

Major Field Assessment Plan
M. A. English

The mission of Southeastern Louisiana University is to lead the educational, economic, and cultural development of southeast Louisiana.

The purpose of the M.A. in English at Southeastern is to advance students in the study of British, American, and World literatures, while preparing students for professional opportunities in teaching, writing, doctoral study, business, government, and any work demanding complex interpretation and communication skills.

Goal 1

MAs in English will know a broad range of British, American, and World literary texts, authors, genres, and critical traditions in their aesthetic, cultural, and historical contexts.

A. Expected Outcome

MAs in English will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of literary texts, authors, genres, and critical traditions through discussion, research, and writing in at least three designated courses.

Assessment

MAs in English must pass at least one graduate course from each of three defined historical periods: ancient/medieval/early modern, eighteenth/nineteenth centuries, twentieth century.

B. Expected Outcome

MAs in English will be able to write comparatively about texts, authors, genres, and critical traditions in their historical and cultural contexts.

Assessment

MAs in English must pass one section of the MA Comprehensive Exam which requires students to produce an essay in a timed two-hour period. The question is designed individually from the courses each student has taken in the three defined periods.

Goal 2

MAs in English will be able to write knowledgeably about literature and effectively in the practice of a profession.

A. Expected Outcome

MAAs in English will produce well-written essays on literary texts and texts appropriate to their chosen professional areas.

Assessment

1. MAAs in English must pass a writing-intensive course for one professional area of English; the coursework centers on a series of writing projects oriented toward a specific career track or concentration.
2. MAAs in English must pass at least 15 hours of graduate coursework courses at the 600 level, courses which require at least one written project involving research, with a total of 36 hours.
3. MAAs in English must pass Part 1 of the MA Comprehensive Exam, consisting of an essay written for a graduate class and revised to a publishable level as judged by a grading committee and director from the graduate faculty.
4. MAAs in English must pass Parts 2 and 3 of the MA Comprehensive Exam, consisting of two timed (2 hour) essays. Part 2 requires a 2-hour timed essay on a synthetic question drawing on texts students read in courses from three broad time periods: ancient, medieval, and early modern literature; 18th- and 19th-century literatures; and 20th- and 21st-century literatures.
5. MAAs in English with a concentration in Professional Writing must successfully write and defend a Master's Thesis; other MA candidates have the option to write and defend a Master's Thesis as part of their program.

Goal 3

MAAs in English will have the conceptual and applied knowledge needed for success in the professional areas they pursue after completing their degree.

A. Expected Outcome

MAAs in English will know and demonstrate knowledge of the major theoretical positions, research materials, and methods in one professional area of English.

Assessment

1. MAAs in English must pass a "gateway" course in one professional area of English; this course surveys major theoretical positions, research materials, and methods in that area; the coursework includes both short and long papers that demonstrate appropriate knowledge of bibliographic methods and resources in that area.

2. MAs in English must pass Part 3 of the MA Comprehensive Exam, which requires a 2-hour timed essay in response to a question drawn from a set primary text and list of secondary readings in one of three areas: literary studies, professional writing or language and literacy.

B. Expected Outcome

MAs in English in English will gain practical experience in their area preparatory to entering their professions.

Assessment

1. Selected students participate in Internship programs in professional writing (placement in internship position in business or industry) and language and literacy (mentor/apprentice teacher training program).
2. Selected students participate in Graduate assistantships that provide professional experience in tutoring, journal production, oversight of computer labs, administration, and scholarly research.

C. Expected Outcome

Graduates will find appropriate employment in their areas of concentration.

Assessment

The Director of Graduate Studies tracks alumnae for 10 years after graduation, including employment information used to assess the number of graduates in jobs directly related to their training in the MA program.

Goal 4

The Graduate Program in English will provide content and methods courses for students seeking an MA in Education with English as their intended field of teaching specialization.

A. Expected Outcome

Graduate students concentrating on the English content area in programs for an MA in Education will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of literary texts, authors, genres, and critical traditions through discussion, research, and writing.

Assessment

The students must pass graduate courses in English as determined by their individual programs.

B. Expected Outcome

Graduate students in Education with a concentration in teaching English as a Second Language will have appropriate training in linguistics and grammar.

Assessment

These students must pass ENGL 524 or 642.

Note:

Improving our English MAs' global awareness and multicultural knowledge, the English Department has recently attempted to hire a new tenure-track position in Literature of the Americas. Though this search was unsuccessful this semester, we plan to conduct another search next year. Course offerings from this new tenure-track position will only add to the many courses specified in our Assessment Plan focusing on literature and culture from a global perspective: 32 of the English graduate courses deal in the culture, language, and literature of non-Americans, particularly 412/507 (Continental Novel), 476/576 (The Rhetorical Tradition), 480/580 (Non-European Literature), 634 (Comparative Literature), and 650 (Cultural Studies in Comparative Literature). Special care is taken that at least one of these global courses is scheduled each semester. Meanwhile, our faculty encourages students to take advantage of the several Study Abroad programs offered by SLU which will provide valuable real-life encounters with the places and people inspiring our literary studies to add to research and classroom experience.