

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements**  
**Department of Drama**  
**Master's of Fine Arts Program in Acting, Directing, Playwriting**  
**Master's Degree in Theory & Criticism**  
**Master's of Art in Theatre Education**

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
 Financial Planning, Institutional Research and Assessment

**GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS**  
**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA**  
**AY2009-2010 to AY2013-2014**

Master's Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2009-2010		0.00%	5	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	5
AY2010-2011		0.00%	7	78.00%		0.00%	2	22.00%	9
AY2011-2012	2	8.00%	23	92.00%		0.00%		0.00%	25
AY2012-2013	1	9.00%	5	45.00%	5	45.00%		0.00%	11
AY2013-2014		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6.00%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>80.00%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4.00%</b>	<b>50</b>

Note:

- 1) Milestone outcomes were included in the categories High Pass and Pass with Honors if these designations were explicitly indicated in the students' milestone record.
- 2) Category "High Pass" includes both "High Pass" and "Pass with distinction".
- 3) The count in this table is based on the exam outcomes of all attempts in an academic year.
- 4) Level of the comps, i.e. Master's, is based on the milestone activities; if there is no specification of the level in the record,

**Assessment Measures**

The Department of Drama uses the following measures to assess student learning outcomes:

Direct measures:

- M.A.T.E.: DR 951 (Supervised project), written comprehensive exams.
- M.A.: DR 995 (Thesis Guidance) or two seminars approved by the head of the program, written comprehensive exams.
- M.F.A. in Directing: DR 850 (Thesis production workshop), DR 997 (Thesis production guidance), written comprehensive exams.
- M.F.A. Acting: DR 939 (Monographs), written comprehensive exams.
- M.F.A. Playwriting: DR 860 (playwriting internship), DR 996 (playwriting thesis guidance), written comprehensive exams.

Indirect measures:

- Grades in all courses
- Student evaluations of all courses
- Student participation in production work
- Alumni feedback
- On-going faculty review of individual student's degree progress
- On-going faculty review of comparable programs

### **Assessment Findings**

M.A.T.E.: One student failed the comprehensive exams in the summer of 2011. That student passed the comprehensive exams in the fall of 2011.

M.A.: All students who have taken the comprehensive exams between 2010 and 2015 have successfully passed them. One student has not completed his language requirement. He submitted an appeal to use American Sign Language for his test. He won the appeal. Once he completes his training, he will sit for the next exams.

M.F.A. in Directing: All students who have taken comprehensive exams in the past five years have successfully passed them.

M.F.A. in Acting: All students who have taken comprehensive exams in the past five years have successfully passed them.

M.F.A. in Playwriting: All students who have taken comprehensive exams in the past five years have successfully passed them.

Comment on Enrollment:

The department admits graduate directors and actors once every three years in order to offer better scholarships to a more talented group. The department adopted this approach and changed the curricula for all of its graduate programs in 2003. The plan has been successful. All of the M.F.A. students follow three-year tracks. The department admits M.F.A. playwrights and M.A. students in the Theatre Education and Theatre History programs every year. These students follow separate tracks, but they have the opportunity to take classes with the actors and directors while they study in the department. A consequence of the different admittance policies and academic tracks for each program is that the number of graduate students enrolled in a particular class varies depending on whether or not the company of actors and directors join that course. However, the varying enrollment does not negatively impact the development of individual students or their experience. In addition to taking classes in each program, students must participate in production work. These practicum experiences allow students in one program to interact with and learn from the work of other graduate and undergraduate students.

Comment on Time to Degrees/ Graduation Rates:

The M.F.A. programs in Acting, Directing, and Playwriting require full-time participation for two years. Most M.F.A. students are considered part-time in their third year, during which they complete an internship at a professional theatre. All M.F.A. students complete their tracks in three years. M.A. students in the Theatre History and Criticism and Theatre Education programs study part-time. They do not have a time limit dictating when they should complete their courses. They do not belong to a company and can enter the program at any time. Therefore, many of the M.A. students take up to four years or longer to complete their program.

### **Comprehensive Exams**

In the past five years two students have failed to pass the comprehensive exams on the first attempt. The students' advisors helped them identify why they did not pass the exam. This feedback helped the student after the designated waiting period. Though the students failed initially, the process worked. In each case, the written portion of the exam proved to be difficult, and each student worked to improve his or her writing. This success rate is due, in part, to the format that the department developed for the graduate exams. Though the department follows a carefully delineated format, its faculty develop different questions for different students. In this respect the exams are an extension of the dialogue between the student and the faculty as each student develops his or her research and/or creative process. This approach allows the department to keep the rigor of the exam as an assessment mechanism while also addressing the needs and interests of individual students. This flexibility has helped us to challenge students to critically analyze their work and better monitor their progress.

The faculty agree that the existing rubric that the department uses to assess the written portion of the graduate comprehensive exams needs serious improvement. The traits and values (numbers) are not complex enough to provide a thorough assessment of each written component of the exam.