Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures  
Master of Arts  
Doctor of Philosophy  

Goals and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes  

Master’s Program  

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I. Overview of the Department  

The Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures embodies CUA’s historical commitment to integrate religious studies with the arts and sciences. From the beginning, the study of biblical and Christian Near Eastern languages and literatures was part of the university’s curriculum. Graduate programs in Semitic and Coptic languages and biblical and Near Eastern antiquities were formally established in 1895. Two years later the department was founded by Monsignor Henri Hyvernat, the first professor chosen for CUA. The department has maintained a commitment to research and instruction in the languages and literatures of the Near East. The departmental focus on the Christian heritage of the communities of the Middle East is unique in the United States. Catholic University was founded as a graduate center, and the Semitics department remains primarily a graduate department. It is a part of the School of Arts and Sciences. The department offers two masters programs:  

Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages (ANWSL) (with a concentration in Hebrew); and  
Near Eastern Christian Languages and Literatures (NECLL) (with concentrations in Syriac, Coptic and Arabic)  

II. Description of the ANWSL Program  

The program in Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages (with a concentration in Biblical Hebrew) leading to a Master of Arts furnishes the linguistic training and other auxiliary
students needed for a scholarly grasp of the texts of the Jewish and Christian Holy Scriptures in their historical and cultural contexts.

Students must complete 30 semester credit hours for the M.A. These include at least 12 credit hours in the student’s major language (credit hours at the 500 level – advanced undergraduate – do not qualify), as well as 6 credit hours in a second Semitic language, which the faculty ascertains best complements the student’s major field (usually Aramaic or Akkadian). Up to 6 credit hours of Greek (beyond the elementary 500 level) may be counted. ANWSL students may take history or language courses (including Syriac, Arabic and Coptic) from the NECLL program. They may take one or more relevant university courses outside the department with the approval of the adviser and chair. Examples of the type of course M.A. students in the ANWSL program have selected are ENG 625 General Linguistics and TRS 705A Introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls. The department permits transfer of graduate credits earned at other accredited institutions in accordance with University regulations.

In addition to their course work, M.A. students must select (with the approval of the chair) two research papers they originally wrote for courses (completed with a grade of B or better). After completing the courses, students revise each of these papers to re-submit to the course instructor and one additional reader for approval. This is in lieu of the M.A. thesis option, which for pedagogical reasons the department discourages students from selecting. Students must also satisfy a modern language qualification requirement for reading knowledge of either French or German.

Many of the program’s M.A. students have families and live some distance from CUA, which suggests they might be less involved in campus activities. However, the department’s Graduate Student Association representative is usually an M.A. student. There are few CUA teaching opportunities for Semitics M.A. students, with the exception of SEM 511-512, the first year level biblical Hebrew course. Some students have the opportunity to participate in archeological digs sponsored by the Catholic Biblical Association http://studentlife.cua.edu/students/org/cbib/arch.cfm.M.A. Students regularly participate in the regional meetings of the Catholic Biblical Association and the Society of Biblical Literature.

Graduates typically pursue scholarly careers. Most M.A. graduates apply for the department’s doctoral program in ancient Northwest Semitic Languages; some apply to other graduate programs. One of the last two graduate students to take a terminal M.A. degree in this program transferred into the university’s doctoral program in Biblical Studies; the other student transferred into the university’s terminal master’s program in Byzantine and Medieval Studies.

III. Goals for ANWSL Student Learning

Students who graduate with a Master of Arts in Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages will:
1. Demonstrate the linguistic proficiency and depth and breadth of knowledge of other auxiliary studies for a scholarly grasp of the texts of the Jewish and Christian Holy Scriptures in their historical and cultural contexts;
2. Demonstrate reading knowledge of either French or German, and
3. Be well-prepared to pursue doctoral studies in Biblical studies, ancient Near Eastern history, or Semitic philology.

