

Institutional Effectiveness
2018-2019

Program: English MA

College and Department: College of Arts & Sciences – Department of English

Contact: Linda Null

Mission: The English M.A. curriculum prepares its graduates for success in Ph.D. programs in English by increasing their knowledge of literary history and developing their skills in writing, literary analysis, and research; providing intensive training in writing and literary studies to help students excel as classroom teachers; preparing students for careers that demand advanced analytical and communication skills.

Program Outcomes:

PG 1: The English Department will graduate a minimum of 5 MA students each year to be a program in good standing.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of literary history, theory, and pedagogy.

SLO 2: Students will be prepared for success in PhD programs in English.

SLO 3: Students will be prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.

SLO 4: Students will be prepared for careers in high schools and community colleges.

SLO 5: Students will be prepared for careers outside academe that require advanced analytical and communication skills.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods:

PG 1: Graduate a minimum of 5 MA students each year.

- Graduation Rate:

Tracking the graduate rate will aid the Department in determining the effectiveness of course offerings and advisement. The threshold for an MA program in good standing is 5 graduates a year.

SLO 1: Demonstrate broad and integrated knowledge

- Comprehensive Exam:

Student shall respond in writing to two questions prepared by their advisory committee. One question is used for this outcome.

For thesis option students including Literature and Creative Writing students, one question will ask the student to relate what they learned in writing the thesis or portfolio to literary movements or critical

theories or writers not covered in the thesis or portfolio. If the thesis or portfolio deals with pedagogical issues, the student will discuss other theories not included in the research.

For Professional and Technical Communication students, the question will ask the student to discuss an ethical choice or dilemma encountered during the client project, including relevant theorists and/or theoretical frames.

- Survey of Alumni: In Fall 2018, the department distributed an alumni survey to graduates of the MA program. Thirteen alumni responded, although one of them was enrolled in the College of Education, rather than the English MA program. The responses indicated that graduates felt well prepared for their careers, although two of them mentioned they wished for more emphasis on research methods. (A new survey was sent in Fall 2020.)

SLO 2: Prepared for success in PhD programs

- Comprehensive Exam:

Student shall respond in writing to two questions prepared by their advisory committee. One question is used for this outcome.

For thesis option students including Literature and Creative Writing students, one question will ask the student to discuss some of the teaching techniques they have used, or to discuss the ways they would present information from the thesis or portfolio in a seminar.

For Professional and Technical Communication students, the question will ask students to discuss specific skills learned or developed while revising their digital artifacts for the portfolio, including ways those skills would transfer to future projects, clients, or professional situations.

Survey of Alumni

SLO 3: Prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.

- Survey of Alumni: The 2018 survey respondents indicated that 4 graduates had earned PhDs, 1 had an EdD, 1 had an EdS, and 1 earned an MBA.

SLO 4: Prepared for careers in high schools and community colleges.

- Survey of Alumni: One alumni respondent was teaching in high school.

SLO 5: Prepared for careers outside academe

- Survey of Alumni: One graduate is now an attorney, one is a chess consultant, one works with software, one works with a nonprofit, one writes promotional texts, one is a legislative consultant, and one works in data management.

Results:

PG 1: Graduate a minimum of 5 MA students each year

M.A. Degrees Awarded by Academic Year

Academic Year	New students*	English M.A. degrees
2014-2015	3	4
2015-2016	5	3
2016-2017	3	4
2017-2018	5	4
2018-2019	5	4
2014-2019 total	21	19
2014-2019 annual average:	4.2	3.8

*Counts students in Fall plus any new entrants from prior Spring

In Fall 2018, five new students entered the English MA program. All five of those students had been TTU undergraduates. Two of the students were enrolled in the Literature Concentration, two in the PTC Concentration, and one in the Creative Writing Concentration. It seems that our undergraduate program is our best source of recruitment for the MA.

