

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2014-15 (Academic Year)

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT Educational Foundations and Research

DATE May 5, 2016

PROGRAM(S) COVERED IN REVIEW Ph.D. in Educational Foundations and Research

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW Shari Nelson, Ken Flanagan, Devon Hansen

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-----|-------------|----|-------------|---------------|
| • Were any goals referenced? | <u>X</u> | Yes | <u> </u> | No | <u> </u> | Qualified Y/N |
| • If so, were goals well-articulated? | <u>X</u> | Yes | <u> </u> | No | <u> </u> | Qualified Y/N |
| • Do goals address student learning? | <u>X</u> | Yes | <u> </u> | No | <u> </u> | Qualified Y/N |

Comments:

The current departmental plan for assessment of student learning was last updated on September 10, 2014. Students in the Ph.D. program take coursework in two major emphases, Educational Foundations and Educational Research. The Educational Foundations Emphasis has one overall foundations goal and three objectives. The goal states:

- The students will demonstrate content knowledge, skills, and dispositions that prepare them for functioning as engaged education professionals in a diverse and complex world.

The Educational Research Emphasis has one overall research goal and five objectives. The goal states:

- The student will demonstrate the ability to understand and conduct research relevant to educational issues.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|-------------|----|-------------|---------------|
| Were any specific assessment methods referenced? | <u>X</u> | Yes | <u> </u> | No | <u> </u> | Qualified Y/N |
| • If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals? | <u>X</u> | Yes | <u> </u> | No | <u> </u> | Qualified Y/N |
| • Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach? | <u>X</u> | Yes | <u> </u> | No | <u> </u> | Qualified Y/N |

Comments:

The assessment plan lists a number of "potential" assessment methods under each Foundations and Research objectives, such as comprehensive exams; summative artifacts from coursework and elsewhere (presentations, publications, scholarly fora, collaborations, etc.); and dissertations (internal and external review).

The assessment plan presents a table outlining when the Foundations and Research objectives would be assessed and by which assessment methods. In 2014-15, Foundations objectives 1 and 2 are assessed by data collected from the analysis of comprehensive exams. Research objectives 1, 2, and 3 are assessed by data collected from the analysis comprehensive exams. Research objectives 4 and 5 are assessed using samples of coursework products and reviewing a sample of completed dissertations.

In 2014-15, a revised assessment rubric consisting of four objectives (listed below) was used to collect data from the analysis of comprehensive exams. Each of these assessment rubric objectives has five levels ranging from one is "exceeds expectations," two is "meets expectations," and so forth until five indicates "does not meets expectations."

#1: Student demonstrates the ability to integrate and synthesize ideas.

#2: Student demonstrates the ability to think critically.

#3: Student demonstrates scholarship.

#4: Student demonstrates effective writing skills.

Since this assessment rubric is also used to assess comprehensive exams in two other departments (EDL and T&L), the four objectives differ from the Foundations and Research objectives listed in the department assessment plan for the Ph.D. program in EFR. The annual report states that the assessment rubric objectives “roughly track” to Foundations objectives 1 and 2 and Research objectives 1 through 5.

For indirect assessment, a survey is conducted to assess areas of professional development relating to Foundations objective 3 and Research objectives 1 and 5.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?	<u>X</u>	Yes	<u> </u>	No	<u> </u>	Qualified Y/N
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?	<u> </u>	Yes	<u> </u>	No	<u>X</u>	Qualified Y/N
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?	<u> </u>	Yes	<u> </u>	No	<u>X</u>	Qualified Y/N
• Were the results tied to goals of student learning?	<u> </u>	Yes	<u> </u>	No	<u>X</u>	Qualified Y/N

Comments:

An assessment rubric was used to collect data from the analysis of comprehensive exams. A table is presented showing the scores for the overall average, Research average, and Foundations average for the four assessment rubric objectives (listed above in the methods section). The annual report states that the overall averages are slightly better than “meets expectations” for all objectives, except assessment rubric objective 2 (Student demonstrates the ability to think critically.) The Foundations average score (2.42) falls below meeting program expectations on objective 2.

Since the annual report states that the assessment rubric objectives used to analyze comprehensive exam only “roughly track” to Foundations and Research objectives in the department assessment plan, it is difficult to say that the results affirm/disaffirm achievement of these student learning objectives or are tied to goals of student learning. Also, it is unclear how the results indicate need for improvement.

The annual report states that an assessment meeting to discuss dissertations was held instead of a formal review as listed in the 2014-15 timeline because there were only four completed dissertations. The discussion revealed that students need additional coursework when undertaking and preparing literature reviews.

Preliminary results were reported for the student survey on professional development. Students were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with professional development opportunities (60%-100% of those with a basis for answering), but the department did receive at least one “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” relating to research mentorship, peer reviewing of manuscripts, and teaching opportunities.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken?	<u>X</u>	Yes	<u> </u>	No	<u> </u>	Qualified Y/N
• If so, were they based on assessment results?	<u>X</u>	Yes	<u> </u>	No	<u> </u>	Qualified Y/N
• If so, do curricular or other improvements/changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?	<u> </u>	Yes	<u> </u>	No	<u>X</u>	Qualified Y/N

Comments:

From results obtained from the comprehensive exam assessment rubric, objective 2 (Students demonstrates the ability to think critically.) had the lowest overall average score. It is reported that the program continues to explore ways to strengthen critical thinking skills, particularly in their Foundations courses.

An assessment discussion regarding dissertations revealed that students need additional coursework when undertaking and preparing literature reviews. The program will make literature reviews a major course assignment in EFR 500, a required

introductory course, as well as research courses in the program.

From results obtained from the student survey on professional development, the program is exploring ways to help students develop professional skills needed to prepare them for academic careers. For example, they are looking for ways to provide teaching opportunities for their students.

The program proposes to implement a post-dissertation defense survey to better track their assessment of student learning goals (Foundations objective 2 and Research objective 5) regarding presentation skills in coursework and all the way through to the dissertation defense.

SUMMARY

Strengths

- ☒ A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☐ Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- ☐ Assessment methods are clearly described.
- ☐ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- ☐ Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- ☐ Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- ☐ Results are reported.
- ☐ Results are tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

Areas for Improvement

- ☐ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☐ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- ☐ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- ☐ No results are reported.
- ☐ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Department of Educational Foundations and Research updated their plan for assessment of student learning on September 10, 2014. The Educational Foundations and Research Ph.D. program has defined student learning goals and objectives and the assessment methods were tied to specific goals and objectives. However, there is a lack of evidence whether the results show that these goals and objectives are being achieved and used to enhance student learning.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

- ☒ Annual assessment report
- ☒ Assessment plan (as posted)
- ☒ Previous assessment review
- ☐ Other (please describe)

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Section 1: Y Section 2: Y Section 3: Q Section 4: Q

Coding Key:

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well (bearing in mind the kind of program(s) reviewed and recognizing that assessment is a cyclical process, i.e., with additional kinds of data to be collected in other years)
- Q = qualified yes as action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that

this is completely and appropriately done
N= no, it is unclear whether it was done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning