

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PLAN
 Requirements, Template, and Example

Requirements

1. *Submit with New Program Proposal*
 - a. *Programs are encouraged to consult with the Office of University Assessment.*
 - b. *Contact information assessment@uca.edu*
2. *Send copy of Assessment Plan to the Office of University Assessment, Wingo 215.*
3. *Update the Program Assessment Plan based upon EAPR or Accreditation Cycles.*

Basic Information

Program Name: MA in English

College: College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Department: English

Program Level (check all that apply)

- Associate's
- Bachelor's
- Undergraduate Certificate
- Master's
- Doctoral
- Graduate Certificate

Date Plan Submitted: Fall 2021

College Dean & email: Dr. Thomas Williams, twilliams73@uca.edu

College Curriculum Committee Chairperson & Email: Dr. Mark Mullenbach, markm@uca.edu

Department Chairperson & email: Dr. Ty Hawkins, thawkins@uca.edu

Department Curriculum Committee Chairperson & email: Dr. Lori Leavell, lleavell@uca.edu

1. Introduction (identify college, unit, and degree programs)

Purpose: Housed within the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, the English department's MA in English enables students to build on knowledge gained at the undergraduate level. Along with broad grounding in British and American literary history from the Middle Ages to the present, our students gain familiarity with the history of literary scholarship. Trained as expert practitioners of literary analysis, students become peculiarly attentive readers, strong communicators, and creative thinkers. As researchers, they become adept at synthesizing large quantities of information as well as evaluating sources and arguments. Fortified by these skills, UCA's MA in English graduates enjoy varied means of career success. Some pursue the Ph.D. in English, while a number teach English at the K-12

level in the U.S. or abroad. Some work in grant, technical, or science writing, too, while others start their own businesses. Yet more work in higher education, serving as librarians, registrars, student-affairs professionals, diversity officers, and more.

Unit Mission Statement: The Master of Arts (MA) program in English does the following:

- fosters knowledge about the periods, authors, genres, and critical theory germane to the study of English, Anglophone, and American literatures, and about the English language on a level befitting graduate-level study.
- teaches students to conduct and present graduate-level research, including the discovery, evaluation, integration, and documentation of primary and secondary sources.
- guides students to become more knowledgeable of the history of literary scholarship as they become self-aware contributors to ongoing scholarly conversations.
- teaches students to read closely and to think critically about literary works and the human cultures they inform, in order to form a thorough understanding of their complexities.
- teaches students to compose graduate-quality writing that presents arguments in clear, mechanically sound prose and supports those arguments with evidence drawn from primary and secondary sources.
- supports students holistically and intentionally to ensure that they grow as professionals equipped for success in myriad careers.

2. Student Outcomes

- Learning Outcomes by Program (focused on student performance, clearly stated, and measurable)

Students who complete the MA in English will demonstrate the following:

Goal 1: content knowledge (literary, cultural, historical, material, and/or theoretical) relevant to interpreting a specific work of literature and/or cultural artifact.

Goal 2: the craft of literary analysis as applied to a specific work of literature and/or cultural artifact, supplying an interpretive argument that makes use of evidence from primary and secondary sources, that explicitly situates its argument relative to ongoing scholarly conversations, and that communicates the significance of the argument.

Goal 3: effective scholarly writing by adopting a scholarly voice appropriate for the discipline (tone and audience awareness), displaying sound structure and compelling style, and showcasing correct mechanics.

3. Assessment Cycle

- Assessment Cycle will be determined with assistance from the Office of Assessment

Our direct methods of data generation will be the submission of a portfolio as the program's capstone. (See Item 5 for more information.) Our indirect method of data generation will be a survey of alumni UCA's Office of Institutional Research helps us issue to graduates every three

years. We will assess accumulated portfolio artifacts, collate resulting data, and close the loop every three years. In advance of each Existing Academic Program Review (EAPR), therefore, we will have completed at least three department-level assessment cycles. Our goal is to position the EAPR as our meta-assessment cycle, in keeping with its university-wide function.

4. Curriculum Map

- Office of Assessment will provide examples and consultative services to meet this requirement.

See Appendix A.

