

# ASSESSMENT REPORT 2017-2018

## English Graduate

## M.A.

### **Program Mission:**

The mission of the Department of English and Philosophy is to provide a quality education leading to intellectual growth and professional success. In regards to “intellectual growth,” the program is committed to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the unique multicultural heritage of the region, and achieves this through both the range of classes offered and the kind of unique theses our students complete, many of which are focused on the literary, creative, and composition aspects of the Southwest. In regards to “professional success,” the graduate program serves regional secondary school teachers, prospective community college teachers, students who plan to enter PhD programs, and students who seek stronger credentials in English for careers in journalism, publication, and professional writing. Each year, graduate assistantships are awarded competitively to full-time students. Along with tutoring in the Writing Center, graduate assistants undertake extensive teacher training in composition and gain considerable experience as composition instructors.

### **Student Learning Outcome 1:**

Students will produce high-quality written work demonstrating their interpretative and analytical skills through mastery of relevant and current theoretical concepts.

### **NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1**

- Effective Communication Skills
- Effective Use of Technology
- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

### **First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:**

Learning Outcome #1 is assessed by evaluation of a student’s written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on Quality of Written Work. These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Quality of Written Work.”

### **Summary of Data:**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4
Total Number of Students	4	Percent of Students Meeting	100 %

Assessed:		Criterion:	
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**Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:**

Learning Outcome #1 is further assessed by evaluation of a student’s written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student’s committee will, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on Mastery of Relevant and Current Theoretical Concepts. These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Mastery Relevant and Current Theoretical Concepts.”

**Summary of Data:**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4
Total Number of Students Assessed:	4	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:**

Though the four graduating students met the criteria of 3.5 and above, there is still room for improvement in this area. Since we changed the procedure to help ensure that students’ Exit Documents were at the level of proficiency required for an MA Degree in English before they were able to file for the degree, one of the four students was delayed a semester after completing the oral defense. However, graduate faculty members have continued to work closely with students on their theses/portfolios to ensure that they are graduating in a timely manner and with the required level of writing proficiency. The Director of Composition continues to offer the Teaching Circle for instructors of composition including graduate students, which sometimes workshops graduate student writing, and this also helps students to improve their theses and meet the outcomes assessment criteria. There is discussion also on setting up a system of peer tutoring at the Writing Center so that graduate students can seek advice on writing from fellow graduate students.

**Student Learning Outcome 2:**

Students will display mastery of the subject and form of their chosen concentration area (Literature, Creative Writing, or Linguistics and Composition).

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2**

- Effective Communication Skills
- Effective Use of Technology
- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

**First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:**

Learning Outcome #2 is assessed by evaluation of a student’s work at four key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, their thesis defense, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student’s committee will, utilizing a form, score these works on a scale of 1-5 based on Mastery of the Subject and Form. These four scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Mastery of the Subject and Form.”

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4
Total Number of Students Assessed:	4	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:**

Students perform very well in this area perhaps because now that all vacancies have been filled in the department, students have the benefit of consistently learning from a variety of faculty members all teaching in their specific area of expertise. Graduate students have been able to take more classes in their concentration and have enjoyed more faculty mentoring, so they have had more opportunities to master the form of their chosen area.

**Student Learning Outcome 3:**

Students will be able to conduct, synthesize, interpret, document, and present original academic research.

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3**

- Effective Communication Skills
- Effective Use of Technology
- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

**First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Learning Outcome #3 is assessed by evaluation of a student’s written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student’s committee will, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on “Ability to Conduct, Synthesize, Interpret, and Document Research.” These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Ability to Conduct, Synthesize, Interpret, and Document Research.”

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4
Total Number of Students Assessed:	4	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

### **Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Learning Outcome #3 is further assessed by evaluation of a student's written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on "Originality of Research or Creative Project." These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for "Originality of Research or Creative Project."

### **Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4
Total Number of Students Assessed:	4	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

### **Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:**

Students continue to score well in this outcome due to the increased and consistent focus on research in classes and through faculty mentoring. Graduate students are also strongly encouraged to present at conferences. The introduction of GEEK week in the spring also provided second-year students with an opportunity to present their ideas at the graduate symposium. These activities have greatly assisted students in understanding and producing original research and meeting the desired outcomes.

### **Utilization of Results:**

Faculty will continue to work closely with students in their courses and in their advising of students working on their thesis or portfolio. There is a slight inconsistency in the scores for the third outcome with some students excelling while others barely meet the desired outcome. In the short-term, the Department of English will break down the data to record whether the students performing less well in research are graduates of the NMHU undergraduate program in English or students with BA degrees from elsewhere in New Mexico, other states, or other countries.

