

Assurance of Student Learning Reflection 2024-2025	
<i>PCAL</i>	<i>English</i>
<i>Creative Writing, Master of Fine Arts, 0478</i>	
<i>Dr. Nancy Dinan, Director; Trini Stickle, Graduate Coordinator</i>	
Is this an online program? ☐ Yes ☒ No	Please make sure the Program Learning Outcomes listed match those in CourseLeaf. Indicate verification here ☒ Yes, they match! (If they don't match, explain on this page under Evaluation)

Instructions: For the 2024-25 assessment, we are asking you to reflect on the last three-year cycle rather than collect data. It's important to take time to look over the results from the last assessment cycle and really focus on a data-informed direction going forward. In collaboration with your assessment team and program faculty, review each submitted template from 2021-2024 and consider the following for each Program Learning Outcome, add your narrative to the template, and submit the draft to your **ASL Rep** by **May 15, 2025**.

Program Student Learning Outcome 1	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Generate complex, original subject material of literary quality and value.
Evaluation	Overview In AY23, we initiated a 5-year assessment plan that would adequately assess all 6 of the SLOs prescribed by the Department for the MFA. Previous to AY23, SLO assessment was random and redundant, and in the 7 years that the MFA program had been in existence, not all of the 6 SLOs had been evaluated. In AY23, the MFA also went through its first (ever) program review. This process solidified our plan to continue forward with our new assessment plan. That plan (AY23-AY27) included taking a baseline assessment of each SLO along with a reassessment schedule each subsequent year for any SLO that was not met in the previous year. We also included a remediation plan for when an SLO was not met in a given year which entailed direct engagement with the faculty of the identified course(s) in which the measurement instrument(s) was assigned as well as discussions with other pertinent MFA faculty. The current number of SLOs for the MFA is 6. Given the 3-year and 3-promged skill-building design of the MFA -- (1) exceptional writers; 2) competent composition and literature instructors; and 3) civically-engaged professionals -- we stand by the SLO number and goals. All 6 SLOs employ a verb from Bloom's Taxonomy. Upon reflection of the last two years of data and reporting documents (as well as a preliminary look at the assessment documents regarding the SLOs scheduled for AY25), the five-year protocol appears to be working much more effectively than the random and repeated SLO assessments completed previously to AY23. Still, we take this time to evaluate additional areas of needed improvement. On SLO 1: We have not evaluated SLO 1 in the last 3-year cycle. It was scheduled to be evaluated for AY25.

	We do stand by its relevance and it employs a verb from Bloom's Taxonomy and the skill is measurable.
Measurement Instruments	The measurement instrument for SLO 1 is one creative writing product from each MFA student developed within either a 501 genre-focused writing workshops or the final theses of graduating MFAs. We find this measurement instrument to be sufficient. While AI could affect any writing-based assessment, we see no conflict with AI in this context as MFA students work closely with their workshop instructors and their mentors to develop original content for publication as students continue to develop their artistic voice. The Qualtrics rubric is sufficient for the faculty to evaluate the MFA student-generated creative writings.
Criteria & Targets	We were scheduled to formally evaluate this SLO for AY25. While we did not formally complete this formative/summative assessment, the thesis defense reports along with publications/awards achieved by our MFA students serve as evidence that we are meeting this SLO.
Results & Conclusion	We have not evaluated SLO 1 in the last three years. It was, however, slotted to be assessed this year (AY25). Given the change in assessment practice to the review of the process, we have collected the measurement instrument and will assess this year's cohort documents alongside the cohorts' measurement instruments in AY26.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	We currently have a 5-year plan in place to evaluate all 6 SLOs, to conduct ongoing conversations with graduate faculty when our expectations are not met for a given SLO in a given year, and to re-assess any SLO in which the measurement instrument shows our students are not meeting that SLO in the following year. For SLO 1, no changed required at this time.

