1. What was the Student Learning Outcome being assessed?
   Students will define an area of interest within biology and demonstrate historic and current knowledge of that area.

2. What assessment method was used to assess that outcome during 2013/14?
   Oral examination conducted by the student's Graduate Committee and departmental faculty.

3. Was that assessment method direct (e.g. exams) or indirect (e.g. surveys or focus groups)?
   Assessment method was a direct, face to face oral exam.

4. Which students were assessed? (e.g. graduate students completing oral exams).
   All Biology graduate students are assessed by two hour long oral exams.

5. When were the students assessed? (e.g., when course work completed)
   Students typically take their graduate orals in spring of their first year of the graduate program, though these can be delayed until their second year if the need arises.

6. How many students were assessed?
   Eleven students were given oral exams between July 19, 2013 and July 17, 2014.

7. Does the assessment method assess knowledge, performance, or attitudes?
   Knowledge is assessed by the oral exams.

8. What was the standard of mastery?
   Students are graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory by their thesis committee.

9. What were the results?
   All eleven students who attempted their oral exams passed the exam as determined by their thesis committee.
10. Were Standards of Mastery met (yes or no)?

Yes, students mastered the Learning Outcome.

Once the above data is completed for all assessment methods there are three “global questions.”

1. How will these assessment results be used to improve learning?

   The oral exams are the method our graduate faculty use to assess whether our program of courses is adequate and provides the knowledge background needed to graduate a Biology Master’s Student. The thesis committees are in communication with the Biology Graduate Committee and with the Department as a whole. Committee members relay their observations to these bodies and, if needed, changes are made to the curriculum.

2. What internal/external constituents were or will the results be reported to?

   The results are given to the Graduate Studies. We will begin to maintain in-department records as well starting in Fall 2015.

3. How were last year’s assessment results used to improve student learning outcomes? What changes were made to curriculum or pedagogy? Were those changes effective?

   We did not modify our curriculum based on last year’s results in any concrete way, however, this year as we began seeking data about our graduate student program we discovered several holes in our tracking of the program. We will begin to maintain records for student progress in the department as a first step to improving the program.