

ENG 321: Assessing Multi-Section Courses and Proposal Assignments

Assessment Report

English Department, Technical and Professional Writing Program

Assessment meeting: June 28, 2017

Faculty in attendance: Tracy Dalton, Lyn Gattis, Sean Herring, Marianne Karanikas, Leslie Seawright, John Turner

Faculty preparing report: Tracy Dalton

During the 2016–17 academic year, faculty who teach ENG 321: Writing II: Beginning Technical Writing in the English Department at Missouri State University gathered assignments from a common genre to assess. The curriculum for this General Education Foundations course includes proposals, so throughout the 2016–17 academic year, faculty discussed assessment activities at general faculty meetings and submitted student proposal assignments for assessment. The sample for assessment included 50 proposals. Here is the breakdown of the sample pool:

- *Fall 2017:* 13 sections (20–22 students/section)
- *Spring 2017:* 12 sections (20–22 student/section)

Faculty also decided to focus assessment on one General Education student learning outcome (SLO): General Goal 15: “Students will be able to synthesize information and integrate material from a variety of courses, as they apply their knowledge, abilities, and skills to specific situations.” Then, assessment focused specifically on SLO 15.1: “utilize academic knowledge to develop solutions to complex problems.”

Methods for assessment

During our meeting, we used a rubric to rank characteristics common to most proposals to assess the best practices for proposal delivery using high, medium, and low quality writing samples (*see the appendix for the rubric used during the June 2017 assessment meeting*). This is a description of the categories into which faculty divided proposals and the criteria for each category:

- *High ranking samples:* provides completely (sometimes extensive) ideas, uses grammar well, formatted appropriately for writing situation, complete and professional engagement with audience
- *Medium ranking samples:* met expectations for assignment development, generally acceptable use of grammar with some errors, no noteworthy features in format, with minimal connection to audience
- *Low ranking samples:* used vague ideas and simple development, problematic grammar, awkward or inappropriate format, and minimal to no connection to audience

Faculty initially submitted the proposals in these categories, so the assessment progressed based on initial determinations of writing quality. At the assessment meeting, faculty evaluated proposal samples from those submitted, working to avoid their own students’ samples. This is the total number of items in the ENG 321 proposal assessment pool:

- Low (16 samples)
- Medium (17 samples)
- High (17 samples)

Assessment data

The following tables list the tallied rankings from this assessment. Numbers in columns indicate total number of proposals in the sample that faculty determined to illustrate each best practice:

High sample totals (17 proposals)

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Clearly states goals and purpose for the proposal	16	1	
Indicates deliverable and provides clear plan for content	13	4	
Uses an acceptable format to present the proposal	10	7	
Connects to audience through call to action	7	7	3
Correctly and consistently applies grammar and mechanics	17		

Medium sample totals (17 proposals)

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Clearly states goals and purpose for the proposal	11	6	
Indicates deliverable and provides clear plan for content	7	7	3
Uses an acceptable format to present the proposal	11	6	
Connects to audience through call to action	6	7	4
Correctly and consistently applies grammar and mechanics	8	7	2

Low sample totals (16 proposals)

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Clearly states goals and purpose for the proposal	4	7	5
Indicates deliverable and provides clear plan for content	3	5	8
Uses an acceptable format to present the proposal	1	9	6
Connects to audience through call to action	6	4	6
Correctly and consistently applies grammar and mechanics	4	7	5

Faculty discussion after assessment

After the assessment of proposals was completed, faculty discussed how, generally, each member grades written and online assignments, and, then, discussion turned to specific ideas about how proposals in ENG 321 are graded. Faculty noticed that proposals are presented in various formats: letters, memos, single- and double-spaced. We acknowledged the range of proposal assignments and discussed how some of faculty present rubrics to students and use those rubrics to grade the assignment. Specifically, faculty decided to list on ENG 321 policy statements the following information:

- the specific SLOs ENG 321 addresses
- corresponding SLOs for each assignment in ENG 321

Faculty decided that listing SLOs in ENG 321 policy statements would better clarify for students the General Education goals for the course.

Outcomes from assessment

Faculty agreed on these outcomes from the assessment of ENG 321 proposals:

- There is a need to further develop students' abilities to synthesize information and express it in writing.
- Students in ENG 321 vary widely in their abilities to use outside resources and to appropriately document those sources in their writing.
- Faculty decided to analyze assignments that require research-based writing for the 2017–18 cycle of assessment, focusing on General Education SLO 3.4: “use writing for inquiry, learning, and thinking to find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize appropriate primary and secondary sources and integrate their own ideas with those of others.”
- Faculty also decided to double the number of samples collected to create better data.

Dr. Leslie Seawright volunteered to lead assessment efforts for ENG 321 during 2017–18.

Appendix

ENG 321 Proposal Assessment Rubric

2016–17

1. General Education Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 15.0

General Goal 15: “Students will be able to synthesize information and integrate material from a variety of courses, as they apply their knowledge, abilities, and skills to specific situations.”

SLO 15.1: “utilize academic knowledge to develop solutions to complex problems.”

Proposal # (code from Blackboard): Low Medium High + Sample # _____

2. Assessment criteria

Rate each item below (3, 2, or 1) for the proposal sample you are analyzing:

Criteria	Excellent (3)	Good (2)	Poor (1)
Clearly states goals and purpose for the proposal			
Indicates deliverable and provides clear plan for content			
Uses an acceptable format to present the proposal			
Connects to audience through call to action			
Correctly and consistently applies grammar and mechanics			