IV. Description of the NECLL Program

The program in Near Eastern Christian Languages and Literatures leading to a Master of Arts (with concentrations in Syriac, Coptic and Arabic) offers future scholars the opportunity to acquire first-hand knowledge and interpretation of the Christian literatures of the Near East in their historical and cultural settings, including Christian interactions with Muslims especially in the early Islamic period. In addition, the department cooperates with the Schools of Theology & Religious Studies and of Philosophy and the Departments of History and Anthropology in the School of Arts & Sciences in the area of early Islamic studies. The department’s commitment to research and instruction in the languages, literatures and history of the Christian Near East is unique in this country, and the Catholic University of America is one of the few academic centers where scholars actively pursue such studies.

Students must complete 30 semester credit hours for the M.A. These must include 12 credit hours in the student’s major language (in which credit hours at the 500 level – advanced undergraduate – do not qualify) and 6 credit hours in a second language that the faculty ascertains is the most necessary for effective work in the student’s major field. Major/minor combinations may include: Arabic/Coptic; Arabic/Syriac; Coptic/Arabic; Coptic/Syriac; Syriac/Arabic; Syriac/Coptic. Up to 6 credit hours of Greek (beyond the elementary 500 level) may be counted. NECLL students may take history and language courses (including Hebrew and Aramaic) from the ANWSL program. They may take one or more relevant university courses outside the department with the approval of the adviser and chair. Examples of the type of course M.A. students in the NECLL program have selected are TRS 727 Principles of Patristic Exegesis and TRS 727A Patristic Anthropology. The department permits transfer of graduate credits earned at other accredited institutions in accordance with University regulations.

In addition to their course work, M.A. students must select (with the approval of the chair) two research papers they originally wrote for courses (completed with a grade of B or better). After completing the courses, students revise each of these papers to re-submit to the course instructor and one additional reader for approval. This is in lieu of the M.A. thesis option, which for pedagogical reasons the department discourages students from selecting. Students must also satisfy a modern language qualification requirement for reading knowledge of either French or German.

Many of the program’s M.A. students have families and live some distance from CUA, which suggests they might be less involved in campus activities. However, the
department’s Graduate Student Association representative is usually an M.A. student. Occasionally M.A. students serve as Teaching Assistants for the University Honors course HSHU 101 From Jesus to Muhammad. Some students have the opportunity to participate in special projects based on unique resources in the departmental library. Recent examples include a Syriac digital project, The Syriac Studies Reference Library http://www.lib.byu.edu/dlib/cua/, and a papyrus conservation project, http://libraries.cua.edu/issue9.html#art3.

Graduates typically pursue scholarly careers. Most M.A. graduates apply for the department’s doctoral program in Near Eastern Christian Languages and Literatures. Some students may choose to take a terminal M.A. degree. No terminal M.A. degrees in this program have been awarded since 2001.

V. Goals for NECLL Student Learning

Students who graduate with a Master of Arts in Near Eastern Christian Languages and Literatures will:

1. Demonstrate first-hand knowledge and skill in the interpretation of the Christian literatures of the Near East in their historical context and settings, including Christian interactions with Muslims especially in the early Islamic period.
2. Have the linguistic training and familiarity with other auxiliary studies for a scholarly grasp of the Christian literatures in two of three of the following languages: Arabic, Coptic, and Syriac;
3. Demonstrate a reading knowledge of either French or German, and

VI. ANWSL & NECLL Program Milestones
(Direct Student Assessment Outcome Measures)

1. Admissions Requirements. Requirements for admission to graduate study in the university are published in the General Information section of the Graduate Studies Announcements. Briefly, applicants for graduate study leading to a degree in the department are required to submit:
   a) An application for graduate study;
   b) Official transcripts of all undergraduate coursework and postsecondary studies;
   c) Three official letters of recommendation from academic sources who are acquainted with the applicants’ ability for graduate study;
   d) Official score reports from the General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE);
   e) A statement of purpose for undertaking graduate study in this department. Competence in the English language is a requirement. International applicants from countries and areas where English is not the common, spoken language
are required to take the standard Test of English as a Foreign Language, TOEFL, and submit the results to support their applications.

