

**Department of English
Graduate Programs Assessed:
M.A. in English
&
Ph.D. in English
2002**

**Prepared by
Ravi Sheorey
Assessment Coordinator
210 Morrill Hall
(E-mail: sheorey@okstate.edu; ext.: 4-9471)**

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT GRADUATE PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Introduction

To assess the effectiveness of its graduate program in meeting its stated mission, goals, and objectives, the Department of English proposes to conduct an outcomes assessment as described in this proposal. The assessment will be an integral part of the continuing efforts to review our curriculum, enhance the quality of instruction, and improve the overall educational experience of our graduate students. The assessment effort will be coordinated by Ravi Sheorey, who will work closely with members of the department's Assessment Committee (Robert Mayer, Denise Tillery, and Jules Emig, members) and members of the English Department faculty, especially the Department Head and the Associate Head.

The graduate programs in the English Department lead to (a) Master of Arts in English, with options in creative writing, technical writing, and teaching English as a second language (TESL) and (b) Ph.D. in English, with areas of concentration in literature, creative writing, technical writing, TESL/linguistics, and composition and rhetoric. Although the specifics of these degree programs and options differ from one another in some respects, the assessment plan described below is intended to apply to all the students in the graduate program.

In this proposal, we specify the mission of the department, goals and objectives, desired student skills and outcomes, assessment methodology, methods of data analysis, and the budget needed to conduct the assessment.

Mission

The English Department seeks to provide students an opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of English language and literature and to critically analyze literary texts as works of art and as reflections of the cultural and social contexts in which they are produced. While the study of language and literature is at the core of English as a discipline, the graduate program also seeks to provide students an opportunity to explore the study of film, popular culture, rhetoric, technical and business writing, teaching the language to nonnative speakers, and linguistics--all of which have expanded our understanding of the ways in which words and images make an impact on our lives.

Students seeking graduate degrees in English are prepared to fill positions such as college and university professors (Ph.D. students only), community college instructors; writing teachers; technical writers and editors; creative writers; researchers in language, linguistics, and literature; and teachers of English to speakers of other languages around the world; others may aim at careers in publishing and the wider information industry.

Program Goals and Objectives

The major educational objective of the English graduate programs is to provide quality instruction that familiarizes the students with the literary works which shape cultural heritage, but also develops their abilities to speak and write effectively, think analytically and critically, and consider various points of view when dealing with people and ideas. The English Department, then, seeks to develop in students the capacity to make balanced critical judgments and the ability to write logically, coherently, and persuasively--skills essential to success in a variety of disciplines for which a major in English provides excellent preparation, including law, administration, business, and teaching. Among the more specific objectives of the program are the following:

- X Prepare students for varied careers associated with the study and/or teaching of language (including English as a second language) and literature, technical writing, creative writing, film, and rhetoric and composition.
- X Prepare students (primarily doctoral students) to conduct original research pertaining to literature and other subdisciplines of English mentioned above.
- X Acquaint students with and help them appreciate and interpret the achievements of Western literature, especially American and British.

- X Assist students in developing skills to critically analyze texts and to write about them with clarity, precision, and insight.
- X Help students master analytical, imaginative, and communication skills that can be used in a wide range of employment possibilities.

Desired Student Outcomes

The desired student outcomes listed below are intended to reflect the broad program goals and objectives stated above. In order to succeed in their chosen professions after they complete their degree program, graduate students in English are expected to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of literature, technical writing, creative writing, film, teaching English as a second language, or composition and rhetoric as a discipline.
2. Demonstrate the techniques and procedures necessary to conduct and report research in their chosen option, including publishing the results of their research.
3. Complete, in high percentages, all the requirements of their degree programs in a timely manner.
4. Be able to compete and find appropriate employment upon completion of the degree program.

In addition to these competencies, the graduate program in English hopes that the students will express satisfaction with the program as follows:

5. Display satisfaction with their educational experience in the English Department graduate program.
6. Display satisfaction with their graduate program *after* they will have left the program for a period of 3 to 5 years.

Assessment Methodology

To ensure an accurate and thorough assessment of the English graduate program, we will use both quantitative and qualitative data. Some of the assessment will require the using of external personnel; others will essentially be internal assessments.

- X *Graduation Rates:* An on-going tally will be kept to record the number of students entering the program and successfully completing it (within an average of three years for M.A. and five years--after M.A.--for Ph.D.), including results of the comprehensive exams, theses and dissertation defenses, creative components, etc. The results of these quantitative measurements will be summarized annually (outcome 4).
- X *Exit Interviews:* We will conduct exit interviews of M.A. and Ph.D. graduating students to obtain their views on the curriculum, facilities, extra curricular activities, advising, instruction, and job placement. Initially, all graduating students will be asked to complete a standard questionnaire and, a sample of graduating students will be provided a confidential forum to make additional comments about the program--comments which will not be part of the exit interview record. These interviews will be conducted by the members of the Department=s Graduate Studies Committee (outcomes 3, 4, and 5).
- X *Student Research, Publications, and Awards:* A list of graduate students= publications, conference or other presentations, and any awards or scholarships won by them for their scholarly work (e.g. outstanding thesis or dissertation awards) will be prepared and reported (outcomes 2).
- X *Graduate Student Evaluations:* At the end of each semester, English faculty provide to the English Department Graduate Coordinator a formal written evaluation of each graduate student in each of the courses they taught. Quantitative data about the number of these evaluations will be reported annually (outcome 1).

- X *External Program Review:* A comprehensive review of the entire department is periodically conducted by a team of three external reviewers from peer institutions, and the review team prepares a report, with recommendations, designed specifically to provide guidance to the faculty and administration for program improvement. The next such review is expected to be conducted in 2005 or 2006 (all outcomes).
- X *Alumni Survey:* We will design, draft, and distribute a survey to a selected sample of our program alumni to find out how their program of study and the faculty prepared them for life in the workplace and/or for their intellectual and social development. (outcome 6).
- X *Student Participation:* The Graduate Coordinator will periodically meet with graduate students to provide information about program assessment and to solicit their suggestions for improving the assessment process and their educational experiences.

Timelines

- X The internal review measures (graduation rates, exit interviews, student publications, student participation) will be implemented by the Spring semester, 2001, and will be reported on an annual basis.
- X Graduate student evaluations are submitted by faculty every semester.
- X The next Alumni Survey and the External Program Review will be conducted, respectively, during the spring semester, 2002 and 2005 or 2006 (tentative dates).

Data Analysis

The Assessment Coordinator, with the assistance of the members of the department=s Assessment Committee, will collect and analyze the data and measure outcomes as specified above. In cases which call for qualitative analyses, representative remarks and suggestions will be included in the Outcomes Assessment Report. A variety of visual aids (graphs, charts, tables, etc.) and appendices (e.g., questionnaires) will be used to illustrate the results.

Feedback

Results will be initially discussed by the Department=s Assessment Committee, after which they will be shared with the English Department faculty and the English Graduate Student Association Executive Committee--all of whom will be requested to provide feedback and suggestions. A final report will be prepared and submitted to the Department Head, who will have the ultimate responsibility to initiate any changes to the graduate program. As required, the final report will also be submitted to the Office of University Assessment through the Dean of A&S.

Proposed Budget

The estimated budget for each Academic Year will be submitted by the deadlines set by the University Assessment Office.