5. Assessment Methods and Measures (Formative and Summative recommended)

- Record the assessment measure(s) that evaluate each student learning outcome (note: each learning outcome should have an associated assessment measure).
- Direct Methods/Measures Preferred/Used at the Course and Program Levels (examples: writing examples, oral examinations, internships, clinicals, quizzes, test, team/group projects and presentations)
- Indirect Methods/Measures Preferred/Used at the Course and Program Levels (examples: surveys, quantitative data, course grades, alumni surveys, student evaluation of instruction)

Explanation of Program Structure: Our program has two required courses, ENGL 6393: Research Methods and ENGL 5366: Literary Theory and Criticism. In these two courses, concepts/skills/methods are “Introduced.” The rest of the student’s 24 hours are electives (or a combination of electives and thesis hours for those on the thesis-track) that students select in consultation with their advisor. The designation of “Reinforced” applies to these 24 remaining hours. The designation of “Applied” pertains to the portfolio.

Explanation of Direct Assessment Method: Students completing the MA in English submit a portfolio as the program’s capstone near the end of their final semester (either fall or spring). The graduate portfolios include the paper completed for ENGL 6393: Research Methods OR ENGL 5366: Literary Theory and Criticism—whichever course was taken first—and a second-year paper of the student’s choosing completed during the final twelve hours of coursework; it may be either a research paper completed for class during these final hours of coursework or a thesis chapter. These two items will be reviewed for Assessment by the department’s Assessment Committee. The 6393 OR 5366 paper and the second-year paper will be the two items reviewed for SLO #1: Content Knowledge, SLO #2: Literary Analysis, and SLO #3: Scholarly Writing. Comparing these two essays will indicate the degree of improvement over the course of the program.

Direct Methods for SLOs #1-3:

During their final semester (either fall or spring), students completing the MA in English submit a portfolio as the capstone. This portfolio must contain artifacts of the student’s work, including one from a class designated as “Introduce” (ENGL 6393 OR ENGL 5366) and one from a class designated as “Reinforce” (a paper completed for any class during the final twelve hours of coursework or a thesis chapter). The portfolio itself is categorized as “Applied.” Using the

Graduate Portfolio Assessment Rubric available in Appendix C, each artifact will be assessed for SLO #1 (content knowledge), SLO #2 (literary analysis), and SLO #3 (scholarly writing)

Students will submit copies of their portfolios to the department's Assessment Committee for evaluation in their final semester. The committee will use our department's Graduate Portfolio Assessment Rubric (see Appendix C) to score the students' artifacts. We will set as performance benchmarks the following goals:

- (1) No fewer than 75% percent of our graduating MA in English students will have their second-year paper score a 4 or higher (a "G" or "Good") in each SLO category.
- (2) We will see MA in English students growing, when we compare their scores in each SLO category for the first-year and the second-year paper.

Indirect Methods for SLOs 1-3:

In addition to our portfolio-assessment work, the department also will partner with UCA IR to assess the MA in English via a survey of alumni. This survey includes questions scorable via five-point Likert scales regarding student learning outcomes and post-graduate success. We will set the following goals as performance benchmarks:

- (1) Our mean score will be a 4 or higher on at least 75 percent of questions.
- (2) Our mean score will be a 3 or higher on at least 90 percent of questions.

6. Data Collection and Review

- When will data be collected for each outcome?

As the capstone for the MA, portfolios will be submitted digitally in the semester in which students graduate. Portfolios are due November 15 in the fall and April 15 in the spring. All the "direct methods/measures" are contained in the portfolio.

- How will data be collected for each outcome?

Students submit their portfolios digitally to the graduate coordinator and English department office staff, who uploads the portfolios to a GoogleDrive. (This process is already in place for submission of portfolios as a program requirement, which is overseen by the Graduate Coordinator and yearly-appointed Graduate Portfolio committee.)

- What will be the benchmark/target for each outcome?

Direct Methods: We will set as performance benchmarks the following goals:

- (1) No fewer than 75% percent of our graduating MA in English students will have their second-year paper score a 4 or higher (a "G" or "Good") in each SLO category.
- (2) We will see MA in English students growing, when we compare their scores in each SLO category for the first-year and the second-year paper.

Indirect Methods: We will set the following goals as performance benchmarks:

- (1) Our mean score will be a 4 or higher on at least 75 percent of questions.
- (2) Our mean score will be a 3 or higher on at least 90 percent of questions.

