



HPU Graduate Assessment

Overview

In Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, the Academic Assessment and Program Review Committee (AAPRC) conducted an ILO assessment of our graduate student population. We used the same rubric deployed in the 2022-2023 academic year and assessed the graduate ILOs at a single point during a student's final coursework at HPU (e.g. final project or presentation, thesis defense). We report here the ILO assessment results.

Method

The AAPRC deployed the AY 23-24 graduate rubric to assess the four graduate ILOs: Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Scholarly or Creative Mastery. Specifically, at mid-semester, the College or School's AAPRC representative notified their graduate faculty that an assessment was due for students completing their programs. Graduate faculty were asked to use the rubric to assess students in their final coursework at HPU (e.g. capstone course, thesis defense, portfolio review). Faculty were asked to mark the rubric form and return the completed rubric to the AAPRC co-chair together with a writing sample for assessment archives (e.g. abstract or conclusion section from a thesis or a final written project). For those programs in which graduate students have a committee of multiple readers, all committee members were invited to mark the rubric, and the scores for that student were averaged for this report. It was the intention of the AAPRC to import the final rubric into Watermark so that faculty can upload the written samples and score against the rubric using the Watermark software as is done for three of the five undergraduate ILO assessment projects. However, several faculty appreciated the ability to mark the rubric while listening to the final student presentation without a laptop open. Therefore, we will continue to use the paper version of the rubric.

Assessment Findings

The work of 125 graduate students was assessed against the rubric, and written artifacts were collected and archived. This sample represents 93 students from two doctoral programs (92 from Doctor of Physical Therapy and one from Doctor of Psychology) and 32 students from four Masters programs (MA in Diplomacy and Military Studies, MA in Strategic Communication, MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, and MS Marine Science). Table 1 shows the number of students who scored in each

of the four rubric categories across each rubric criterion. Table 2 presents the mean Master's ($n=32$) and Doctoral ($n=93$) scores (mean \pm stdev) for each rubric criterion.

Table 1. Number of Graduate Students Scoring in each Rubric Category ($n=125$)

Rubric Criteria	Number of Students Scoring in Each Category			
	<i>1-Deficient</i>	<i>2-Acceptable</i>	<i>3-Proficient</i>	<i>4-Exemplary</i>
Scholarly Mastery	0	6	67	52
Critical Thinking	0	81	24	20
Written Communication	0	32	51	42
Information Literacy	0	6	96	23

Table 2. Mean scores in each Rubric Category for the Masters and Doctoral Candidates

Rubric Criteria	Scholarly Mastery	Critical Thinking	Written Communication	Information Literacy
Overall mean	3.3 \pm 0.6	2.3 \pm 0.6	2.9 \pm 0.8	2.9 \pm 0.5
Masters, $n=25$	3.1 \pm 0.8	3.1 \pm 0.7	3.0 \pm 0.8	3.2 \pm 0.7
Doctoral, $n=93$	3.3 \pm 0.6	2.0 \pm 0.2	2.8 \pm 0.8	2.9 \pm 0.3

Table 3: Results by program

Program	Scholarly Mastery		Critical Thinking		Communication		Info Lit	
	written	oral	written	oral	written	oral	written	
overall	mean	3.3	3.2	2.3	3.2	2.9	3.3	2.9
	stdev	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.5
	n	118	24	125	24	124	24	125
DPT	mean	3.3		2.0		2.8		2.9
	stdev	0.6		0.0		0.8		0.3
	n	85		92		91		92
MADMS	mean	2.9		2.8		2.7		2.6
	stdev	0.7		0.7		0.7		0.5
	n	9		9		9		9
MASC	mean	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.2
	stdev	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8

	n	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
MATESOL	mean	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.1
	stdev	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.8
	n	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
MSMS	mean	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6
	stdev	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.5
	n	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
PsyD	n=1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Discussion

- *How closely do we think these findings reflect the actual level of competence of our students?*
 - This sample was dominated by scores from the Doctor of Physical Therapy program; therefore, this should be considered when this data is analyzed. Overall, our graduate students scored in the Proficient category for Scholarly Mastery, Written Communication, and Information Literacy. Overall scores were Acceptable for Critical Thinking (Table 2). When parsed out by degree, our Master's students scored slightly better than our Doctoral students in Critical Thinking, Written Communication, and Information Literacy (Table 2). Still, none of these differences between degree levels were statistically significant, perhaps due to the skew in the data towards the Doctoral programs.
 - We feel this level of performance reflects our graduate student competency relatively well, on average, and posit that much more participation from our growing masters programs will be necessary for overall graduate assessment results to be meaningful.
- *Were there any problems with the process?*
 - None, to our knowledge. We were pleased with the response rate, which was well above previous assessment projects with the new and very well-enrolled Doctorate of Physical Therapy included in the project. We note that a few of the submissions from MA TESOL, MA DMS, and MSMS were from students who graduated in the prior academic year but were not submitted in time for the 2022-2023 assessment. We are trying to accustom programs to submitting data after each semester.

