

# Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

**Program: Master's of Art in English (529)**

**Department of English, Languages, & Cultural Studies**

**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Graduate School**

**Prepared by: J. Ereck Jarvis**

**Date: May 28, 2024**

**Approved by: Dr. Greg Handel, Dean of Graduate School Date:**

**Northwestern State University Mission:** Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

**Graduate School Mission:** Northwestern State University's Graduate School maintains as its mission and purpose to develop, provide, and support innovative, responsive, and accessible graduate programs of the highest quality. The Graduate School encourages mastery of disciplinary literature, innovative research, and professional development and practice opportunities. It further supports research by members of its scholarly community. The Graduate School is a source of intellectual capital for the University and contributes to the public welfare of the region, state, and nation.

**Department of English, Foreign Language, And Cultural Studies Mission:** The Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies is a dynamic, student-oriented program preparing students to achieve in diverse fields. The Department cultivates innovative, responsive, and accessible education of the highest level. We provide versatility through a range of digital literacies; our students build creative, cultural, critical, linguistic, and compositional skills—all in a contemporary digital context. Dedicated to preparing students to thrive in an ever-changing cultural and workplace environment, we support research, innovation, experiential learning, and creative endeavors by students and faculty.

**English Master's Degree Program Mission:** The Graduate Program of the Department of English, Foreign Languages and Cultural Studies is a dynamic, student-oriented program focused on rigorously preparing students to achieve in diverse fields. The English M.A. degree focuses on developing, providing, and supporting forward-thinking, responsive, and accessible graduate education of the highest level. Through concentrations in Folklife and Southern Culture, Literature, TESOL, Writing and Linguistics, and Creative Writing, as well as a Generalist option, the Graduate Program encourages mastery of discipline-specific literature, thoughtful research, professional development, and cross-curricular innovation as members of an engaged scholarly

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

community. Offering its students access to creative, critical, and compositional skills and experiences, the Graduate Program provides invaluable versatility in a rapidly changing world.

### Methodology:

1. Assessment tools are completed by the Graduate Faculty in English and returned to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies in English during the week of thesis defenses each term (summer, fall, and spring for each reporting cycle).
2. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies in English assembles, collates, and analyzes the data.
3. Results from the assessments are discussed with Graduate Faculty in English.
4. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies in English, in consultation with the Department Head and Graduate Faculty, will propose an action plan (if there are needed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools, and/or curricula or program) in response to assessment findings.
5. The program will implement the action plan in the next assessment reporting cycle.

### Student Learning Outcomes.

**SLO 1. Ideas: Students will employ creative thinking, innovation, and creative inquiry.**

#### Measure 1.1 (Direct—Student Artifact).

Each of the six concentrations in the M.A. program in English offers two options for degree completion:

**Thesis Option:** Students choosing to write a thesis as the culminating project for their degree will enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 5980: Thesis. A fully approved thesis proposal must be on file in the Department and the Graduate School prior to registration for thesis hours. Thesis students must successfully defend the thesis prior to graduation. Thesis students complete 24 hours of coursework (8 classes) and 6 hours of thesis, ENGL 5980, in which the thesis will be written and defended.

**Papers-in-lieu Option:** Students choosing to write papers-in-lieu as their culminating project for their degree must enroll in 3 hours of ENGL 6950: Research Problems. An overview of the papers must be created in consultation with the project director prior to registration for research hours. The papers must be approved by the student's director and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. PIL students complete 27 hours of

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

course work (9 classes) and 3 hours of Research Problems, ENGL 6950, in which two research papers-in-lieu of thesis will be written and submitted.

The attached rubric describes in detail the measurable outcomes for the degree completion options and the assessment columns for each outcome.

All students will achieve an average of 8.4 or higher on the revised rubric for “Ideas”: student “employ[s] creative thinking, innovation, and critical inquiry.”

