

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Bachelor of Arts with a major in English (BA)

Instructional Degree Program

Spring 2003

Assessment Period Covered

July 1, 2003

Date Submitted

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage:

Institutional Mission Reference:

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, is committed to the preparation of students for leadership roles in their chosen profession and in increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University is a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

College/University Goal(s) Supported:

To increase "(1) students' ability to communicate through the use of the written and spoken word; (2) their knowledge and appreciation of culture, fine arts, social integration; and (3) self realization. The College [COAH] also prepares students for a variety of professions and roles by providing a broad-based liberal arts education."

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:

- 1.** Graduates will be able to write a documented essay that is free of distracting errors and that demonstrates the ability to integrate secondary sources appropriately into the essay.
- 2.** Graduates will demonstrate a knowledge of literature that compares favorably to that of graduates from similar programs in the nation.
- 3.** Graduates will be successful in obtaining admission to graduate or professional programs.

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Bachelor of Arts with a major in English (BA)

Instructional Degree Program

Spring 2003

Assessment Period Covered

July 1, 2003

Date Submitted

Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:

NOTE: There should be one form for each intended outcome listed. The intended outcome should be restated in the box immediately below and the intended outcome number entered in the blank spaces.

1. Graduates will be able to write a documented essay that is free of distracting errors and that demonstrates the ability to integrate secondary sources appropriately into the essay.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

1a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

The research papers of English majors classified as seniors will be sampled from 3000-4000-level classes initially and then later exclusively from English 4399, Senior Seminar. Using a grading scale developed by the department, a team of faculty members will evaluate the papers from errors and for use of secondary sources. At least 85% of the seniors will receive scores of "satisfactory" or higher.

1a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:

Three English professors performed an analytical analysis of a randomly selected sample of 9 research papers written by senior English majors for 4000-level English classes. They read and scored each paper at least twice. Using a 4 point scale (with 4 being excellent, 3 acceptable, 2 unacceptable, and 1 totally inadequate), they arrived at the following results.

Overall: Five (55.5%) of the students scored a 3 or higher, with 3 scoring a 4 and 2 scoring a 3. Four (44.4%) scored below a 3, with 2 scoring a 2.5.

Analysis: In addition to the overall score, papers were evaluated for 6 qualities. The 6 qualities, followed parenthetically by the number and percent of students scoring a 3 or higher for that quality, were as follows:

Organization & Focus (5 / 55.5%), Development (4 / 44.4%), Logic & Coherence (5 / 55.5%), Syntax & Style (6 / 66.6%), Mechanics (6 / 66.6%), and Documentation (5 / 55.5%).

1a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:

That only 5 of 9 papers written by senior English majors received an overall score of 3 or higher is an unacceptably low “pass” rate. Though the sub-scores for the 6 analytical criteria differed on slightly, the scores nevertheless suggest that students need to work more on organizing and developing their ideas than they do on expression. English faculty will meet early in the fall semester to discuss ways in which they can help students write better course papers. An increased emphasis on student-faculty writing conferences during the writing process is likely.

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Bachelor of Arts with a major in English (BA)

Instructional Degree Program

Spring 2003

Assessment Period Covered

July 1, 2003

Date Submitted

Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:

NOTE: There should be one form for each intended outcome listed. The intended outcome should be restated in the box immediately below and the intended outcome number entered in the blank spaces.

2. Graduates will demonstrate a knowledge of literature that compares favorably to that of graduates from similar programs in the nation.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

2a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

Graduates will score at the 50th percentile or above overall on a norm-referenced subject test of literature (ACAT or Major Field Assessment Exam-MFAT).

2a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:

Seventeen undergraduate senior English majors (14 B.A. in English and 3 B.A. in English with Secondary Certification) took the Major Field Assessment Exam (MFAT) published by ETS. The MFAT for Literature in English was revised in early 2003, and thus MFAT does not yet have national norms.

Overall, undergraduates scored an average of 144.7 (Scale: 120-200), with non-certification English majors averaging a 147.9 and certification English majors averaging a 139.6. The 4 analytical categories producing sub-scores (Scale: 20-100) follow:

Literature before 1900	46 Av.
Literature after 1900	48.1 Av.
Literary Analysis	46.8 Av.
Literary History and Identification	46.7 Av.

Additional "Assessment Indicators" are provided for 8 key areas. The areas and the overall results (includes the scores of 4 graduate students) follow, ranked from high to low by percentage of questions answered correctly:

Literature in English since 1945	57.4%
American Literature to 1900	52.8%
British & American Lit. 1901-1945	48.4%
British Literature pre-1660	44.7%
Literary Theory	42.5%
Literary History	41.7%
Identification	40.5%
British Literature 1660-1900	38.8%

The G.P.A. of undergraduates did not seem to be a good indicator of MFAT results – with the notable exception that those with a 3.5 G.P.A. or higher did considerably better (177.8) than those with a 3.0-3.49 (138.4). Two undergraduates scored extremely high: one with a 195 and one with a 191.

2a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:

Without national norms with which to compare the performance of our students, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the meaning of the results that we have.

These will have to await the emergence of patterns over a few years of testing.

Nevertheless, some provisional conclusions seem justified – for this group of seniors, at least. First, the range of difference on sub-scores (46 to 48.1) is sufficiently narrow to suggest that in the broadest divisions of our discipline our students do not have any stand-out weaknesses – or strengths. Second, the “assessment indicators” which produce a score for more narrow categories of our discipline suggest that our current graduates are stronger in 20th century literature than they are in pre-20th century literature, that they are slightly stronger in American than in British literature, and that they are weakest in literary theory, literary history, literary identification (terminology?), and British literature from 1660-1900, all of which scored very closely together. Third, a rather wider than expected gap exists between the best students (3.5 or higher G.P.A.) and all the others.

The English faculty adopted a new degree plan for the B.A. in English for 2003-2004.

This new plan requires that students take courses in each of the major historical areas of British and American literature. This change was taken to insure that each graduate had a balanced knowledge of British and American literature. More specifically, our students' low scores in British Literature 1660-1900 should rise next year, for we are offering two courses in this area between now and next summer. In other areas of weakness, the faculty will place greater emphases on both literary history and literary theory.

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Bachelor of Arts with a major in English (BA)

Instructional Degree Program

Spring 2003

Assessment Period Covered

July 1, 2003

Date Submitted

Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:

NOTE: There should be one form for each intended outcome listed. The intended outcome should be restated in the box immediately below and the intended outcome number entered in the blank spaces.

3. Graduates will be successful in obtaining admission to graduate or professional programs.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

3a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

60% of graduates who seek entrance into graduate programs in English will be admitted. A post-graduate survey conducted yearly will be conducted to collect this information.

3a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:

None of the May graduates with a B.A. in English had applied for graduate school.

3a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:

August and December graduates will be polled, as well as May graduates.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

SOURCE	LOCATION/Special Instructions
ACAT	
Major Field Assessment Exam (MFAT)	