

**Template
Degree Program
Assessment of Student Learning Plan
Kansas State University**

FEB 17 2005

received

- Check the box if your program's student learning outcomes have been modified since November 2003. If so, please email (apr@ksu.edu) or attach a hard copy to this document.

A. College, Department, and Date

College: *Arts & Science*
Department: *History*
Date: *16 November 2004*

B. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plans

Professor Michael Ramsay, Department of History Assessment Chair (*on sabbatical, spring 2005*)

Contact, Spring 2005:
Professor Sue Zschoche
Chair, Department of History
208 Eisenhower Hall
532-6730

C. Degree Program

Ph.D. in History

D. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

1. Student Learning Outcomes

- 1. **Historical Content:** enhanced knowledge of significant people, events, ideas, and developments in history*
- 2. **Awareness of Historical Method:** basic knowledge of the holistic nature of history and the disciplinary tools as used by contemporary historians*
- 5. **Critical Thinking Skills:** ability to critically evaluate interpretations and apply skeptical inquiry and the scientific method*
- 6. **Research Methods:** familiarity with the various methods of research, data collection and analysis in history and understand their relevance to specific research topics*
- 7. **Historical Theory:** understand the major theoretical perspectives and trends in history*
- 8. **Communication Skills:** ability to communicate effectively through written and oral means*

Special rationale for selecting these learning outcomes

The selected SLOs are central to the professional production of history, that is, the capacity to perform original historical research and present the findings. The production of history is the ultimate goal of historical study. For doctoral students, the production of history takes the form of a dissertation.

Relationship to K-State Student Learning Outcomes (see table attached at the end of this report)

2. How will the learning outcomes be assessed? What groups will be included in the assessment?

In a profound sense, the selected learning outcomes are already extensively assessed as part of the production and ultimate defense of the doctoral dissertation. However, knowing that the achievement of these outcomes is the ultimate objective of doctoral study, the department intends to assess students' progress toward these outcomes from the beginning and throughout the course of their doctoral study. At the annual department meeting dedicated to the discussion of individual graduate student progress, the major professor will assess each of his or her students using a standard rubric (devised by the department as a whole and written to accommodate the more advanced performance required of doctoral students) that defines the various levels of progress/achievement for each of the selected student learning outcomes. The Director of Graduate Studies will maintain a portfolio for each student that will eventually contain all of his or her progress reports during the period of master's study. [Direct measure]

In addition, the General Field Committees (the committees charged with administering the main portion of doctoral preliminary examinations) will be charged with assessing student performance on the examination, particularly in regard to SLO #1, Historical Content, and SLO #7, Historical Theory, and reporting their findings to the department as a whole. [Direct measure]

As part of graduate course evaluations, the student will be asked to assess the course in terms of how it advanced their progress toward these selected outcomes, e.g., how it advanced historical content knowledge, awareness of historical method, application of research methods, critical thinking skills, understanding of historical theory, and communication skills. [Indirect measure]

3. When will these outcomes be assessed? When and in what format will the results of the assessment be discussed?

i. Year 1 (2004-2005)

The department will design the "doctoral student progress rubric" and apply it during the annual department meeting dedicated to the discussion of individual graduate student progress.

ii. Years 2 and 3 (2005-2007)

The annual "individual student progress" meetings, already mandated by the department, will continue. Drawing upon these evaluations as well as student evaluations, the department will commence a discussion of the entire graduate curriculum with the aim of standardizing the aims and projected outcomes for topics courses and research seminars in order to better insure student progress toward these outcomes. In addition, during year three, assessment of SLO #1 and SLO #7, as revealed in the general field preliminary exam, will be used as an additional source of information for this process.

4. What is the unit's process for using assessment results to improve student learning?

As described in the aforementioned plan, the department sees the assessment of student learning outcomes as providing a critical body of data pertinent to the ongoing evaluation, revision, and partial standardization of the graduate curriculum as a whole. An annual department retreat at which assessment of student learning at the graduate level is a major topic will commence in the spring 2005 semester.

History Program SLOs	University-wide SLOs (Graduate Programs)			
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes and Professional Conduct	Program SLOs conceptually different from University SLOs
1. Historical Content: enhanced knowledge of significant people, events, ideas, and developments in history	X			
2. Awareness of Historical Method: basic knowledge of the holistic nature of history and the disciplinary tools as used by contemporary historians	X			
3. Cultural Diversity: awareness and appreciation of cultural similarity and diversity over time	X		X	
4. Historical Perspective: understanding of historical perspective and how it differs from moral relativity	X		X	
5. Critical Thinking Skills: ability to critically evaluate interpretations and apply skeptical inquiry and the scientific method	X	X	X	
6. Research Methods: familiarity with the various methods of research, data collection and analysis in history and understand their relevance to specific research topics	X	X	X	
7. Historical Theory: understand the major theoretical perspectives and trends in history	X	X	X	
8. Communication Skills: ability to communicate effectively through written and oral means		X		
9. Application: ability to apply historical thinking to everyday life, function successfully in a multicultural world and nation, and make sense of social, political, and economic complexity		X	X	
10. Cultural Awareness: understand the roles played by history, culture and language in shaping world views	X		X	
11. Dynamic Nature of History: understand the study of history as a dynamic process of adaptation through innovation in theoretical perspectives or the development of new sources through time and across the globe	X	X		

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

Writing requirements. Inasmuch as the discipline of history offers few opportunities for quantitative evaluation of specific skills, students are evaluated through repeated qualitative analysis by faculty of their ability to perform analytical tasks through extensive written activities. While specific writing exercises vary from course to course, as a general rule each student can expect to produce 30 to 40 pages of written material in one course.

Some exercises focus on how well the student understands the theoretical or intellectual basis of an historical interpretation, others look at how well prepared the student may be to teach the material to undergraduates, while still others assess the student's ability to conduct basic research in an area relevant to the topic under examination in the course.

Preliminary examinations.

The preliminary examinations consist of a set of written examinations, one in a general field and one in each of the special fields chosen by the student in consultation with the supervisory committee, and a single oral examination covering all of the fields. The department's intention is to determine the students' mastery of the fundamental issues and historiography in each area in which they wish to assert professional competence.

Each doctoral student must stand for examination in three special fields to be determined by the student in consultation with the supervisory committee. One of them must offer a mode of historical understanding significantly different from the student's dissertation field or be from a discipline outside history. In the latter case a faculty member from that discipline will serve as the outside member of the committee (Dept. Minutes, 26 Feb 90). The written examination in each special field shall last no longer than four hours (Dept. Minutes, 16 Dec 86, #1) and will be prepared and graded by the member of the supervisory committee responsible for that field.

Completion of an approved doctoral dissertation.

The doctoral dissertation represents the results of a substantive research investigation based largely on primary materials (manuscript and archival holdings, newspapers, government publications, and other published and unpublished contemporary materials) on an historical problem or topic approved by the candidate's supervisory committee. Its purpose is to demonstrate the candidate's mastery of a specialized field within history; historical conceptualization, analysis, and interpretation; research skills; and lucid historical writing.