**Findings:** Target was not met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2022-2023, the target of 8.35 was not met, as the four students who completed an extended, research-based writing project scored an arithmetic mean of 7.75. In the extended, research-based writing, students represented an effective endeavor to think originally and critically, taking a reasonable approach to content and making some contribution to the disciplinary conversations. However, they did not demonstrate proficiency in creative and critical thinking by expressly taking innovative approaches to content and making apt contributions to disciplinary conversations through their argumentation. During AC 2022-2023, the faculty conducted a professional development workshop to integrate the targeting of SLO1 across the program’s curriculum. Faculty implemented and revised assignments to target and benefit innovative and creative research design. As a result, the faculty set a plan of action to support students in improving the implementation of innovative critical inquiry.

As a result of the analysis of AC 2022-2023, in AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. The scheduling of the completion project administration in ENGL 5980 (Thesis) and ENGL 6950 (Research Problems) was revised to extend the composition period of the proposal, thereby enabling faculty to direct better the planning of the project’s intended critical contributions and original applications of theory. Students likewise gained more time to develop knowledge of methods and critical approaches already applied in existing research related to their projects. The ten students who completed an extended, research-based writing project scored an arithmetic mean of 8.3. Importantly, this also does not meet the target set for the previous year, AC 2022-2023, although it does represent a marked increase of 0.55 from the score in that earlier assessment.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, in AC 2024-2025, the Graduate Program in English will drive continuous improvement through revision to the options for degree completion and related curriculum noted above in the first section of Measure 1.1. All students in the standard M.A. program in English will complete a reconceptualized iteration of the “Papers-in-Lieu Option,” 27 hours of coursework (9 classes) and 3 hours of ENGL 6950. ENGL 6950, previously titled Problems in Research, will be renamed Master’s Capstone. ENGL 6950 (Master’s Capstone) will be revised to follow more closely the model of professional development of research within English studies. Professional research and creative output in English are typically initiated through the presentation of shorter, more limited drafts presented at conferences or readings. This initial work is expanded, significantly revised, and peer-reviewed for publication as a

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

journal article, chapbook, or similar issuance. In ENGL 6950 (Master's Capstone), students will begin with content and writing completed in a previous graduate English course, substantially revise and expand that work such that it meets the standards for professional peer-reviewed publication. ENGL 6950 will result in the completion of one paper-in-lieu of the thesis, with more thorough revision, expansion, development, and finalization of that project. The Master's Capstone is directed by one professor, generally, the one in whose course the initial work was completed, with a second professor operating as a reader—supplementing initial research, expansion, and revision plans and approving the final draft. The second reader emulates the model of peer-review similar to the function of a thesis committee. The "Thesis Option" (24 hours of course work (8 classes) and 6 hours of thesis, ENGL 5980, in which a thesis is written and defended) will be available to and required of only students who are completing the M.A. program in English as part of the Louisiana Scholars' College accelerated degree programs for an Accelerated Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts (820B and 820H) and a Master of Arts in English (529). Within the accelerated dual degree programs, the MA thesis fulfills both the M.A. in English completion requirement and the Louisiana Scholars' College requirement that students complete a thesis. ENGL 5980, previously titled "Thesis," will be changed to "Thesis for Accelerated Scholars BA-MA," and the course will be revised, reducing the conceptual breadth of theses to prioritize quality and depth through more limited foci. ENGL 5980 will require a thesis of two to three rather than three or more chapters.

The alterations to the options for degree completion and related curriculum will enable students to complete more thorough work with more consistent guidance from faculty. As such, these changes will result in stronger, more refined scholarly proficiency in creative and critical thinking and the development of innovative approaches that build well-defined arguments that contribute aptly to the project's discipline.

ENGL 5800 (Research & Bibliography), required of all M.A. in English students, will be revised to anticipate and support the revision of the options for degree completion and related curricular changes. The "Final: Proposal" assignment will be removed and replaced with a "Prospective Abstract" assignment, which will require that students frame and articulate a prospective analysis with emphasis on its original contribution to the discipline. An additional new assignment will build proficiency in SLO 1 and prepare for the "Prospective Abstract" by asking students to identify and summarize the critical methods implemented in a pair of published journal articles within their concentrations. Students will also apply Kenneth Burke's concept of research conversations regarding these articles, which will require them to articulate the innovation and originality of each article. The "Prospective Abstract" assignment will require an annotated bibliography that functions as a literature review. Furthermore, a revised version of the "Theory Project" assignment will be reimplemented, adding a requirement that students not only identify the application of a theoretical framework but also articulate the critical innovation accomplished through this theoretical application.

