

Assessment Plan and Assessment Mapping for Master of Technical Communication

We have instituted two points of assessment that all Master of Technical Communication students must participate in. Thus, in addition to their regular assessment in graduate courses, graduate students are specifically assessed for their progress toward learning objectives in/on:

- Coursework (including the two required classes, ENGL 6400 and 6410. Please note that as of Fall 2016, entering students are required to take a third required class, ENGL 6830)
- Programs of Study

A. Assessment from Curriculum

In 2016, the Graduate English and American Studies Curriculum Committees and faculty reviewed the coverage of the program learning objectives across courses for the English programs. Coverage is ranked as high (H), medium (M), or low (L). The result of this ranking is presented in the following table. The Graduate Advisory Committee will review the assessment mapping every spring to update, amend, and correct it. The program learning objectives below are particular to the MTC program.

Course	L1: Demonstrate practical technical communication skills.	L2: Demonstrate understanding of theories and scholarship that guide workplace practices.	L3: Demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate current workplace practice in relation to scholarly theories
ENGL 6400 (required class)	H	H	H
ENGL 6410	M	H	M
ENGL 6420	H	H	H
ENGL 6430	H	M	M
ENGL 6440	M	H	H
ENGL 6450	H	H	H
ENGL 6460	H	M	M
ENGL 6470	H	M	M
ENGL 6480	H	H	H
ENGL 6800 <i>Note this course is also listed as an offering in the English (Literature Writing) program</i>	H	H	M
ENGL 6830 <i>(required class for those entering Fall 2016 and after) Note this course is also listed as an offering in the English (Literature and Writing) program</i>	M	H	H

ENGL 6860 <i>Note this course is also listed as an offering in the English (Literature and Writing) program</i>	H	H	M
ENGL 6890 <i>Note this course is also listed as an offering in the English (Literature and Writing) program</i>	L, M, or H, depending on the topic	L, M, or H, depending on the topic	L, M, or H, depending on the topic

Student mastery of learning objectives at high, medium, and low levels is measured by this general rubric applied to the student’s writing both in paper assignments and in the online discussion forums that constitute the bulk of class interaction:

High mastery: All—or nearly all—aspects of the student’s work are exemplary. The student demonstrates a deep understanding of course content, shown through writing that reflects a thorough command of assigned readings and an ability to apply the ideas and theories conveyed through course materials to new situations. In discussion forums, the student not only contributes actively to class discussions but advances them through perceptive critique of the course material, pointing out strengths and weaknesses or exceptions and discussing how the ideas and theories might have practical implications for—and applications to—workplace technical communication. The student typically responds to discussion prompts early and with insight such that class members look to the student as a discussion leader—one who generates and sustains discussion rather than shutting it down. Where assignments call for practice of particular technical communication skills, the student demonstrates a high level of skill. Students demonstrating high mastery are often encouraged to submit their work for publication in appropriate journals, and it may be used as examples for students in subsequent classes. High mastery is reflected in A grades.

Medium mastery: The student performing at this level exhibits many of the characteristics of high mastery but either not as many or at a lower level of excellence. Alternatively, the student’s performance may not be consistent, measuring high in some areas, low in others. Medium mastery is reflected in grades of A- to B+.

Low mastery: The student demonstrating low mastery does work of unacceptable or barely acceptable quality. Assignments may be misinterpreted or not completed as required. Execution is at a level where the student may be asked to redo work. B-grade is the lowest grade that a student in English may count towards a graduate degree, and work reflecting low mastery is reflected in grades of B or lower.

The table below illustrates high, medium, and low levels of mastery of each learning objective by showing examples from specific assignments from courses in which the

objective is ranked high for coverage (see the table above). For instance, learning objective one is covered at the high level in ENGL 6400 (Advanced Editing), and the example describes the expectations for a “Comprehensive Editing Assignment.” For learning objective two, the example given is that of the “Literature Review Assignment” from ENGL 6410 (Theory and Research in Professional Communication). For learning objective three, the example given is the “Weekly Reading Response Assignment” from ENGL 6480: Studies in Technology and Writing. The table columns below the learning objective headings show what high, medium, and low student mastery of that objective might look like in the specific assignments.

	L1: Demonstrate practical technical communication skills.	L2: Demonstrate understanding of theories and scholarship that guide workplace practices.	L3: Demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate current workplace practice in relation to scholarly theories.
Examples of HIGH levels of mastery	ENGL 6400: Advanced Editing. For the "Comprehensive Editing Assignment," the student perceptively analyzes the rhetorical situation for a flawed document and edits its problems at the rhetorical, organizational, syntactic, and mechanical levels in an exemplary way.	ENGL 6410: Theory and Research in Professional Communication. For the "Literature Review Assignment," the student selects a theme of particular relevance to the field, selects a body of scholarship relating to that theme, and places those scholarly works in conversation with each other, not only summarizing but synthesizing the body of theory and scholarship by drawing connections, identifying tensions, and noting the implications of this scholarly work for professional practice.	ENGL 6480: Studies in Technology and Writing. In the "Weekly Reading Response Assignment," the student comprehensively summarizes the readings for the week and uses the learned technological theories to evaluate a specific workplace technological practice, revealing the rhetorical, ethical, and cultural values of that practice.
Examples of MEDIUM levels of mastery	ENGL 6400: Advanced Editing. Student makes substantial improvements to a flawed document but neglects to address one or two of the needed levels of edit, leaving some room for further improvement.	ENGL 6410: Theory and Practice of Professional Communication. Student selects appropriate literature relating to a theme of current interest to the field and accurately summarizes each piece. However, the student does not synthesize the work by drawing connections, identifying tensions, noting implications of this work for practice.	ENGL 6480: Studies in Technology and Writing. Student comprehensively summarizes the weekly readings but in his/her evaluation of a workplace technological practice s/he only reveals rhetorical values of that practice, overlooking the ethical and cultural values.

