

Creative Writing Minor

Program assessment goal

Goal Description:

Program faculty will develop ways to assess student performance with regards to the following:

Composing creative and critical texts across genres

Understanding the current terminology in the creative discipline

Demonstrating analytical and critical skills in the discussion of creative writing

Providing Department: Creative Writing Minor

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Critical Discussion

Learning Objective Description:

Students will be able to competently and critically discuss creative texts.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessment Plan

Indicator Description:

Faculty will submit a plan for assessment that address all learning objectives.

Criterion Description:

75% of creative writing minors will demonstrate proficiency for all learning objectives.

Findings Description:

Learning objectives are still be formulated.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action - Assessment Plan

Action Description:

From undergraduate creative writing classes, we will collect samples (three examples per class, selected randomly by the instructor of record) of student writing that focuses on critical analysis of creative writing (such as reading journal entries, written workshop comments, etc.). Because the format of creative writing classes, and the assignments given, can vary significantly, some flexibility will have to be observed in the kinds of samples collected. At the same time, the creative writing faculty, in coordination with the department, will form a committing composed of the MFA program director and 1-2 other creative writing faculty who rotate off the committee each year. This committee will score the collected samples of student writing on a rubric designed to assess the quality of the students’ critical engagement as demonstrated in the writing samples. The first iteration of the committee will have to develop this rubric as currently none exists.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Producing Texts

Learning Objective Description:

Students will compose texts across creative genres.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessment Plan

Indicator Description:

Faculty will submit a plan for assessment that address all learning objectives.

Criterion Description:

75% of creative writing minors will demonstrate proficiency for all learning objectives.

Findings Description:

Learning objectives are still be formulated.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action - Assessment Plan

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RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Developing assessment tools

Performance Objective Description:

The program faculty will develop specific measurement tools that address program goals.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessing Composition

KPI Description:

The program will discuss and develop a best practice for assessing students' ability to compose creative and critical texts within diverse genres.

Target Description:

Program will develop process for collecting and evaluating artifacts from creative writing minors.

Results Description:

Program has not yet formalized collection/evaluation methods.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Assessing Composition

Action Description:

From undergraduate creative writing classes, we will collect samples of student writing randomly by the instructor of record. Examples of writing corresponding to each objective will be collected. Because the format of creative writing classes, and the assignments given in them, can vary significantly, some flexibility will have to be observed in the kinds of samples collected. At the same time, the creative writing faculty, in coordination with the department, will form a committing composed of the MFA program director and 1-2 other creative writing faculty who rotate off the committee each year. This committee will score the collected samples of student writing on rubrics designed to assess the corresponding learning objectives. These scores will be collected and reported by the MFA program director and used as the KPIs for the corresponding learning objectives.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessing critical and analytical discourse

KPI Description:

The program will discuss and develop a best practice for assessing students' ability to discuss the discipline analytically and critically using the current trends within the discipline as well as an understanding of historical developments within the discipline.

Target Description:

Program faculty will develop assignments that reflect student's knowledge of current trends.

Results Description:

Program has not yet formalized collection/evaluation methods.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Assessing Critical and Analytical discourse

Action Description:

The creative writing faculty, in coordination with the department, will form a committing composed of the MFA program director and 1-2 other creative writing faculty who rotate off the committee each year. This committee will evaluate whether “students’ knowledge of current trends” is an appropriate metric for assessing this minor. If it is deemed appropriate, the committee will devise a rubric for scoring collected student samples for measuring this metric. If the committee does not find it to be an appropriate metric, they will devise a different one that is appropriate, as well as a metric for assessing it.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessing knowledge of current terminology

KPI Description:

The program will discuss and develop a best practice for assessing students' knowledge and use of current terminology in the discipline.

Target Description:

Faculty will develop assignments that demonstrate use of terminology related to the discipline.

Results Description:

Program has not yet formalized collection/evaluation methods.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Assessing Knowledge of current terminology

Action Description:

The creative writing faculty, in coordination with the department, will form a committing composed of the MFA program director and 1-2 other creative writing faculty who rotate off the committee each year. This committee will evaluate whether “use of terminology related to the discipline” is an appropriate metric for assessing this minor. If it is deemed appropriate, the committee will devise a rubric for scoring collected student samples for measuring this metric. If the committee does not find it to be an appropriate metric, they will devise a different one that is appropriate, as well as a metric for assessing it.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

- 1) Appoint coordinator from the creative writing faculty.
- 2) Finalize assessment instruments
- 3) Continuing to recruit students through "awareness" activities.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

This is, to my knowledge, the first time that creative faculty have actually been involved in developing and conducting the assessment for the creative writing minor. This would explain why the previous cycle’s items have yet to be completed—creative writing faculty were entirely unaware of them. It’s my suspicion that some of the objectives and metrics previously added to the assessment plan are going to be difficult to evaluate and may not be of a kind that creative writing faculty find appropriate for assessing the work students do in these courses. A central problem to this sort of assessment is that much/most of the work that students perform in these classes is creative/artistic in nature, and while faculty are expert at providing detailed, qualitative feedback to students, the “quality” of student creative writing is (to say the least) difficult to capture in a numerical score that is generalizable across different students’ work. Students in these classes may be completing very different kinds of creative work that do not aspire to the same craft goals—the aesthetic standards that one story or poem seeks to achieve, for example, can vary substantially from that of another story or poem, and thus a metric used to assess one piece’s “quality” would not make any sense when applied to another. The creative writing faculty will have to consult with the Assessment office (and each other) to figure out how to meet these assessment goals in a way that is actually meaningful for the work creative writing minor students do.

Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

This is, to my knowledge, the first time that creative faculty have actually been involved in developing and conducting the assessment for the creative writing minor. This would explain why the previous cycle's items have yet to be completed—creative writing faculty were entirely unaware of them. It's my suspicion that some of the objectives and metrics previously added to the assessment plan are going to be difficult to evaluate and may not be of a kind that creative writing faculty find appropriate for assessing the work students do in these courses. A central problem to this sort of assessment is that much/most of the work that students perform in these classes is creative/artistic in nature, and while faculty are expert at providing detailed, qualitative feedback to students, the "quality" of student creative writing is (to say the least) difficult to capture in a numerical score that is generalizable across different students' work. Students in these classes may be completing very different kinds of creative work that do not aspire to the same craft goals—the aesthetic standards that one story or poem seeks to achieve, for example, can vary substantially from that of another story or poem, and thus a metric used to assess one piece's "quality" would not make any sense when applied to another. The creative writing faculty will have to consult with the Assessment office (and each other) to figure out how to meet these assessment goals in a way that is actually meaningful for the work creative writing minor students do.

Above, I've proposed the formation of a committee composed of the MFA program director (me, currently) and 1-2 other creative writing faculty (which might include tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty). This committee would evaluate the plan items that have been added previously, and devise some way to either create workable measurement strategies for those items OR to develop new items that we think are more applicable.