

**Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology
Graduate Program Assessment Plan**

Program Learning Outcomes

For masters' students:

1. Conduct research or produce some other form of creative work.
2. Demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge and research/critical inquiry methodology.
3. Demonstrate effective written communication of substantive content.
4. Demonstrate effective oral communication of substantive content.
5. Ability to conduct scholarly or professional activities in an ethical manner.

For doctoral students:

1. Produce and defend an original significant contribution to knowledge.
2. Demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge and research/critical inquiry methodology.
3. Demonstrate effective written communication of substantive content.
4. Demonstrate effective oral communication of substantive content.
5. Be able to conduct scholarly and professional activities in an ethical manner.
6. Professionalization into the field of study (publications, presentations, funded fellowships, professional association activities, professional experience, etc).

Student Assessment Plan:

Masters Program

Data Source	Outcomes				
	1	2	3	4	5
Departmental Records ¹	X				
Thesis/Thesis Defense ²		X	X	X	X
Seminar ³		X		X	X

Doctoral Program

Data Source	Outcomes					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Departmental Records ¹	X					
Dissertation/Dissertation Defense ²		X	X	X	X	
Seminar ³		X		X	X	
C.V. ⁴						X

¹Program will track thesis/dissertation defenses and calculate success rates.

²The rubrics for outcomes 1-4 are to be completed at the thesis/dissertation defense. If departments prefer, they may use comprehensive exams rather than the actual dissertation, thesis, or paper. These rubrics will not be used to assess or evaluate individual students and will not inform the decision regarding whether a student passes a defense or course. The data will be aggregated for all students in

the program over a two-year period to assess the success of the program in meeting its program learning outcomes (see sample rubric attached).

³The rubric for outcome 5 is the completion of some ethics training.

⁴C.V.s of students will be collected as they complete their degrees. The C.V. will be used to provide evidence of appropriate professional activities to the particular field of study (these may be published papers, research training, teaching development, presentations at conferences, etc. as is appropriate for your discipline or program and as was identified in learning outcome 6 above).'

Response Threshold

- All programs: At least 80 percent of students will be ranked at a 4 or 5 level (on a 1-5 best scale) in subject content knowledge and written and oral communication.
- 100 percent of students will be able to conduct scholarly research in an ethical manner.
- At least 80 percent of students will pass their defense on their first attempt.

Doctoral Programs

- 100 percent of students will demonstrate professionalism in their field of study.
- At least 80 percent of students will pass their defense on their first attempt.
- At least 80 percent of students will be ranked at a 4 or 5 level (on a 1-5 best scale) in subject content knowledge and written and oral communication.
- 100 percent of students will be able to conduct scholarly research in an ethical manner.

Schedule of Assessment

- Assessment reports for Masters programs will be submitted in September of even-numbered years.
- Assessment reports for Doctoral programs will be submitted in September of odd-numbered years.

Process for Assessing the Data

Data is collected from students as they complete the certificate or degree programs. The graduate assessment coordinator will tabulate the scores from the rubrics and the data on defenses/program completion. They will also prepare lists of students taking comprehensive/qualifying exams and the results (pass or fail) of such exams. For doctoral programs, the coordinator will also identify, based on an analysis of C.V.s, the percent of students demonstrating acceptable professionalization into the field of study. The coordinator will write up a brief summary of the assessment results and this will be presented to the faculty members working with graduate students. The faculty will review the assessment results and make decisions about how to respond.

- If an acceptable performance threshold (as outlined in the plan) has NOT been met, a faculty response is required. It should include some strategy for addressing improving areas where the threshold has not been met.

- Gather additional data next year to verify or refute the result.
- Change something in the curriculum or program to try to improve performance.
- Change the acceptable performance threshold (must provide reasoning behind such a strategy).

- If faculty members identify new strategies for meeting the learning outcomes, they may respond to assessment results even if the acceptable performance threshold has been met.
- It is also okay to decide that changes are not needed when students are demonstrating proficiency with each learning outcomes. In this case just note that the faculty are satisfied, based on the assessment, that the program is achieving its goals. A summary of the year's assessment activities and faculty decisions is reported to the Provost's office in your Department's annual Graduate Program Assessment Activities Report.

The assessment report due on September 15 must include the following:

- 1) A list of students taking comprehensive exams/qualifying exams and defending theses/dissertations or completing program requirements in the past two years.
- 2) The results of those examinations and defenses summarized into the numbers of passes and failures.
- 4) A statement on the assessment of the program indicating if the program outcomes are being met, and identifying any program changes needed to better prepare students to meet the program learning outcomes.