Department/Program  English

1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

English majors at Boston College should demonstrate:
— an ability to write clear, coherent, organized, and stylistically correct papers;
— an ability to close-read, interpret, and analyze texts (including poetic texts);
— a knowledge of literary genres and appropriate use of critical terminology;
— a recognition of the historical specificity of literary works and/or other cultural products; — an awareness that there are a variety of critical approaches to literary and cultural texts.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department’s learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

Department website: http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/english/learning-outcomes.html

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

This year an assessment committee drew a random sample of 25% of our Advanced Topic Seminar (“ATS”) papers at the end of the academic year. Students in the ATS courses should be demonstrating proficiency in the English major outcomes by the end of these courses. In AY ’16 there were six ATS sections over the two semesters. Of the 48 essays written in the six sections, three faculty members on the ATS assessment committee (including the chair) read 12 anonymous essays according to a scoring rubric we devised, after conducting a norming session on three essays (which we then excluded from the assessment sample).

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The scores were tabulated and discussed in a meeting of the ATS assessment committee. A member of the committee wrote up a report that will be discussed at a department meeting in the fall.