UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO | College of Arts and Sciences

ASSESSMENT REPORT (REGULAR TEMPLATE)

Academic English for Multilingual Students (AEM)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2019 - 2020

I.   LOGISTICS

1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair, Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).

Doreen Ewert, Director AEM

dewert@usfca.edu

2. Please indicate if you are submitting report for (a) a Major, (b) a Minor, (c) an aggregate report for a Major & Minor (in which case, each should be explained in a separate paragraph as in this template), (d) a Graduate or (e) a Certificate Program

AEM is a curricular program for students who have not met the required minimum undergraduate/graduate English language proficiency scores. Historically, this program (formerly known as ESL Program) has been scrutinized for its effectiveness in delivering a curriculum (and co-curriculum) which serves the needs of these students allowing them to continue successfully at USF. For this reason, although not a major, minor, or certificate, it has been our practice to submit an assessment report each year.

Regular assessment is a feature of all accredited ESL programs in the US. Although we do not have, need, or desire specialist independent accreditation (since our students are matriculated and get F1 visas on that basis), we have engaged in regular assessment activity every year since I have been the director. For the years prior to the implementation of this university-wide assessment process, I prepared reports for Associate Dean, Eileen Fung.

3. Please note that a Curricular Map should accompany every assessment report. Has there been any revisions to the Curricular Map since October 2019?

We did not make any changes to the curricular map for the period of October 19 until today.

We are planning changes to the curricular map (based on suggestions by the external program reviewers in 2019) once we return to regular teaching on campus. Although we are actually implementing some of the expected changes right now, it is only because of the necessity for our courses to be remote and the significant reduction in the number of students we are serving this year. (See Appendix D).

II. MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. **Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? Kindly state "Yes" or "No." Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting <u>an aggregate report, please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program</u>**

Mission Statement (No changes)

AEM's mission is to serve students for whom English is not the primary language primarily in developing their written and oral language proficiency and secondarily fostering dialogue that promotes awareness of expectations of the academy and a deeper understanding of the USF Mission.

The AEM Program considers its mission in line with the broader mission of the Department of Language and Rhetoric, of which it is a part:

> The mission of the Department of Rhetoric and Language is to teach students (create learning opportunities) to use communication effectively to engage with people, texts, and the discourses of academia and civic society.

> This mission involves three goals: first, to assure that students develop the skills in written and oral communication that will allow them to be successful in academic, civic, and professional contexts; second, to promote understanding of and proficiency in rhetoric and literacy; and third, to offer a variety of classes and co-curricular activities that promote excellence in writing and speaking, and their corollaries: reading, listening, and responding.

4. <u>Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? Kindly state "Yes" or "No." Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting <u>an aggregate report, please provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.</u></u>
   Note: Major revisions in the program learning outcomes need to go through the College Curriculum Committee (contact: Professor Joshua Gamson, <u>gamson@usfca.edu</u>). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

PLOs (No changes)

Students who have applied themselves rigorously in their AEM studies (at the test-score level expected of students who were not required to take any additional AEM courses) will be able to:
> A. Communicate successfully in writing for a variety of academic and personal purposes.
> B. Intelligibly communicate orally for a variety of academic and personal purposes.

C. Understand the rationale and demonstrate means for using reliable sources of information.

D. Demonstrate and articulate typical expectations of a liberal arts education in US universities.

E. Articulate knowledge of the USF Mission

These goals are accomplished through a rigorous curriculum implemented by qualified instructors with the resources of the University's facilities, including libraries and computing systems.

5. State the particular Program Learning Outcome(s) you assessed for the academic year 2019-2020.

PLO being assessed

A. Communicate successfully in writing for a variety of academic and personal purposes.

III. METHODOLOGY

Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO.

This PLO has been assessed in a variety of direct (rating student essays in individual classes/sections; rating student essays for evidence of specific features related to the other PLOs i.e. D or E) and indirect (GPA in subsequent courses, retention) ways over the years.

Here is some background information on the process and materials used for skipping a course and for this analysis

Skipping Policy Statement (from AEM Student Handbook)

AEM Skipping Policy

In exceptional cases, students may "skip" a level of either reading/writing or oral communication. To do so, the student must demonstrate proficiency equivalent to those completing the level they wish to skip AND have at least an A- in the current class. To demonstrate proficiency, students must complete an application and submit a portfolio of work from the current class. The application and all information regarding the portfolio requirements are available from the AEM office (KA 204). The completed portfolio must be submitted with the application no later than 5 p.m. on the last day of classes in the current semester. A committee of departmental professors will review the portfolio and decide whether the student demonstrates sufficient proficiency to skip a level. Students will be informed of the decisions by the last day of final examinations week. The committee's decisions are final.

Skipping Assessment Process

During exam week of every semester, the four full-time AEM faculty participate in rating student skipping portfolios. The portfolios include both academic and personal writing from our literacy course sequence (AEM 110, 120, and 124). Every portfolio is read independently by two instructors. Once scores are submitted, any discrepancies are noted and a third read is requested. After that, the Director collates the

results and confirms with the faculty that the right decisions have been made. Sometimes there is discussion about a particular portfolio that receives highly divergent ratings. Although the instructors were hired as AEM instructors for their language acquisition knowledge and training, most have taught the RHET courses that many students are asking to skip or skip into. In a few cases, we have asked another instructor in RHET teaching, for example RHET 110, to take a look at a portfolio. We try to balance between our desire to give students as much opportunity to move forward as quickly as they can and not to set them up for failure in the future course or to create additional difficulties for the instructor.

