Professional Development Workshops for Program Assessment Leaders

Marquette University
February, 2014
Assessing Graduate Programs
Agenda:

- Why assess graduate program learning outcomes?
- Special challenges of assessing graduate education.
- Deciding what to measure.
- Using natural points of contact with program processes for evidence.
- How and when to measure.
- Standards for success and use of results.
- The larger context: Elements of program review.
Students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of concepts in their discipline.

2. Seek out and critically evaluate conceptual knowledge and apply theory to practice. As appropriate in their field of study, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to perform research, scholarly or creative activities.

3. Effectively communicate the subject matter of their discipline to professional and other audiences as appropriate in their field of study.

4. Demonstrate integrity, responsible conduct, and ethical and professional behavior.

Source: Marquette University Graduate School Guidelines on Program-Level Assessment
November 2, 2012
“Demonstrate an in depth mastery of advanced concepts in biological sciences.”
“Use appropriate student development, organizational and environmental theories to analyze issues related to students and student affairs practice.”

1.3 Ability to clearly identify the central issues presented in a case study.

1.4 Ability to analyze the central issues using appropriate student development theory.

1.5 Ability to make recommendations for practice that are drawn from the issues in the case and theories used in the analysis.
“Modify, adapt or construct methods, techniques and software for addressing significant problems in the field of computational science.”

• Uses appropriate theory or techniques to solve problems. (QE, dissertation and dissertation defense)

• Demonstrates sound practice and mastery of appropriate tools. (Comprehensive Exam, DQE)

• Demonstrates integration of theory and computation. (Dissertation defense, dissertation)
Are/Do the learning outcomes statements:

• Describe what students should be able to demonstrate, represent or produce to indicate mastery?

• Stated in clear and specific terms?

• Differentiate among the degree levels in competence expected? (For example, master’s vs. Ph.D)

• Focus on the learning result and not the learning process?

• Observable and measurable?

• Not “bundled”?

• Lend themselves to diagnosing where improvement is needed?
Next Step: Alignment of the learning outcomes with opportunities to acquire that learning and demonstrate mastery.

Have you sought input from your students about the sequencing, content and number of courses in your degree program?
• Coursework: Papers, projects, or required assignments.
• Exams
• Thesis/Dissertation
• Portfolios
• Oral Presentations
• Internship paper
• Professional projects
• Master’s essay
• Peer-reviewed submissions for publication
• Disciplinary conference presentations
• Peer-reviewed grant applications
ASSESSING GRADUATE PROGRAMS

• Student satisfaction surveys, exit interviews or focus groups (Student perceptions of their learning experiences)
• Alumni surveys
• Student retention and graduation rates
• Career placement of graduates
• Employer surveys
• Comparison or benchmarking with peer institutions (NRC data)
• Alumni professional accomplishments
• Alumni giving
1. Exhibit understanding of standards in multiple areas of technology and technology management.

2. Exhibit awareness of and familiarity with organizations that promulgate standards for technologies and technology management.

3. Exhibit capability to assess particular products in terms of specific ways that standards have been implemented or ignored within them.

4. Exhibit ability to research and determine the standards most appropriate for a particular technology area, computing problem, or technology management problem.

5. Exhibit the ability to explain the benefits of standards to particular computing and technology management problems.
What difficulties do you experience with collecting evidence?
Some graduate assessment plans on the web:

BYU
https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/

Oregon State
http://oregonstate.edu/admin/aa/apaa/assessment/graduate-assessment/graduate-assessment-plans

University of West Florida
http://uwf.edu/cutla/alp.cfm
What do you do with assessment results?

• Aggregate data across several years.

• Compare the program to itself over time.

• Make changes as warranted by the data.
Can assessment...

• Increase completion rates and shorten time to degree?

• Strengthen recruitment of high quality graduate students?

• Validate the need for your program?

• Support your requests for resources?

• Demonstrate value of the degree to employers?
Contact Information:

Sharron Ronco  
Assessment Director  
Raynor Library, R326  
Email: Sharron.ronco@marquette.edu  
phone: 288-6390