Annual Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet

Assessment reports are due the 1st Wednesday after the Fall Term

Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

Program Information:

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<tr>
<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Experimental Psychology Ph.D. Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>College</td>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
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<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Chris Kearney</td>
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<td>Assessment Coordinator</td>
<td>Jennifer Rennels</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
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Contact Person for This Report

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<th>Jennifer Rennels</th>
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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
  1. Students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge of theories and empirical research in a particular domain of psychological science.
  2. Students will have knowledge of research methods and data analysis and apply this knowledge by designing research studies and analyzing and interpreting data.
  3. Students will present their knowledge to relevant parties through clear written and verbal communication.
  4. Students will advance psychological science through scholarly publication.
  5. Students will demonstrate teaching skills and pedagogical expertise.
  6. Students will demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to enter applied and academic research positions.

- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
  Outcomes 1 and 2

- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
Outcome 1 was assessed by determining the percentage of students who completed their qualifying activity within program deadlines over the last three years.

Of the 12 students who completed their qualifying activity between 2016-2018, 10 completed it on time (83%) and the other 2 completed it two semesters past the deadline.

Outcome 2 was assessed by determining the percentage of students who completed their thesis and dissertation within program deadlines over the last three years.

Of the 11 students who completed their dissertation between 2016-2018, 10 completed it on time (91%) and the other student completed it one semester past the deadline. Of the 13 students who completed their thesis between 2016-2018, 10 completed it on time (77%) and the other three students completed it 1-2 semesters past the deadline.

Outcome 2 was also assessed by calculating the number of student publications and professional presentations at time of graduation with the expectation that students should publish at least two papers and present at least three times at a professional conference before graduating.

For the 11 students who received their Ph.D. between 2016-2018, they had an average of 4.18 publications (SD = 2.56; range = 1-8) and 14.64 presentations (SD = 12.68; range = 6-50) at graduation.

- What was learned from the assessment results?

The majority of our graduate students are completing milestones on time demonstrating their ability to apply their theoretical and empirical knowledge to their area of study. Those who went past the deadline did so for various reasons, such as data collection being delayed due to difficulty recruiting subjects, whereas others simply needed more time to write or incorporate mentor feedback on their drafts. I should note that starting with the 2015 cohort, we changed our milestone deadlines to be a bit more rigorous and get students through the program more quickly. Four of the six students who were delayed in meeting a milestone were from the 2015 entering cohort, so it will be important to take that under consideration when discussing these results with program faculty.

Our students are also disseminating their empirical work in scientific journals and book chapters, and at various conferences presentations. These data demonstrate their ability to adequately design research studies, analyze those results, and discuss the findings and implications to relevant audiences.

- How did the program respond to what was learned?

The experimental psychology Ph.D. program faculty will meet during the SP2019 semester to discuss these results. A graduate student representative will be present at the meeting and can serve as a liaison to share the findings with the current
graduate students in our program and get their feedback. I anticipate one item we will certainly discuss are the milestone deadlines. It may not be necessary to change these deadlines, but rather to make efforts to streamline the process for achieving a milestone. For example, my colleagues and I are currently working on changes to the culminating experience for the master’s degree. Some students start falling behind by not proposing their thesis within the desired timeframe even though they are working on research projects upon entry into the program. One approach that seemed favorable to many of the faculty at our last meeting was for the student to develop a paper more similar to a journal article in their area of study for the culminating experience, so it would be publication ready while also fulfilling the goals of our master’s degree.