**EXAMPLE GRADUATE ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**Objective:** To prepare Doctoral students to be effective researchers in the field and to prepare Masters students to be effective members of research teams in the field. To prepare students interested in academic careers to be effective teachers.

# **Outcome:**

a) **MASTERS:** Students will demonstrate that they are skilled researchers in an area of study, developing a substantial expertise in that area that allows them to make significant contributions to it in a team environment.

**DOCTORAL:** Students will demonstrate that they are independent researchers in an area of study, developing a substantial expertise in that area that allows them to make original contributions to it.

# **Findings Based on Evidence Collected**

**EVIDENCE COLLECTED:** Evaluation rubrics completed by MS or PhD committee members at preliminary oral exams, final comprehensive exams, and capstone presentations (MS students only). Using a four-point rubric (Poor=1, Fair=2, Good=3, Excellent=4) we assessed Q1: Mastery of core or foundational knowledge in areas of the discipline most closely related to field of specialization, and Q4: research independence and ability to apply knowledge to novel and emerging problems.

There were 25 doctoral students assessed at preliminary oral exams and 12 doctoral students assessed at final comprehensive exams. There were 15 masters students assessed at their capstone presentations.

**MASTERS:** Faculty assessment of demonstrated student capabilities in formulating and solving, in depth, a research problem in field of degree.

**DOCTORAL:** Faculty assessment of demonstrated student capabilities in formulating and solving an original research problem in field of degree.

**FINDINGS:**

**DOCTORAL**: Based on a sample of 25 doctoral oral preliminary exams, the Q1 outcomes had 18 students in the 3.50-4.00 range, 6 students in the 3.00-3.49 range and one student in the 1.50-1.99 range. The Q4 outcomes had 17 students in the 3.50-4.00 range, 7 students in the 3.00-3.49 range and one student in the 2.5-2.99 range. Based on a sample of 12 doctoral final comprehensive exams, the Q1 and Q4 outcomes had all students in the 3.50-4.00 range.

**MASTERS:** Based on a sample of 15 masters students capstone presentations for Q1, there were 10 students in the 3.50-4.00 range, 4 students in the 3.00-3.49 range and one student in the 2.5-2.99 range. For Q4, there were 9 masters students in the 3.50-4.00 range, and 6 students in the 3.00-3.49 range.

# **Evaluation of Program Based on Findings**

**STRENGTHS:** The assessment data suggest that both our doctoral and master’s programs are doing a Very Good-to-Excellent job in achieving outcomes in this reporting category.

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:** Based on the data, program faculty did not identify any areas that needed improvement.

# **Actions Taken to Address Areas for Improvement**

Based on the assessment data, no new actions warranted at this time.

# **Outcome:**

b) Students will communicate their research clearly and professionally in both written and oral forms appropriate to the field

# **Findings Based on Evidence Collected**

**EVIDENCE COLLECTED:** Evaluation rubrics completed by the MS and PhD committee members at oral exams. Using a four-point rubric (Poor=1, Fair=2, Good=3, Excellent=4), we assessed Q5: ability to speak and present research goals, methods, and results and Q6: ability to effectively convey research goals, methods, and results in written form.

MASTERS: Faculty assessment of demonstrated student capabilities in written and oral communication skills and ability to work effectively with both researchers in our field and those from other disciplines (if relevant). DOCTORAL: Faculty assessment of demonstrated student capabilities in written and oral communication skills and ability to work effectively with both researchers in our field and those from other disciplines.

**FINDINGS:**

**DOCTORAL:** Based on a sample of 25 doctoral oral preliminary exams, the Q5 outcomes had 15 students in the 3.50-4.00 range, 5 students in the 3.00-3.49 range and 3 students in the 2.50-2.99 range. The Q6 outcomes had 18 students in the 3.50-4.00 range, 6 students in the 3.00-3.49 rang and 1 student in the 2.50-2.99 range.

Based on a sample of 12 doctoral final comprehensive exams, both the Q5 and Q6 outcomes had all students in the 3.50-4.00 range.

**MASTERS**: Based on a sample of 15 masters students capstone presentations, the Q5 outcomes had 7 students in the 3.50-4.00 range, 6 students in the 3.00-3.49 range, and 2 students in the 2.50-2.99 range. The Q6 outcome had 8 students in the 3.50-4.00 range, 3 students in the 3.00-3,49 range, and 4 students in the 2.50-2.99 range.

# **Evaluation of Program Based on Findings**

**STRENGTHS:**

**DOCTORAL:** The assessment data suggest that our doctoral program is doing a Very Good-to-Excellent job in achieving outcomes in this reporting category at the stage of the oral preliminary exam. The increased percentage of students in the 3.50-4.00 range at the stage of the final comprehensive exam demonstrates that training activities in the final years of our program contribute to enhanced success in this reporting category. Program faculty did not identify any areas that needed improvement for doctoral students for this outcome.

**MASTERS:** The assessment data suggest that our master’s program is doing a Very Good-to-Excellent job in achieving outcomes for oral communication (ability to speak and present research goals, methods, and results).

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

**DOCTORAL:** Program faculty did not identify any areas that needed improvement for doctoral students for this outcome.

**MASTERS:** Although most master’s students’ scores for Q6 (ability to effectively convey research goals, methods, and results in written form) were in the Very Good-to-Excellent range, there were still four students whose writing skills were not as strong and they scored in the Fair range.

**Actions Taken to Address Areas for Improvement**

**DOCTORAL:** Based on the assessment data, no new actions warranted at this time.

**MASTERS:**  Based on the assessment data, there is room for improvement at the MS level with written communication for some students. Program faculty have decided to work more closely with to develop embedded course assignments to provide additional opportunities to strengthen students’ technical writing. Program faculty have also decided to encourage students to engage with Writing Support offered through The Graduate School as well as The Graduate Writing Center.