

*Academic Program
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
The University of New Mexico*

A. College, Department and Date

1. College: Arts and Sciences
2. Department: Sociology
3. Date: January, 2009

B. Academic Program of Study*

Ph.D. Sociology

C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan

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D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

1. Broad Program Learning Goals for this Degree/Certificate Program

The Ph.D. program *includes all the learning goals for the M.A. program* plus three additional goals that represent skills representative of professional sociologists whose careers will be primarily in education and research. Only the learning goals that are exclusive in the Ph.D. program are listed below, and it is those goals that will be the focus of concern for assessment of the Ph.D. program. However, a full assessment report for the Ph.D. program would properly contain information garnered from assessment of the M.A. program.

- A. Develop the knowledge and skills appropriate for a specialist in a sub-field of sociology.
- B. Develop teaching skills appropriate for a college and university teacher.
- C. Develop the skills of a professional research sociologist.

2. List of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this Degree/Certificate Program

A. Specialized Knowledge SLOs (Ph.D. focus)

- A.1** Students will be able to explain the major characteristics of four sub-fields of sociology, note how the sub-fields may overlap, and the advantages and disadvantages of disciplinary sub-divisions.
 - A.2.** Students will be able explain and critique the major theoretical and empirical materials in a sub-field of sociology.
 - A.3.** Students will be able to discuss research applications of major theoretical perspectives in a sub-field of sociology.
- ### **B. Pedagogical SLOs (Ph.D. focus)**
- B.1** Students will be able to organize a course in sociology, including syllabus construction.
 - B.2.** Students will be able to facilitate and instruct the course in sociology.
 - B.3.** Students will be able to engage in evaluation of student performance in the course.
- ### **C. Original Research SLOs (Ph.D. focus)**
- C.1** Students will be able to define and organize a research project.
 - C.2.** Students will be able to carry out data collection and analysis for an original piece of research.
 - C.3.** Students will be able to write a professional report of the empirical and theoretical results of a research project.

E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

1. Student Learning Outcomes

[Insert at least 2-5 priority learning outcomes that will be assessed by the unit over the next three years. Each unit will select which of its learning outcomes to assess.]

Relationship to UNM Student Learning Goals (insert the program SLOs and check all that apply):

Each of the SLOs for a Ph.D. degree in sociology includes all three UNM student learning goals. This is to a large extent because of the nature of sociology and the program at UNM. In both the discipline and the program the instructional effort is directed towards acquisition of *knowledge* about the social world that can facilitate development of *skills* in social action and social organization that help not only individual and group functioning, but can also facilitate social *responsibility* in academia, social organizations, society, and the international community. For example, in developing the knowledge and skill of explaining and critiquing a sub-field of sociology (SLO A2), students develop capabilities to help better understand the social world and offer informed assessments of social issues that can contribute to informed discussions and social policy.

University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals				
Program SLOs	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility	Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals.
A.2. Students will be able explain and critique the major theoretical and empirical content in a sub-field of sociology.	X	X	X	
C.1. Students will be able to define and organize a research project.	X	X	X	

2. How will learning outcomes be assessed?

A. What:

- i. For each SLO, briefly describe the means of assessment, i.e., what samples of evidence of learning will be gathered or measures used to assess students' accomplishment of the learning outcomes in the three- year plan?

Assessment for A.2 (explain and critique a sub-field) will be done through examining Ph.D. area exams taken during the prior academic year. The examination will have two components. One component will consist of reports provided by members of the student's examination committee. A second component will be through having a faculty member chosen by the Department's Graduate Committee read all area exams, provide a report on each exam, and create a summary report that covers the reports of all readers. It is anticipated that individual reports will be about one to two pages in length and will provide information on the breadth of a student's knowledge and how he or she exhibited analytical skills, including the ability to link theoretical and empirical content.

Assessment for C.1 (set up a research project) will be done through examining Ph.D. dissertation proposals completed during the prior academic year. The examination will have two components. One component will consist of reports provided by members of the student's dissertation committee. A second component will entail having a faculty member chosen by the Department's Graduate Committee read all dissertation proposals, provide a report on each proposal, and create a summary report that covers the reports of all readers. It is anticipated that individual reports will be about one page in length and will provide information on the student's ability to clearly define a research project, relate the project to prior research, and specify an appropriate mechanism of data collection and analysis.

- ii. Indicate whether each measure is **direct** or **indirect**. If you are unsure, then write "Unsure of measurement type." There is an expectation that at least **half of the assessment methods/measures will be direct** measures of student learning. [See attached examples of direct and indirect measures.]

Both measures are direct measures of the specific SLO.

- iii. Briefly describe the **criteria for success** related to each direct or indirect means of assessment. What is the program's performance target (e.g., is an "acceptable or better" performance by 60% of students on a given measure acceptable to the program faculty)? If scoring rubrics are used to define qualitative criteria and measure performance, attach them to the plan as they are available.