2. **Course Grades.** Graduate students must consistently earn grades of A and B in their courses. Any graduate student who obtains two or more grades of C in coursework for his or her graduate program is subject to academic dismissal.

3. **Fulfilling the modern language qualification requirements for French or German** indicates a reading level of knowledge of these languages. The modern language qualification requirements may be satisfied in various ways:
   a) By presenting a minimum score of 450 on the Graduate School Foreign Language Test;
   b) By passing the non-credit intensive 500-level language course offered by the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures;
   c) Unusually, in special circumstances, by passing a Semitics department-administered language test.
   d) A student whose native language is French or German shall be considered to have fulfilled the language requirement in that language without examination, provided that the department chair states, in writing, to the academic dean that the language is a language of scholarship for the student’s discipline.

i. **Comprehensive Examination.** Students typically register in the academic dean’s office for the master’s comprehensive examination at the beginning of the Fall or Spring semesters and notify the chair of the department of their intention to take the examination. They take their comprehensive examination in one major language/literature and one minor language/literature. ANWSL major/minor combinations may include: Hebrew/Aramaic; Hebrew/Akkadian. NECLL major/minor combinations may include: Arabic/Coptic; Arabic/Syriac; Coptic/Arabic; Coptic/Syriac; Syriac/Arabic; Syriac/Coptic. The student’s graduate advisor and a faculty member with primary responsibility for the student’s minor language area of concentration prepare reading lists for the exam. The department also encourages students to review the department file of examination questions from previous years. The two faculty members who developed the examination and at least one other evaluate the completed examination, applying the same specified criterion of linguistic proficiency. The comprehensive examination is taken over the course of two eight-hour days. One day is allotted to the major language/literature and one day to the minor language/literature. The scoring framework is pass-fail. The three faculty members must agree on the examination score. A student who did not pass may retake the failed part(s) of the examination again the next semester. A student who incurs two failures in a comprehensive examination is no longer considered eligible to receive the master’s degree. The second failure is recorded on the student’s permanent record.

VII. Indirect Student Assessment Outcome Measures
In addition to the ANWSL and NECLL program milestones, student assessment outcome measures for the department doctoral programs include:

4. **Student evaluations.**
   a) Student evaluations of courses and faculty are captured on a departmental evaluation form handed out in class during the last week of the semester. The forms are filled out anonymously and returned to the department chair. The chair reviews the evaluations with faculty in department meetings at the end of the semester.
   b) Faculty evaluate the students with a view to measuring their academic progress at department meetings at the end of the Fall and Spring academic semesters.

5. **Student-Faculty interaction.** Department offices and classrooms are housed within the departmental library. Students and faculty have assigned work space in the library rooms, where critical library resources are used. This model promotes and encourages student-faculty interaction in a small academic department. The department considers this informal student-faculty interaction a valuable student assessment outcome measure because it often provides early indicators of difficulties with course assignments and research. It also provides early indicators of a student’s research and language interests, which can be used to help students make good course decisions.

6. **End-of-program surveys.** The department asks graduates to fill out a department end-of-program survey when they graduate. These forms are filled out anonymously and returned to the department chair. The chair reviews the surveys with faculty at department meetings.

7. **Alumni surveys.** Department faculty meet informally with program alumni at the annual meetings of the Catholic Biblical Association, the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Academy of Religion, The American Oriental Society, and the North American Patristics Society. These meetings are a way to share current information about the department and to track alumni. The department will circulate a written alumni survey in June 2008.
I. Overview of the Department

The Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures embodies CUA’s historical commitment to integrate religious studies with the arts and sciences. From the beginning, the study of biblical and Christian Near Eastern languages and literatures was part of the university’s curriculum. Graduate programs in Semitic and Coptic languages and biblical and Near Eastern antiquities were formally established in 1895. Two years later the department was founded by Monsignor Henri Hyvernat, the first professor chosen for CUA. The department has maintained a commitment to research and instruction in the languages and literatures of the Near East. The departmental focus on the Christian heritage of the communities of the Middle East is unique in the United States. Catholic University was founded as a graduate center, and the Semitics department remains primarily a graduate department. It is a part of the School of Arts and Sciences. The department offers two doctoral programs:

Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages (ANWSL) (with a concentration in Hebrew); and
Near Eastern Christian Languages and Literatures (NECLL) (with concentrations in Syriac, Coptic and Arabic)

II. Description of the ANWSL Program

The program in Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages leading to a Doctor of Philosophy (with a concentration in Biblical Hebrew) furnishes the advanced linguistic training and other auxiliary studies needed for a scholarly grasp of the texts of the Jewish and Christian Holy Scriptures in their historical and cultural contexts.

The Ph.D. program incorporates the M.A. curriculum and requires an additional 30 semester hours of coursework, as well as successful completion of a doctoral comprehensive examination, a thesis and an oral defense of the thesis. Ph.D. candidates must also satisfy modern language qualification requirements for a reading knowledge of French and German.
Briefly, the M.A. requires 30 semester credit hours, including a requisite 12 credits in the student’s major language (courses at the 500 level in the major language do not count) and 6 credit hours in a second language, which the faculty ascertains best complements work in the student’s major field (usually Aramaic or Akkadian). The M.A. also requires the submission of two research papers in lieu of a thesis and the fulfillment of a modern language qualification requirement for reading knowledge of either French or German. M.A. students must pass M.A. comprehensive examinations in their major and minor languages. The department permits transfer of graduate credits earned at other accredited institutions in accordance with University regulations.

Ph.D. students engage in course planning with their advisors with a view to completing their course work within three years, if they are full-time students. Among the additional 30 credits for the Ph.D., students must take six credits of Greek (or demonstrate an equivalent competence). They also must take two courses, ordinarily six credits, outside the department. In this instance students may propose any courses at CUA that fit into their programs. Because these courses can be at the graduate or advanced undergraduate level (i.e., 500 level or higher) and in a variety of programs or departments, they should complement the student’s interests and be adjusted to his or her background and training. Examples of the types of courses Ph.D. students in the ANWSL program have selected include: ENG 625 General Linguistics and TRS 802A Deuteronomistic History. Students also may satisfy this requirement by taking one course per semester from universities belonging to the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area. Only courses not available at CUA may be proposed, and the approval of the adviser, chair, dean, and consortium coordinator is necessary. One example of the type of course Ph.D. students in the ANWSL program have selected is Georgetown University’s CNGU 585 Intensive Chinese I. Other credit hours are selected from Semitics department courses. ANWSL program students may take history or language courses (including Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic) from the NECLL program.

Most of the program’s Ph.D. students are older, have families, live some distance from CUA, which suggests they might be less involved in campus activities (e.g., the department’s Graduate Student Association representative is usually an M.A. student). There are few CUA teaching opportunities for Semitics students, with the exception of SEM 511-512, the first year level biblical Hebrew course. Some students have the opportunity to participate in archeological digs sponsored by the Catholic Biblical Association [http://studentlife.cua.edu/students/org/cbib/arch.cfm](http://studentlife.cua.edu/students/org/cbib/arch.cfm). Students participate in a departmental lecture series in which Semitics doctoral candidates nearing completion of the dissertation explain their dissertation work to department students and faculty. They regularly participate in and present papers at professional conferences such as the regional meetings of the Catholic Biblical Association and the Society of Biblical Literature.

The program’s graduates typically pursue scholarly careers.

2001-2007 Ph.D. graduates include:

2001. Bryan Estelle
III. Goals for ANWSL Student Learning

Students who graduate with a Doctor of Philosophy in Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages will:

4. Demonstrate the advanced linguistic training and other auxiliary studies needed for a scholarly grasp of the text of the Jewish and Christian Holy Scriptures in their historical and cultural contexts;

5. Be prepared to teach biblical Hebrew and other Semitic languages in seminaries and in undergraduate and graduate college and university programs;

6. Be prepared to teach courses in the history and culture of the ancient Near East in undergraduate and graduate college and university programs;

