

## STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY FORM

Program Name: MA Program in English. Fall 2024 Report. October 15, 2024

Dept: English

College: CLAS

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### Part 1:

<b>CGS Learning Goal #1</b> A depth of content knowledge	Program Learning Goal(s): Develop advanced content knowledge in selected concentration.
How are learners assessed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial Portfolio (all students complete an initial portfolio through ENG 5000)</li> <li>2. Final Portfolio (completed in last semester of study)</li> <li>3. Thesis &amp; Oral defense</li> <li>4. Thesis &amp; Independent Study Proposals</li> <li>5. Exit Survey</li> </ol>
What are the expectations for the students?	Students will generate informed interpretations or analysis of texts and questions for scholarly or creative inquiry or as a means for inquiry into advanced pedagogy (theory and practice).
What are the expectations for the program?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 80% of students achieve expectation in initial portfolio</li> <li>2. 20% of students exceed expectation; 80% meet expectations in final portfolio.</li> <li>3. 80% students meet expectations; 20% exceed expectations in thesis and oral defense.</li> <li>4. 100% of thesis proposals meet or exceed expectations; 75% of independent study proposals meet expectations.</li> <li>5. 85% of respondents indicate "Excellent" or "Good" when asked to rate "How your coursework has helped you to achieve or to enhance the knowledge and skills required in your current or targeted profession."</li> </ol>
What were the results?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 30 initial portfolios reviewed: 70% achieved or exceeded expectation</li> <li>2. 20 final portfolios reviewed: 10% exceeded expectation; 70% Achieved expectation</li> <li>3. 5 Theses completed: 2 Passed with Distinction (40% exceed expectations); 3 Passed (60% met expectations)</li> <li>4. 2 (29%) thesis proposals exceeded expectations; 5 (71%) thesis proposals met expectations; of 8 independent study proposals, 100% met expectations</li> <li>5. When asked to rate "How your coursework has helped you to achieve or to enhance the knowledge and skills required in your current or targeted profession," 88% of respondents said "Excellent," 12% said "Good."</li> </ol>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are discussed in most Graduate Studies Committee meetings throughout the year, specific issues related to assessment processes and individual students are addressed by the committee. Results, concerns and plans for the future are shared with all faculty in 1-2 department meetings in fall semester.</li> <li>• The results this year will be useful as a baseline because we have just changed our curricular requirements for each of our three concentrations. These changes will take effect next year</li> </ul>

	<p>and we anticipate improvements in student preparedness engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In compiling this report, our committee recognized some problems with data collection and conveying information to students about which data to submit. We will work on ways to remedy these issues in the coming years.</li> </ul>
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<b>CGS Learning Goal #2:</b> Critical thinking and problem-solving skills	Program Learning Goal(s): Develop advanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
How are learners assessed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial Portfolio (all students complete an initial portfolio through ENG 5000)</li> <li>2. Final Portfolio (completed in last semester of study)</li> <li>3. Thesis &amp; Oral defense</li> <li>4. Thesis &amp; Independent Study Proposals</li> <li>5. Exit Survey</li> </ol>
What are the expectations for the students?	Students will demonstrate advanced skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing, including the ability to analyze texts, to synthesize ideas, and to reflect on these activities.
What are the expectations for the program?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 70% of students achieve expectation in initial portfolio</li> <li>2. 90% of students meet expectation; 10% exceed expectations in final portfolio.</li> <li>3. 80% students meet expectations; 20% exceed expectations in thesis and oral defense.</li> <li>4. 100% of thesis proposals meet expectations; 75% of independent study proposals meet expectations</li> <li>5. 100% of surveys show excellent or good results when asked to rate "The effectiveness of courses in challenging your critical, analytic, and/or creative thinking."</li> </ol>
What were the results?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 30 initial portfolios reviewed: 67% Achieved expectation</li> <li>2. 20 final portfolios reviewed: 93% achieved expectation</li> <li>3. 5 Theses completed: 2 Passed with Distinction (40% exceed expectations); 3 Passed (60% met expectations).</li> <li>4. 2 (29%) thesis proposals exceeded expectations; 5 (71%) thesis proposals met expectations; of 8 independent study proposals, 100% met expectations</li> <li>5. When asked to rate: "The effectiveness of courses in challenging your critical, analytic, and/or creative thinking": 100% Excellent.</li> </ol>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are discussed in most Graduate Studies Committee meetings throughout the year, specific issues related to assessment processes and individual students are addressed by the committee. Results, concerns and plans for the future are shared with all faculty in 1-2 department meetings in fall semester.</li> <li>• The results this year will be useful as a baseline because we have just changed our curricular requirements for each of our three concentrations. These changes will take effect next year and we anticipate improvements in student preparedness engagement.</li> <li>• In compiling this report, our committee recognized some problems with data collection and conveying information to students about which data to submit. We will work on ways to remedy these issues in the coming years.</li> </ul>