We have never reviewed whether the students who are given permission to skip are able to excel in the advanced course they are placed in. In this case, we are directly assessment our skipping procedure, while the direct assessment of the writing happened earlier.

Skipping Application

There are separate application forms for skipping literacy or oracy courses. We have had very few applicants for skipping our second oracy course, mostly because we have very few students taking the first level oracy course (see Appendix A for a literacy course skipping application).

Skipping Portfolio Examples

124 to 110N not permitted: Fall 2015 (see Appendix B)

124 to 110N permitted: Fall 2015 (see Appendix C)

IV. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

Skipping Data 2012-2020

Students are informed of the AEM Skipping Policy in the AEM Student Handbook, every AEM Syllabus, and in AEM Orientation and Advising meetings. The number of applications varies by year both because of overall enrollment in the program (always much lower in Spring semesters) and proficiency (see Table 1)

Table 1. Distribution of Skipping Applications and Decisions 2012-2020

Semester	Total applications (Total Enrollment)	Total applications approved	AEM 124	RHET 106N	RHET 106	RHET 110N	RHET 110	Acceptance Rate percentage
Fall 2012	45 (258)	13			9	2	2	28%
Spring 2013	36 (218)	4			1	3		11%
Fall 2013	18 (201)	2	1			1		11%
Spring 2014	9 (159)	5	1	2		1	1	55%
Fall 2014	24 (151)	10	3	2	2	1	2	41%
Spring 2015	19 (135)	8		3	1	4		42%
Fall 2015	20 (107)	13		3		8	2	65%
Spring 2016	2 (73)	2				2		100%
Fall 2016	16 (74)	10	3	2	2	3		62%
Fall 2017	20 (104)	10	3	5		2		50%
Spring 2018	11 (59)	6		2		4		54%

Fall 2018	14 (72)	7	2	3		2		50%
Spring 2019	7 (58)	2		1		1		28%
Fall 2019	11 (100)	2	1	1				18%
Spring 2020	9 (40)	3		1	1		1	33%
TOTAL	**261 (1,809)**	**97**	**14**	**25**	**16**	**34**	**8**	**37%**

*No Data for Spring 2017

One measure of whether the students have met the learning outcomes of the course skipped is the GPA achieved in the subsequent literacy course. These data reveal that the students have been successful in the courses they have skipped into (see Figure 1). Of course, there are multiple factors contributing to a course GPA, not all of which are direct measurements of student writing proficiency.
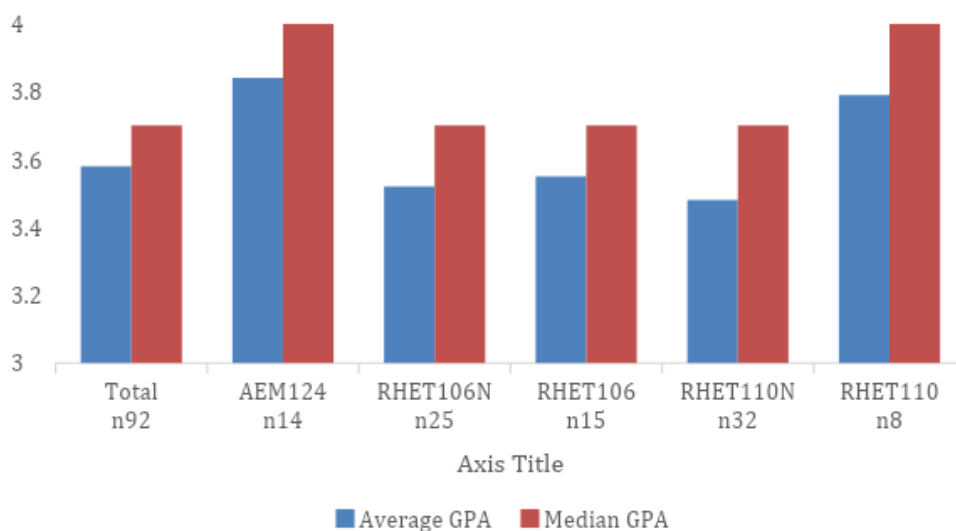

Figure 1: Average and Median GPAs of AEM Students in Courses after Skipping
*Although 97 students total were allowed to skip, 5 withdrew or transferred from USF, so we do not have subsequent course grades for them.

V. CLOSING THE LOOP

1. Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next academic year itself.

We are pleased with the evidence that our skipping process is working well to support student progress at USF. One of the goals of our entire department has been to streamline as much as possible the process of academic literacy development so that students can continue successfully in the rest of their course work even though we know well that any series of courses is not an "inoculation" process to avoid future writing development (a view held by many in the academy).

We do not plan to make any changes with this skipping process at this time.

Incidentally, we have found it useful each semester to look at portfolio of student work from different courses and/or different sections of the same course in our program. This has revealed considerable variation in expectations and course assessment practices, which we have then brought back to all of the AEM instructors (full and part-time) for consideration. This has been useful in trying to establish greater coherence in the curriculum, but that work is not complete since it depends on instructors to change.

2. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2018-2019, submitted in October 2019)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

As someone who writes, reviews, and publishes on second language literacy rubrics, I did not agree with the one reviewer's claim that our rubric needed to be redesigned since ours was purposefully data (not a priori) driven and was applied by trained holistic writing assessment raters.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Appendix A   AEM Skipping Application for Literacy Course

Appendix B   Approved Skip Portfolio

Appendix C   Not Approved Skip Portfolio

Appendix D   AEM Curriculum Map