7. Demonstrate reading knowledge of both French and German and basic knowledge of Greek.

IV. Description of the NECLL Program

The program in Near Eastern Christian Languages and Literatures leading to a Doctor of Philosophy (with concentrations in Syriac, Coptic and Arabic) offers future scholars the opportunity to acquire advanced first-hand knowledge and interpretation of the Christian literatures of the Near East in their historical and cultural settings, including Christian interactions with Muslims especially in the early Islamic period. In addition, the department cooperates with the Schools of Theology & Religious Studies and of Philosophy and the Departments of History and Anthropology in the School of Arts & Sciences in the area of early Islamic studies. The department’s commitment to research and instruction in the languages, literatures and history of the Christian Near East is unique in this country, and it is one of the few academic centers promoting active pursuit of such studies.

The Ph.D. program incorporates the M.A. curriculum and requires an additional 30 semester hours of coursework, as well as successful completion of a doctoral comprehensive examination, a thesis and an oral defense of the thesis. Ph.D. candidates must also satisfy modern language qualification requirements for a reading knowledge of French and German.

Briefly, the M.A. requires 30 semester credit hours, including a requisite 12 credits in the student’s major language (courses at the 500 level in the major language do not count)
and 6 credit hours in a second language, which the faculty ascertains best complements work in the student’s major field. (Major/minor combinations include Arabic/Coptic; Arabic/Syriac; Coptic/Arabic; Coptic/Syriac; Syriac/Arabic; Syriac/Coptic.) The M.A. also requires the submission of two research papers in lieu of a thesis and the fulfillment of a modern language qualification requirement for reading knowledge of either French or German. M.A. students must pass M.A. comprehensive examinations in their major and minor languages. The department permits transfer of graduate credits earned at other accredited institutions in accordance with University regulations.

Ph.D. students engage in course planning with their advisors with a view to completing their course work within three years, if they are full-time students. Among the additional 30 credits for the Ph.D., students must take six credits of Greek (or demonstrate an equivalent competence). They also must take two courses, ordinarily six credits, outside the department. In this instance students may propose any courses at CUA that fit into their programs. Because these courses can be at the graduate or advanced undergraduate level (i.e., 500 level or higher) and in a variety of programs or departments, they should complement the student’s interests and be adjusted to his or her background and training. Examples of the types of courses Ph.D. students in the NECLL program have selected include: ECST 778 Monasticism in Late Antiquity and PHIL 747 Plotinus. Students also may satisfy this requirement by taking one course per semester from universities belonging to the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area. Only courses not available at CUA may be proposed, and the approval of the adviser, chair, dean, and consortium coordinator is necessary. One example of the type of course Ph.D. students in the NECLL program have selected is George Washington University’s REL 773 Perennial Philosophy. Other credit hours are selected from Semitics department courses. NECLL students may take history and language courses (including Hebrew and Aramaic) from the ANSWL program.

Most of the program’s Ph.D. students are older, have families, live some distance from CUA, which suggests they might be less involved in campus activities (e.g., the department’s Graduate Student Association representative is usually an M.A. student). There are few CUA teaching opportunities for Semitics students. Occasionally Ph.D. students serve as Teaching Assistants for the University Honors course HSHU 101 From Jesus to Muhammad. Some students have the opportunity to participate in special projects based on unique resources in the departmental library. Recent examples include a Syriac digital project, The Syriac Studies Reference Library http://www.lib.byu.edu/dlib/cua/ , and a papyrus conservation project, http://libraries.cua.edu/issue9.html#art3 .

