

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR Group 1: Cycle 1 - Fall 2017 - Summer 2019

Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster a dynamic and collegial environment that serves our two most important goals: The creation knowledge and the education of future business leaders. We produce rigorous and relevant research that enriches the understanding and practice of business. We develop graduates whose professional expertise, skills and leadership are enhanced by a unique understanding of the global marketplace. Through our service and our achievements in research and education, we contribute to the welfare of our main constituents: our students, alumni, university, state and business partners.

Goal 1.

The overall goal of the Doctoral Programs in Economics is to provide advanced education in economics to students of outstanding ability who plan to pursue academic careers at institutions of higher learning or research oriented careers in business or government.

PhD ECON Curriculum Alignment Matrix

Curriculum

Students in the Doctoral Program in Economics are exposed to the concepts necessary for them to obtain the skills associated with program learning goals. These concepts are best illustrated in the Curriculum Alignment Matrix for Doctoral Programs in Economics.

Learning Outcome 1.

Students will be able to approach economics-related issues theoretically. Students should demonstrate a mastery of the relevant literature and have an appreciation for the usefulness and limitations of a given theory.

Measures and Criteria

In order to assure that each student is developing the skills required for the degree, the doctoral student will be evaluated on the performance criteria for Learning Goals (1) through (5) through the utilization of five scoring rubrics. The rating scale for all rubrics is as follows:

Excellent – Exceptional performance characterized by noteworthy rigor, clarity, creativity, skill, knowledge, or contribution; performance worthy of commendation

Good – Better than average performance; few, if any, deficiencies noted

Adequate – Average performance; some deficiencies noted that must be corrected

Fair – Below average performance; suggests inadequate skill, knowledge, or motivation

Poor – Performance is clearly unacceptable; suggests a failure to make adequate progress toward the degree

It is expected that 85% of students will score adequate or better for this learning outcome.

Methods

The Office of Institutional Research & Assessment serves as our coordinating mechanism for assessment activities. The office works closely with individual faculty members who teach the required courses identified for assessment to collect assessment data. Once data has been collected, the Institutional Research & Assessment Office then aggregates, analyzes and disseminates assessment results to faculty representatives serving as doctoral program coordinators. Doctoral program coordinators review the assessment results and complete action plans which outline what changes, if any, will be made as a result of assessment activities. Discussion of action plans received from the program coordinators for proposed changes to program learning goals, and assessment plans, processes and procedures occurs during faculty meetings of the Ph.D. Program Faculty Committee. Decisions that result from these meetings are then reported back to the faculty from whom the assessment data was originally collected, thus closing the assessment loop. Assessment of this learning goal only occurs when a student has reached the appropriate stage of the doctoral program.

Results

For the Comprehensive Exams and Dissertation Proposals, 100% of students scored ≥ 3 for both criteria. For the Dissertation Defenses, 86% of students scored ≥ 3 for both criteria.

Use of Results

In general, our students have a good command of the literature and knowledge of the theories in their area of specialization. We have improved scores since our last assessment with recent cohorts performing significantly better. We added a research workshop for the third year of the program 4 years ago which meets biweekly. These biweekly meetings are aimed at improving quality of student research by focusing on methods to synthesize the existing literature and formalize questions and hypothesis and discussion of methods to tests these ideas. We have also replaced our second year field exams with a third year paper which enables students to focus on more specific literature.

We will continue to hold the research workshops and may change the meeting intensity. We will also assign this course to faculty who best matches each cohorts research interests but also have guest lecturers to address specific student research agendas. We will also increase the variety of field courses offered.

Students should be given regular feedback on of their presentation and interpretation of the literature. We have changed the annual review forms to provide more guidelines to students on department expectations in terms of research at every stage of the program by customizing it to our departments schedule by year. These forms now give them better guidelines in timing of field/topic/advisor selection, thus making it possible to form more successful matches which should improve our students' proficiency in their related fields. In addition, we can ask instructors of field courses to focus on these skills as a part of their learning objectives and assess reports, papers, and presentations over the course of the semester with the same criteria and provide feedback to the students.

PhD ECON LO1 Action Plan Form

Learning Outcome 2.

Students will be able to analyze data. Students should have the ability to construct, estimate, and interpret economic models.

Measures and Criteria

In order to assure that each student is developing the skills required for the degree, the doctoral student will be evaluated on the performance criteria for Learning Goals (1) through (5) through the utilization of five scoring rubrics. The rating scale for all rubrics is as follows:

Excellent – Exceptional performance characterized by noteworthy rigor, clarity, creativity, skill, knowledge, or contribution; performance worthy of commendation

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Results

For the Comprehensive Exams and Dissertation Proposals, 100% of students scored ≥ 3 . For the Dissertation Defenses, 86% of students scored ≥ 3 .