A new graduate program brochure will be sent in targeted mailings to graduates from our undergraduate B.A. program and regional English departments in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. The latter targeted mailing will help address the observation made in our academic audit by TBR in 2016-17, that Tech’s English M.A. wasn’t well-known outside our campus. The Creative Writing concentration competes only with UT-Chattanooga as a Creative Writing M.A. at a public institution in Middle Tennessee, and the PTC M.A. appears to be unique in the state.

SLO 1: Demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge

Comprehensive Exam:

	# attempting	# passing
2017-18	4	4
2018-19	3	3

Alumni Survey 2018: Thirteen alumni completed the survey, but one of them was an education major rather than a student who received an MA in English.

The graduates felt well prepared to teach. Several of them praised the strong communication skills they had developed.

SLO 2: Prepared for success in PhD programs

Comprehensive Exam:

	# attempting	# passing
2017-18	4	4
2018-19	3	3

Alumni Survey 2018: The alumni felt well prepared to serve as teaching assistants. They felt a little less well prepared for the research that was expected in PhD programs. Four of the respondents reported that they received PhDs.

SLO 3: Prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.

Alumni Survey 2018: Seven of the alumni who responded completed degrees beyond the MA. Other advanced degrees earned by the respondents include one EdD one MBA, and 1 EdS. (this degree was earned by the student whose master's degree was in the College of Education.)

SLO 4: Prepared for careers in high schools and community colleges.

Alumni Survey 2018: Three of the alumni reported that they taught at two-year colleges. One of them teaches in high school. (This is the respondent whose master's degree is in education.)

SLO 5: Prepared for careers outside academe

Alumni Survey 2018: Seven respondents work outside academia. Their positions include one attorney, one tester of software, one consultant, one official with a nonprofit organization, one writer of promotional text, one legislative auditor, and one student data manager.

Modifications for Improvement

PG 1: Graduate a minimum of 5 MA students each year

The department received recommendations in recent years from a variety of different sources to develop graduate offerings. For two five-year cycles, the department has been on the THEC low-performing program list, failing to graduate an average of five students from the MA program over a five-year period.

Two new MA concentrations, one in Creative Writing and one in Professional and Technical Communication, were developed and adopted to begin in Fall 2017. These create a better fit between our master's program, which formerly offered only a traditional literature-based degree concentration, and the undergraduate program, which has among its options concentrations in Professional Communication and Creative Writing in addition to Literature.

2017-18 was the introductory year for our new graduate concentrations in Creative Writing (CW) and Professional and Technical Communication (PTC). English had four students graduate with traditional literature-based MA

degrees this past year (as well as a fifth whose extra month writing his thesis will have his graduation officially come in summer 2018, to be counted next year), but the nine students currently full-time in the program, as of Fall 2018, are split evenly, with three each in Literature, CW, and PTC. Eight of these nine have Graduate Teaching Assistantships (up one from last year, making use of all available GTA lines). The first 6000-level courses in Creative Writing and PTC debuted this Fall.

A new graduate program brochure will be sent in targeted mailings to graduates from the TTU undergraduate BA program and regional English departments in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. The latter targeted mailing will help address the observation made in the academic audit by TBR in 2016-17, that Tech's English MA wasn't well-known outside our campus. The Creative Writing concentration competes only with UT-Chattanooga as a Creative Writing MA at a public institution in Middle Tennessee, and the PTC MA appears to be unique in the state.

Appendices

1. English MA Curriculum Map

Appendix 1: English MA Curriculum Map

Learning Outcomes	Required Courses		
	ENGL 6000 Introduction to Graduate Studies	ENGL 6--- American Literature	ENGL 6--- British Literature
Demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of literary history, theory, and pedagogy	I	R,A	R,A
Succeed in Ph.D. programs in English	I	R, A	R,A
Succeed in other areas of advanced graduate education	I	R,A	R,A
Be prepared for teaching careers in high school and community colleges	I	R,A	R,A
Be prepared for careers outside academe that require advanced analytical and communication skills	I	R, A	R,A