- What individuals/groups will be responsible for data collection?

The process of collecting data is already in place and is overseen by the graduate coordinator and the yearly-appointed Graduate Portfolio committee.

7. Participation in Assessment Process

- Who will participate in carrying out the assessment plan?

The department's graduate coordinator, department Assessment Committee, and department chair.

- What will be their specific role/s?

The graduate coordinator collects the portfolios. The department's Assessment Committee will use the Rubric in Appendix C to assess artifacts and draft recommendations for the department. The department chair will serve as liaison between Assessment Committee and the department to communicate findings.

8. Data Analysis

- How will the data and findings be shared with faculty?

Assessment Committee members, graduate coordinator, and department chair will tabulate and share assessment data with the larger department during each three-year assessment cycle. This will occasion department meetings to digest results and decide whether and how to implement plans for programmatic improvement. In addition, every trio of assessment cycles will function as the springboard for the EAPR.

- Who was involved in analyzing the results?

The graduate coordinator, Assessment Committee, and department chair carry the primary responsibility. However, all English Graduate faculty share responsibility for recursive programmatic improvement.

- How are results aligned to outcomes and benchmarks?

The emphasis of our assessment plan is on continuous programmatic improvement. For this reason, the processes by which we align results to outcomes and benchmarks does not differ in the event that results are highly positive, highly negative, or somewhere in between. We will use assessment results to drive department-wide analyses of what's working, what isn't working, how we can maximize our strengths, and how we mitigate weaknesses. Such analyses could lead to changes in how we evaluate teaching, our curriculum, this assessment plan, and many other possibilities.

9. Plan for Using Assessment Results to Improve Program

- How will you use the results to improve your program?

We will use assessment results to occasion department-wide analyses of what's working, what isn't working, how we can maximize our strengths, and how we mitigate weaknesses. Such analyses could lead to changes in how we evaluate teaching, our curriculum, this assessment plan, and many other possibilities.

10. What are the plans to evaluate students' post-graduate success?

In addition to our portfolio-assessment work, the department also will assess the MA in English via a survey of alumni. This survey includes questions regarding student learning outcomes and post-graduate success. We will set the following goals as performance benchmarks:

- (1) Our mean score will be a 4 or higher on at least 75 percent of questions.
- (2) Our mean score will be a 3 or higher on at least 90 percent of questions.

11. What are the plans to evaluate teaching effectiveness?

The English Department will add this assessment plan to an already robust array of tools we use to promote teaching effectiveness. Formative tools we use include peer observations of teaching, chair observations of teaching, peer review of syllabi and assignments, chair review of syllabi and assignments, and student evaluations of teaching. Summative measures we use include the annual-review and tenure-and-promotion processes. Our best means of promoting effective teaching, however, is a departmental culture of genuine, holistic, empathic care for students. This culture permeates everything we do, and it is one we must work hard to grow and sustain each day.

12. Appendices-Required....Curriculum Maps by Program, Assessment Tools (examples: Rubrics, Surveys, Tests, etc.), any other important materials/documentation

- Appendix A: MA in English Curriculum Map
- Appendix B: ENGL 6393: Sample Assignment Description
- Appendix C: Graduate Portfolio Assessment Rubric

13. Submit Assessment Plan

- Send completed form electronically to assessment@uca.edu

For questions or concerns please contact:

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Appendix A: MA in English Curriculum Map

	<u>SLO I</u>	<u>SLO II</u>	<u>SLO III</u>
6393 RESEARCH METHODS IN ENGLISH	I	I	I
5366 LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM	I	I	I
5301 RENAISSANCE LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5305 MEDIEVAL LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5311 18TH-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5312 EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5313 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5314 20TH- AND 21ST-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5320 19TH-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5321 20TH- AND 21ST-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5325 POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5332 SHAKESPEARE	R	R	R
5340 MAJOR AUTHORS	R	R	R
5360 HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE	R	R	R
5361 LITERATURE FOR ADOLESCENTS	R	R	R
5362 SOUTHERN LITERATURE AND CULTURE	R	R	R
5370 GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN LITERATURE	R	R	R
5380 AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE	R	R	R
5382 RACE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE	R	R	R
5383 ASIAN AND ASIAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE	R	R	R
5385 TRAVEL SEMINAR IN LITERATURE	R	R	R
6V93 THESIS RESEARCH CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT	R	R	R
6V94 INDEPENDENT STUDY	R	R	R
6190 GRADUATE TEACHING PRACTICUM IN ENGLISH	R	R	R