They participate in a departmental lecture series in which Semitics doctoral candidates nearing completion of the dissertation explain their dissertation work to department students and faculty. They regularly participate and present papers at graduate student conferences, such as Dorushe Annual Graduate Student conference on Syriac Studies, and at professional conferences such as the Byzantine Studies Conference, American Academy of Religion, NAPS North American Patristics Society, Society of Biblical Literature, Middle East Studies Association.
The program’s graduates typically pursue scholarly careers. 2001-2007 Ph.D. graduates include:


2003. **Jason Zaborowski** (Concentration in Coptic and Arabic). 2006+ Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Bradley University. Teaching concentration: courses on religion in the Middle East: Islamic studies from historical and linguistic perspectives; the Coptic Christian community of Egypt; social change of religions in the Middle East, from pre-Islamic times to the modern period. [http://www.bradley.edu/las/phl/zaborowski/index.shtml](http://www.bradley.edu/las/phl/zaborowski/index.shtml)

2007. **David Bertaina** (Concentration in Arabic and Syriac). 2007+ Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Illinois at Springfield. Teaching concentration: history and literature of the medieval Middle East, with an emphasis on Christian-Muslim dialogues. [http://www.uis.edu/history/faculty/index.html](http://www.uis.edu/history/faculty/index.html)

V. Goals for NECLL Student Learning

Students who graduate with a Doctor of Philosophy in Near Eastern Christian Languages and Literatures will:

6. Demonstrate advanced first-hand knowledge and skill in the interpretation of the Christian literatures of the Near East in their historical and cultural contexts;

7. Exhibit the advanced linguistic training and knowledge of other auxiliary studies for scholarly study and translation of the Christian literatures in two or more of these languages: Arabic, Coptic, and Syriac;

8. Be prepared to teach late antique history, the history of Christian doctrine in the Near East, early Islamic history and thought, and patristics courses more generally in seminaries, undergraduate and graduate college and university programs, and

9. Demonstrate reading knowledge of both French and German and basic knowledge of Greek.

VI. ANWSL & NECLL Program Milestones
(Direct Student Assessment Outcome Measures)

8. **Admissions Requirements.** Requirements for admission to graduate study in the university are published in the General Information section of the *Graduate Studies Announcements*. Briefly, applicants for graduate study leading to a degree in the department are required to submit:
   a) An application for graduate study;
   b) Official transcripts of all undergraduate coursework and postsecondary studies;
   c) Three official letters of recommendation from academic sources who are acquainted with the applicants’ ability for graduate study;
d) Official score reports from the General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE);
e) A statement of purpose for undertaking graduate study in this department. Competence in the English language is a requirement. International applicants from countries and areas where English is not the common, spoken language are required to take the standard Test of English as a Foreign Language, TOEFL, and submit the results to support their applications.

9. Course Grades. Graduate students must consistently earn grades of A and B in their courses. Any graduate student who obtains two or more grades of C in coursework for his or her graduate program is subject to academic dismissal.

10. Fulfilling the modern language qualification requirements for French and German indicates a reading level of knowledge of these languages. One of these two language qualification requirements is taken to fulfill M.A. requirements; the other is taken to fulfill Ph.D. requirements. The modern language qualification requirements may be satisfied in various ways:
   a) By presenting a minimum score of 450 on the Graduate School Foreign Language Test;
   b) By passing the non-credit intensive 500-level language course offered by the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures;
   c) Unusually, in special circumstances, by passing a Semitics department-administered language test.
   d) A student whose native language is French or German shall be considered to have fulfilled the language requirement in that language without examination, provided that the department chair states, in writing, to the academic dean that the language is a language of scholarship for the student’s discipline.

11. Comprehensive Examination. Students in a doctoral program typically register in the academic dean’s office for the doctoral comprehensive examination at the beginning of the Fall or Spring semesters and notify the chair of the department of their intention to take the examination. They take their comprehensive examination in one major language/literature and one minor language/literature. ANWSL major/minor combinations may include: Hebrew/Aramaic; Hebrew/Akkadian. NECLL major/minor combinations may include: Arabic/Coptic; Arabic/Syriac; Coptic/Arabic; Coptic/Syriac; Syriac/Arabic; Syriac/Coptic. The student’s graduate advisor and a faculty member with primary responsibility for the student’s minor language area of concentration prepare reading lists for the exam. The department also encourages students to review the department file of examination questions from previous years. The two faculty members who developed the examination and at least one other evaluate the completed examination, applying the same specified criteria: linguistic proficiency, and knowledge and interpretation of the examination texts within their historical and literary contexts. The comprehensive examination is taken over the course of two eight-hour days. One day is allotted to the major language/literature and one day to the minor language/literature. While the master’s comprehensive examinations assess the linguistic proficiency of the students, the doctoral comprehensive examinations assess
linguistic competence, literary analytical skills, and knowledge and interpretation of the texts within their historical and literary contexts. The scoring framework is pass-fail. The three faculty members must agree on the examination score. If a student does not pass one or both parts of the examination, the student may take the failed part(s) of the examination again the next semester. A second failure is final.

