

Appendix A

Assessment of Student Learning Department and Program Report

Please enter the appropriate information concerning your student learning assessment activities for this year.

Academic Year of Report: 2014-15

College: College of Arts and Humanities

Department: History

Program: Master of Arts in History

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed, and why? M.A. students were assessed during their capstone experience, consisting of either a written exam and oral defense, a thesis and oral defense, or a project and oral defense. The department created a seven-part assessment rubric with a tripartite scale as follows: exceeds expectations; meets expectations; and does not meet expectations. The six categories in the rubric are: (1) Writing; (2) Research Skills/Sources; (3) Analysis; (4) Documentation; (5) Logical Organization; (6) Diversity; (7) Globalism. These six categories, together, assess mastery of historical skills and knowledge. NOTES: Category 4, Documentation, is not applicable to written M.A. exams. Categories 6 and 7 are assessed on a “meets expectations” or “does not meet expectations” only.
2. A note on SLO category 6 and 7, Diversity and Globalism: Here we determine whether a given thesis, project, or exam examines a historically marginalized or underrepresented group within or outside the U.S. In Category 7, we determine whether a given thesis, project, or exam examines a nation, culture, or region outside the U.S., or alternately, U.S. relations with such a region. Our goal is for at least half of the theses and examinations completed in a given year to focus in whole or in part on such cultures, regions and/or peoples.
3. How were Student Learning Outcomes assessed?
 - a. What methods were used? Five-part assessment rubric with three possible responses to each part (exceeds expectations; meets expectations; does not meet expectations), plus a two-part assessment rubric with two possible responses (meets expectations; does not meet expectations). In Category 4, the criteria for thesis students differs from the criteria for exam students. See attached rubric for definition of “exceeds expectations,” “meets expectations,” and “does not meet expectations” for each part of the rubric. Ideally, all M.A. students will “exceed expectations” in each part.
 - b. Who was assessed? Five of seven M.A. students who completed degree requirements in 2014-15. Four (4) M.A. students from 2014-15 wrote theses and three (3) were assessed. Three (3) took and defended a written exam and two (2) were assessed.
 - c. When was it assessed? Each student is assessed at the time they complete the M.A. via oral defense of thesis, project, or written examination.
4. What was learned?

Total M.A. students graduated, 2014-15	7
M.A. exam option	3 (2 assessed)
Project option	0
Thesis option	4 (3 assessed)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Category One: Writing				
Exceeds expectations	5	4	2	4
Meets expectations	3	0	3	1
Does not meet expectations	0	0	0	0
Category Two: Research Skills/Sources (thesis or project only)				
Exceeds expectations	1	2	3	1
Meets expectations	0	2	0	2
Does not meet expectations	0	0	0	0
Category Three: Analysis				
Exceeds expectations	5	1	2	1
Meets expectations	1	2	3	3
Does not meet expectations	2	1	0	0
Category Four: Documentation (thesis or project only)				
Exceeds expectations	1	3	2	1
Meets expectations	0	0	0	2
Does not meet expectations	0	0	0	0
Category Five: Logical Organization				
Exceeds expectations	4	2	2	1
Meets expectations	3	1	2	3
Does not meet expectations	1	0	1	1
Category Six: Diversity				
Meets expectations	NA	4	5	5
Does not meet expectations	NA	0	0	0
Category Seven: Globalism				
Meets expectations	NA	3	3	3
Does not meet expectations	NA	1	0	2

Concise interpretation of results: M.A. students who completed their theses, projects, or exams in 2014-15 on the whole performed slightly worse than those from 2013-14 in research, analysis, documentation, logical organization, and globalism but slightly better in writing and diversity skills. It is noteworthy that one student (once more) did not meet expectations in logical organization. This, too, is an area for

improvement. “Worse” performance indicates a decline in students that exceed expectations and a transition to more students that meet expectations; the worse performance does not indicate any growth in students that do not meet expectations or department goals: For example, 60% of students meet expectations in globalism, surpassing the department goal of 50%.

5. What will your department or program do as a result of that information? In the past three years, the department has encouraged advisors to pay more attention to prospectuses and outlines in order to improve Analysis and Logical Organization. We will continue to do this. M.A. examinees will be asked to prepare “practice” answers in advance of taking the exam.
6. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information? In 2012-13, the department added two missing criteria for assessment, Diversity and Globalism (see above for definitions). In 2013-14, the department abolished the requirement that examination students have a second field. The general consensus was that students needed to dedicate more time to mastering their first field, rather than spending a lot of time developing a second. Though they are no longer tested on a second field, examination-option students are encouraged to take at least two courses in a second field.
7. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University. In the past, department members have repeatedly found the quality of M.A. examinations to be subpar. That continued to be the case in 2013-14 (two of the three examination students generally met expectations in all categories but did not exceed them. One of those students did not meet expectations in the logical organization category, though he did manage to pass the exam. We continue to want exam students to show better understanding of historiography as well as a better understanding of content (dates, people, trends, social movements, legislation, and the like). To that end, the department plans to discuss ideas for better mentorship of exam students.
8. Strengths. History’s M.A. students typically conduct research or write exams that involve global and/or diversity themes. This held true in 2014-15. All exams and theses dealt with such themes. Writing skills improved from 2013-14 to 2014-2015.