

**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](mailto: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: Arkansas Writers MFA Workshop at UCA

College: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Department: Film, Theatre and Creative Writing

Program Level (check all that apply)

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

Date Plan Submitted:

College Dean & email: Thomas Williams, [twilliams73@uca.edu](mailto:twilliams73@uca.edu)

College Curriculum Committee Chairperson & Email: Mark Mullenbach [markm@uca.edu](mailto:markm@uca.edu)

Department Chairperson & email: Shauna Meador, [smeador@uca.edu](mailto:smeador@uca.edu)

Department Curriculum Committee Chairperson & email: Jennifer Case [jcase@uca.edu](mailto:jcase@uca.edu)

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

- Purpose

The Arkansas Writer's MFA Workshop is a writing-intensive studio program in Creative Writing that uniquely prepares graduates for careers in writing pedagogy and publishing. The program provides graduate students the opportunity to concentrate on the study, practice, and teaching of Creative Writing in a highly focused writing environment facilitated by writers for writers. At 45 hours, this two-and-a-half year program will ensure that graduates build multi-genre backgrounds in the popular discipline of Creative

Writing through workshops, forms courses, topics courses, a wide variety of electives, and specialized teaching and editing practicums.

After being trained in both composition and creative writing pedagogy, some students will be offered graduate assistantships for teaching undergraduate writing classes; others work as graduate assistants in the Center for Writing & Communication, in Sponsored Programs or the Graduate School, among others. All students complete a thesis project.

- **Unit Mission Statement**

The primary mission of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences is to equip the next generation of artists, scholars, and leaders. The Department of Film, Theatre, and Creative Writing supports and enhances this mission by fostering creativity and innovation in the cinematic, dramatic, and literary arts.

## **2. Student Outcomes**

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

SLO 1: Graduates will demonstrate the ability to develop a full-length creative work in a primary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, scriptwriting, playwriting or hybrid) that could plausibly be submitted for publication.

SLO 2: Students will compose a critical introduction to their full-length creative work that contextualizes it in a literary tradition, exhibits an advanced understanding of the publishing process, and demonstrates formal and technical knowledge of genre expectations.

## **3. Assessment Cycle**

- Students will be assessed directly after they have defended their thesis, usually in the spring, sometimes in the fall. Immediately after the defense, the thesis, which has been read and responded to in writing by all committee members beforehand, the rubric will be distributed. With the discussion of the thesis fresh in their minds, the director and committee will be asked to complete the rubric and the MFA director will collect them.

## **4. Curriculum Map**

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

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

SLO 1: Final thesis. See attached rubric.

SLO 2: Final thesis critical introduction. See attached rubric.

Rationale for summative assessment. Like its counterparts elsewhere, the coursework in the UCA MFA has been structured to lead students ,from their first year through their last, in the process

of producing a full-length creative work. Many students pursue entry into the program for this reason; however, very few of them have produced creative work that signals their relative ability to create this work when they start the program. Moreover, in their early stages, they often have not chosen the genre, of four, that their thesis will be in. Thus, it would be very difficult to assign our faculty to judge early vs. later work. Consequently, there is little basis upon which to conduct a formative assessment. However, because we work intensively with students on the thesis itself, we feel confident in its ability to assess the program.

## **6. Data Collection and Review**

- When will data be collected for each outcome?
  - Data will be collected for each outcome during the evaluation of the MFA candidate's thesis by the thesis director and committee members. Because each thesis is unique and genre specific, sometimes hybrid, the thesis will be evaluated by directors and committee members who are experts in those disciplines.
- How will data be collected for each outcome?
  - The MFA director will have the thesis director and the committee members fill out the attached rubric for each MFA candidate after the thesis defense.
- What will be the benchmark/target for each outcome?
  - 80% or higher of MFA candidates will score at least a 4 on SLO 1.
  - 80% or higher of MFA candidates will score at least a 3 on SLO 2.
- What individuals/groups will be responsible for data collection?

The MFA Director will collect and store the rubric sheets for each candidate.

## **7. Participation in Assessment Process**

- Who will participate in carrying out the assessment plan? The MFA director, the thesis director and committee members, the latter chosen specifically for their genre expertise relevant to the thesis, will carry out the assessment for each candidate.
- What will be their specific role/s?

The MFA director will submit the assessment rubric to the committee at the end of the thesis defense. The director will collect the rubrics for use in analyzing the data on a yearly basis.

## **8. Data Analysis**

- How will the data and findings be shared with faculty?
  - Data and findings will be shared with faculty at the first Creative Writing meeting of the fall semester.
- Who was involved in analyzing the results?
  - The MFA director will analyze the results.
- How are results aligned to outcomes and benchmarks?
  - The outcomes and benchmarks are directly aligned to the SLO's.

## **9. Plan for Using Assessment Results to Improve Program**

- How will you use the results to improve your program?
  - In fall semester after the results are shared, the MFA director will schedule a meeting of MFA faculty to discuss the results, especially those that need improvement, with the goal of creating annual areas of focus in the program and especially, during thesis advisement.

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

The MFA director currently keeps informal records on all graduates. In the future, once a student graduates, we will enter their contact information into an excel file and survey them on an annual basis.

**11. What are the plans to evaluate teaching effectiveness?**

After analyzing each year's data, MFA faculty will discuss emerging strengths and weaknesses. Faculty will report specific pedagogical methods they will use to focus on those weaknesses in their teaching and thesis advising in the upcoming year and going forward. The MFA director will collect these pedagogical methods and the weaknesses will be revisited the following year to determine if there is improvement.

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

**13. Submit Assessment Plan**

- Send completed form electronically to [assessment@uca.edu](mailto:assessment@uca.edu)

For questions or concerns please contact:  
Dr. Jacob Held 450-5307 [jmhheld@uca.edu](mailto:jmhheld@uca.edu)  
Alyson McEntire 450-5086 [amcentire@uca.edu](mailto:amcentire@uca.edu)