

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (Fall 2003)

Please provide the information below about how your academic unit assesses the extent to which students achieve learning outcomes associated with each academic program (defined as a major). If you need assistance, please contact Drs. Virginia Wheelless or Nancy McCray at 565-2085 or on Groupwise email. This information is due in the Planning Office no later than November 21, 2003 and will be updated annually.

Academic Program (Major): **Doctor of Philosophy with a Major in English and a Concentration in Creative Writing**

Graduate Degree Program

Date: 21 November 2003

Coordinator of the Program: **Barbara Rodman** **Email: brodman@unt.edu**

Person completing this form: **Brenda R. Sims** **Email: sims@unt.edu**

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I. Statement of Student Learning Outcomes: Provide a brief list of the learning outcomes that students are expected to demonstrate that they know and/or are able to perform at the end of their program; in other words, demonstrate what they have learned. Each outcome listed should be capable of being measured by the means noted in II below. Please number the outcomes (1 to x).

At the end of their program, students are expected to demonstrate considerable of knowledge of the following:

1. the materials available for research in British and American literature
2. the conventions of presenting material in scholarly writing
3. the methods of research in literary history and literary criticism
4. the reading and close analysis of a variety of types of literary criticism
5. how to read and analyze literature
6. Old English
7. the methods for teaching composition
8. the works of one or more of the major writers or literary genres of the medieval period
9. the works of one or more major authors of the Renaissance
10. the writings of the major authors of American literature from 1800-1865 the works of one or more authors of contemporary American or British literature

Additionally, students are expected to demonstrate extensive knowledge of the following:

1. rhetorical criticism of poetry to show how poems achieve identification with the audience
2. rhetorical criticism of prose fiction to show how short stories and novels achieve effect
3. the principles of prose fiction, with an emphasis on writing for specific subgenres.
4. the principles of poetic composition in traditional forms as well as free verse

II. Measuring Student Learning Outcomes: Describe how the program measures how well students have achieved the outcomes listed above and provide a list of methods and/or tools with the following information:

1. **Fourth year oral examination:** During the fourth year, students take two-hour oral examination in creative writing. (Part-time students take this examination when they have reached an equivalent point in their program, that is, when they have completed approximately 54 hours of course work.) The oral examination is administered by an examination committee composed of at least three faculty members appointed by the chair of graduate studies in consultation with the Director of Creative Writing. The examination committee becomes the student's dissertation committee. On the oral examination, students may pass, may pass conditionally, or may fail. The conditional pass requires the student to write an essay(s) or retake all or part of the oral examination. The student who fails the oral may petition the graduate committee to repeat the oral examination the following spring

semester, but will not be allowed to register for courses during that semester. The student must pass the oral examination before he or she is allowed to register for dissertation hours.

2. **Dissertation prospectus:** In the fourth year, the student provides an extended and detailed dissertation prospectus to his or her dissertation committee. The dissertation committee must approve the prospectus before the student is allowed to enroll for dissertation hours.
 3. **Dissertation:** The dissertation demonstrates the ability of students to integrate knowledge of diverse literary tradition in the development of a creative work(s). A committee of three faculty members from the Department of English evaluates the dissertation. The director of the dissertation committee has expertise in creative writing. The other committee members have expertise in creative writing or contemporary British or American literature.
 4. **Final comprehensive examination (dissertation defense):** Once the student has completed the dissertation and the dissertation committee has approved the dissertation, the student takes an oral comprehensive examination over the contents of the dissertation. This examination is administered and evaluated by the members of the student's dissertation committee. If the student does not pass the examination, the committee may ask the student to rework the dissertation.
- II. Use of Assessment Results:** Describe how the results of the assessments described above are shared with faculty in the academic program? How are the results used to improve the program?

The creative writing faculty and the Graduate Committee in the English department review the results of the fourth-year examination. The faculty and the Graduate Committee also examine how the program in English at UNT compares to similar programs at other major universities. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of Creative Writing meet regularly with graduate students for advising and degree planning. At these meetings, students have the opportunity to evaluate the course offerings in this program.

- III. Changes Made Based on Assessment Results:** Describe how the program has changed (or why it has not changed) based on the results of the assessment of learning outcomes. Indicate the year the change was implemented. Please indicate how the learning outcomes have changed if applicable.

In the fall of 2002, the Graduate Committee appointed a Ph.D. task force to examine the current Ph.D. degree at UNT. This task force examined Ph.D. requirements of thirty universities that grant a Ph.D. in English. The committee determined that our current Ph.D. program was not sufficiently preparing students for employment and for writing the dissertation. Therefore, in the spring of 2003, the task force submitted a revised Ph.D. program that includes a more rigorous written test at the fourth year and a revised course of study. The Department of English faculty and by the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Curriculum Committee has approved this program. The revised program was then submitted to the Graduate Council in October of 2003. We have not yet learned whether the Graduate Council has approved the revised program.

Signature of Person Completing the Form:

Date: 21 November 2003

Signature of Department Chair after Reviewing the Form:

Date: 21 November 2003