



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

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

**A. College, Department, and Date**

College: Graduate School  
Department: Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work  
Program: Sociology  
Date: 10/27/04

**B. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plans**

Richard Goe, Professor of Sociology & Graduate Coordinator

**C. Degree Program**

M.A./ Ph.D. in Sociology

**D. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan**

**1. Student Learning Outcome(s)**

The Graduate Program in Sociology will focus on the three graduate student learning outcomes that were approved by the graduate faculty in Sociology for the M.A. and Ph.D. programs. These were:

M.A. Program

1. *Demonstrate competency and understanding of sociological theory, research methods, and one area of specialization in the discipline.*
2. *Demonstrate the ability to apply sociological knowledge to produce scholarly and creative works, including research papers and theses.*
3. *Demonstrate an awareness of principles of integrity and ethical behavior that are central to the profession of sociology.*

Ph.D. Program

1. *Demonstrate competency and understanding of sociological theory, research methods, and two areas of specialization in the discipline.*
2. *Demonstrate the ability to apply sociological knowledge to produce scholarly and creative works, including research papers and dissertations.*

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*3. Demonstrate an awareness of principles of integrity and ethical behavior that are central to the profession of sociology.*

Special rationale for selecting these learning outcomes (optional):

These were selected because of their direct correspondence to the graduate student learning outcomes adopted by the Graduate Council at K-State.

Relationship to K-State Student Learning Outcomes (insert the program SLOs and check all that apply):

M.A. Program

Program SLOs	University-wide SLOs (Graduate Programs)			
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes and Professional Conduct	Program SLO is conceptually different from university SLOs
1. Demonstrate competency and understanding of sociological theory, research methods, and one area of specialization in the discipline.	X			
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply sociological knowledge to produce scholarly and creative works, including research papers and theses.		X		
3. Demonstrate an awareness of principles of integrity and ethical behavior that are central to the profession of sociology.			X	

Ph.D. Program

Program SLOs	University-wide SLOs (Graduate Programs)			
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes and Professional Conduct	Program SLO is conceptually different from university SLOs
1. Demonstrate competency and understanding of sociological theory, research methods, and two areas of specialization in the discipline.	X			

2. Demonstrate the ability to apply sociological knowledge to produce scholarly and creative works, including research papers and dissertations.		X		
3. Demonstrate an awareness of principles of integrity and ethical behavior that are central to the profession of sociology			X	

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

The student learning outcomes for the Graduate Program in Sociology will be assessed using both direct and indirect measures. In regard to the direct measures that will be used, both the M.A. and Ph.D. programs employ a capstone experience that involves internal juried review of comprehensive projects. In order to earn the M.A. degree, M.A. students must either: (a) successfully pass a comprehensive exam covering the 3 areas of sociological theory, research methods, and one area of specialization in the discipline; or (b) successfully pass two oral examinations on an M.A. thesis (one for a research proposal and the second for the finished thesis) that demonstrates sufficient knowledge of sociological theory, research methods, and one area of specialization in the discipline. Both of these capstone experiences involve an internal juried review by a panel of 3 faculty members.

In order to earn the Ph.D. degree, Ph.D. students must successfully pass comprehensive examinations in two areas of specialization in the discipline. They must also demonstrate adequate knowledge in the areas of sociological theory and research methods by earning a grade point average greater than 3.0 in course work for either of these areas. Ph.D. students that do not meet this criterion in course work for either area of sociological theory or research methods must also successfully pass a comprehensive exam in that area. All Ph.D. comprehensive exams involve internal juried review by a panel of 3 faculty members. Finally, Ph.D. students must also successfully pass two oral examinations on a Ph.D. dissertation (one for a research proposal and the second for the finished dissertation) that demonstrates sufficient knowledge of sociological theory, research methods, and one or more areas of specialization in the discipline. This part of the capstone experience involves internal juried review by a panel of five graduate faculty members. Three of these members are selected from within the program, one is selected from a program outside the discipline, and one is appointed by the Graduate School.

All students in the Graduate Program in Sociology will be included in the assessment. Students will be prepared for these capstone experiences through on-going feedback during the initial course work phase of their graduate program. All courses in the graduate Sociology curriculum require students to produce a research paper as part of the course requirements. This ongoing experience in professional research and writing will help students develop competency in sociological theory, research methods, and/or an area of specialization, help them develop the ability to produce scholarly and creative work, and allow them to demonstrate principles of integrity and ethical behavior in conducting sociological research. Ultimately, these competencies must be demonstrated in the capstone experience and judged to be sufficient through an internal juried review by the panel of faculty members.

Indirect measures that will be used in the assessment include graduation rates, job placement data for graduates, exit interviews with graduates, and self-report measures assessing students' perceptions of what they have learned. In regard to the latter, additional items will be used in course evaluations to assess whether students perceive that the student learning outcomes emphasized in each graduate course are being met.

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

The assessment procedures for graduate student learning outcomes are already in place with the exception of developing a systematic exit interview for graduates and ensuring that course evaluations for all graduate courses include items designed to assess whether the emphasized graduate student learning outcomes have been met. These assessment tools will be developed and implemented during the Spring 2005 semester. Where applicable, the results of the assessment will be quantified. The Graduate Coordinator will organize and collect assessment data on student learning outcomes. The results will be presented and discussed by graduate faculty during a review of the performance of graduate students that is conducted on an annual basis during the Spring semester of the academic year. Evaluation of both direct and indirect measures will be ongoing, with changes being made as problems are identified.

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

The graduate program conducts a review of graduate student performance on an annual basis. All graduate students are required to submit an annual report describing their progress and achievements in the graduate program. All graduate faculty are required to evaluate and comment on the performance of graduate students enrolled in their graduate classes, or for whom they have served as a member of a graduate committee. A meeting is then held in which the performance of each graduate student is discussed by the graduate faculty. Each graduate student is then provided feedback by the Graduate Coordinator about their performance in the program, which includes recommendations for improving areas of weakness if applicable.

It is a policy of the graduate program that each graduate student select a graduate faculty member to serve as the major professor of their graduate committee by the end of the first year of study. The major professor will provide individualized feedback, mentoring, and advice to the student until the degree is completed in effort to improve the performance of the student. The Graduate Coordinator will serve in this capacity until a major professor is selected.

In cases where students are unable to pass comprehensive exams and/or oral exams as part of the capstone experience, faculty evaluating the exams will be required to provide feedback on areas in need of improvement. It is a policy of the graduate program that students failing these exams be granted a second opportunity to take them. Faculty evaluating the re-take will again be required to provide feedback on student performance. It is a policy of the graduate program that students failing these exams a second time be terminated from the program. However, students may petition and be granted the opportunity to take an exam a third time, contingent upon approval by the student's major professor, supervisory committee, and the Department Head.

Assessment data will also be used to help improve student learning in specific graduate courses and the policies and procedures of the graduate program. Student perceptions of what they have learned in a specific graduate course will be used to provide feedback to individual faculty on potential modifications to course content in order to better meet student learning outcomes. Information

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collected through exit interviews will be used to identify potential needs for improvement in the policies and procedures of the graduate program.