

PhD Sociology
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
College of Arts and Sciences
The University of New Mexico

A. College, Department and Date

1. College: College of Arts and Sciences
2. Department: Sociology
3. Date: January 2017

B. Academic Program of Study

Ph.D. Sociology

(Note: The MA & PhD Sociology programs have effectively become one program. Their assessment plans and reports, while still separate, should be read together. The MA Goals and SLOs also apply to our PhD program.)

C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan

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D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

(Note that the MA Goals and SLOs also apply to our PhD program; the PhD Goals and SLOs listed here are in addition to those, but do not apply to the MA portion of the program.)

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

- A. Develop the knowledge and skills appropriate for a specialist in a sub-discipline of sociology.
- B. Develop the skills of a professional research sociologist.

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

A.1. Students will be able to explain, critique, and discuss research applications of the major theoretical perspectives within two sub-disciplines of sociology.

UNM Goals (Knowledge Skills Responsibility)

B.1. Students will be able to organize and carry out a substantial social science research project, and write a professional report of its results.

UNM Goals (Knowledge Skills Responsibility)

B.2. Students will be able to build a professional identity through the presentation of their research in academic venues and the publication of their work in peer reviewed presses and journals.

UNM Goals (___ Knowledge ___X_ Skills ___X_ Responsibility)

E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

1. Timeline for Assessment

Year/Semester	Assessment Activities
Year 1, Fall	Indirect measures for B2 Faculty discussion of B1 results, proposals for improvements
Year 1, Spring	Direct measures for B2 Implementation of changes for B1
Year 2, Fall	Indirect measures for A1 Faculty discussion of B2 results, proposals for improvements
Year 2, Spring	Direct measures for A1 Implementation of changes for B2
Year 3, Fall	Indirect measures for B1 Faculty discussion of A1 results, proposals for improvements
Year 3, Spring	Direct measures for B1 Implementation of changes for A1

2. How will learning outcomes be assessed?

A. What:

Direct Measures: Two of the SLOs will be directly assessed through milestones in the PhD program that correspond to the given SLO: The Knowledge SLO (A1) will be assessed with comprehensive exams, and the Research SLO (B1) will be assessed with dissertation proposals. The Professionalization SLO (B2) will be assessed by examining the students’ professional involvement and output, in terms of submissions and acceptances to peer-reviewed journals and presses, academic conferences, grant applications, and other professional venues. The comprehensive exams (A1) and proposals (B1) will be evaluated by the students’ committee and by either the assessment coordinator or another member of the department with a specialization in the topic. The assessor will rate all of these based on the 4 point scale described in Appendix 1. Professional output (B2) will be evaluated by the graduate committee chair and the assessment coordinator, relative to their understanding of acceptable progress for each student’s stage in the program. This understanding will also adjust for the type of research each student is involved in, as some methodologies lend to more frequent presentations and publications than others. They will rate each student on the 4 point scale described in Appendix 1.

Indirect Measures: All SLOs will be indirectly assessed through online surveys of the graduate students. These questions will pointedly ask the students to rate the courses' and program's effectiveness in helping them achieve the SLO, and ask for more detailed, open-ended feedback on how the program can improve student learning.

Criteria for Success: Generally a rubric will be used that has three "passing" categories (excellent, good, fair), and one "failing" category (poor), and success will be represented by having 75% of the students receive a passing assessment. See example rubrics in Appendix 1.

B. Who:

For SLOs A1 and B2, students will be sampled from the required milestones that every student in the program must pass through (comp exams and dissertation proposals) that closely match the SLO. In the case of B2, all students enrolled in the program will be assessed. Thus every student in the program has a chance of being assessed for all three, and many, if not nearly all, will be. To ensure a sufficient number of students to assess, multiple years of data on the milestone may be used, if necessary. For instance, there may be only a few dissertation proposals in a given academic year, so three years' worth of proposals may be included in that assessment.

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

At the beginning of each Fall semester, the tenure-line faculty of the department will meet to review and discuss the assessment reports for the previous year, as presented by the assessment coordinator. The faculty will decide at this meeting on improvements to the curriculum and/or assessment process based on these results and discussion. These will be recorded in the meeting minutes and the assessment reports themselves, and will be communicated to non-tenure-line faculty and staff as necessary by the department chair and/or graduate committee chair. The graduate committee will then take the lead on implementing any changes to curriculum, with a general goal of doing so in the following Spring semester, depending on the nature of the changes. The assessment coordinator will take the lead on implementing any changes to the assessment process, with a general goal of doing so immediately.

Appendix 1. Example Assessment Rubrics

Comprehensive Exam Assessment Rubric		
Score	Assessment	Standard
4	Excellent	Student went above and beyond the requirements of the instructions in displaying mastery of the SLO, and/or demonstrated particular good insight or skill regarding the SLO.
3	Good	Student demonstrated the SLO with a good performance and fulfilled the requirements of the assignment instructions.
2	Fair	Student's demonstration of the SLO was adequate but not good, or a good but with incomplete fulfillment of the assignment instructions.
1	Poor	Student did not adequately demonstrate the SLO.

Professional Output Assessment Rubric		
Score	Assessment	Standard
4	Excellent	Student went above and beyond the expectations of professional output relative to her stage in the program.
3	Good	Student met the expectations of professional output relative to her stage in the program.
2	Fair	Student fell short of the expectations of professional output relative to her stage in the program, but has good opportunities to improve in the coming year.
1	Poor	Student is well behind the expectations of professional output relative to her stage in the program.