**Graduate Program Assessment Plan <Psychology>**

9-10-2014

**Program Learning Outcomes**

1. Conduct research or produce some other form of empirical work
2. Demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge and research/critical inquiry methodology
3. Demonstrate effective written communication of substantive content
4. Demonstrate effective oral communication of substantive content
5. Be able to conduct scholarly or professional activities in an ethical manner

**Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

The table below shows how each outcome will be assessed. Outcome 1 is assessed based on satisfactory completion of a thesis project. Our department will track theses defenses and calculate success rates. Outcomes 2-4 will be assessed using the Rubrics attached in the appendix. Rubrics for outcomes 2-4 will be completed at the thesis defense. Although these performance dimensions are directly related to the successful completion of our program, the rubrics will not be used to assess or evaluate individual students. The data will be aggregated for all students in the program over a two-year period in order to assess the program’s success in meeting its learning outcomes. The rubric for outcome 5 is completion of ethics training. The currently required training module is the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI).

Table 1. Data sources for the assessment of learning outcomes.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Data Source | Outcomes | | | | |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Masters’ thesis or paper | X |  |  |  |  |
| Thesis/Thesis defense |  | X |  |  |  |
| Thesis/thesis defense |  |  | X |  |  |
| Thesis defense |  |  |  | X |  |
| Ethics training in responsible conduct of research |  |  |  |  | X |

**Response Threshold**

* At least 80% of students will be ranked at a 4 or 5 level in subject content knowledge, written communication, and oral communication.
* 100 % of students will successfully complete the ethics training.
* At least 90 % of students will pass their thesis defense on their first attempt.

**Assessment Schedule**

* Assessment reports will be submitted in September of even-numbered years.

**Process for Assessing the Data**

Data are collected from students as they complete the degree program. The graduate coordinator will tabulate the scores from the rubrics and the data on defenses/program completion. A list of students taking comprehensive exams and the results (pass or fail) of such exams will be developed. The coordinator will write up a brief summary of the assessment results and this will be presented to the faculty members that serve on the graduate students committee or have instructional interactions with the student. The outcome of these deliberations will be used in the following manner:

* If an acceptable performance threshold (as outlined in the plan) has **NOT** been met, the faculty will meet to discuss strategies for improving the currently unsatisfactory performance and a plan will be implemented for the following year. This plan may include any of the following.
  + Gather additional data next year to verify or refute the result.
  + Alter the curriculum or program to try to improve performance.
  + Change the acceptable performance threshold (must provide reasoning behind such a strategy).
* If acceptable performance has **been met** in all areas, faculty members will have the option of the following.
  + Faculty members may still identify new strategies for meeting the learning outcomes.
  + If faculty members are satisfied, based on the assessment, that the program is achieving its goals, they may decide that changes to the program are not needed.

A summary of assessment activities and faculty decisions will be reported to the CLS Deans office and to the Provost’s office in our Department’s Graduate Program Assessment Activities Report.