

Guidelines for Submission of the Master's Portfolio

Revised January 2018

The Master's Degree in English at Winthrop University requires the successful completion of an oral examination during the student's final semester of course work. The submission of a portfolio is a prerequisite for taking the oral examination. Portfolio papers will be ranked for assessment purposes only but should represent your own evaluation of what best reflects your scholarly work in the program. **The portfolio is due no later than the beginning of the Oral Comprehensive Qualifying Examination. You will be working on your portfolio in ENGL 694, Graduate Studio; consult the Studio Director for additional information and deadlines.**

Format for the Portfolio

The student should use tabbed dividers to separate the portfolio items in a one-inch three-ring binder. (A suitable binder may be available on a loan basis from the Department of English's office, BANC 250.)

Contents

- Quick checklist:
 - Cover sheet with the student's name and contact information (e-mail, phone number, mailing address).
 - C. V. or updated résumé.
 - Graduate Student Inventory Confirmation Sheet (Inventory is now in Qualtrics; consult the Graduate Director (GD) or Graduate Studio Director for the link)
 - Self-assessment essay (Details below)
 - Reading List for the Oral Comprehensive Examination (see Oral Comprehensive Exam Instructions for more details)
 - Abstract and American paper*
 - Abstract and British paper*
 - Abstract and a third critical (British, American, or World) or creative piece*
- *An appropriate chapter of a Master's Thesis may meet one of these requirements
- The GD will review the portfolio as soon as possible. The GD will send the student either written approval of the portfolio or guidelines for revision. The GD must approve the student's committee, reading list, and portfolio pieces.
- In the event that revisions are required, the student has five working days to comply with the GD's written instructions.
- The GD and the Graduate Committee will review all portfolios submitted in an academic year for purposes of departmental assessment. After this review is completed and any relevant materials are copied or scanned for assessment purposes, students may retrieve their original portfolios from the GD.
- In the event of failure of the oral exam, the student meets with the GD to discuss his or her options.

Self-Assessment Essay

The purpose of the portfolio assignment is to have you assess your writing during your graduate work. The self-assessment document will not only enable you to reflect on your strengths and weaknesses but also provide data to help the Department of English improve graduate instruction. The writing style of this self-assessment document should be professional, but you can also use “I” as you comment on your own work. Overall, the portfolio assessment will help you to explore your answers to the following question: “How did your graduate study of English develop your scholarly identity?”

Self-Assessment Reflection

This document has two parts: the rating grid and your narrative analysis. Each part is explained below.

-Rating grid (see below): Assign yourself marks in each category according to the rubric below. The chart represents your overall rankings of your work. In other words, there is one chart representing all of your work—not four separate charts (one for the three papers and one for the reading list.) For example, if you were ranking yourself for your “ability to write a complex thesis,” look at all three of your papers and then make a determination. That way, as you write your justification, you can pull evidence from each of those three papers.

-Narrative Analysis (Justification of ratings): Then, use the scores to write 5-8 pages (this includes the rating grid) about the development and growth of your overall learning experience. As you explain and justify your self-assessment, remember that specifics pulled from your three papers and your reading list should enable a more comprehensive self-assessment. The final question is not, for example, which paper’s thesis statement is best but instead what this information tells you about your development as a graduate student of English.

Rubric

This rubric is based on the “Literary Analysis Rubric for the Master’s Portfolios” that faculty will be using to assess your portfolio. Here’s your chance to complete your own self-analysis with the same material in mind. The following equivalencies will be your general guide:

- 4 = I feel like my work shows distinction in this category.
- 3 = I feel like my work shows competence in this category.
- 2 = I feel like my work shows that I still have some work to do to be competent in this category.
- 1 = No basis to make a decision

Grid

Cut and paste the following grid into the first page of your self-assessment document.

#	Category	Further Explanation	Score
1	Ability to summarize scholarly work in an abstract	If you have had to write a summary, how do you feel about your ability to summarize your argument concisely?	
2	Ability to synthesize ideas within a course	Putting together a big picture based on particular evidence. For example, how did your American literature paper help you to synthesize ideas from that American lit class?	

3	Ability to synthesize ideas from one course to another course	How do you see the three papers and reading list speaking to each other in terms of concepts? Where do they intersect?	
4	Ability to write a complex thesis	Do you see your papers as presenting your independent insights, or do you feel that they are based more on published research or class discussion?	
5	Depth of literary analysis	For this category, concentrate on the amount of detail in the analysis itself (number and selection of examples chosen, depth of discussion of those examples, etc.)	
6	Quality and sophistication of argument	For this category, consider the overall impact of the thesis, the rhetorical effects of arrangement and development, etc. For example, are the ideas mechanically linked, or do they organically arise from each other? To what extent does the argument address or anticipate opposition points of view?	
7	Ability to conduct significant research	What do your papers show about the development of your research process? Did you use sources beyond Dacus? Do your sources show a variety of source types represented? (books, journals, appropriate web pages, archival work?)	
8	Ability to incorporate significant research	How did you use the research you found to establish a critical conversation? What was your research frame in the papers?	
9	Ability to incorporate different theoretical approaches	How does your work participate in a theoretical conversation? Are there multiple theoretical approaches represented, or do you find that you focus on one primary approach?	
10	Overall professional growth over time	Do you feel like you're ready for conference/journal submissions, or do you feel like you still have some work to do in this area?	