

M.A., Political Science
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
The University of New Mexico

A. College, Department and Date

1. College: *Arts and Sciences*
2. Department: *Political Science*
3. Date: February 28, 2014

B. Academic Program of Study

M.A., Political Science

C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan

Christopher K. Butler, Associate Professor, ckbutler@unm.edu

D. Broad Program Goals & Measureable Student Learning Outcomes

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

- A. Thorough grasp of major theories and literature relevant to the project.
- B. An ability to think critically, in both methodological and theoretical terms.
- C. A firm understanding of appropriate research design and methods.
- D. The capacity to conduct an original research project.
- E. Analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience.

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

- A.1. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the literature and experts in their subfield.
- A.2. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the major theories in their subfield.
- B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically in methodological terms.
- B.2. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically with respect to theory.
- C.1. The students will demonstrate a firm understanding of research design and methods.
- D.1. The students will demonstrate the capacity to conduct an original research design.
- E.1. The students will demonstrate analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience.

E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

All programs are expected to measure some outcomes annually and to measure all priority program outcomes at least once over two consecutive three-year review cycles. Describe below the plan for the next three years of assessment of program-level student learning outcomes.

1. Student Learning Outcomes

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

University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals

Program SLOs	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility
<i>A.1. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the literature and experts in their subfield.</i>	X		
<i>A.2. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the major theories in their subfield.</i>	X		
<i>B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically in methodological terms.</i>		X	
<i>B.2. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically with respect to theory.</i>		X	
<i>C.1. The students will demonstrate a firm understanding of research design and methods.</i>	X	X	
<i>D.1. The students will demonstrate the capacity to conduct an original research design.</i>		X	
<i>E.1. The students will demonstrate analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience.</i>		X	

2. How and when will learning outcomes be assessed?

Two types of instruments are used in our assessment of our SLOs. We will use the IDEA student evaluation system to gage three of the twelve learning objectives on that survey that we feel are related to our SLOs. This will be used in our professional seminars and, thus, near the beginning of our students' usual path in the program. The other type of instrument is a writing sample rubric. The *research paper* will be typically be completed during the fourth semester of the student's academic career. Each student completing a research paper will be collectively rated by a committee using the attached Research Paper Matrix. Each SLO will be assessed by at least one direct measure. Five of the seven SLOs will additionally by assessed by an indirect measure.

M.A. Political Science Assessment Schedule

Program SLOs	Research Paper	IDEA Form Learning Objective
<i>A.1. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the literature and experts in their subfield.</i>	X	#2 "learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories"
<i>A.2. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the major theories in their subfield.</i>	X	#2 "learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories"
<i>B.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically in methodological terms.</i>	X	#11 "Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view"
<i>B.2. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically with respect to theory.</i>	X	#11 "Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view"
<i>C.1. The students will demonstrate a firm understanding of research design and methods.</i>	X	
<i>D.1. The students will demonstrate the capacity to conduct an original research design.</i>	X	
<i>E.1. The students will demonstrate analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience.</i>	X	#8 "Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing"

3. When and in what forum will the results of the assessment be discussed? What is the unit's process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?

The data will be analyzed, discussed, and reported to the College no less than once every three years. Annually, the graduate director will summarize these assessment data as part of our review of the graduate program in the spring semester. Minutes of these discussions will be included in the report to the College.

The graduate director will discuss the assessment results with the graduate committee with regard to the severity of the weaknesses (is one SLO weak on every measure at each step of the academic path?) and engage in a triage process, coming to collective agreement about what SLO is the program's weakest overall. The graduate committee will then discuss why this SLO is weak and what might be done to make it stronger. The graduate director will summarize this discussion and make a formal recommendation for improving this SLO in a report to the faculty. This recommendation may be with respect to the assessment process itself, the curriculum, or pedagogy. The faculty will then consider the report and recommendation of the graduate committee at a department meeting in the Fall semester for implementation in the Spring semester.

The department chair, in consultation with the graduate director, will prepare an outcomes assessment report for the College that summarizes the measures of the SLOs, summarizes the department's discussion regarding the graduate director's internal reports, and describes what changes (in assessment instruments, curriculum, or pedagogy) were approved by the faculty.

RESEARCH PAPER MATRIX

Department of Political Science

M.A./Ph.D. Program

Date:

Student's Name:

Committee Members:

Instructions: In addition to grading the student's research paper, as part of the Department's program of outcomes assessment, please rate as a committee the student's performance using the following criteria. *Please also indicate using an asterisk the student learning outcome on which the student performed best.*

PhD-level pass

Student Learning Outcome

Fail

MA-level pass

PhD-level pass

with distinction

*

Thorough grasp of major theories and literature relevant to the project

Critical thinking (methodological)

Critical thinking (theoretical)

Ability to execute appropriate research design and methods

Capacity to conduct an original research project

Analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience

	Fail	MA-level pass	PhD-level pass	with distinction	*
Thorough grasp of major theories and literature relevant to the project					
Critical thinking (methodological)					
Critical thinking (theoretical)					
Ability to execute appropriate research design and methods					
Capacity to conduct an original research project					
Analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience					

COMMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION: (circle one)

FAIL

M.A. PASS

Ph.D. PASS

Ph.D. PASS WITH DISTINCTION