Program Student Learning Outcome 2	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Apply relevant craft techniques to their own original writing.
Evaluation	We believe that this outcome is still relevant as it represents the core goal of the MFA program, and the outcome is measurable using the chosen Bloom's Taxonomy verb.
Measurement Instruments	In AY21-22, we used an essay from the pedagogy unit of ENG 507: Introduction to Creative Writing Studies to assess this SLO, and with this measurement instrument, we successfully met achievement goals and support the SLO as key to the program goals of the MFA. Moving forward, however, we determined that a measurement instrument from ENG 512: Reading Like a Writer is more appropriate, and for our next assessment, we will ask students to examine and demonstrate this skill in ENG 512. We will, consequently, use the 512 assignment as the measurement instrument in AY26.
Criteria & Targets	Our target for success was that 75% of students would exceed or meet expectations, and in AY21-22, 100% of students achieved this target, with 50% exceeding expectations and 50% meeting expectations. Based on this result, we don't see a need to change our target, though we will be changing the artifact collected for this SLO.
Results & Conclusion	Results for this SLO exceeded our expectations, and we believe that this is primary skill that the program teaches. We do, however, believe that changing the measurement instrument will help us to better assess this SLO.

	We stand by the successful teaching of this skill within multiple MFA classes. We conclude, however, that the ENG 512 course is designed specifically to learn and practice this SLO. Because of this reflection, we will be using an artifact from ENG 512 instead of from ENG 507 in future ASL reports.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	For SLO 2, we will: • Change the assessment instrument, collecting a measurement instrument from ENG 512; and • Assess this SLO in AY26. We will alter the curricular map in terms of changing the SLO measurement instrument.

To add more outcomes, if needed, select the table above and copy & paste below.

Program Student Learning Outcome 3	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate literary works in progress.
Evaluation	We have not evaluated SLO 3 in the last three-year assessment cycle as it is scheduled for assessment this year, AY26. The MFA faculty stand by this skill as crucial to creative writers to be part of their professional circles and, thus, incredibly relevant for graduate students to begin to develop this skill within the graduate program. The skill is measurable as it employs a single verb from Bloom's Taxonomy.
Measurement Instruments	The measurement instrument is derived from ENG 512, Reading as a Writer, and we will evaluate the instrument's effectiveness to capture this skill next assessment cycle; however, this is the course in which students practice evaluating both proven and student-generated creative works, and we expect this sufficient alignment with assessment of the skill with the measurement instrument. We do not expect AI to have great affect in the assessment of this skill as the over 50% of the works in which students are generating comment to demonstrate their ability to critically evaluate a literary work in progress are not yet published works. We will proof both the measurement instrument, the influence of AI, and the skill set of our MFA students in the next assessment cycle.
Criteria & Targets	We will proof both the measurement instrument, the influence of AI, and the skill set of our MFA students in the next assessment cycle.
Results & Conclusion	We will proof both the measurement instrument, the influence of AI, and the skill set of our MFA students in the next assessment cycle.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	For SLO 3, we will: • Proof the assessment of the measurement instrument in AY26; and • Assess any affect from AI; We do not expect to change the curriculum map for this SLO, but we must assesses whether the measurement instrument is the appropriate choice after our assessment in AY26.

