

# Assessment Plan: Creative Writing

To determine the effectiveness of the department's academic program, the Creative Writing Emphasis in the English BA/BS degrees developed an assessment plan built around measuring student work vis-à-vis three key learning objectives.

Creative Writing collects annual data from the academic year (spring semester, fall semester) by gathering senior papers from its courses and designating faculty readers from its curriculum committee 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. Along with this direct measure of student learning, Creative Writing also employs an indirect measure, student interviews, as well.

For the Creative Writing Emphasis in the department's BA/BS degrees, the three key Learning Objectives are:

1. Identify and artfully explain significant questions (writing for an audience)
2. Gather and analyze relevant information in writing
3. Communicate ideas effectively through competence in form

## PART 1 of 2: DIRECT MEASURES (Rubric of Student Work)

Identify and artfully explain significant questions (writing for an audience)

### Unacceptable:

Evidence that the student has mastered this objective is not provided, is unconvincing, or very incomplete

Student work does not demonstrate a basic understanding of writing for an audience in the following specific areas:

- **Tone** of writing invites reader into the work
- Anticipates and **addresses potential resistances** on the part of the reader
- Presents a **matter that reader will care about** or makes a good case why the reader should care about the writing

### Marginal:

Evidence that the student has mastered this objective is provided, but it is weak or incomplete

Work shows evidence that the student understands the concept of writing for an audience, but execution of the concept is weak or incomplete in the following specific areas:

- **Tone** of writing invites reader into the work
- Anticipates and **addresses potential resistances** on the part of the reader
- Presents a **matter that reader will care about** or makes a good case why the reader should care about the writing

### Acceptable:

Evidence shows that the student has generally attained the objective

Work shows evidence that the student understands the concept of writing for an audience and does so with competence in the following specific areas:

- **Tone** of writing invites reader into the work
- Anticipates and **addresses potential resistances** on the part of the reader
- Presents a **matter that the reader will care about** or makes a good case why the reader should care about the topic

### Exceptional:

Evidence demonstrates that the student has mastered this objective at a high level

Work shows evidence that the student not only understands the concept of writing for an audience but also does so at a highly proficient level, as defined by these specific areas:

- **Original tone** of writing invites reader into the work
- Anticipates and **compellingly addresses potential resistances** on the part of the reader
- Artfully presents a **matter that reader will care about** or makes a good case why the reader should care about the writing

2. Gather and analyze relevant information in writing

### Unacceptable:

Evidence that the student has mastered this objective is not provided, is unconvincing, or very incomplete

Student work does not demonstrate a basic understanding of how to gather and analyze relevant information in the following specific areas:

- Provides **appropriate credit or citing** of others' ideas
- Shows **knowledge of the appropriate body of literature** associated with the genre and subject of the writing
- Develops an **original** artistic vision, thesis, or research contribution

### Marginal:

Evidence that the student has mastered this objective is provided, but it is weak or incomplete

Work shows evidence that the student understands how to gather and analyze relevant information, but execution of the concept is weak or incomplete in the following specific areas:

- Provides **appropriate credit or citing** of others' ideas
- Shows **knowledge of the appropriate body of literature** associated with the genre and subject of the writing
- Develops an **original** artistic vision, thesis, or research contribution

### Acceptable:

Evidence shows that the student has generally attained the objective

Work shows evidence that the student understands how to gather and analyze relevant information and does so with competence in the following specific areas:

- Provides **appropriate credit or citing** of others' ideas
- Shows **knowledge of the appropriate body of literature** associated with the genre and subject of the writing
- Develops an **original** artistic vision, thesis, or research contribution

### Exceptional:

Evidence demonstrates that the student has mastered this objective at a high level

Work shows evidence that the student not only understands how to gather and analyze relevant information but also does so at a highly proficient level, as defined by these specific areas:

- Provides **appropriate credit or citing** of others' ideas
- Shows **knowledge of the appropriate body of literature** associated with the genre and subject of the writing and **gracefully integrates this knowledge** into the work
- Develops an **original** artistic vision, thesis, or research contribution and does so in a way that is particularly **compelling, engaging, or artful**

### 3. Communicate ideas effectively in writing

<b>Unacceptable:</b>	<b>Marginal:</b>	<b>Acceptable:</b>	<b>Exceptional:</b>
Evidence that the student has mastered this objective is not provided, is unconvincing, or very incomplete	Evidence that the student has mastered this objective is provided, but it is weak or incomplete	Evidence shows that the student has generally attained the objective	Evidence demonstrates that the student has mastered this objective at a high level
Student work does not demonstrate a basic understanding of how to communicate ideas effectively in the following specific areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Free of problems</b> at the sentence level (syntax, usage, grammar)</li><li>• <b>Clear and descriptive</b> language</li><li>• <b>Flows</b> well from paragraph to paragraph</li></ul>	Work shows evidence that the student understands how to communicate ideas effectively but the execution is weak or incomplete in the following specific areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Free of problems</b> at the sentence level (syntax, usage, grammar)</li><li>• <b>Clear and descriptive</b> language</li><li>• <b>Flows</b> well from paragraph to paragraph</li></ul>	Work shows evidence that the student understands how to communicate ideas effectively in the following specific areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Free of problems</b> at the sentence level (syntax, usage, grammar)</li><li>• <b>Clear and descriptive</b> language</li><li>• <b>Flows</b> well from paragraph to paragraph</li></ul>	Work shows evidence that the student understands how to communicate ideas effectively and does so at a highly proficient level, as defined by these specific areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Free of problems</b> at the sentence level (syntax, usage, grammar)</li><li>• <b>Clear and descriptive and vivid</b> language (sophisticated word choice)</li><li>• <b>Flows</b> well from idea to idea via <b>particularly artful transitions</b></li></ul>

## **PART 2 of 2: INDIRECT MEASURES (Student Interviews)**

Faculty members meet with students annually and ask them the following questions:

### Courses

What was your experience getting the classes you wanted? What was the longest you had to wait to get into a workshop?

Was there a course you wanted to take but weren't able to?

Could you tell a difference between the intro courses in a genre and the advanced ones?

Did the intro classes prepare you for the advanced classes?

Were you challenged?

Is there a course we should be offering but aren't? Do you perceive any gaps in your learning?

Did the literature courses help you as a writer?

### Workshops

Was there a workshop model that you thought was especially effective?

Was there an organization to the course schedule you found especially helpful?

Was there an approach to grading and feedback that you found especially effective?

### Profession

Do you feel you learned enough about the writing profession?

Are you prepared to submit creative work?

Are you familiar with the journals of the field?  
Do you know how to apply to MFA and PhD programs?  
Are these things that matter to you?

### Extracurricular

We have tried to offer additional outlets to our majors. We have guest speakers, *Scribendi*, Helicon West, and the creative writing club. Did you take advantage of these extracurricular activities? Why or why not?  
How could we make these additions more appealing or central to our students?

### Faculty

Did the faculty who taught your creative writing courses seem knowledgeable?  
Did they share experiences with you as writers, model for you aspects of the profession?