On the rubric, the AC 2024-2025 target for this measure will be set at 8.45 to promote continuous improvement.

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

**SLO 2. Context: Students will demonstrate a command of pertinent critical assumptions, methodologies, and practices in their chosen concentration.**

### **Measure 2.1 (Direct—Student Artifact)**

Each of the six concentrations in the M.A. program in English offers two options for degree completion:

**Thesis Option:** Students choosing to write a thesis as the culminating project for their degree will enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 5980: Thesis. A fully approved thesis proposal must be on file in the Department and the Graduate School prior to registration for thesis hours. Thesis students must successfully defend the thesis prior to graduation. Thesis students complete 24 hours of coursework (8 classes) and 6 hours of thesis, ENGL 5980, in which the thesis will be written and defended.

**Papers-in-lieu Option:** Students choosing to write papers-in-lieu as their culminating project for their degree must enroll in 3 hours of ENGL 6950: Research Problems. An overview of the papers must be created in consultation with the project director prior to registration for research hours. The papers must be approved by the student's director and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. PIL students complete 27 hours of course work (9 classes) and 3 hours of Research Problems, ENGL 6950, in which two research papers-in-lieu of thesis will be written and submitted.

The attached rubric describes in detail the measurable outcomes for the degree completion options and the assessment columns for each outcome.

All students will achieve an average of 8.3 or higher on the revised rubric for "Context": students "demonstrate[s] a command of pertinent critical assumptions, methodologies, and practices."

**Findings:** Target was not met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. Students situated their extended, research-based writing projects within a well-defined theoretical framework, and they provided a compelling rationale for that approach, proceeding through clearly related methodologies. To support continuous improvement, the curriculum of ENGL 5800 was revised to expand practice and reflection regarding methodologies and critical assumptions in research-based writing. During the AC 2022-2033, the faculty also conducted a professional development workshop to further integrate the targeting of SLO2 across the program's curriculum. Faculty implemented and revised assignments to target and benefit innovative and creative theoretical and methodological approaches. As a result, the faculty set a plan of action to support students in articulating and implementing the methodological contexts of their academic research.

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

As a result of the analysis of AC 2022-2023, in AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. A new unit was added to ENGL 5800, one that framed the course and its subsequent assignments in relation to epistemology and knowledge production in English studies. The ten students who completed an extended, research-based writing project scored an arithmetic mean of 8.0. This score meets the target set for AC 2022-2023 but does not fulfill the goal of continuous improvement set for the current year.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, in AC 2024-2025, the Graduate Program in English will drive continuous improvement through revision to the options for degree completion and related curriculum noted above in the first section of Measure 2.1. All students in the standard M.A. program in English will complete a reconceptualized iteration of the “Papers-in-Lieu Option,” 27 hours of coursework (9 classes) and 3 hours of ENGL 6950. ENGL 6950, previously titled Problems in Research, will be renamed Master’s Capstone. ENGL 6950 (Master’s Capstone) will be revised to follow more closely the professional development model of research within English studies. Professional research and creative output in English are typically initiated through the presentation of shorter, more limited drafts presented at conferences or readings. This initial work is expanded, significantly revised, and peer-reviewed for publication as a journal article, chapbook, or similar issuance. In ENGL 6950 (Master’s Capstone), students will begin with content and writing completed in a previous graduate English course, substantially revise and expand that work such that it meets the standards for professional peer-reviewed publication. ENGL 6950 will result in the completion of one paper-in-lieu of thesis, with more thorough revision, expansion, development, and finalization of that project. The Master’s Capstone is directed by one professor, generally, the one in whose course the initial work was completed, with a second professor operating as a reader—supplementing initial research, expansion, and revision plans and approving the final draft. The second reader emulates the model of peer-review similar to the function of a thesis committee. The “Thesis Option” (24 hours of course work (8 classes) and 6 hours of thesis, ENGL 5980, in which a thesis is written and defended) will be available to and required of only students who are completing the M.A. program in English as part of the Louisiana Scholars’ College accelerated degree programs for an Accelerated Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts (820B and 820H) and a Master of Arts in English (529). Within the accelerated dual degree programs, the MA thesis fulfills both the M.A. in English completion requirement and the Louisiana Scholars’ College requirement that students complete a thesis. ENGL 5980, previously titled “Thesis,” will be changed to “Thesis for Accelerated Scholars BA-MA,” and the course will be revised, reducing the conceptual breadth of theses to prioritize quality and depth through more limited foci. ENGL 5980 will require a thesis of two to three rather than three or more chapters.

The alterations to the options for degree completion and related curriculum will enable students to complete more thorough work with more consistent guidance from faculty. By reducing breadth and increasing focus, the revised completion options and related curriculum will teach and enable students to more thoroughly situate their projects within well-defined theoretical and methodological rationales.

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

ENGL 5800 (Research & Bibliography), required of all M.A. in English students, will be revised to anticipate and support the revision of the options for degree completion and related curricular changes. A revised version of the “Theory Project” assignment will be reimplemented: this iteration of the assignment will remove the research survey requirement, replacing it with a requirement that students thoroughly articulate the application of theory, drawing on and explicating multiple instances of evidence.

On the rubric, the AC 2024-2025 target for this measure will be set at 8.3 to promote continuous improvement.

**SLO 3. Research/Discourses: Students will conduct, analyze, synthesize, and contextualize relevant research within their English concentration.**

### Measure 3.1 (direct—student artifact)

Each of the six concentrations in the M.A. program in English offers two options for degree completion:

**Thesis Option:** Students choosing to write a thesis as the culminating project for their degree will enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 5980: Thesis. A fully approved thesis proposal must be on file in the Department and the Graduate School prior to registration for thesis hours. Thesis students must successfully defend the thesis prior to graduation. Thesis students complete 24 hours of coursework (8 classes) and 6 hours of thesis, ENGL 5980, in which the thesis will be written and defended.

**Papers-in-lieu Option:** Students choosing to write papers-in-lieu as their culminating project for their degree must enroll in 3 hours of ENGL 6950: Research Problems. An overview of the papers must be created in consultation with the project director prior to registration for research hours. The papers must be approved by the student’s director and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. PIL students complete 27 hours of course work (9 classes) and 3 hours of Research Problems, ENGL 6950, in which two research papers-in-lieu of thesis will be written and submitted.

The attached rubric describes in detail the measurable outcomes for the degree completion options and the assessment columns for each outcome.

All students will achieve an average of 8.4 or higher on the revised rubric for “Research/Discourses”: student “conduct[s], analyze[s], synthesize[s], and contextualize[s] relevant research within their English concentration.”

**Findings:** Target was not met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2022-2023, the target of 8.35 was not met. Students located their extended, research-based writing projects within defined but not clearly defined academic contexts. Their literature reviews presented and synthesized relevant research with

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

increased thoroughness and explicit, specific articulation of how their project contributed to ongoing academic conversations. Changes were made to assignments related to a literature review in ENGL 5800 to provide additional instruction and practice in SLO3. The faculty also conducted a professional development workshop to further integrate the targeting of SLO3 across the program's curriculum. Faculty implemented and revised assignments to target and benefit the thorough representation and synthesis of extant research and to better define academic contexts that define and inform their critical and research-based writing. As a result, a plan of action was set by the faculty to support students in thorough literature reviews that aptly situate their research projects and arguments.