Program Student Learning Outcome 4	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Demonstrate the ability to write a comprehensive analysis of a literary work.
Evaluation	This is an important and necessary skill for graduate students of English, and it is even more important for those students who will teach literature or who will continue on to a doctoral program in English. Demonstrate is a Bloom's taxonomy verb. The outcome is measurable, as literature courses are required for each MFA student, and some students follow a Literature concentration. The artifacts come from students in each of the 3 years of the program. One challenge here is that not every student will take a literature course in a given year, and, thus, we will not assess the entire MFA enrollment in any given semester.
Measurement Instruments	A literary analysis from a graduate literature course is the most appropriate artifact to assess SLO 4. No adjustments needed. All courses in which student writing is the measure can be affected by the rise of AI. To address this effect, the faculty are developing conversations within their courses on valid and ethical uses of AI, continuing a process approach to paper development in which the student voice is both observed and developed by the course instructor, and exploring platforms or software for the detection of AI generated text.
Criteria & Targets	Because these artifacts come from students at all levels of the program, the benchmarks for assessment are somewhat varied. The AY2324 assessment of this SLO showed 40% of students at a 3.0 or higher rating (on a 4-point scale), 50% at a developing stage of graduate literary analysis, and 10% scoring insufficient for literary analysis (although this student was very close to an acceptable level). This meets our expectation that 35% of MFA students will conduct literary analysis at a minimum of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, 45% will be at a developing stage of literary analysis, and no more than 20% will be deemed insufficient in analytical skills. We do not see a need to change the artifact or the criteria for this SLO at this time.
Results & Conclusion	We found that this SLO was a straightforward outcome to teach and assess, and we believe that this SLO is vital for our students' success. At this time, we do not see a need to change the assessment of this learning outcome.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	For the next assessment cycle, AY28, we will work on consistency with this SLO, as we are pleased with the artifact and the assessment. Going forward, we will: • Collect and assess literary analyses from our graduate students once per assessment cycle for this SLO, and • If necessary because benchmarks are not met, we will re-collect and re-assess literary analyses. We do not expect to change the curriculum map for this SLO considering we assessed and reassessed this SLO with the next scheduled assessment scheduled for AY28.

Program Student Learning Outcome 5	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Clearly articulate their own writerly aesthetic.
Evaluation	We have not evaluated SLO 5 in the last three-year assessment cycle as it is scheduled for assessment this year, AY26.

	The MFA faculty stand by this skill as crucial for creative writers to clearly convey this to editors and publishers, and thus, incredibly relevant for students to begin to develop this skill within their graduate program. The skill is measurable as it employs a single verb from Bloom's Taxonomy.
Measurement Instruments	The measurement instrument is derived from ENG 512, Reading as a Writer, and we will evaluate the instrument's effectiveness to capture the initial development of this skill in the students' second year; but, upon reflection, we will add as a measurement instrument the critical essay each graduating MFA student composes as a compendium to their creative writing thesis to track the development of this skill across students and across the program. We do not expect AI to have great affect in the assessment of this skill as the development of a personal aesthetic is individual in focus and voice. We will proof both the measurement instruments, the influence of AI, and the skill set of our MFA students for their ability to develop this skill in the next assessment cycle.
Criteria & Targets	We have no data to assess this measure.
Results & Conclusion	We will assess this SLO in AY26. We will proof both measurement instruments, the influence of AI, and the skill set of our MFA students in the next assessment cycle.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	For SLO 5, we will: • Proof the assessment of the measurement instrument in AY26; • Add a secondary measurement instrument (the critical reflective essay of each graduating MFA student); • Assess any affect from AI. We may, after AY26's assessment, alter the curricular map in terms of adding a secondary measurement instrument.

Program Student Learning Outcome 6	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Demonstrate understanding of professional and pedagogical practices and opportunities within and related to the field of creative writing.
Evaluation	While this SLO employs a measurable skill using a verb from Bloom's Taxonomy, we will initiate a discussion in AY26 on whether or not the MFA faculty wish to remove this SLO or to alter this to focus only on professional, and not pedagogical, practices and opportunities. The reason for this proposed changes is that this SLO has been, perhaps, the most difficult to assess. This difficulty appears to stem from the multiple parts of the phrase "professional and pedagogical practices and opportunities." We used a measurement instrument from our internship course, ENG 515, to assess this SLO. The challenge faced is that students, with assistance from their MFA mentor and the internship course instructor, choose their individual internships. Thus, particular internships may not focus heavily on pedagogical practices and opportunities. While the MFA faculty remain committed to the development of each of these skills within the Graduate Assistants, they do recognize the difficulty in evaluating these outcomes in a single document.

