

**Ph.D., 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**

*Ph.D., Political Science*

**C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan**

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

**D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

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

- A. Knowledge sufficient to teach a basic course.
- B. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the literature and major theories in the field.
- C. An ability to think critically, in both methodological and theoretical terms.
- D. A firm understanding of research design and methods.
- E. The capacity to conduct an original research project.
- F. Strong written and oral communication skills

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

- A.1. The students will demonstrate sufficient general knowledge in the area to teach a basic course in their subfield.
- B.1. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the literature and experts in their subfield.
- B.2. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the major theories in their subfield.
- C.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically in methodological terms.
- C.2. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically with respect to theory.
- D.1. The students will demonstrate a firm understanding of research design and methods.
- E.1. The students will demonstrate the capacity to conduct an original research design.
- F.1. The students will demonstrate analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience.
- F.2. The students will demonstrate the ability to communicate orally in the field.
- F.3. The students will demonstrate the ability to answer questions effectively.

## 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 sufficient general knowledge in the area to teach a basic course in their subfield.</i>	X		
<i>B.1. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the literature and experts in their subfield.</i>	X		
<i>B.2. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the major theories in their subfield.</i>	X		
<i>C.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically in methodological terms.</i>		X	
<i>C.2. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically with respect to theory.</i>		X	
<i>D.1. The students will demonstrate a firm understanding of research design and methods.</i>	X	X	
<i>E.1. The students will demonstrate the capacity to conduct an original research design.</i>		X	
<i>F.1. The students will demonstrate analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience.</i>		X	
<i>F.2. The students will demonstrate the ability to communicate orally in the field.</i>		X	
<i>F.3. The students will demonstrate the ability to answer questions effectively.</i>		X	

## 2. How and when will learning outcomes be assessed?

Students will be assessed on their progress toward the SLOs at four points during their academic career. The table below enumerates which SLOs will be evaluated at each assessment point. Each SLO will be assessed by at least two direct measures at different points in the student's program.

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.

The *comprehensive exams* will typically be taken in the sixth semester of a student's academic career. The comprehensive exam in the student's minor field will be written, while the comprehensive exam in the student's major field will consist of both a written and an oral component. Each student completing a comprehensive exam will be collectively rated by a committee using the attached Comprehensive Exam Matrix.

The *dissertation defense* of each student will be collectively rated by a committee using the attached Dissertation Defense Matrix.

### Political Science Ph.D. SLO Assessment Schedule

Program SLOs	Research Paper	Comp. Exam (Minor Field)	Comp. Exam (Major Field)	Diss. Defense
<i>A.1. The students will demonstrate sufficient general knowledge in the area to teach a basic course in their subfield.</i>		X	X	
<i>B.1. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the literature and experts in their subfield.</i>	X	X	X	
<i>B.2. The students will demonstrate a thorough grasp of the major theories in their subfield.</i>	X	X	X	
<i>C.1. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically in methodological terms.</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>C.2. The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically with respect to theory.</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>D.1. The students will demonstrate a firm understanding of research design and methods.</i>	X			X
<i>E.1. The students will demonstrate the capacity to conduct an original research design.</i>	X			X
<i>F.1. The students will demonstrate analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience.</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>F.2. The students will demonstrate the ability to communicate orally in the field.</i>			X	X
<i>F.3. The students will demonstrate the ability to answer questions effectively.</i>			X	X

**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.*

<b>Student Learning Outcome</b>	Fail	MA-level pass	PhD-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

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAM MATRIX

Department of Political Science

Ph.D. Program

Date:

Student's Name:

Exam Field:

Student's Major or Minor Field?

Committee Members:

Instructions: In addition to grading the student's comprehensive exam, as part of the Department's program of outcomes assessment, please rate as a committee the student's performance using the following criteria. If this is the exam in the student's minor field, strike out the final two SLOs and do not rate them. Please also indicate using an asterisk the student learning outcome on which the student performed best.

Student Learning Outcome	Fail	Pass	Pass with Distinction	*
Thorough grasp of the literature and major experts in the field				
Thorough grasp of major theories				
Critical thinking (methodological)				
Critical thinking (theoretical)				
Ability to teach a basic course in the field				
Analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience				
Ability to communicate orally in the field				
Ability to answer questions effectively				

COMMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION: (circle one)

FAIL

Ph.D. PASS

Ph.D. PASS WITH DISTINCTION

**DISSERTATION DEFENSE MATRIX**

Department of Political Science

Ph.D. Program

Date:

Student's Name:

Committee Members:

Instructions: In addition to grading the student's dissertation, 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.*

Student Learning Outcome	Fail	Pass with extensive revisions	Pass with minimal revisions	Pass with distinction	*
Critical thinking (methodological):					
Critical thinking (theoretical):					
Firm understanding of research design and methods					
Capacity to conduct an original research project					
Analytical writing that is clear and appropriate to the audience					
Ability to communicate orally in the field					
Ability to answer questions effectively					

COMMENTS:

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION: (circle one)

FAIL

PASS WITH EXTENSIVE REVISIONS

PASS WITH MINIMAL REVISIONS

PASS WITH DISTINCTION