<b>CGS Learning Goal #3:</b> Effective oral and written communication skills	Program Learning Goal(s): Develop effective oral and written communication skills.
How are learners assessed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial Portfolio (all students complete an initial portfolio through ENG 5000)</li> <li>2. Final Portfolio or Thesis (completed in last semester of study)</li> <li>3. Thesis &amp; Oral defense</li> <li>4. Thesis &amp; Independent Study Proposals</li> </ol>
What are the expectations for the students?	Students will conduct and produce original research, creative, or pedagogical work that aligns with selected concentration and/or professional goals.
What are the expectations for the program?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 75% of students achieve expectation in initial portfolio</li> <li>2. 90% of students meet expectation; 10% exceed expectations.</li> <li>3. 80% students meet expectations; 20% exceed expectations in thesis and oral defense.</li> <li>4. 80% achieve expectation; 20% exceed expectation</li> </ol>
What were the results?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 30 initial portfolios reviewed: 100% Achieved expectation or achieved with Distinction</li> <li>2. 20 final portfolios reviewed: 100% Achieved expectation or achieved with Distinction</li> <li>3. 5 Theses completed: 2 Passed with Distinction (40% exceed expectations); 3 Passed (60% met expectations).</li> <li>4. 2 (29%) thesis proposals exceeded expectations; 5 (71%) thesis proposals met expectations; of 8 independent study proposals, 100% met expectations</li> </ol>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are discussed in most Graduate Studies Committee meetings throughout the year, specific issues related to assessment processes and individual students are addressed by the committee. Results, concerns and plans for the future are shared with all faculty in 1-2 department meetings in fall semester.</li> <li>• The results this year will be useful as a baseline because we have just changed our curricular requirements for each of our three concentrations. These changes will take effect next year and we anticipate improvements in student preparedness engagement.</li> </ul> <p>In compiling this report, our committee recognized some problems with data collection and conveying information to students about which data to submit. We will work on ways to remedy these issues in the coming years.</p>
<b>CGS Learning Goal #4:</b> Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity.	Program Learning Goal(s): Develop advanced scholarship, skills, or preparation for professional career through research and/or creative activity
How are learners assessed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial Portfolio (all students complete an initial portfolio through ENG 5000)</li> <li>2. Final Portfolio or Thesis (completed in last semester of study)</li> <li>3. Thesis &amp; Oral defense</li> <li>4. Thesis &amp; Independent Study Proposals</li> <li>5. Exit Survey</li> </ol>
What are the expectations for the students?	Students will engage in professional activities by producing concentration-specific documents intended for a professional audience and/or through public reading of scholarly/creative work or through publication.
What are the expectations for the program?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 50% of students achieve expectation in initial portfolio</li> </ol>

	<p>2. 90% of students met expectation; 10% exceed expectation in final portfolio.</p> <p>3. 80% students meet expectations; 20% exceed expectations in thesis and oral defense.</p> <p>4. 80% achieve expectation; 20% exceed expectation</p> <p>5. 100% of surveys reveal excellent or good results when asked to rate “How your coursework has helped you to achieve or to enhance the knowledge and skills required in your current or targeted profession.”</p>
What were the results?	<p>1. 30 initial portfolios reviewed: 50% Achieved or exceeded expectation</p> <p>2. 20 final portfolios reviewed: 70% met or exceeded expectation</p> <p>3. 5 Theses completed: 2 Passed with Distinction (40% exceed expectations); 3 Passed (60% met expectations).</p> <p>4. 2 (29%) thesis proposals exceeded expectations; 5 (71%) thesis proposals met expectations; of 8 independent study proposals, 100% met expectations</p> <p>5. When asked to rate “How your coursework has helped you to achieve or to enhance the knowledge and skills required in your current or targeted profession,” 88% of respondents said “Excellent,” 12% said “Good.”</p>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results are discussed in most Graduate Studies Committee meetings throughout the year, specific issues related to assessment processes and individual students are addressed by the committee. Results, concerns and plans for the future are shared with all faculty in 1-2 department meetings in fall semester.</li> <li>The results this year will be useful as a baseline because we have just changed our curricular requirements for each of our three concentrations. These changes will take effect next year and we anticipate improvements in student preparedness engagement.</li> <li>In compiling this report, our committee recognized some problems with data collection and conveying information to students about which data to submit. We will work on ways to remedy these issues in the coming years.</li> </ul>

