# Master’s Program Assessment Report

Assessment reports for M.A. and M.S. programs are due in even numbered years with a deadline of September 15th each year.

The use of this template is entirely optional.

 Academic Year: 2014-15 and 2015-16

 Department: Psychology

 Program(s): All programs/options

## 1. Students completion of comprehensive exams and defenses/programs completions.

***2014-15*** (6/7; 86% on time or within a *1 month extension*, 1 defended late in the Summer)

***2015-16*** (4/4; 100% on time or within a *1 month extension*. There are 5 students in this cohort, but one student took a departmentally sanctioned leave of absence in the spring and will defend her thesis in the fall of 2016. In this case, we would consider her defense on time, and 5/5 of this cohort will have completed the program on time.)

## 2. Results of the comprehensive exams and defenses

Completion report:

* 7 students turned in their thesis by the stated deadline or even 1 semester early (2 students).
* 3 students completed their thesis within the 1-month extension period.
* 1 student completed her thesis late
* All 11/11 students passed their **oral** comprehensive exams (1 pending due to leave of absence in the spring).
* All 11/11 students passed their **written** comprehensive exam (i.e., written thesis; 1 pending due to leave of absence in the spring).

Performance Assessment: The psych department uses a rubric with scores ranging from 1-5 to assess Subject content knowledge, Written Communication, and Oral Communication during thesis defenses. In our assessment plan, at least 80% of students will be ranked at a 4 or 5 level in these areas. (The summary below includes 10 of 12 students from the 2014-2016 cohorts. We are missing data for one student who completed the program on time in spring 2015, and one student was on departmentally sanctioned leave in the spring 2016 and has not yet completed the program. This later student is expected to complete the program *on time* in fall 2016.)

* 7/10 students received a 4 or 5 average on subject content knowledge
* 7/10 students received a 4 or 5 average on written communication
* 7/10 students received a 4 or 5 average on oral communication

## 3. Summary of ethics training among Masters’ students who have finished their degrees.

All of our graduate students completed either the Human Subjects Research training module (i.e., the **Social, Behavioral and Educational module** or the Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher module) or the Animal Care and Use training module provided through [https://www.citiprogram.org/](https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp?language=english) before conducting any research in our department. All students have completed this training (100%) in order to conduct the research for their master’s thesis.

## 4. What Was Learned

Students in our master’s program are successfully completing their oral defense on time (91%): Either before the deadline (64%) or within the 1-month extension (27%). Further, all of our students (100%) received research-ethics training and executed ethical research as part of their thesis requirements. Our assessment ratings were slightly below our goal of 80% 4 or 5 ratings, with 70% receiving average ratings of 4 or above in knowledge, written, and oral communication.

## 5. How We Responded

Our students performed slightly less than our goal of 80% 4-5 ratings. Had we planned to continue our master’s program, this would have been an area of focus for improving the quality of thesis defenses. However, we have discontinued this program and are now starting our new Ph.D. program this year. Our final M.S. student class is finishing this spring and our first Ph.D. class started this fall semester. We have put considerable effort and discussions into how to maximize performance in the Ph.D. program during master’s defenses and exams, comprehensive exams, and dissertation defenses and have outlined an assessment plan within the Ph.D. proposal itself. We are also putting considerable effort into more active recruitment measures to improve the quality of our applicants and students. Next year we will report on the progress of our new Ph.D. students. Having said this, our Ph.D. program includes a master’s defense en route to the Ph.D. so improving the performance of master’s defenses is still of utmost importance. Therefore, we will discuss these results and their implications for our new Ph.D. program during next week’s (9-21-16) department meeting. The emphasis will be on how to increase the 3 critical assessment areas in the Ph.D. program.