Measurement Instruments	The document used to assess this SLO is the final reflection from ENG 515, our graduate creative writing internship course. As noted above, this document does a great job assessing students’ understanding of professional practices and opportunities, but it is less successful in assessing pedagogical practices and opportunities. Thus, we will discuss removing this ‘pedagogical practices and opportunities’ from this SLO, particularly as not all of the MFA students are pursuing the degree with the goal of higher education teaching. We are not concerned about the rise of AI in this SLO, but we do want to explore separating “professional and pedagogical” in this SLO, or perhaps re-visiting the goal of the 515 course and reflection. This evaluation will be a priority for MFA faculty in AY26.
Criteria & Targets	For this reflection, we copy and paste the reflection on our AY2324 report, where we reassessed SLO 6: <i>This is a reassessment of SLO 6 of the four third-semester students using the same course and course artifact as we did for our assessment of SLO 6 for the AY2324 cohort of six students. Since our AY2324 cohort fell below our expectations for this SLO, we have developed a recursive assessment process to help determine whether our response to those results move us closer to our desired program goals.</i> <i>Complicating the analyses, however, is the small sample size of students each year. That said, this year’s cohort did, overall, better display an understanding of professional and pedagogical practices within the field of creative writing as well as a stronger knowledge of opportunities within and related to the field of creative writing with 75% scoring at the desired level of a 3.0 for each skill.</i> <i>We believe changes to the course assignments and explicit instruction on the development of 1) an appropriate internship, 2) increased instructor leadership, and 3) revision of course assignment documents, expectations, and final products are responsible for students achieving outcomes for this SLO.</i> <i>Thus, this reassessment of SLO 6 suggests positive movement of SLO 6 as students displayed sufficient rather than a developing understanding of the skills subsumed within SLO 6.</i> <i>In the aggregate, the students met the threshold of 3.0 for all skills; however, individually, 75% achieved the our goal for each skill. On a six-point scale in which a 4 indicates a display of professional knowledge, the four 3rd semester students (of the 6-semester program) had an aggregate score of 3.69 as opposed to the AY2324 students whose aggregate score was 2.65.</i> <i>Assessment was calculated based on the assessment of the three skills—professional practices, pedagogical application, and other opportunities.</i> <i>SLO 6 is truly comprised of three subskills. Our assessment survey does provided a nuanced view of each subskill and the results show an even more promising development for our second year students.</i> <i>Subskill 1) Upon completing their professional internship, on displays of professional practices, the aggregate score of our four students was 3.87 as opposed to last year’s cohort average of 2.67. Individually, the AY2324 cohort, three of the four scored over a 3.0 on this skill (75%).</i> <i>Subskill 2) On displays of professional opportunities, the aggregate score for the four students was 3.25 as opposed to our last year’s cohort average of 2.54. Individually, the AY2324 cohort, three of the four scored over a 3.0 on this skill (75%).</i>

	<i>Subskill 3) The area for which we need to further develop, even at the second-year level is knowledge of pedagogical opportunities; the aggregate score for the four students was 3.95 as opposed to our last year's cohort average of 2.12. Individually, the AY2324 cohort, three of the four scored over a 3.0 on this skill (75%).</i> As this reflection demonstrates, we have had ongoing struggles with the assessment of SLO 6, and we consider the evaluation of this SLO's assessment a top priority for the CW faculty in AY26.
Results & Conclusion	We did not expect these results, so this has led to our proposed change as described below. See notes above: this SLO and its measurement instrument present difficulties because we may be trying to measure too many things at once. We will enact steps in AY26 to eliminate assessing both skills and focus on assessing only the students' demonstration of their understanding of professional practices and opportunities.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	In AY26, the CW faculty plan to • Evaluate whether this SLO assesses too many and too diverse outcomes; • Use that evaluation to articulate how best to assess the desired outcomes; and • Identify a measurement instrument that would best assess the newly evaluated outcomes. We may, after AY26's assessment, alter the curricular map in terms of changing the SLO and measurement instrument.