<b>CGS Learning Goal #5:</b> Ethics and Professional Responsibility	Program Learning Goal(s): Understand and abide by ethical and professional responsibility in the field of English Studies.
How are learners assessed?	<p>1. Students in ENG 5000 (required) complete an ethics and professional responsibility project. This course also has units on the pedagogical implications of plagiarism, AI and critical media literacy.</p> <p>2. Graduate assistants assigned to the Writing Center will (1) develop a teaching/mentor philosophy through the Writing Center Practicum (ENG 5500); This will address ethics, professional responsibility, and attentiveness to diversity and inclusion of various student populations.</p> <p>3. Graduate assistants in Mentored Teaching Program (ENG 5502) are evaluated in regard to their work ethic and professional performance and potential.</p>
What are the expectations for the students?	Students in all concentrations will learn and abide by professional codes of ethics as defined by EIU and the Modern Language

	Association, which includes a responsibility to protect free inquiry; to promote integrity in teaching, mentoring, and research practices; and to promote respect and value for diversity and inclusion.
What are the expectations for the program?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 100% of students should meet expectations</li> <li>2. 15% of GAs will exceed expectations; 85% will meet expectations</li> <li>3. 100% of students should meet expectations</li> </ol>
What were the results?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 100% of students assessed met expectations.</li> <li>2. 100% of students met or exceeded expectations.</li> <li>3. In terms of work ethic, ability to adapt to student needs and challenges and over all professional potential, 66% of students were deemed "Excellent"; 34% deemed "Strong."</li> </ol>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are discussed in most Graduate Studies Committee meetings throughout the year, specific issues related to assessment processes and individual students are addressed by the committee. Results, concerns and plans for the future are shared with all faculty in 1-2 department meetings in fall semester.</li> <li>• The results this year will be useful as a baseline because we have just changed our curricular requirements for each of our three concentrations. These changes will take effect next year and we anticipate improvements in student preparedness engagement.</li> <li>• In compiling this report, our committee recognized some problems with data collection and conveying information to students about which data to submit. We will work on ways to remedy these issues in the coming years.</li> </ul>

## Part 2

**Describe what your program's assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the Graduate Assessment Summary Response from last year's report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.**

In our last report we indicated that, in response to students needing more guidance in putting together their preliminary and final portfolios, we had systematized this process through a unit in our introductory course, ENG 5000. We instituted a unit that focuses on preparing and uploading the required documents as part of any section of the course, regardless of who teaches it. Discussion of and instructions for the requirements for the final portfolio also takes place in ENG 5000 so that, upon application for graduation, student simply need a reminder to complete the portfolio. We have continued this practice and find that very few students still struggle with completing their portfolios, either at the beginning or the end of our program. We did find, however, that we need to provide more guidance to students about *what kind* of documents they submit to the portfolio; sometimes, submitted material was not assessable based on the criteria of the learning goals.

Our last report outlined one way in which we began addressing Learning Goal #5 about professional ethics by including a unit on ethical practices both here at EIU and at the MLA, our national organization. We have continued that practice to great success. Since then, we have also implemented two other ethics-related units in ENG 5000: one on AI and one on Critical Media Literacy. We discuss both issues from the perspective of a student and a potential educator. Both units introduce students to the issues and research surrounding these topics and we discuss their ethical ramifications to students, educators and the culture at large.

## Overall Assessment Plan

As this report indicates, our students are not quite meeting our highest expectations. Some of this discrepancy is a result of the wide variety of course we offer and the wide variety of student we serve. In other words, we need to adjust our requirements from the older model of English Studies that focused on the research essay and update them to include the lesson plan, the creative work, the public-facing project, etc. As in previous years, the central component of our assessment plan--the student portfolio--is a highly flexible tool for gauging student achievement across all three concentrations (Literary Studies, Creative Writing, and Rhetoric and Composition) for students who are both online and on campus. As we refocus our assessment expectations to accommodate different approaches to assignments, we anticipate that the portfolio model will continue to serve us well in that endeavor.

