

FEB 17 2005

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**Revised Template  
Degree Program  
Assessment of Student Learning Plan  
Kansas State University**

Check the box if your program's student learning outcomes have been modified since November 2003. If so, please email ([apr@ksu.edu](mailto:apr@ksu.edu)) or attach a hard copy to this document.

**A. College, Department, and Date**

College: Graduate School  
 Department: English  
 Date: 15 October 2004

**B. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plans**

Gregory Eiselein, Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director

**C. Degree Program**

M.A. in English

**D. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan**

**1. Student Learning Outcome(s)**

- The ability to think analytically and critically about literature and language
- The ability to write well, with an understanding of audience and purpose

Special rationale for selecting these learning outcomes (optional):

These two SLOs were selected because they are central to and equally valued by all specialties within the English Graduate Program.

Relationship to K-State Student Learning Outcomes (insert the program SLOs and check all that apply):

Program SLOs	University-wide SLOs (Undergraduate Programs)					Program SLO is conceptually different from university SLOs
	Knowledge	Critical Thinking	Communication	Diversity	Academic / Professional Integrity	
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

Program SLOs	University-wide SLOs (Graduate Programs)			Program SLO is conceptually different from university SLOs
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes and Professional Conduct	
1. Read carefully, with historical and contextual perspective		X		
2. Conduct research within the field of English		X	X	
3. Think analytically and critically about literature and language		X		
4. Recognize and analyze the perspectives and assumptions that they and other readers and critics bring to texts and interpretations		X	X	
5. Write well, with an understanding of audience and purpose		X	X	
6. The acquisition of a broad and deep knowledge about literature and language, especially within their selected area	X			

**2. How will the learning outcomes be assessed? What groups will be included in the assessment?**

The direct and primary way that we will assess these outcomes is through a final examination report form. After students complete their final writing projects or theses and take their final oral examination, the Major Professor and Supervisory Committee Members complete a report form that asks them to assess the extent to which students have met the Program SLOs as demonstrated by the final writing project or thesis and the final oral examination. All of these report forms along with copies of all the theses and final writing projects go to the Department's Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC), which looks for program-wide patterns related to student's achievements or struggles with respect to program SLOs.

In the 2004-2007 school years, we will be asking Major Professor and Supervisory Committee Members to comment in more precise detail about students' success or struggles with SLOs #3 (the ability to think analytically and critically about literature and language) and #5 (the ability to write well, with an understanding of audience and purpose).

The program also uses indirect measures: a survey of our alumni, exit interviews for all of the graduating GTAs, and GAC evaluation of program-wide patterns related to graduation rates, retention, and grade point averages.

**3. When will these outcomes be assessed? When and in what format will the results of the assessment be discussed?**

Our GAC currently assesses all SLOs on annual basis; in the fall of each school year, the GAC examines the student learning for the previous school year. Then in a series of meetings the GAC discusses the results of the assessment before passing this on to the graduate faculty for discussion at a graduate faculty meeting. Using our primary, direct method of assessment, we will continue to assess all SLOs on annual basis.

Beginning in 2004-05, however, we will begin also to focus in particular on two SLOs for a three-year cycle, in an attempt to build up some more specific, more focused information across a three-year period. Thus:

2004-07: SLO's #3 and #5

2007-10 SLO's #6 and #1

2010-13 SLOs #2 and #4

Our indirect measures happen on different schedules:

- the survey of alumni happens every 3-5 years
- exit surveys happen annually
- the GAC evaluation of program-wide patterns related to graduation rates, retention, and grade point averages has been happening annually, but we are starting to sense that this might be too often (thus we may put this on a 2-3 year cycle at some point in the near future)

After the GAC has examined and sifted the assessment information, it takes its findings to the faculty for discussion, sometimes in the form of a targeted graduate faculty meeting (particularly when the GAC senses the need for programmatic changes, such as new courses, major changes to courses, new writing project or oral examination procedures, new or changed assessment methods, etc.) or in the form a Department-wide discussion of assessment and student-learning (meetings that involve the discussion of undergraduate as well as graduate curriculum).

#### **4. What is the unit's process for using assessment results to improve student learning?**

The data is assessed by the GAC. The GAC uses this information to develop suggested changes to courses (we are currently planning a re-vamping of our ENGL 801 Graduate Studies in English courses, for example), to curriculum, to final examination procedures, and to our SLOs themselves. These proposed changes are brought to the graduate faculty for their consideration, discussion, and possible action.

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We currently have a regularly scheduled, GAC monitored, and program-wide assessment program. We assess all SLOs each year. Starting in 04-07, we will begin targeting two particular SLOs for more in-depth study. We rely primarily on a direct method of measurement – an assessment of the students' capstone research/writing projects and their final examination – though we also uses three other forms of indirect measurement. We have a committee that examines carefully the assessment data we gather, and we have begun to use this data to change and improve key courses (such as ENGL 801) in order to help students meet key SLOs more successfully. We expect, as we put into practice a newly revamped assessment procedure, that we will use this data to propose and implement other changes designed to improve student learning.

We also have a great deal of course-based assessment that drives improvements in our program. It is not, initially, calendar driven, GAC monitored, or program wide – not initially, at least. We have large number of faculty who are individually engaged in high-level assessment of SLOs in their own classes. For example, twelve members of the Department have been actively involved in the Peer

Review of Teaching project and in the creation of detailed course portfolios that document evidence of student learning in courses that they teach, portfolios that are available for peer-review by other teacher-scholars in the field and in the Peer Review of Teaching project. This kind of assessment activity – which is exemplified by the makers of course portfolios but includes several other types of individual, course-based assessment – occupies a more organic, less structured, but very important place in our program-wide assessment of program SLOs. This assessment activity has had a powerful influence on assessment in English. Typically, individual professors will take their course-based assessment, concerns, and ideas to the members of their "track" (in our Department, the "tracks" represent the four major specialties within our M.A. program – cultural studies, British and American literature, creative writing, and composition and rhetoric). The track committees often take these concerns and assessment data and use them to develop changes to courses, to curriculum, and to program requirements – changes that are then recommended to the GAC, which oversees the process of graduate faculty discussion and, when needed, the implementation of the agreed-upon improvements. In other instances, the track committees use these concerns and sets of course-based assessment data to discuss smaller, but nevertheless significant changes: new types of writing assignments in certain courses, agreements upon which authors must be taught in selected courses, pedagogical practices designed to achieve already-agreed upon goals, and much more. These track-centered discussions do not sometimes become a direct part of the GAC's program-wide assessment, but they are important. They have a significant influence on the of student learning in our graduate program and on the development of improvements, large and small, in our teaching, curriculum, and efforts to achieve student learning consistent with the aims of the program.