Examples of LOW levels of mastery	ENGL 6400: Advanced Editing. Student solves some of the editing problems in a flawed document effectively but overlooks significant opportunities to improve it further.	ENGL 6410: Theory and Practice of Professional Communication. Student selects literature relating to a theme and accurately summarizes aspects of each piece. However, the student has missed key ideas of the scholarship, presents an outdated picture of the scholarly conversation, and/or fails to synthesize the work by drawing connections, identifying tensions, noting implications of this work for practice.	ENGL 6480: Studies in Technology and Writing. Student comprehensively summarizes the weekly readings but in evaluation of a specific workplace technological practice s/he overlooks significant rhetorical, ethical, and cultural values.
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B. Assessment from Coursework

To determine the effectiveness of the Master of Technical Communication degree, the Technical Communication Curriculum Committee has developed an assessment plan built around measuring student work vis-à-vis three key learning objectives.

The Technical Communication Curriculum Committee collects annual data from the calendar year (spring semester, fall semester) by gathering final project papers from the Master of Technical Communication Core courses. The committee designates faculty readers to assess the student work in relation to the key learning objectives. Each emphasis evaluates the papers and posts its Outcomes Data on the department's assessment website. Each emphasis then makes decisions on the basis of this data and delineates its Data-Based Decisions on the assessment website.

For the Master of Technical Communication program's three key Learning Objectives are:

1. Demonstrates **practical technical communication skills**
2. Demonstrates **understanding of theories and scholarship that guide workplace practices**
3. Demonstrates **ability to critically evaluate workplace practices and suggest new practices in light of theory and scholarship**

PART 1 of 1: DIRECT MEASURES (Rubric of Student Work)

The faculty committee uses the following three rubrics to score the skill levels of the students.

1. Demonstrates **practical technical communication skills**

Low:	Mid:	High:
<p>Work demonstrates practical technical communication skills, but execution of the concept is <i>weak</i> or <i>incomplete</i> in the following specific areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs for consistency and readability • Engages in primary and secondary research • Edits for grammar, style, and mechanics 	<p>Work demonstrates practical technical communication skills and does so with <i>competence</i> in the following specific areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs for consistency and readability • Engages in primary and secondary research • Edits for grammar, style, and mechanics 	<p>Work demonstrates <i>mastery</i> of practical technical communication skills as defined by these specific areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs for consistency and readability in a way that is particularly artful or engaging • Engages in primary and secondary research in a way that is particularly compelling or engaging • Edits for grammar, style, and mechanics

2. Demonstrates **understanding of theories and scholarship that guide workplace practices**

Low:	Mid:	High:
<p>Work demonstrates evidence that the student understands theory and scholarship but articulation of concepts is <i>weak</i> or <i>incomplete</i> in the following ways:</p>	<p>Work demonstrates evidence that the student understands theory and scholarship and articulation of concepts is <i>competent</i> in the following ways:</p>	<p>Work demonstrates <i>mastery</i> of theory and scholarship as defined in the following ways:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an understanding of the roles theory and scholarship play in shaping the discourse of the field • Demonstrates the selection of appropriate theory and scholarship to address specific situations • Demonstrates the ability to implement appropriate theory and scholarship to workplace practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an understanding of the roles theory and scholarship play in shaping the discourse of the field • Demonstrates the selection of appropriate theory and scholarship to address specific situations • Demonstrates the ability to implement appropriate theory and scholarship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an understanding of the roles theory and scholarship play in shaping the discourse of the field • Demonstrates the selection of appropriate theory and scholarship to address specific situations • Demonstrates the ability to implement appropriate theory and scholarship

3. Demonstrates **ability to critically evaluate workplace practices and suggest new practices in light of theory and scholarship**

<p>Low:</p> <p>Work demonstrates basic evidence that the student can evaluate workplace practices and articulate solutions but in a manner that is <i>weak</i> or <i>incomplete</i> in the following ways:</p>	<p>Mid:</p> <p>Work demonstrates evidence that the student can evaluate workplace practices and articulate solutions in a manner that is <i>competent</i> in the following ways:</p>	<p>High:</p> <p>Work demonstrates <i>mastery</i> of ability to evaluate workplace practices and articulate solutions in the following ways::</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to define problems in workplace practices • Demonstrates the ability to select appropriate theory to analyze workplace practices • Demonstrates the ability to suggest scholarship- and evidence-based solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to define problems in workplace practices • Demonstrates the ability to select appropriate theory to analyze workplace practices • Demonstrates the ability to suggest scholarship- and evidence-based solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to define problems in workplace practices • Demonstrates the ability to select appropriate theory to analyze workplace practices • Demonstrates the ability to suggest scholarship- and evidence-based solutions