Annual Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet

Assessment reports are due the 1st Wednesday after the Fall Term
Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

Program Information:

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<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Experimental Psychology Ph.D. Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>College</td>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
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<td>Department Chair</td>
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<td>Jennifer Rennels</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
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Contact Person for This Report

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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
  1. Students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge of theories and empirical research in a particular domain of psychological science.
  2. Students will have knowledge of research methods and data analysis and apply this knowledge by designing research studies and analyzing and interpreting data.
  3. Students will present their knowledge to relevant parties through clear written and verbal communication.
  4. Students will advance psychological science through scholarly publication.
  5. Students will demonstrate teaching skills and pedagogical expertise.
  6. Students will demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to enter applied and academic research positions.

- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
  Outcomes 1-6

- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
  For the assessment, we used data from the currently active graduate students’ annual evaluations submitted during November 2015 and from previous years.
1. The percentage of students completing their qualifying activity within program deadlines (by the 4th year in the program) was used to assess outcome 1.
   - 43% (3 out of 7) of eligible, active students completed their qualifying activity within program deadlines. An additional 3 students proposed, but did not complete their qualifying activity, and 1 student has not proposed yet.

2. Completion of the thesis and dissertation was used to assess outcomes 2, 3, and 4. Students should complete the thesis by their 3rd year in the program and a dissertation by their 6th year in the program.
   - 58% (7 out of 12) eligible, active students completed their master’s thesis within program deadlines. 40% (2 out of 5) of students who received their Ph.D. during 2015 completed their dissertation within program deadlines.

3. Student publications were used to assess outcomes 2, 3, 4, and 6. Students should publish at least two papers in a professional journal before graduation.
   - Of the 5 students who received their Ph.D. during 2015, there was an average publication rate of 3.6 (range = 0-7). 80% of Ph.D. graduates met the minimum publication rate.

4. Student teaching evaluations were used to assess outcomes 3 and 5. Most students teach at least one class in psychology before graduation. The expectation is that student instructors should receive teaching evaluation scores above the mid-point of the scale used.
   - The average of graduate student teaching evaluations was 3.51 (range = 2.19-4.00) for the 1-4 pt scale used prior to Spring 2015 and was 4.41 (range = 3.80-4.84) for the 1-5 pt scale used starting in Spring 2015. 98% of students’ teaching evaluations were above the mid-point of the scale used.

5. Student professional presentations were used to assess outcomes 2, 3, and 6. Students should present at least three papers at professional conferences before graduation.
   - Of the 5 students who received their Ph.D. during 2015, there was an average presentation rate of 14.8 (range = 6-26). 100% of Ph.D. graduates met the minimum presentation rate.

What was learned from the assessment results?

1. Students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge of theories and empirical research in a particular domain of psychological science.
   - Results are somewhat mixed in terms of meeting this outcome. For the students who completed the qualifying activity, the defense committee (three graduate faculty) judged it to be acceptable. These data demonstrate these students have appropriate theoretical and empirical knowledge in their area of psychological science. For the students who have not yet completed the qualifying activity, it is unclear why. These students might have difficulty with the material or writing or time management.
2. Students will have knowledge of research methods and data analysis and apply this knowledge by designing research studies and analyzing and interpreting data.

3. Students will present their knowledge to relevant parties through clear written and verbal communication.

4. Students will advance psychological science through scholarly publication.
   - Results are generally favorable in terms of meeting outcomes 2-4. The mean of the Ph.D. students’ publication and presentation rate exceeded our expectations, demonstrating their appropriate use and scientific communication of research methods, data analyses, and interpretations of data (outcome 2), ability to present their knowledge in written and verbal format (outcome 3), and advance science through scholarly publications (outcome 4). For the ~50% of students who did not meet/are not meeting program deadlines, we need to determine whether they have difficulty adequately applying their knowledge or difficulty with writing or verbal skills. Given the publication/presentation records for most of our graduating students, however, it seems the majority of our students are meeting learning outcomes 2-4.

5. Students will demonstrate teaching skills and pedagogical expertise.
   - Results in meeting this learning outcome are excellent. Our graduate students’ mean teaching evaluation scores are almost 1 point above the mid-point of the scale. These data demonstrate our students have effective teaching skills and appropriate pedagogical expertise.

6. Students will demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to enter applied and academic research positions.
   - As indicated for outcomes 2-4, results are generally favorable in terms of meeting this outcome. Our students are publishing and presenting at rates above our expectations, demonstrating they have the skills necessary to pursue careers in applied or academic research positions. Those meeting the program deadlines are likely to manage these positions the most favorably.
   - How did the program respond to what was learned?

The Experimental Ph.D. Program faculty will meet at the beginning of the Spring 2016 semester to discuss student progress in the program and the results of this assessment. Those conversations will include discussions regarding the positive outcomes and potential reasons why some students are not meeting program deadlines. The Experimental Ph.D. Program Coordinator will also work with the Experimental Ph.D. Program Student Committee to get feedback from the students’ perspective regarding why about 50% of students have difficulty meeting program deadlines. The program established a writing workshop in recent years, which has helped many students progress with meeting milestones, so we will likely encourage students behind in the program to partake in the workshop.