

IUPUI GAC Reviewer Form

Documents Reviewed: *Graduate Certificate in Teaching Writing*

Summary of Proposal:

This proposal calls for establishing a 20-hour graduate certificate that would "address the needs of licensed teachers who want to keep abreast of developments in disciplinary knowledge and best practices in teaching writing..." The program would serve middle school and high school teachers. Credits could be applied toward a masters in English if desired.

1. Are the goals clear and achievable?

Yes, I believe that they are. Their assertion that better approaches to writing are currently available is certainly true, and it is also true that secondary-area teachers are key leaders in the development of K-12 writing skills. My one concern is that there is no clear evidence that such a certificate would be acknowledged or valued by the schools; a statement to that effect from the Indiana Department of Education, or from a local district or districts, would buttress this claim. Even so, the content made available to participants would certainly be of value.

2. Is the program academically sound?

Yes. The faculty listed are recognized leaders in the field and are accustomed to working closely with the School of Education and with local teachers and schools. The core course makes sense, and the electives offer a wide range of topics appropriate to 7-12 education. A sample syllabus of the core course and some statement about the credentials of adjunct faculty teaching in the program would be helpful in assuring the academic rigor of the program.

3. Are faculty resources available to offer this certificate without undercutting other key missions of the unit?

Since the courses already exist and are being taught, this does not appear to be an issue.

4. Is there overlap, either real or potential, with any other unit that could harm the program or be exploited to help the program?

The primary overlap is with graduate programs in the School of Education, specifically the MS in Language Education. However, the School of Education appears comfortable with the proposal. They did express concern that the proposal would need to stay limited to middle and secondary teachers, as the SOE MS focuses on elementary. The Department of English should work to maintain lines of communication with appropriate School of Education faculty after program approval to help guide its development and ensure complementary, rather than competing, services for students.

5. My recommendation, comments/concerns regarding this proposal...

I recommend approval. However, I would suggest that the assessment piece be laid out in somewhat greater detail. There appears to be plans for much conferring and discussion, but little specifics. For example, just how will "sample papers" be selected, and what sort of rubrics or other instruments will be used to evaluate the quality? What sort of follow-up contacts will take place: phone calls, surveys, questionnaires, or other instruments? Will employers be contacted to determine significant, measurable effects that earning the certificate may have had on teachers? Assessment is a key feature of critique for any new proposal; I have no doubt that these specifics could be easily developed—if they don't exist already—but the Department should know that this aspect always receives intense scrutiny and thus needs to be detailed and convincing.