

English Department Program Assessment Plan
Department of English
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Introduction

The English Department at Park University anticipates the ongoing assessment of our program in order to provide outstanding curriculum and best practices for faculty.

Mission Statement

The mission of the English Department at Park University is to instill in our students critical practices in reading, writing, and thinking in order to promote creative and humanist responses to literature, life, and intellectual endeavor.

Academic Goals

English Department graduates will be prepared to:

- Attend graduate school in English and other disciplines
- Write and communicate in professional, work, and community places
- Participate in both the enjoyment and production of literary expression
- Analyze and respond appropriately to text and context

Program Competencies

English Department graduates will display the following areas of competence:

1. Discuss literary, linguistic, and rhetorical issues with a clear sense of the scholarly and professional discourse of contemporary English studies.
2. Demonstrate a broad understanding of literary theory, as well as periods and genres of English and American literary history.
3. Demonstrate how literature and rhetoric is embedded in cultural contexts, and to appreciate the cultural diversity informing literature and language.
4. Conceive, design, write, and deliver a paper in a context modeled on a professional conference.

5. Apply reading, writing, and speaking, and listening skills developed in the program to a wide range of professional endeavors and community service.

Evaluation of Competencies

The English Department employs two important tools to assess the competencies of the program.

Oral and Written Comprehensive Examination (Tool Measures Competencies 1, 2, 3 and 5)

Every English major must pass a three hour written exam and an hour long oral exam. The comprehensive exams are usually taken in the Spring of the Junior year.

The Written Exam

- The written exam is based on a Reading List that is recreated every year by the full time English Department faculty. Faculty with expertise in the period offer selected readings from that time period. (See attached reading list for Spring 2007).
- Students choose three areas from the Reading List and read the stipulated works.
- Full-time English Department faculty write 2—3 questions for their area. Students take the three hour exam that is proctored by a full-time faculty member. They choose one question from the three written questions in each area. Thus, students respond to three questions in three different literary areas and have approximately one hour to respond to each question.
- While all English faculty read the written exam, only two designated readers rate the exam.

A student must pass two of three parts of the written exam. The student may retake the parts of the exam that did not meet expectations. The student may repeat this process until the written exam is passed.

The Oral Exam

- The oral exam is scheduled a few days after the written exam. Successful candidates who have passed the written examination proceed to the oral portion.
- They appear before the English Department faculty and must be prepared to answer oral questions regarding the stipulated texts in their areas of choice.

If a student fails the oral exam, the student may take the oral exam again, at another offering, until the student has successfully passed the oral exam.

Following the oral exam, faculty assess the student's performance. They come to consensus based on a faculty created rubric. (Please see attached rubric.) Examining faculty then rate the student's performance with one of the following:

- High Pass (exceptional)
- Pass
- Fail

Capstone Course (EN 490) (Tool Measures Competencies 4 and 5)

The Capstone Course description is as follows:

The seminar will focus on a general topic in English studies on the model of an academic conference. Students will develop 20-minute conference papers in the first portion of the course and deliver them before the class and an invited audience in a series of seminar meetings late in the semester. Attention will be paid to both the research and the rhetorical demands of this task and to the relationship between each individual contribution and the wider topic.

This course prepares students for professional life and responsibilities, and measures Competencies 4 and 5 (please see attached syllabus and evaluation rubric)

Evaluation of Program Tools and Collection of Artifacts that Support Student Performance of the Competencies

- We will collect the final draft of the Capstone Paper.
- We will collect the written examination from the Comprehensive Exams.