Our assessment plan spans six stages and provides for a rigorous and ongoing assessment of our students during their time in the MA Program.

#### Stage 1: Orientation

Stage 1 provides an orientation to incoming students at the beginning of their degree. Students are introduced to the MA program's learning goals and expectations through EMAP--the MA Program's D2L site. Students are provided with an overview of the Assessment Portfolio, a description of its components, important steps in the completion timeline, and tips and best practices for completion.

#### Stage 2: Core Course & Initial Portfolio

Stage 2 occurs in English 5000--the single required course for all concentrations and typically taken in the first year of study. In English 5000, students will complete an initial portfolio with the close guidance of the faculty member teaching the course. This initial portfolio includes a résumé, statement of professional goals, and one self-selected document from coursework. Students will be asked to provide a rationale for their portfolio selections and indicate how their selections meet the learning expectations.

#### Stage 3: Thesis and/or Independent Studies

For students who participate in these aspects of the degree, the thesis and independent study proposals and thesis oral defenses are assessed by all faculty members in attendance.

#### Stage 4: Graduate Assistant Evaluation

Graduate Assistants are evaluated in the Writing Center and in the Mentored Teaching course (ENG5502).

#### Stage 5: Final Portfolio

In order to gain a holistic perspective on student achievement during their time in the MA program, we require all students to submit a final portfolio. Students may choose the coursework option or the thesis option:

Portfolio Coursework Option	Or	Portfolio Thesis Option
<p>Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résumé</li> <li>• Professional Statement</li> <li>• Statement on how documents meet learning expectations</li> <li>• 2 coursework documents (formal papers or creative works)</li> <li>• 1 public document (paper or creative work designed for presentation)</li> </ul>		<p>Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résumé</li> <li>• Professional Statement</li> <li>• Statement on how thesis/capstone experience has met learning expectations</li> <li>• Thesis + documents from initial portfolio</li> </ul>

#### Stage 6: Exit Survey

Issued to all graduating students. Results in report.

### Part 3

**Summarize changes and improvements in curriculum, instruction, and learning that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?**

We have recently gotten Departmental approval for substantial curricular changes. We created two new courses in Composition/Rhetoric (ENG 5021 and ENG 5022). Now that these courses are approved, we are moving forward with a plan to require them for our Comp/Rhet Concentration, bringing the number of required courses in that concentration from 3 to 5. Part of this revision includes lowering the require number of courses from our other two concentrations to bring all three in line with each other. Once these changes are approved, all concentrations will have 5 required courses and 6 elective courses (Creative Writing concentrators are required to take the 1-credit professionalization course (ENG 5025)). We feel that these changes will allow our students both to specialize in their chosen concentration, and to take a variety of courses outside that concentration so that they can become true masters of English Studies.

Our students' consistently good performance across a variety of assessment vehicles demonstrated to us that we are doing a good job on the whole of accepting good candidates, guiding and supporting them through our program, and helping them meet their professional goals. This is gratifying to recognize, since we serve a rather wide variety of student: online and face-to-face; students who are already working professionals, teachers returning for their Masters degrees, students who wish to continue graduate study at the Ph.D. level, those who want to be community-college instructors and those who want to be writers.

One area we wanted to focus on is to encourage continued professional development. We already have several courses that do this (ENG 5025 for creative writers and ENG5502 for GAs who wish to teach), but we realize there is more we could do. In the past, we have held symposia designed to help students apply to and prepare to present at professional conferences, but they were rather poorly attended, given the tight and varied schedules our students maintain, both on and off campus. To rectify this, we are in the process of implementing a unit in ENG 5000 that discusses conference travel and presentation preparation. The course already requires students to find and respond to a call for papers with an abstract (the assignment does not require them to submit the abstract, but introduces them to the process of finding and responding to relevant calls for papers). We are devising a list of nearby and graduate-student-friendly conferences which we will make available and encourage students to apply. It is our hope to have these symposia serve as a sort of pipeline into helping students apply for the travel grants the Graduate School awards. Right now, few of our students take advantage of this opportunity and we hope to find ways to facilitate that kind of professional development. We also hope to use some of our Distinguished Graduate Program budget to fund student travel as well.