

Classics

Assessment Update 2009

In the Classics department, undergraduate student assessment takes place at the end of each spring semester. To assess majors in the classical languages and literature track, the faculty members teaching the intermediate Greek and Latin language courses report on the extent to which students meet basic benchmarks, such as comprehension of basic grammar and syntax and fluency in reading. For classical humanities majors, a faculty committee reads a selection of papers from the senior capstone seminar to assess whether students have a general knowledge of classical antiquity and the ability to analyze complex literary sources, as well as strong writing skills. Lastly, graduating seniors complete an exit survey to give us a sense of the undergraduate experience in classics and the career plans of our students.

Graduate student progress is more highly monitored, and therefore easier to track, because of the many exams they must take before undertaking the dissertation. Progress toward the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees is measured at several points during the academic year: in the fall, when all students are required to complete a self-assessment sheet and discuss it individually with the graduate advisor; before and after language and preliminary exams; and in early february when each student meets individually with a faculty team to discuss progress. The graduate advisor then reports on student progress twice yearly to the departmental executive committee.

The exit surveys have helped to identify weaknesses in the curriculum (e.g., the need for more courses in translation for classical humanities major).