

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Drama
B.A. Program in Drama, Drama Education
AY 2010-11

Key Assessment Findings

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Major	0	0.00%	5	83.33%	3	16.67%	8

Five of our students passed the traditional comprehensive examinations in January of 2011, and three passed the performance comprehensive examinations in March of 2011. All of the students passed the exams. The three who completed the performance comprehensive exams earned a High Pass. This was noted in their records.

Curricular Improvements

After administering the comprehensive exams in the spring of 2010, the Associate Chair discussed how to best incorporate powerpoint slides in the oral portion of the undergraduate comprehensive exams. The faculty agreed in 2009 that students could no longer insert any text into the slides. Students had been allowed to insert text formatted in bullets, but they began to include entire paragraphs into each slide. A portion of these students also read from the text in support of their oral response. This undermined the improvisational and spontaneous nature of the oral portion of the exam, and we could no longer easily assess whether or not a student commanded a comprehensive understanding of the material presented in the oral response. Now students may use powerpoint slides to illustrate items within the presentation, but these slides cannot include any text. This was an improvement over the inclusion of sentence-long text. The rules are clearer of the oral portion of the exam, and the Associate Chair now includes those regulations in the advance instructions that outline the exams. The Senior Seminar instructor (DR 451) also explains the importance of these changes in regards to the goals of the oral portion of the exam to the students in the class during the semester before they must take the exams.

We continue to use the rubrics that we developed just after 2009 to evaluate the comprehensive exams. After administering the spring 2010 exams, the Associate Chair and Chair adjusted the rubrics for the essay and oral portions of the exam by switching the columns labeled “Exceeds Expectations” and “Below Expectations.” Whereas “Exceeds Expectations” used to occupy the far left column and “Below Expectations” was placed at the far right column, “Below Expectations” is now the first column that appears as an evaluator reads from left to right. The hope is that this change will require an evaluator to read through the rubric from left to right and consider the description

within each category before assigning a value to that part of the student's performance in a given essay or oral presentation. We have also altered the plays required in our Drama 101 class to reflect more contemporary work, exposing the students to a wider diversity of plays.

After carefully examining each question in each rubric submitted by each professor involved in the comprehensive exams, the Chair, Associate Chair, and faculty responsible for teaching courses that include formal writing assignments have agreed to use the same criteria to evaluate their papers. The faculty share the criteria with one another and their students in a one-page rubric. The repeated use of this rubric should enable the students to more easily pass the written portion of their comprehensive exams.

Finally, the faculty has agreed to discuss how we determine what constitutes a Pass, High Pass, or Fail for each portion of the exam. We have three faculty members separately grade the two essays and oral portion of the exams using the rubrics included in this report. Though each rubric includes a score, we have yet to determine what numbers constitute a High Pass or Pass. In the past, each faculty member submitted a written evaluation score for the two essays and the one oral portion of the exam. The evaluations included the designation: Pass, High Pass, and Fail. The Associate Chair would then combine the scores to arrive at an overall score. The new scoring system requires a more quantitative approach, and we have not finalized which combined scores equal Pass, High Pass, and Fail.