

Faculty assessed students who completed preliminary examinations during the reporting period as demonstrating their greatest strengths in written communications skills (3.463 out of 4). The level of factual knowledge demonstrated in the written exam produced the next strongest score (3.301 out of 4). For doctoral students taking preliminary exams faculty assessment produced noticeably weaker scores for historiographical knowledge demonstrated in the oral exam (3.151 out of 4). Notably, faculty also assessed the historiographical skills demonstrated in both the written dissertation and oral defense as the weakest components in our students' abilities (2.984 out of 4 in the dissertation; 3.137 out of 4 in the oral defense). These scores suggest that our program might devote additional attention to strengthening our students' skills in historiography over the course of their program of study and as it pertains to their core areas of expertise and research. With an average score of 3.13 for research methodology in the dissertation, our program might also consider other ways to improve our students' methodological skills.

Student success in publication is notable. Publication is not a requirement of our program but a goal we set for our students as our final assessment metric. Of the 19 students who defended their dissertations in the reporting period, 7 published peer reviewed original research. This group accounts for six scholarly articles and three scholarly monographs. At least 10 from this group have a publication of some sort (encyclopedia entries, book review, etc). Of the 13 students who took preliminary exams during the reporting period, 7 produced research-based peer reviewed articles (and an eighth student published an encyclopedia entry within her area of expertise). Going forward, putting into place a formal procedure to record our students' publication achievements might help us better consider this metric, and would also allow us to capture publishing achievements during the reporting period of students who did not take preliminary exams or defend their dissertations.

Indirect assessment of our program, as indicated in the student exit survey, also points to many program strengths. The overwhelming majority of students responding to the exit survey answered affirmatively (either strongly agree or agree) that they received good advisement, were intellectually challenged, and obtained a good overall education. Only 4% registered disagreement in the above categories. 92% of our PhD alums would recommend our program to others. The overwhelming majority of PhD alums saw a some correlation between the graduate education they received and the professional position they accepted (19% said the relationship was "neutral," with 0% choosing "minimally related" or "not related at all." 81% selected "closely related" or "related"). 38% of our doctoral alums accepted positions outside of academia/education field and government. As this category of "Other" was not specified, it could be useful for our program to develop tools to compile this information, which in turn might inform us as to how better prepare our graduates for the careers that await them. The 7.3-year average time to degree is consistent with the national average for History (8 years) and the Humanities (6.9 years [sources: American Historical Association, Inside Higher Ed]).