

## LSUA Annual Assessment Form

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Bachelor of Arts in English

2015 - 2016

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Reporting Unit

Academic Year

### Section I

#### LSUA Goal:

II a. All academic curricula and programs will demonstrate currency and rigor.

#### Statement of Purpose

#### Unit Desired Outcome:

1. Graduates will write clearly and effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

#### Assessment Methods and Criteria

1. Graduates will take the ETS Major Field Exam in English. The ETS Major field Exam in English measures the content knowledge that graduates need in order to write effective papers. Graduates will be evaluated on their performance on Subsection S1 Literature 1900 and Earlier and on Subsection S2 Literature 1901 and Later. It is desired that graduates should score in the 50th percentile or higher on each subsection. 2. Majors will submit research papers to the department for review. A panel made up of English professors will evaluate the papers according to a rubric. The rubric has six areas: documentation, mechanics, historical and cultural context, theoretical background, style, close reading, and originality. Each area will be ranked according to mastery as Above Average, Average, Below Average, or Needs Remediation. It is desired that graduates score Average or Above Average on at least four of the six areas.
2. Majors will submit research papers to the department for review. A panel made up of English professors will evaluate the papers according to a rubric. The rubric has six areas: documentation, mechanics, historical and cultural context, theoretical background, style, close reading, and originality. Each area will be ranked according to mastery as Above Average, Average, Below Average, or Needs Remediation. It is desired that graduates score Average or Above Average on at least four of the six areas.

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### Section II

#### Results of Assessment

1. Two Fall graduates and nine Spring and/or coming Fall graduates took Educational Testing Services' Major Field Test in English. Of the eleven total examinees, two scored above the 50th percentile (65 and 56th percentiles); the remaining scores ranged from the 40th

percentile to the first percentile. Of the On Subsection S1 Literature before 1900, two graduates scored at or above the 50th percentile; on Subsection S2 Literature 1901, three graduates scored above the 50th percentile. Three graduates scored above the 50th percentile in Literary Analysis. No one scored above the 50th percentile in Literary History and Identification. The program did not reach the benchmark, and the number of times that students scored above the benchmark has decreased. In the 2013-2014 academic year there were eleven graduating seniors who took the Major Field Test, and nine of their sub scores were at or above the fiftieth percentile. In 2014-2015 there were again eleven graduating seniors who took the Major Field Test, but this time 16 of their sub scores were at or above the fiftieth percentile. In the 2015-2016 nine sub scores were at or above the 50th percentile.

2. When evaluating the papers of graduates, we do not use a numerical score, at least not in the traditional sense. What we attempt to determine is the competency of the students in the following categories: focus, organization, evidence, development, sentence structure, mechanics, and documentation. If students are competent or better in 4 out of the 6 categories listed above, they earn a pass. These categories mark a return to the original rubric used to evaluate the papers of graduates. The categories of cultural and historical background and critical theory were replaced by the category of documentation. That change in categories may have led to a slight increase in our pass rate. We rate each category on the basis of 1 to 4. A student must have at least a score of 12 total for 4 of the six categories in order to pass. The 1-4 scale mimics a scale sometimes used by Educational Testing Service. The idea is that there can be no middle ground. Odd numbered scales-3/5/7 lend themselves too easily to compromise and allow graders to avoid declaring the person competent or incompetent. If a student is "maybe sort of okay," she or he might earn a 3 on a 5 point scale and eke out a pass. Obviously, the same can be said for the other odd numbered scales. A panel of five English professors met and evaluated research papers for six of eleven graduates. Later on, two professors met and evaluated three papers. The papers were from 3000 and 4000 level English classes. Each paper was read by two instructors who evaluated the paper according to a rubric. If the two readers did not agree on their evaluations, then a third reader evaluated the paper and the paper was scored according to the majority.

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### Section III

#### Use of Results

1. The faculty did not discuss at length the results of the Major Field Exam; however, the problems with identification and literary history remain. The English Faculty will need to meet to review the results and suggest appropriate strategies for improvement. Possible changes include: • More emphasis in courses on literary history and identification • The creation of a capstone course in which students will work on a major paper and prepare for the MFT
2. After evaluating the papers, panelists did not express concerns about student's being able to document accurately since most writers did use parenthetical citation appropriately. However, most papers had very few citations and may not have been a rigorous enough test of students' abilities to document. In the 2013-2014 academic year, the faculty discussed the possibility of a common grading rubric for all research papers at the 4000 level so that there would be a similar grading focus. Subsequent discussion, though brief, did not establish any consensus among faculty about using a common rubric. One change has been made and that is to charge the advisor of graduating students with providing the evaluation committee with copies of one 4000 level paper. Faculty have continued to discuss the possibilities of a portfolio approach and the need to share program reports with all faculty.

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### Section I

#### LSUA Goal:

II a. All academic curricula and programs will demonstrate currency and rigor.

#### Statement of Purpose

#### Unit Desired Outcome:

2. Graduates will interpret texts critically and analytically, taking into account cultural and historical contexts as well as theoretical approaches to interpretation.

