

Assessment

English is a humanistic discipline that teaches, practices, and researches various ways to communicate and interpret meaning in a wide array of written, oral, and visual forms. The success of faculty and student efforts is commonly determined by **qualitative measures** that assess people's actions and reactions within a distinct communication context. The success of programmatic efforts is similarly determined by qualitative measures that assess students' development.

Mission Statement

The Department of English continues to carry out a mission of crucial importance to both the College and the University:

- To help students understand the ways that language and literature are central to acquiring knowledge, shaping thought and attitudes, and transmitting information.
- To heighten students' sensitivity to the moral, social, and humane values that have molded and continue to inform our culture and the world.
- To teach students to use language effectively and to analyze and interpret it in various contexts and manifestations.
- To use the talents and expertise of its faculty to help broaden the University's international involvement.
- To contribute to knowledge through continued research and publication.

Teaching Goals and Student Outcomes

Graduates of all degree programs in the Department of English are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the nature, history, current practice and critical issues in their curricular fields. Specifically, they will have opportunities that enable them to develop in these areas

- Understand, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate content knowledge. This knowledge includes discipline-specific terms, the history of the field, the theories in the field, elements of criticism, and cultural knowledge.
- Engage in critical thinking and communication that articulates that thinking. Competencies include analyzing and interpreting information and ideas, being a strategic reader, and making connections between and among divergent views.
- Plan, prepare, present, and evaluate written, oral, and visual communication. These competencies include research skills and tools; communication that is analytical, persuasive, and/or expressive; and peer and self-editing.
- Express a range of appropriate attitudes and behaviors. These include responding to, analyzing, interpreting, assessing, and valuing a range of written, oral, and visual artifacts reflecting various cultures and heritages.

Assessment Measures

Because the Department of English supports several diverse programs and degrees in English studies, most of the assessment measures are matched to outcomes specific to each individual program and degree. In all Department of English programs and degrees, these measures involve examining and assessing selected student performances—for example, papers, presentations, projects, and publications—both for the individual class and over an extended period. In addition, some programs and degrees in the department consider data derived from student surveys, feedback from internship supervisors, and post-degree employment. Programs and degrees in the Department of English encourage student participation on standing and ad hoc committees as well as faculty discussion about programmatic issues. Each program and degree area has its own assessment measures. Until recently, the department as a whole conducted senior interviews and now conducts a comprehensive survey of all its graduating seniors.

Curricular development based on feedback

Curricular development in the Department of English since 2005 represents our response to various types of internal and external programmatic assessment. Faculty knowledge, responses to national and international trends, external expert opinions and feedback from students in our programs have resulted in various changes in the English department.

M.F.A.—Creative Writing and the Environment (started 2006 with a small group of transfers from MA Engl CW Specialty). The first recruited class for the MFA started in Fall 2007

PhD in Applied Linguistics and Technology – The first recruited class started in Fall 2005. There are now 40 PhD students in the program. The Program of Study was significantly changed beginning Fall 2014 based on feedback and experience with previous cohorts.

The Graduate TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) Certificate's first admitted student was in Fall 2007. Based on feedback from faculty and students, the name was changed to the TESL/TEFL Certificate in Fall 2011

The MA Engl, with a specialty on Literature and the Teaching of Reading started in Fall 2009 to serve K-12 public school teachers.

An undergraduate minor in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) was approved beginning Fall 2014.

Assessment by area groups

Each area group in the Department of English has identified program- or degree-specific learning outcomes and assessment measures, shaped by that area's specialized content and pedagogy.

While assessment measures vary from area to area, they tend to be qualitative, which is in keeping with disciplinary standards and practices at peer institutions. Broadly speaking, the following activities contribute to assessment measures across the department; however, not every activity applies to every program or degree:

- Collect and analyze student portfolios and student papers.
- Conduct and analyze interviews and e-surveys of students.
- Track and categorize the actual path of undergraduate and graduate students when they complete their program (e.g., further academic degree; jobs in teaching, industry, government, or nonprofit organizations).
- Collect, assess, and analyze opportunistic feedback (e.g., unsolicited letters and email from students as well as others inside and outside Iowa State).
- Monitor current policies/processes and regularly invite student and faculty feedback addressed to committees charged with recommending/making changes.