Closing the Loop

- *How shall we use these findings?*
 - This report will be distributed to graduate programs along with the data specific to their programs for use in their Program Review self-study and/or outside accreditation reporting. With this assessment data, programs can have “closing the loop” discussions and make recommendations about programmatic changes, if necessary, as this is not the purview of the AAPRC.
 - That said, the AAPRC recommends that the Doctorate of Physical Therapy program explore why candidates did not show proficiency in the Critical Thinking ILO. It is possible that it is not expressly practiced in the program and/or the assessment artifact did not sufficiently cover that rubric category, and, therefore, scores were lower than expected.
 - The AAPRC will report these results to the University during our annual Assessment day in August. The report will then be uploaded to our Student Success website, making the graduate ILO assessment results public.
- *Are we satisfied with the results? If not, what are we going to do about it?*
 - The AAPRC will continue to collect and report graduate ILO assessment data using this rubric. Assessment results from this project will provide a baseline or starting point from which our new and our legacy graduate programs may begin to determine annual trends in student performance on all four graduate ILOs.
 - **Update to the rubric:** In the 2023-2024 cycle and prior years the rubric included rows for scoring an oral defense under Critical Thinking, Scholarly Mastery and Communication which could be scored as N/A for programs that did not have an oral component to the capstone. As part of the discussion of the first report (2022-2023), AAPRC members queried why we were including scores for oral communication since it was not a graduate ILO. For the 2024-2025 cycle, we revised the rubric slightly to remove the score for oral communication, and created two versions of the rubric. Programs who choose to evaluate an oral defense or other oral artifact in addition to a written one can continue to report scores for the defense under Critical Thinking and Scholarly Mastery. However, programs without an oral defense can use a rubric that only features rows for evaluating a written artifact.



Graduate ILO Assessment Rubric

Degree (circle one): Masters Doctorate

Year-Semester/Term: _____

Committee Chair or Capstone Course Instructor: _____

College or School: _____ Department or Program: _____

Name of Evaluator: _____

Directions to Evaluators: Place a checkmark on the line in front of the rubric description for each Institutional Learning Outcome Assessment that best reflects the quality and level of achievement related to the report, thesis, dissertation, or portfolio as required in the capstone course and/or graduate program requirements. Feel free to copy this form if there is more than one evaluator. Please scan and send the completed rubric(s) along with a student's writing sample (e.g. abstract, discussion section, report section, portfolio) to the AAPRC co-chairs for archiving in Watermark. **Note:** if there is no requirement for an oral defense or presentation, please mark the oral defense line "NA".

	1. Deficient	2. Acceptable	3. Proficient	4. Exemplary
Scholarly Mastery: capstone project (thesis, portfolio, professional paper, or performance) demonstrates advanced knowledge, skills, and perspectives that contribute to their discipline				
Level of knowledge reflected in the written document (e.g. report, thesis, dissertation, or portfolio)	___ Reflects an unacceptably low level of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.	___ Reflects acceptable level of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.	___ Reflects above-average level of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.	___ Reflects outstanding level of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.
Level of knowledge reflected in the oral presentation and/or defense	___ Reflects an unacceptably low level of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.	___ Reflects acceptable level of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.	___ Reflects above-average level of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.	___ Reflects outstanding level of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.

	1. Deficient	2. Acceptable	3. Proficient	4. Exemplary
Critical Thinking: identify and explain issues, analyze evidence, assess assumptions, define their perspectives and positions, and present the implications and consequences of their conclusions				
Level of critical thinking reflected in the written document (e.g. report, thesis, dissertation, or portfolio)	___ Reflects an unacceptably low level of critical thinking.	___ Reflects acceptable level of critical thinking.	___ Reflects above-average level of critical thinking.	___ Reflects outstanding level of critical thinking.
Level of critical thinking reflected in the oral presentation and/or defense.	___ Reflects an unacceptably low level of critical thinking.	___ Reflects acceptable level of critical thinking.	___ Reflects above-average level of critical thinking.	___ Reflects outstanding level of critical thinking.
Communication Written and Oral: The ability to organize their thoughts and feelings, synthesize relevant information and concepts, and effectively, clearly, and persuasively communicate their perspectives through written language and spoken format.				
Level of communication skill reflected in the written document (e.g. report, thesis, dissertation, or portfolio)	___ Reflects an unacceptable ability to express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally in writing.	___ Reflects an acceptable ability to express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally in writing.	___ Reflects above-average ability to express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally in writing.	___ Reflects outstanding ability to express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally in writing.
Level of communication skills reflected in the oral presentation and/or defense.	___ Reflects an unacceptable ability to orally express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally.	___ Reflects an acceptable ability to orally express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally.	___ Reflects above-average ability to orally express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally.	___ Reflects outstanding ability to orally express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally.
Information Literacy: The ability to recognize and articulate an information need, and to access, evaluate, and use relevant source material effectively, ethically, and legally in their academic pursuits.				
Level of skills reflected in the written document (e.g. report, thesis, dissertation, or portfolio)	___ Reflects an unacceptably low level of information literacy.	___ Reflects an acceptable level of information literacy.	___ Reflects an above-average level of information literacy.	___ Reflects an outstanding level of information literacy.