#### Assessment Methods and Criteria

1. Graduates will take the ETS Major Field Exam in English. The ETS Major Field Exam in English measures the content knowledge that graduates need to analyze texts culturally and historically. Specifically, graduates will take Subsection S3 Literary Analysis and Subsection S4 Literary Identification. It is desired that graduates score in the fiftieth percentile or higher on each subsection.
2. English 2027 Poetry is a required course that majors typically take at the beginning of their sophomore year. The English faculty will give a standardized poetry exam that tests the main literary concepts that English majors need to know. It is desired that majors score in the 70th percentile or higher on the exam.

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### Section II

#### Results of Assessment

1. Of the On Subsection S1 Literature before 1900, two graduates scored at or above the 50th percentile; on Subsection S2 Literature 1901, three graduates scored above the 50th percentile. Three graduates scored above the 50th percentile in Literary Analysis. No one scored above the 50th percentile in Literary History and Identification. The program did not reach the benchmark, and the number of times that students scored above the benchmark has decreased. In the 2013-2014 academic year there were eleven graduating seniors who took the Major Field Test, and nine of their sub scores were at or above the fiftieth percentile. In 2014-2015 there were again eleven

graduating seniors who took the Major Field Test, but this time 16 of their sub scores were at or above the fiftieth percentile. In the 2015-2016 nine sub scores were at or above the 50th percentile.

2. One instructor for ENGL 2027 administered the pre- and post-test for English 2027 to her class of twenty-three, five of whom were English Majors. Only three of the five took the post-test. Each of those three increased his or her test score by 20 plus points. One student who did not take the post-test earned an 88% on the exam; the other student who did not take the post-test earned a 56% on the exam. Since three of the five English majors scored well, we can establish that 60% of the English majors met the benchmark.

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### Section III

#### Use of Results

1. It was recognized that the graduates found the Literary History and Identification section to be the most challenging.
2. The numbers are too small to provide us with much information. However, these tentative conclusions can be offered: • Low test scores may indicate a lack of subject-matter knowledge; • Low test scores may indicate some problems with the exam (the adjunct teaching the course indicated that she thought the exam may need to be revised because of occasional vagueness; • Improved test scores suggest that the course is improving the students' understanding of poetry Other issues include the following: • Test administration needs to be improved and made regular—the results from 2013 were much more comprehensive; prior to class, any instructor teaching 2027 needs to be reminded via email of the pre- and post-test assessment and needs to have access to that test. A revised copy of the test should be stored on the W drive in the English Assessment Folder. • If the word "percentile" in the outcome is to continue to be used, then instructors need to identify the English Majors in the class and then determine the percentile rank of those students. • If the word "percentile" in the outcome is to be dropped, then the English Department needs to establish a cut-off percentage score.

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### Section I

#### LSUA Goal:

II a. All academic curricula and programs will demonstrate currency and rigor.

#### Statement of Purpose

#### Unit Desired Outcome:

3. Graduates will produce original scholarship that follows MLA guidelines.

#### Assessment Methods and Criteria

1. Graduates will take the ETS Major Field Exam in English. The Major Field Exam in English measures the knowledge that graduates need in order to conduct scholarly inquiry. The faculty will examine the overall score for the Major Field Exam. It is desired that graduates score in the fiftieth percentile or higher.
2. Majors will submit research papers from an upper-level course to be evaluated by the faculty. The faculty will use a rubric to score the papers. The rubric will assess six areas: Content, Organization, Conventions, Conventions, style, and Scholarship. The areas will be ranked: Beginning, Developing, Competent, or Exemplary. It is desired that graduates score competent or higher on four of the six areas.

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### Section II

#### Results of Assessment

1. Two Fall graduates and nine Spring and/or coming Fall graduates took Educational Testing Services' Major Field Test in English. Of the eleven total examinees, two scored above the 50th percentile (65 and 56th percentiles); the remaining scores ranged from the 40th percentile to the first percentile. The national median score for the test was 153. Two of the nine graduates scored above this median. Other scores ranged from the 1st to the 40th percentile. A panel made up of English professors met and evaluated research papers for nine graduates. Of the nine papers evaluated, five papers were scored as competent. These papers exhibited strengths in the following areas: clarity of focus, specific and illustrative content, logical and appropriate organization, precision and variety in sentence structure and word choice, limited numbers of mechanical errors, and a sparsity of errors in documentation. Only one reviewer believed that a

paper exhibited substantial scholarship. None of the papers emerged as exemplary. Four of the papers emerged as developing and exhibited the following weaknesses: vague focus, limited content, inconsistent organization, limited sentence variation and control, repeated weakness in mechanics and usage, and unclear documentation. In general, no single writer emerged as clearly outstanding. Slightly more than 50% of graduates (5/9) were evaluated as competent, which might be considered a small success.

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### **Section III**

#### **Use of Results**

1. The faculty will continue monitoring Major Field Test scores.
  2. Faculty will continue to teach MLA conventions in all required English literature courses, including ENGL 2027 Poetry, ENGL 2031 The Novel, ENGL 3020 British Literature I, ENGL 3022 British Literature II, ENGL 3070 American Literature I, and ENGL 3072 American Literature II.
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