

Assessment Plan
Department of History
8 October 1993
(Amended, 25 August 2004)

1. The assessment of students' academic achievement will remain a component of the History Department's mission to students and majors as it has been for more than two decades. To this end instructors will be encouraged to continue defining academic goals for all courses. All instructors will be reminded that the department's mission-and-goal statement was written to reflect both the specific mixture of survey and advanced courses within a history major, as well as the general goals the department has had for its survey classes. Those academic goals are normally included on the syllabi of all departmental courses. Thus, course syllabi along with examinations, essay assignments and other written requirements on which course grades are based should continue to reflect the department's mission and goals.

The chair of the History Department and its Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Committees will also continue to review and assess syllabi, major assignments and mid-term and final examinations as a significant component in the reappointment of non-tenured and associate faculty and in tenure and promotion cases for line positions. The chair and Reappointment Committee will continue to suggest modifications to course design in history where modifications are appropriate to ensure correlation between course contents and the mission and goals of the department.

2. Interim assessment of history majors will be based on student growth and development in H217, The Nature of History, a sophomore-level course meeting the School of Arts and Sciences second-semester writing requirement. A tenure-line faculty member will be assigned as principal teacher for H217 each time it is offered, but both instruction and assessment of student achievement in the course will be carried out by the principal teacher and by as many full-time faculty members as are available that semester to assist him or her in the instruction and assessment of the course. The minimum number of assistants will be two, the maximum (and optimum) number will be all full-time line faculty.

Copies of all graded assignments in the course with the assessor's initials on the paper will be placed in a student portfolio and will be retained in departmental files. At the conclusion of the course the principal teacher will provide students with a brief evaluation of their work and recommendations for continued progress in studying history. The portfolios will be added to and employed in assessing departmental mission, goals and objectives at a later time as described below in 4.

3. External exit assessment will be monitored in the future by the department as it has been in the past on the basis of the survey of History Department graduates which

has been sent to all graduating history majors for at least two decades. The mission and goals statement of the department reflects topics and questions posed for discussion by graduates in the departmental survey. All responses will be printed and distributed to the department except those elements of the responses that can be considered confidential.

In addition, at the conclusion of J495 Senior Seminar, each history major in the seminar will add to (or prepare) a departmental portfolio. The portfolio shall include all graded material in H217, and additional material including the seminar paper from J495 with comments of the instructor and review committee, and copies of two out-of-class written assignments from two different history classes above the 100 level--for example, an essay, research paper or book review. The portfolios will provide one basis for the review of the history program and the techniques of assessment to be conducted every five years. Obviously, portfolios compiled from calendar year 1994 and several years thereafter will be incomplete until students who have taken H217 matriculate in J495. For such students without earlier departmental portfolios, one additional out-of-class written assignment from a history class above the 100 level should be included in the portfolio.

4. Review of the program will take place every five years during the spring semester and will assess departmental activity and its assessment program during the five preceding calendar years. The Committee to Review the History Program and the Academic Assessment of Student Achievement will include three full-time, line faculty members appointed by the chair. They shall in turn represent the three major areas of history taught by the department, namely, American, Western European and World History. The Review of the Program and Assessment will be based on select syllabi, assignments and examinations from all full-time and select associate faculty for courses taught during the review period, the student portfolios as defined above in 4 from senior graduates completing degrees during the five previous calendar years and the results of the student exit surveys from the five previous calendar years. At the end of the spring semester the committee will report to the department its evaluation of the department's teaching activity as it relates to the mission and goals of the department. The committee will also assess the effectiveness of the department's assessment program for the academic achievement of students during the preceding five calendar years and recommend improvements and modifications to pedagogical and curricular elements in the program and its assessment procedures where those are appropriate.
5. For the purposes of this document interim assessment and internal and external exit assessments will commence August 15, 1994. The first review of the history program and its assessment in terms of this document will take place during Spring, 1999.

Department voted to delete the following from the assessment of majors:

Internal exit assessment of undergraduate history majors will be monitored by a committee of two faculty members appointed by the chair. This committee will read and assess the Senior Seminar Paper from J495, a degree requirement for all majors, after the conclusion of the seminar. The members of the committee should be historical specialists in areas of history different from those of the subject and instructor of the seminar. They cannot have directed the seminar itself.

The committee will provide each student in the seminar with a brief confidential report on his or her paper and include that report in the departmental portfolio along with a copy of the finished paper for future assessment of the program and the procedures for assessment used in the department. The brief evaluation of the seminar paper in the capstone course will address the relations of the seminar design and advanced-student achievement to the mission and goals of the department.