6301 SEMINAR IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH LITERATURE	R	R	R
6302 SEMINAR IN THE RENAISSANCE	R	R	R
6303 SEMINAR IN NEOCLASSICISM	R	R	R
6304 SEMINAR IN ROMANTICISM	R	R	R
6305 SEMINAR IN THE VICTORIAN PERIOD	R	R	R
6306 SEMINAR IN ENGLISH AND ANGLO. LIT. 1900 TO PRESENT	R	R	R
6307 SEMINAR IN AMERICAN LITERATURE 1900 TO PRESENT	R	R	R
6320 SEMINAR IN 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE	R	R	R
6323 MULTICULTURAL AND TRANSNATIONAL LITERATURES	R	R	R
6336 TEXTS AND MANUSCRIPTS	R	R	R
6337 GRADUATE INTERNSHIP	N/A	N/A	N/A
PORTFOLIO CAPSTONE	A	A	A

Appendix B: ENGL 6393: Sample Research Paper Description

Final Research Paper
ENGL 6393: Graduate Research Methods

Length: 15+ pages

Secondary Sources: 10+ (Most of these need to be works of literary scholarship)

Worth: 100 points

Based partly on the advice we've been discussing from Eric Hayot and Wendy Belcher, the paper needs to include the following:

- (1) An introduction, including an indication of the methods utilized (about 2 pages or so)
- (2) A literature review (probably should be part of the introduction, but there could be more than one)
- (3) Distinct sections (consider including subheadings) that keep Hayot's uneven U in mind
- (4) Endnotes (at least two)
- (5) Topic sentences that make claims (or promises) rather than state facts (in Hayot's terms, closer to level 4)
- (6) Body paragraphs that ladder up and down the uneven U
- (7) A conclusion (can be short, but it should not simply repeat the argument and/or main points; instead, it needs to address the larger significance and implications of the argument. In Hayot's terms, it should approach level 5)
- (8) Application of the new MLA guidelines (eighth edition)

As much as possible, implement Hayot's and Belcher's respective advice for thinking about academic writing from the perspective of the reader: How can you add texture to your paragraphs (following a long, complex sentence with a short one, etc.), build in the element of suspense or surprise, demonstrate confidence in handling secondary sources, take charge of where and how you reveal what you know (iceberging), etc.?

- **Monday, November 16: Draft of Research Paper Due** Must have a minimum of 13 full pages completed; if less than 15 pages, include detailed notes throughout the draft about what will be covered in the missing space (specific scenes for close reading, examples that serve as counterarguments, conversation with specific scholars, etc.). For this class, about half of the time will be reserved for the workshop. But we will spend a good amount of time discussing the assigned reading from Hayot and Belcher.

- **Monday, November 30: Research Paper Due**

Appendix C

Graduate Portfolio Assessment Rubric

SLO1: Content Knowledge

Ratings Defined:

- E = Excellent = (5): Student demonstrates a thoroughgoing understanding of various contexts (literary, cultural, historical, material, and/or theoretical) relevant to the primary source and has a sophisticated approach for compellingly bringing those contexts to bear on the primary source.
- G = Good = (4) Student demonstrates a growing understanding of various contexts (literary, cultural, historical, material, and/or theoretical) relevant to the primary source and brings those contexts to bear on the primary source in worthwhile ways.
- F = Fair = (3) Student mentions various contexts (literary, cultural, historical, material, and/or theoretical) relevant to the primary source. The student is beginning to connect texts and contexts, though the execution is somewhat uneven, lacking in nuance, and/or otherwise uninspired.
- P = Poor = (2) Student is working to connect texts and contexts, but is not yet succeeding. The paper may substitute generalizations (historical or otherwise) for concrete particulars.
- U = Unsatisfactory = (1) Student approaches texts and contexts without a basic understanding of their connectedness.

