

GRADUATE SCHOOL



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**Memo**

**From:** Dr. Jeanne Hossenlopp, Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School

**To:** Directors of Graduate Studies

**Copy:** Department Chairs, Associate Deans, and Deans with Graduate School Programs

**Date:** November 2, 2012

**Re:** Guidance on Program-level Assessment

During the Spring 2012 semester, the Graduate School collected your input on assessment of learning outcomes that were identified by the University Board of Graduate Studies (UBGS) as important for graduate education. As we noted then, the most appropriate place for assessment of graduate student learning outcomes is at the program level, something that you already do as part of the University's assessment cycle. The following outcomes, which can readily be modified to best fit the specifics of your program, are recommended for your assessment programs. The proposed outcomes are that 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 with professional and other audiences as appropriate in their field of study.
4. Demonstrate integrity, responsible conduct, and ethical and professional behavior.

As discussed at the May 2012 Directors of Graduate Studies meeting, all programs reported that assessment of items 1 and 2 is currently included in your plans. While item 3 was reportedly not assessed by a few programs, comments indicated that the primary issue with this outcome was defining professional and "other" audiences. Note that the UBGS has recommended assessment of communication skills *as appropriate in the field of study*.

The fourth recommended outcome was not assessed by all programs. We discussed this in the May DGS meetings – demonstrating integrity, responsible conduct, and ethical and professional behavior are important outcomes for any graduate program. One of the challenges raised was how to measure demonstration of these behaviors. Kevin Gibson will be happy to explore ways to incorporate this outcome in your assessment plans.