The criteria for success will be that 75% of all the evaluations for all the documents examined (dissertation proposals and area exams) are evaluated as good, very good, or excellent in a five point scale, with less than 25% evaluated as fair or poor.

B. Who: *State explicitly whether the program's assessment will include evidence from all students in the program or a sample. Address the validity of any proposed sample of students.*

The mechanisms of assessment include all students in the program as they move towards the later stages of progress within the Ph.D. degree.

3. *When will learning outcomes be assessed? When and in what forum will the results of the assessment be discussed?*

Assessment of SLO A.2 (sub-disciplinary knowledge) take place from Spring, 2009 through Spring, 2010. Assessment of SLO C.1 (develop research project) will occur from Fall 2010 to Spring, 2011.

As noted above, the reports will be produced by members of a student's exam committee and his or her dissertation committee. A person outside of the student's committee will be selected by the Department's Graduate Committee to review all area exams, while another person will be selected to evaluate all dissertation proposals.

The results will be discussed in several forums listed below. The list begins with those closest in time to the presentation of results.

- Persons chosen by the Graduate Committee to examine all exams and research proposals will meet with a representative of the Graduate Committee (in most cases the chair) to discuss the reports and provide information to the full faculty.
- Each year the Department has a day-long retreat in which a variety of topics are discussed by the Department in some depth. One session of the retreat will be dedicated to considering the results of components of the Department's assessment projects, including the reports regarding Ph.D. SLOs. It is expected that discussion among the full faculty at the retreat will lead to recommendations for changes and improvement in student learning.
- It is expected that the Departmental retreat will produce issues that will be referred back to the Graduate Committee. The continual interplay among assessment participants, the Graduate Committee and the full faculty will keep assessment alive and dynamic.

A three-year time line for assessing the SLOs listed above will be:

[Briefly describe the timeframe over which your unit will conduct the assessment of learning outcomes selected for the three-year plan. For example, provide a layout of the semesters or years (e.g., 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011), list which outcomes will be assessed, and which semester/year the results will be discussed and used to improve student learning (e.g., discussed with program faculty, interdepartmental faculty, advisory boards, students, etc.)]

Assessment of the Ph.D. Program in Sociology: 2008-2009

(SLO A.2: sub-field expertise)

Fall, 2008

- * Inform Department of Ph.D. assessment procedures for SLO A2 (sub-discipline expertise)

Spring, 2009

- * Ph.D. exam committee members write one-page reports on students' area exams taken in FA08 and SP09
- * "Outside" evaluator reads area exams and prepares draft report

Assessment of Graduate Program in Sociology: 2009-2010

(sub-disciplines expertise)

Fall, 2009

- * Finish completing reports on Ph.D. area exams
- * Discussion between "outside evaluator" of Ph.D. exams and the representative of the Graduate Committee

Spring, 2010

- * Full faculty review report of Ph.D. exams.
- * Recommendations and policy recommendations made and implemented.

Assessment of Ph.D. Program in Sociology: 2010-2011

(SLO C1: research projects)

Fall, 2010

- * Dissertation committee members write one-page reports on students as they complete proposal defenses

Spring, 2011

- * Dissertation committee members write one-page reports on students as they complete proposal defenses
- * Outside evaluator reads all dissertation proposals and prepares a report

4. What is the unit's process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?

Briefly describe:

1. *who will participate in the assessment process (the gathering of evidence, the analysis/interpretation, recommendations).*

Participation and involvement of individuals and groups is described above at various places, yet will be summarized here. Most generally, the full regular faculty, members of dissertation and exam committees, and an "outside evaluator" are most directly linked to the area targeted for assessment. More specifically, the process initially involves the full regular faculty by establishing goals and specific learning objectives. Then, dissertation and exam committee members, along with an "outside" evaluator chosen by the Graduate Committee work on acquiring information and producing reports. This is followed by discussions and recommendations in meetings of persons doing the assessment and a representative of the Graduate Committee, followed by discussion with the full faculty at the annual faculty retreat and regular meetings. Implementation of possible changes is made as needed.

2. *the process for consideration of the implications of assessment for change:*
 - a. *to assessment mechanisms themselves,*
 - b. *to curriculum design,*
 - c. *to pedagogy*
 - d. *in the interest of improving student learning.*

As discussed above, individuals and committees are involved at various points in the process in considering possible changes in assessment mechanisms and program modification. The culmination of a general discussion at the faculty retreat helps keep assessment of student learning in the Ph.D. program alive and evolving.

3. *How, when, and to whom will recommendations be communicated?*

As noted above, the results of the reports of assessment are discussed and recommendations considered at several levels, with these discussions and recommendations moving up to the full faculty and then into policy implementation. The levels at which the discussions and recommendations are made are as follows: (1) persons directly involved in the assessment; (2) the Graduate Committee; and (3) the full faculty at a faculty retreat and regular faculty meetings.

Source: Kansas State University Office of Assessment