

Goals of the Ph.D. in English Studies

The Ph.D. in English Studies is designed for students who have a demonstrated career commitment to teaching, especially in two and four year colleges. Its purpose is to integrate theories of undergraduate instruction with knowledge in composition, language, and literature. Students in this program must successfully complete courses and/or seminars in education, i.e., a professional education component, as well as courses in the major and minor disciplines. The professional education component, including an internship, is designed to familiarize students with basic pedagogical concepts in higher education. The disciplinary component is designed to expose Ph.D. students to a breadth and depth of knowledge and skills that will enhance teaching in English.

The objectives of the Ph.D. in English Studies are:

1. to educate students in the theoretical and practical applications of research in pedagogy, language, composition, and literature;
2. to prepare students for leadership in the profession through scholarly activity, and
3. to prepare students to teach reading and writing to undergraduate students to improve their verbal and analytical skills.
4. To place graduating students in appropriate faculty and administrative positions in higher education, and in appropriate positions in business and non-profit organizations.

Means of Assessment:

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam in English Studies

Demonstrates students' preparation in area 2 above.

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam in Area of Specialization

Demonstrates students' preparation in areas 1 and 2 above.

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam in Pedagogy

Demonstrates students' preparation in area 3 above.

Placement Data Gathered through ongoing Communication with Graduates

Assesses the department's performance in area 4 above.

Outcomes:

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exams: In 1999 the department adopted a revised Ph. D. comprehensive exam, changing the focus of our exams somewhat and reducing the number of areas in which students are evaluated from 5 areas to three. Between March 1999 and March 2002 eight students took the new Ph. D. comprehensive exams. Seven students passed all exams on their first try. One student failed one section of the exam on the first try, then passed on the first re-take.

Ph. D. Placement Rates: Since its inception in the late 1970s the English department doctoral program has produced over 130 graduates, and has placed over 90% of those graduates in tenure-track faculty jobs or comparable administrative positions. Between March 1998 and March 2002 we graduated twenty Ph. D. students. Seventeen of those graduates found tenure-track or comparable positions, and three of them took non-tenure-track teaching positions. Our graduates from this four-year period found tenure-track teaching jobs in a range of institutions, including Baylor University, Louisiana State University, Northern Michigan University, Ferris State University, South Dakota State University, Heartland Community College, Illinois Valley Community College, and others. During this period the national average tenure-track placement rate for Ph. D. programs has been slightly below 50%.