiency in a particular student outcome, the committee will make a recommendation to the Graduate Committee to ascertain what, if any, action should be taken to remediate the problem.