### **Changes to Program Based on Results:**

Last year, graduate faculty in the Department of English discussed the possibility of offering a section of Engl. 535 ST: Graduate Writing Workshop in the summer—in June—to help students complete their theses or portfolios if their work had not reached the desired level of proficiency by the end of the spring semester. However, Graduate Assistantships were not available in the summer and students were not prepared to pay for such a class. If in the summer of 2019, Graduate Assistantships become available,

we could offer this class to help students complete their degree. Alternatively, the department could offer The Graduate Writing Workshop in the spring semester, while students are still on campus and the GA still pays for their tuition. The Graduate Council has also discussed the difficulty of students completing their exit document once they have begun working full-time, and so an interdisciplinary writing course scheduled in the spring could help to resolve this difficulty. However, few departments permit this course to count for graduation, and so now that the GA covers only 9 credits per semester, students outside of English are unlikely to register for this course. The graduate faculty in English will continue to brainstorm new ways of helping our students to move effectively through the program.

The director of graduate studies in English has reviewed the Outcomes Assessment reports of other graduate programs and added the Engl. 601 Research Essay to the number of documents assessed in 2018-2019 Assessment Plan so that the MA English Program can evaluate students across their degree from their first to last semester. This year, the Director of Graduate Studies will research and design a grading rubric for the Outcomes Assessment forms to ensure that faculty members are consistent in their understanding and application of the OA scores.

The director of graduate studies will undertake to record whether there is a distinction in the level of research skills between graduates of the MA English Program who gained a BA at NMHU and those with an undergraduate degree from another institution. If there is a difference, more effort will be made in Engl. 601 Research Methods to ensure that students from elsewhere have as much understanding of what is required of them in this area.

### **Retention Strategies:**

See above. Last year, the department discussed the possibility of offering a second graduate class in the summer so that graduate students could complete their degree within the desired two years and not consider dropping out at the end of the academic year. Often students disappear over the summer. If they were in classes, they would be more likely to resurface the following fall. And some students never graduate despite having completed all the degree requirements with the exception of their Exit Document. Engl. 535: The Graduate Writing Workshop could potentially solve this problem. The class could be opened up to other graduate students in the Humanities and Media Arts. But there needs to be Graduate Assistantships for students in the summer before such a class would have a sufficient number of students. And until the Graduate Assistantship stipend is increased, it is likely that a few graduate students will drop out of the program at the end of their first and second semester as occurred during the 2017-2018 AY.

MA English Program Improvement Plan (2017-2018)

SUMMARY	STEP/ACTION	SMART GOALS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graduate students always need more help and advice on their writing and graduate student peer mentors could help each other.</li> <li>2. The DGS will continue to work on getting support from the Graduate Council for summer Graduate Assistantships so that students can take a spring or summer section of Engl. 535 ST Graduate Writing Workshop and complete their degree by the end of the summer.</li> <li>3. The department of English will continue to offer a wider variety of courses so that students can continue to master their subject of concentration and gain the benefit of specialized faculty mentoring.</li> <li>4. Graduate faculty will continue to encourage students to present at conferences and at the graduate symposium in GEEK week and the Graduate Student Research Day.</li> <li>5. With the addition of new faculty, it is important that everyone has the same understanding of the</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Writing Center may institute a system of peer tutoring so that graduate students can seek advice on writing from fellow graduate students.</li> <li>2. Possibly offer a section of Engl. 535 ST Graduate Writing Workshop in the spring or summer to help students complete their theses/portfolios in two years. Possibly open up this class to other graduate students in the Humanities and Media Arts. The DGS will liaise with faculty on the GC to see whether such a course could count for their program degree (otherwise their students will not take the class, especially if GA now only covers 9 credit hours).</li> <li>3. The DGS will research and design a grading rubric for the Outcomes Assessment forms to ensure that faculty members are consistent in their understanding of and assignment of the OA scores.</li> <li>4. The DGS will break down the data to record whether the students performing less well in research are graduates of the NMHU</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased graduation rates</li> <li>2. Increased consistency in faculty evaluations of students</li> <li>3. Increase in students' mastery of research</li> <li>4. Greater collaboration with other humanities disciplines &amp; Media Arts</li> </ol>

<p>outcomes assessment evaluation forms. So the DGS will research and design a grading rubric for the Outcomes Assessment evaluation forms to present to faculty for discussion, review, and approval.</p> <p>6. The DGS will continue to seek support from the GC for increasing the graduate assistantship stipend so that graduate students do not drop out of the program.</p>	<p>undergraduate program in English or students with BA degrees from elsewhere in New Mexico, other states, or other countries.</p>	
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