Score on paper from 5366 OR 6393:

Score on second-year paper:

Growth between 5366/6393 paper and second-year paper:

SLO 2: Literary Analysis

Ratings Defined:

- E = Excellent = (5): Student demonstrates highly evolved skills in literary analysis as applied to a specific work of literature and/or cultural artifact. The paper proffers a compelling and multidimensional interpretive argument, makes use of evidence from appropriate primary and secondary sources with sophistication, explicitly situates the argument relative to published scholarship, and persuasively communicates the larger significance of the argument. The student's insight consistently surprises the reader. The paper may show potential for publication.
- G = Good = (4) Student demonstrates strong skills in literary analysis as applied to a specific work of literature and/or cultural artifact. The paper proffers an interpretive argument that is largely compelling and multidimensional. The paper makes use of evidence from appropriate primary and secondary sources. The paper situates the argument relative to published scholarship, though this relationship may not be as explicitly articulated as it should be or may lack sophistication. The paper addresses the larger significance of the argument to a degree, though this aspect may lack clarity, sophistication, or nuance. The student's insight sometimes surprises the reader.
- F = Fair = (3) Student demonstrates commitment to intricate literary analysis as applied to a specific work of literature and/or cultural artifact. The paper proffers an interpretive argument, though it may be only somewhat compelling. It makes use of evidence from primary and secondary sources, though important sources may be missing, the logic of source selection may be unclear, and/or application of sources' insights may be uneven. The paper attempts to situate the argument relative to published scholarship, though this aspect may need revision. The paper attempts to address the larger significance of the argument, but this aspect may need revision. The student's insight rarely surprises the reader, but the student's conclusions are usually sound.
- P = Poor = (2) Student demonstrates commitment to intricate literary analysis, but significant revisions are needed (with respect to the argument, use of evidence, demonstration of argument's relationship to published scholarship, and/or articulation of the argument's larger significance) to make the paper graduate-level quality.
- U = Unsatisfactory = (1) Student is not practicing, or is just commencing to practice, intricate means of literary analysis. In addition to needing significant revisions (with respect to the argument, use of evidence, demonstration of argument's relationship to published scholarship, and/or articulation of the

argument's larger significance), the paper yields exclusively or almost exclusively facile insights that may be off-base.

Score on paper from 5366 OR 6393:

Score on second-year paper:

Growth between 5366/6393 paper and second-year paper:

SLO 3: Scholarly Writing

Ratings Defined:

E = Excellent = (5): Student produces scholarly writing that demonstrates thoroughgoing familiarity with the genre of the scholarly article in the field of English by showcasing the following: sound structure, appropriate scholarly voice (tone, audience awareness, etc.), compelling style, precise citation practices, and correct mechanics. The writing reflects awareness of the reader's experience.

G = Good = (4) Student produces scholarly writing that largely demonstrates familiarity with the genre of the scholarly article in the field of English in terms of structure, scholarly voice (tone, audience awareness, etc.), style, citation practices, and mechanics, though one or more of these aspects may be somewhat lacking in terms of sophistication and/or precision. The writing somewhat reflects awareness of the reader's experience.

F = Fair = (3) Student produces scholarly writing that somewhat demonstrates familiarity with the genre of the scholarly article in the field of English in terms of structure, scholarly voice (tone, audience awareness, etc.), style, citation practices, and mechanics. However, one or more of these aspects is significantly lacking sophistication and/or precision. The writing may seem to lack awareness of the reader's experience.

P = Poor = (2) Student does not demonstrate baseline familiarity with the genre of the scholarly article in the field of English. The paper is severely lacking in terms of structure, scholarly voice (tone, audience awareness, etc.), style, citation practices, and/or mechanics to the degree that the writing is not of graduate-level quality. The writing lacks awareness of the reader's experience.

U = Unsatisfactory = (1) Student does not demonstrate baseline familiarity with the genre of the

scholarly article in the field of English. The paper is severely lacking in several of the following: structure, scholarly voice (tone, audience awareness, etc.), style, citation practices, and/or mechanics. The writing is not of graduate-level quality and various shortcomings interfere with reader's ability to grasp the argument.

Score on paper from 5366 OR 6393:

Score on second-year paper:

Growth between 5366/6393 paper and second-year paper: