Getting Started Guide:
How to Assess Graduate Student Outcomes
In Master’s Programs

This guide outlines minimum expectations for developing and implementing an assessment plan related to graduate student outcomes. While it is expected that your efforts will evolve beyond this minimum level over time, the steps below serve as a standard approach for programs that are in the beginning stages of developing their assessment plan. Note that faculty have autonomy regarding the development and implementation of their assessment plans; this guide is intended for those programs that want to take a prescribed approach to launching their assessment plans.

The assessment process used at Mines is displayed below. Note that while there are multiple steps in the assessment process, the most important step is to use assessment information to improve student learning (step #4 in the graphic below.) The purpose of assessment is continuous improvement, not paperwork.

Implementation of the assessment process
1. Adopt institution-wide outcomes (online here) as the basis for your assessment efforts.
2. Consider adopting best practices in graduate student assessment. Examples are online (here for Mines-specific examples and here for general examples.)
3. Review the list of assessment practices in use (or proposed) at Mines. Determine which, if any, could be used by your program.
4. You can utilize any of the assessment methods on the list in #3, but if you initially want to implement only one assessment method to assess the student outcomes do the following:
   a. Thesis based programs: Assess the thesis defense by implementing the defense rubric, a comprehensive rubric (a useful example from URI is here or another rubric of your choosing (additional samples are online.)
   b. Non-thesis based programs: Identify a culminating course project, assignment, exam, etc. and apply a rubric (samples are online) to assess students’ work.
5. Compile results in an Excel document (or in whatever format you choose) so that you can monitor changes over time.

6. Share results with the faculty in your program. Discuss what is working well and consider if there are any opportunities for changes. Document how these changes were informed by the assessment information that you gathered. Then continue the cycle: assess to what extent the changes impacted achievement of the outcomes.

7. Submit the annual report by January 23. The expectation is not that you will have the assessment plan or the report fully developed; assessment is an ongoing process. Criteria for the assessment committee’s review of the report are online.

8. Contact Kay Schneider for assistance at any time!
Getting Started Guide: How to Assess Graduate Student Outcomes In Doctoral Programs

This guide outlines minimum expectations for developing and implementing an assessment plan related to graduate student outcomes. While it is expected that your efforts will evolve beyond this minimum level over time, the steps below serve as a standard approach for programs that are in the beginning stages of developing their assessment plan. Note that faculty have autonomy regarding the development and implementation of their assessment plans; this guide is intended for those programs that want to take a prescribed approach to launching their assessment plans.

The assessment process used at Mines is displayed below. Note that while there are multiple steps in the assessment process, the most important step is to use assessment information to improve student learning (step #4 in the graphic below.) The purpose of assessment is continuous improvement, not paperwork.

Implementation of the assessment process

1. Adopt institution-wide outcomes, attached and online as the basis for your assessment efforts.
2. Consider adopting best practices in graduate student assessment. Examples are online (here for Mines-specific examples and here for general examples.)
3. Review the list of assessment practices in use (or proposed) at Mines. Determine which, if any, could be used by your program.
4. You can utilize any of the assessment methods on the list in #3, but if you initially want to implement only one assessment method to assess the student outcomes, implement the defense/presentation rubric, a comprehensive rubric (a useful example from URI is here) or another rubric of your choosing (additional samples are online.)
5. Compile results in an Excel document (or in whatever format you choose) so that you can monitor changes over time.

6. Share results with the faculty in your program. Discuss what is working well and consider if there are any opportunities for changes. Document how these changes were informed by the assessment information that you gathered. Then continue the cycle: assess to what extent the changes impacted achievement of the outcomes.

7. Submit the annual report by January 23. The expectation is not that you will have the assessment plan or the report fully developed; assessment is an ongoing process. Criteria for the assessment committee’s review of the report are online.

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