

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

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**A. College, Department and Date**

1. College: Arts and Sciences
2. Department: English
3. Date: 10/27/2016

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

PhD in English Language and Literature

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

Jonathan Davis-Secord, Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, [jwds@unm.edu](mailto:jwds@unm.edu)  
Anita Obermeier, Department Chair, [aobermei@unm.edu](mailto:aobermei@unm.edu)

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

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

- A. Knowledge: comprehend primary texts and master secondary texts
- B. Research: independently identify critical problems and research a significant contribution
- C. Composition/Presentation: formulate and present research in appropriate style
- D. Professionalization: articulate academic and professional goals

**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. *Comprehension*: Students will demonstrate comprehensive understanding of primary texts.  
UNM Goals (  Knowledge     Skills     Responsibility)
- A.2. *Hermeneutics, History, Theory*: Students will demonstrate mastery of secondary texts, including literary history, literary criticism, and theory.  
UNM Goals (  Knowledge     Skills     Responsibility)
- B.1. *Independent Thinking and Critical Methods*: Students will identify critical problems in the field of literature and conduct independent research that utilizes the most relevant critical methods and tools.  
UNM Goals (  Knowledge     Skills     Responsibility)

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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.).

- B.2 *Intellectual Contribution*: Students will advance the critical knowledge of a specialized field through their independent research, which contributes to a broader ongoing intellectual dialogue.  
UNM Goals (  Knowledge \_\_\_ Skills  Responsibility)
- C.1 *Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis*: Students will demonstrate the ability to formulate and defend surprising, contestable, and critically significant arguments in which they analyze, evaluate, and synthesize material effectively.  
UNM Goals (  Knowledge  Skills  Responsibility)
- C.2 *Mastery of Writing Style*: Students will employ discipline-specific language in formal writing and oral presentations, including appropriate structures, form, rhetoric, style, and usage.  
UNM Goals (  Knowledge  Skills  Responsibility)
- D.1 *Professionalization*: Students will attain advanced professionalization in the study of English through their courses of study and through the articulation of their academic, professional, and/or pedagogical goals.  
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:

- i. All SLOs will be assessed in five ways:
  1. the completion and defense of the comprehensive doctoral exams covering three different fields within English literary and rhetorical studies. Each field exam is four hours long, with the exact format determined by the student and the Committee on Studies.
  2. the completion and defense of the dissertation prospectus, a ten- to fifteen-page document (excluding bibliography) articulating the thesis, purpose, and the critical/theoretical principles and methods that underlying the dissertation, while providing a review of relevant scholarship already published on the topic and a proposed organization of the dissertation's chapters.
  3. the completion of the dissertation, a formal, scholarly document, seldom less than 150 double-spaced pages and often much longer, which makes a distinctive

- contribution to the field, shows professional mastery of academic methods and materials, and provides a foundation for further research and teaching in the field of study.
4. the dissertation defense, a public event typically lasting 60-90 minutes, during which time the Dissertation Committee members, including any outside reader(s), evaluate the candidate's dissertation and general knowledge of the field, along with the candidate's professionalism.
  5. 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 PhD 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.
1. The members of the Committee on Studies (COS) read all three PhD comprehensive examinations and grade them "Pass" or "Fail," based on the Student Learning Outcomes listed above. The faculty members complete an "Outcomes Assessment Form" in which they numerically rank a set of 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.
  2. In the prospectus defense, the student presents to the Dissertation Committee regarding the topic and plan for the dissertation. The committee members then examine the student orally regarding the prospectus and the dissertation plan. The committee then complete an "Outcomes Assessment Form" in which they numerically rank a set of criteria correlated with the SLOs.
  3. The members of a student's Dissertation Committee read and evaluate the dissertation's 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 dissertation is complete, the committee members complete an "Outcomes Assessment Form" in which they numerically rank a set of 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.
  4. In the dissertation defense, the student gives a public presentation of ten-to-fifteen minutes concerning the ideas, methods, and significance of the dissertation, followed by questions from both Dissertation Committee members and any members of the faculty or public who wish to participate. The 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 for Graduate Studies. The committee also completes a departmental evaluation form assessing the dissertation and defense on a number of criteria correlated with the departmental SLOs and commenting on specific strengths and weaknesses.
  5. Graduating students complete an exit survey regarding their experience in the program.

iii. Our criteria for success is for 90% of our graduate students to pass PhD comprehensive exams and successfully write and defend a dissertation. We want a similar proportion to consider their time in the program valuable and successful.

B. Who: Since doctoral students finish coursework and write dissertations at different times with different paces, it is impossible to assess all students simultaneously. Consequently, the department will officially assess each measurement when a critical mass of students reaches it in the same semester. The Associate Chair for Graduate Studies and the chair or a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee also monitor student performance on a yearly basis so as to flag any possibly problems as soon as possible.

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

*PhD Comprehensive Exams:*

In the Fall semester of each academic year the ACGS and the chair or a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee 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 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 Prospectus:*

In the Fall semester of each academic year the ACGS and the chair or a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee 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 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:*

In the Fall semester of each academic year the ACGS and the chair or a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee 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 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:*

In the Fall semester of each academic year the ACGS and the chair or a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee 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 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:*

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 outcome, the committee will make a recommendation to the Graduate Committee to ascertain what, if any, action should be taken to remediate the problem.

APPENDIX: FORMS

## Outcomes Assessment Form

Please complete and return this form within 48 hours after the defense.

Date:

Candidate's Name:

Expected Graduation Date:

Dissertation Advisor:

Title of Dissertation:

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### Score

Pass \_\_\_\_\_

Pass with minor revisions \_\_\_\_\_

Fail \_\_\_\_\_

Reader's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Reader's Signature and Date)

**A. Evaluation Criteria**

Score the following criteria from 1 to 2, in accordance with the following scale.

- 2 Pass (meets expectations)
- 1 Fail (does not meet expectations)

- 1. Shows specialized historical and critical knowledge that advances our understanding of the topic. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and historical understanding of primary works in the field. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of theory and methods of criticism in the field. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Demonstrates comprehensive understanding of secondary and critical works in the field. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Shows ability to think critically. (Argument, Thesis, Purpose) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Shows proficiency in research design. (Evidence, Support) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Shows ability to write clearly and imaginatively. (Organization, Style, Clarity) \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Comments**

- 1. What are the strengths of the dissertation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. What are the weaknesses of the dissertation?

Exit survey?

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exit survey