As a result of the analysis of AC 2022-2023 data, the target was not met in AC 2023-2024. The scheduling of the completion project administration in ENGL 5980 (Thesis) and ENGL 6950 (Research Problems), extending the composition period of the proposal and thereby enabling faculty to better guide students' reading of existing scholarship and research related to projects. Students likewise gained more time to build core knowledge of established analyses and existing research related to their projects. Changes were made to ENGL 5800 to provide models of literature reviews and to ask students to develop work based on these models in the "Final Proposal" assignment. The ten students who completed an extended, research-based writing project scored an arithmetic mean of 7.7. Although the failure to meet this target is addressed fully below, it should be noted that one student's score in AC 2023-2024 was exceptionally low such that when this single score is removed from the data set, the nine remaining students scoring an arithmetic mean of 8.0. This score still does not meet the target for AC 2023-2024 of that set for AC 2022-2023, but it was considered in establishing a future target score for SLO3.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, in AC 2024-2025 the Graduate Program in English will drive continuous improvement through revision to the options for degree completion and related curriculum noted above in the first section of Measure 3.1. All students in the standard M.A. program in English will complete a reconceptualized iteration of the "Papers-in-Lieu Option," 27 hours of course work (9 classes) and 3 hours of ENGL 6950. ENGL 6950, previously titled Problems in Research, will be renamed Master's Capstone. ENGL 6950 (Master's Capstone) will be revised to follow more closely the model of professional development of research within English studies. Professional research and creative output in English is typically initiated through presentation of shorter, more limited drafts presented at conferences or readings. This initial work is expanded, significantly revised, and peer-reviewed for publication as a journal article, chapbook, or similar issuance. In ENGL 6950 (Master's Capstone), students will begin with content and writing completed in a previous graduate English course, substantially revise and expand that work such that it meets the standards for professional peer-reviewed publication. ENGL 6950 will result in the completion of one paper-in-lieu of thesis, with more thorough revision, expansion, development, and finalization of that project. The Master's Capstone is directed by one professor, generally the one in whose course the initial work was completed, with a second professor operating as reader—supplementing initial research, expansion, and revision plans and approving

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

the final draft. The second reader emulates the model of peer-review similar to the function of a thesis committee. The “Thesis Option” (24 hours of course work (8 classes) and 6 hours of thesis, ENGL 5980, in which a thesis is written and defended) will be available to and required of only students who are completing the M.A. program in English as part of the Louisiana Scholars’ College accelerated degree programs for an Accelerated Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts (820B and 820H) and a Master of Arts in English (529). Within the accelerated dual degree programs, the MA thesis fulfills both the M.A. in English completion requirement and the Louisiana Scholars’ College requirement that students complete a thesis. ENGL 5980, previously titled “Thesis,” will be changed to “Thesis for Accelerated Scholars BA-MA,” and the course will be revised, reducing the conceptual breadth of theses to prioritize quality and depth through more limited foci. ENGL 5980 will require a thesis of two to three rather than three or more chapters.

The alterations to the options for degree completion and related curriculum will enable students to complete more thorough work with more consistent guidance from faculty. By reducing breadth and increasing focus, the revised completion options and related curriculum will teach and enable students locate their projects within highly-defined academic contexts and generate thorough, well-synthesized reviews of existing scholarship that serve as foundations for their own research.

ENGL 5800 (Research & Bibliography), required of all M.A. in English students, will be revised to anticipate and support the revision of the options for degree completion and related curricular changes. The “Final: Proposal” assignment will be removed and replaced with a “Prospective Abstract” assignment, which will require students to complete an annotated bibliography that functions as a literature review. The assignment instructions and related course content will articulate the connection between the annotated bibliography and the “Literature Review Reflection” assigned earlier in the semester. The texts students work with on the “Literature Review Reflection” will also be updated to better model the thorough literature review expected in graduate research, particularly theses and Master’s capstone projects.

On the rubric, the AC 2024-25 target for this measure will be set at 8.25 to promote continuous improvement.

**SLO 4. Form: Students will practice sophisticated writing skills appropriate to stylistic conventions and genre expectations within their chosen MA concentration.**

### **Measure 4.1 (direct—student artifact)**

Each of the six concentrations in the M.A. program in English offers two options for degree completion:

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

**Thesis Option:** Students choosing to write a thesis as the culminating project for their degree will enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 5980: Thesis. A fully approved thesis proposal must be on file in the Department and the Graduate School prior to registration for thesis hours. Thesis students must successfully defend the thesis prior to graduation. Thesis students complete 24 hours of coursework (8 classes) and 6 hours of thesis, ENGL 5980, in which the thesis will be written and defended.

**Papers-in-lieu Option:** Students choosing to write papers-in-lieu as their culminating project for their degree must enroll in 3 hours of ENGL 6950: Research Problems. An overview of the papers must be created in consultation with the project director prior to registration for research hours. The papers must be approved by the student's director and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. PIL students complete 27 hours of course work (9 classes) and 3 hours of Research Problems, ENGL 6950, in which two research papers-in-lieu of thesis will be written and submitted.