12. Admission to Candidacy for the doctoral degree. The faculty of the school and department must evaluate the progress of the student and determine that the student has completed all course and other requirements, has passed the comprehensive examination, and is otherwise qualified to fulfill the requirements of the doctoral dissertation. A department criterion for admitting students to candidacy for the doctoral degree is demonstrated research and writing ability, as evinced by the student’s two master’s research papers and by the student’s subsequent 700-level research papers. All 700-level papers must receive a grade of B or higher to meet this criterion.


14. Dissertation. The student writes the dissertation to the satisfaction of the dissertation director. Then the dissertation is submitted to the readers for review and approval or rejection. The student’s planning and work on his or her dissertation also reflects ongoing conversations with the graduate adviser and department chair along with the rest of the faculty. Students must complete an acceptable dissertation within five years of formal admission to candidacy, including addressing any revisions the committee suggests. Committee members receive regular updates and portions of the dissertation for review; the readers make their suggestions and corrections through the dissertation director. The dissertation director, in consultation with the readers, determines when the dissertation is ready for defense and requests approval signatures from the readers (required for oral defense) at that time. Committee members do not sign until they agree that the dissertation is ready for defense. All three committee member signatures are required.

15. Oral Defense. The oral defense of the dissertation is conducted in accordance with rules enforced in the School of Arts and Sciences. Briefly, the oral examination board shall include, in addition to the candidate’s dissertation committee, two faculty members from outside the department, one serving as chair and the other as secretary during the examination. In order to pass, the candidate must receive a “pass” vote from at least four of board examiners. The examination board is not permitted to pass the candidate conditionally. If a candidate fails in the first oral examination, he or she must obtain permission from the school to retake the examination. If a candidate fails a second time in
the oral examination, he or she ceases to be a candidate for the doctoral degree. Criteria for evaluating the oral defense include:

ii. the dissertation constitutes a significant contribution to the field of study;

iii. the quality of oral presentation of topic, methodology, results;

iv. the quality of context knowledge, demonstration of analytical ability and awareness of intellectual context of study.

VII. Indirect Student Assessment Outcome Measures

In addition to the ANWSL and NECLL program milestones, student assessment outcome measures for the department doctoral programs include:

16. Student evaluations.
   a) Student evaluations of courses and faculty are captured on a departmental evaluation form handed out in class during the last week of the semester. The forms are filled out anonymously and returned to the department chair. The chair reviews the evaluations with faculty in department meetings at the end of the semester.
   b) The faculty evaluate the students with a view to measuring their academic progress at department meetings at the end of the Fall and Spring academic semesters.

17. Student-Faculty interaction. Department offices and classrooms are housed within the departmental library. Students and faculty have assigned work space in the library rooms, where critical library resources are used. This model promotes and encourages student-faculty interaction in a small academic department. The department considers this informal student-faculty interaction valuable because it provides early indicators of difficulties with course assignments and research. It also provides early indicators of a student’s research and language interests, which can be used to help students make good course decisions.

18. End-of-program surveys. The department asks graduates to fill out a department end-of-program survey when they graduate. These forms are filled out anonymously and returned to the department chair. The chair reviews the surveys with faculty at department meetings.

19. Alumni surveys. Department faculty meet informally with program alumni at the annual meetings of the Catholic Biblical Association, the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Academy of Religion, The American Oriental Society, and the North American Patristics Society. These meetings are a way to share current information about the department and to track alumni. The department will circulate a written alumni survey in June 2008.