

Assessment Plan (2013)  
French and Italian

French – BA/BS, MA, PhD  
French Studies – PFMP  
Italian - BA/BS, MA, PhD

The Department has assessment plans for each of its three programs.

Undergraduate Programs in French and Italian:

Assessment of the undergraduate program in French is carried out by the Undergraduate Studies Committee. In Italian it is overseen by the Italian Instructional Committee. The undergraduate program in French employs review of student papers and surveys as the chief means of assessing student learning. Faculty also carefully monitor grading patterns across multi-section courses, course evaluations, and program requirements. Information from these efforts has led to a broad revision of the French curriculum, both at the course and program level.

Since 2011, our assessment efforts have been enhanced by the TAship which the French program received through the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates. During 2011-2012, the MIU Assessment TA developed our first questionnaire for French language students, asking them both about reasons for choosing specific French language courses and the goals they hoped to achieve in these courses. This questionnaire was distributed to all our first and second-year language students during the late spring of 2012. This year (AY 2012-13), our focus has been a survey of data regarding the current status of our first 6 semesters in the French language sequence through French 311 (plus French 271). We created a questionnaire to assess current courses in this sequence and then met with each of the course chairs of French levels 101-311 to discuss the questions. Information was gathered on the following topics for each course: the objectives and graded class components; the main grammar points and thematic units covered; the types and lengths of reading and writing assignments; and areas the instructors identified as strong points and challenges. The survey of this data has revealed a need for improvement in two main areas: first, adding to our curricula in all the courses considered modules to help students improve their writing; second, developing a better articulation between the different grammar skills that students are expected to master at each stage of our language sequence. We have also been looking at other universities for departments that have undergone a language program review. By examining the websites of peer and aspirational universities and by reviewing professional literature on program assessment, we hope to identify steps that these institutions have taken to evaluate their programs and also to discover possible program adaptations we may not have previously considered

M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in French and Italian:

Assessment of the M.A. and Ph.D. programs in French is handled by the French Instructional Committee, under the guidance of the Director of French Graduate Studies. In Italian assessment is monitored by the Associate Chair and the Italian Instructional Committee. The Department makes use of milestones (preliminary examinations, dissertation defense, etc.) that demonstrate

language proficiency, teaching skills, and academic knowledge. The Department has also surveyed enrolled graduate students and graduate alumni. Changes made as a result of assessment have been directed at ensuring timely progress to degree. The post-M.A. sequence of examinations in the French section has been revised in the past five years in function of the ongoing review by the French Instructional Committee of the effectiveness of the program, resulting in greater flexibility for students and an earlier and more dynamic preparation for writing the dissertation.

#### Professional French Masters Program in French Studies:

The Professional French Master's Program has well articulated learning goals and uses a series of authentic assessment strategies to ensure that students in this program move on to capably perform in the wide variety of professional fields entered after completion of the degree. The most noteworthy of these tools is a program-level evaluation of each student's professional portfolio and final project, written in French. Formerly a more traditional master's thesis, the final project in this portfolio has since 2009 been the thesis-length "Final Internship Report," including internship description, analysis and recommendations. It is written in French. When approved by the program, it is presented, also in French, by the student, before a master's committee and PFMP audience, in a professional-conference format.