The attached rubric describes in detail the measurable outcomes for the degree completion options and the assessment columns for each outcome.

All students will achieve an average of 8.7 or higher on the revised rubric for "Form": student "practice[s] sophisticated writing skills appropriate to stylistic conventions and genre expectations."

**Findings:** Target was not met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2022-2023, the target of 8.5 was met. In their extended, research-based writing projects, students followed academic conventions and communicated essential information with clarity, precision, and coherence. During the AC 2022-2023, the faculty also implemented and revised assignments to target and benefit effective style—clarity, precision, and coherence—in academic and research-based writing. As a result, a plan of action was set by the faculty to support students in thorough literature reviews that aptly situate their research projects and arguments.

As a result of the analysis of AC 2022-2023, in AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Graduate faculty participated in a professional development session focused on graduate-level composition. Additionally, a brief module regarding Joseph Williams' guidelines for revision was added to ENGL 5800. The faculty conducted a professional development workshop to further integrate the targeting of SLO4 across the program's curriculum. The ten students who completed an extended, research-based writing project scored an arithmetic mean of 8.6. This score exceeds the target for 2022-2023, therefore showing improvement; however, the increase does not fulfill the goals for AC 2023-2024.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, in AC 2024-2025, the Graduate Program in English will drive continuous improvement through revision to the options for degree completion and related curriculum noted above in the first section of Measure 4.1. All students in the standard M.A. program in English will complete a

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

reconceptualized iteration of the “Papers-in-Lieu Option,” 27 hours of coursework (9 classes) and 3 hours of ENGL 6950. ENGL 6950, previously titled Problems in Research, will be renamed Master’s Capstone. ENGL 6950 (Master’s Capstone) will be revised to follow more closely the model of professional development of research within English studies. Professional research and creative output in English are typically initiated through the presentation of shorter, more limited drafts presented at conferences or readings. This initial work is expanded, significantly revised, and peer-reviewed for publication as a journal article, chapbook, or similar issuance. In ENGL 6950 (Master’s Capstone), students will begin with content and writing completed in a previous graduate English course, substantially revise and expand that work such that it meets the standards for professional peer-reviewed publication. ENGL 6950 will result in the completion of one paper-in-lieu of thesis, with more thorough revision, expansion, development, and finalization of that project. The Master’s Capstone is directed by one professor, generally the one in whose course the initial work was completed, with a second professor operating as a reader—supplementing initial research, expansion, and revision plans and approving the final draft. The second reader emulates the model of peer-review similar to the function of a thesis committee. The “Thesis Option” (24 hours of course work (8 classes) and 6 hours of thesis, ENGL 5980, in which a thesis is written and defended) will be available to and required of only students who are completing the M.A. program in English as part of the Louisiana Scholars’ College accelerated degree programs for an Accelerated Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts (820B and 820H) and a Master of Arts in English (529). Within the accelerated dual degree programs, the MA thesis fulfills both the M.A. in English completion requirement and the Louisiana Scholars’ College requirement that students complete a thesis. ENGL 5980, previously titled “Thesis,” will be changed to “Thesis for Accelerated Scholars BA-MA,” and the course will be revised, reducing the conceptual breadth of theses to prioritize quality and depth through more limited foci. ENGL 5980 will require a thesis of two to three rather than three or more chapters.

The alterations to the options for degree completion and related curriculum will enable students to complete more thorough work with more consistent guidance from faculty. Specifically, these changes will direct students to complete more thorough and substantive revisions in their research-based writing, thereby leading to clarity, precision, coherence, and logic of both prose and organization regarding the composition as a whole, its parts, and the paragraphs that comprise those parts.

ENGL 5800 (Research & Bibliography), required of all M.A. in English students, will be revised to anticipate and support the revision of the options for degree completion and related curricular changes. New readings on revision in scholarly writing—including work by Ruth Culhum and Nancy Sommers—will direct students to reconceptualize revision and provide concrete examples for adopting new practical approaches to revision as integral to professional writing. A new assignment will require students to analyze revisions in published academic writing, thereby applying ideas from Culhum and Sommers in the analysis of how academic writers revised their work in response to feedback from peer reviewers and others.

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

On the rubric, the AC 2024-25 target for this measure will be set at 8.75 to promote continuous improvement.

### Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results.

- In Measure 1, the scheduling of the completion project administration in ENGL 5980 (Thesis) and ENGL 6950 (Research Problems) was revised to extend the composition period of the proposal. This change enabled faculty to direct better the planning of the project's intended critical contributions and original applications of theory and, as such, extended support and benefit to student success regarding SLO1.
- In Measure 2, ENGL 5800 was revised to include a new unit framing the course and its subsequent assignments in relation to epistemology and knowledge production in English studies. As such, all English graduate students gained key conceptualization of SLO2 and will transfer this learning to subsequent coursework and the completion option to better fulfill SLO2.
- In Measure 3, the scheduling of the completion project administration in ENGL 5980 (Thesis) and ENGL 6950 (Research Problems) was revised to enable faculty to increase the guidance of apt literature reviews. Students also gained more time to synthesize core knowledge related to their projects. Both of these advantages support students' increased success regarding SLO3.
- In Measure 3, changes were made to ENGL 5800 to provide models of literature reviews and to ask students to develop work based on these models in the "Final Proposal" assignment, thereby requiring students to practice application that bolsters their understanding and practice of SLO3.
- In Measure 4, graduate faculty participated in a professional development session focused on graduate-level composition. This session distributed compositional pedagogies across the English graduate curriculum to ensure students receive consistent support and feedback in improved service of SLO4.
- In Measure 4, a brief module regarding Joseph Williams' guidelines for revision was added to ENGL 5800 to provide students with methods and practice of sentence-level strategies that directly benefit SLO4.

### Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- Targets for all four SLOs in AC 2024-2025 have been set with consideration of the AC 2023-2024 averages as well as consideration of a single significant outlier regarding SLO3's scores and of the AC 2023-2024 scores in relation to those of AC 2022-23.
- The options for degree completion and related curriculum will be revised as noted below.
  - All students in the standard M.A. program in English will complete a reconceptualized iteration of the "Papers-in-Lieu Option," 27 hours of

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

coursework (9 classes) and 3 hours of ENGL 6950, previously titled Problems in Research and now renamed Master's Capstone.

- In line with the professional model of peer review, ENGL 6950 (Master's Capstone) will be revised to follow more closely the model of professional development of research within English studies will begin with content and writing completed in a previous graduate English course, will require substantial expansion and revision of that work, and will result in the completion of one paper-in-lieu of thesis,
  - The Master's Capstone will be directed by one professor, with a second professor operating as a reader—supplementing initial research, expansion, and revision plans and approving the final draft.
  - The “Thesis Option” will be available to and required of only students who are completing the M.A. program in English as part of the Louisiana Scholars' College accelerated degree programs for an Accelerated Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts (820B and 820H) and a Master of Arts in English (529).
  - ENGL 5980, previously titled “Thesis,” will be changed to “Thesis for Accelerated Scholars BA-MA,” and the course will be revised to prioritize quality and depth through more limited focus, resulting in theses of two to three chapters.
- In the program's required course ENGL 5800,
- Assignments will be revised to anticipate and support the revised options for degree completion and related curricular changes, including revisions specified below;
  - The “Prospective Abstract” assignment will replace the “Final: Proposal” assignment to require that students frame a prospective analysis with emphasis on its original contribution to the discipline;
  - A new exercise will prepare students for the “Prospective Abstract” through a summary of the critical methods implemented in a pair of published journal articles within their concentrations. Application of Kenneth Burke's concept of research conversations will require them to articulate the innovation and originality of each article;
  - “Prospective Abstract” assignment will require an annotated bibliography that functions as a literature review;
  - A revised version of the “Theory Project” assignment will be reimplemented, with a new requirement that students articulate the critical innovation accomplished through model articles' theoretical application;
  - The models students work with on the “Literature Review Reflection” will be updated to better reflect the thorough literature review expected in graduate research;
  - Addition of new readings on revision in scholarly writing—including work by Ruth Culhum and Nancy Sommers—will direct students to reconceptualize revision and provide examples for the adoption of strong revision methods.

## **Assessment Cycle 2023-2024**

- A new assignment will require students to analyze revisions in published academic writing in relation to Culhum and Sommers.