Use of Results

The majority of our students have a good command of the latest developments in the econometric approaches and theoretical models used in the literature in their fields. We have also improved in this respect over the last few years. This was another benefit of the research workshop. We have been successful placing our students last year which we believe indicates our students are well trained in theory and research methods. Also our students received research awards from the university and opportunities to intern at Federal Reserve Banks in Boston and Minneapolis.

We have increased emphasis on the applied methods in the second year courses. We will incorporate even more quantitative methods and data analysis to our curriculum.

We encourage students to present their papers at many national conferences and our departmental brownbags. We also encourage research papers to be sent out for peer reviews in their 4th and 5th years, before graduation. In the last cohorts, we had students publish before graduation in highly respected field journals. We can increase our efforts on this front. We can also encourage junior faculty to collaborate with the graduate students in earlier years. This will not only increase productivity but will be a hands on learning experience for our students, making it easier to publish their own research.

PhD ECON LO2 Action Plan Form

Learning Outcome 3.

Students will be able to undertake original research on economic issues. This should include the abilities to critically review previous research, to develop approaches to answering relevant questions, and to appropriately draw inferences from the outcomes of these research activities. The stress is on the ability to use data appropriately to answer research questions empirically.

Measures and Criteria

In order to assure that each student is developing the skills required for the degree, the doctoral student will be evaluated on the performance criteria for Learning Goals (1) through (5) through the utilization of five scoring rubrics. The rating scale for all rubrics is as follows:

Excellent – Exceptional performance characterized by noteworthy rigor, clarity, creativity, skill, knowledge, or contribution; performance worthy of commendation

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assessment loop. Assessment of this learning goal only occurs when a student has reached the appropriate stage of the doctoral program.

Results

For the Dissertation Proposals, 100% of students scored ≥ 3 for both criteria. For the Dissertation Defenses, 86% of students scored ≥ 3 for both criteria.

Use of Results

In general, our students have a good command of the theoretical modeling techniques and the econometric techniques. With the help of our second and third year research workshop and increased emphasis on programming and data analysis techniques in field courses our students have improved significantly over the last cohorts. We have been successful placing our students last year which we believe indicates our students are well trained in theory and research methods.

We can provide more opportunities to participate in faculty research for our students in earlier years. We can match students to advisors or research mentors early in the program. This should encourage collaboration.

PhD ECON LO3 Action Plan Form

Learning Outcome 4.

Students will be able to clearly and effectively communicate the results of their research in written and oral form.

Measures and Criteria

In order to assure that each student is developing the skills required for the degree, the doctoral student will be evaluated on the performance criteria for Learning Goals (1) through (5) through the utilization of five scoring rubrics. The rating scale for all rubrics is as follows:

Excellent – Exceptional performance characterized by noteworthy rigor, clarity, creativity, skill, knowledge, or contribution; performance worthy of commendation

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Methods

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Results

For the Comprehensive Exams and Dissertation Proposals, 100% of students scored ≥ 3 for all criteria. For the Dissertation Defenses, 86% of students scored ≥ 3 for Written Communication.

Use of Results

Our younger cohorts are performing very well. Current cohorts are presenting regularly in classes and at least twice per semester in the research course. All of our students score well in oral presentations. Some of our international students had issues with written communication which we believe has also been much improved for their counterparts in recent cohorts.

We have added requirements to present starting from the first year of the program. We will encourage our students to present their research more frequently to a variety of audiences starting from their third year in the program.

We will provide more mock presentation opportunities for our students and encourage them to present their work in conferences and within the department more often. These assessments can be done after workshop presentations and in class presentations to provide feedback to students not only in terms of topics and methodologies but also on presentation skills and language issues. We can also encourage them to regularly present to their fellow students and give feedback to each other. For written communication, we can utilize resources provided by the University and can use professional editors to provide writing feedback.

PhD ECON LO4 Action Plan Form

Learning Outcome 5.

Students will develop the skills required to teach college-level classes in the area of economics.

Measures and Criteria

In order to assure that each student is developing the skills required for the degree, the doctoral student will be evaluated on the performance criteria for Learning Goals (1) through (5) through the utilization of five scoring rubrics. The rating scale for all rubrics is as follows:

Excellent – Exceptional performance characterized by noteworthy rigor, clarity, creativity, skill, knowledge, or contribution; performance worthy of commendation

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Poor – Performance is clearly unacceptable; suggests a failure to make adequate progress toward the degree

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Methods

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Results

No student teaching evaluations were conducted using the standard scoring rubric during this assessment cycle. The program did conduct teaching evaluations as part of continuous student evaluation processes, including peer evaluations, but this data is not readily available for assessment purposes.

Use of Results

We are very happy with our students' teaching performance. Two of our students won the last two teaching awards given to graduate students by the business school. Most of our students also get consistently good student teaching reviews.

We will provide peer reviews for our students starting from their third years, when they first start teaching. We will continue to recommend that they utilize resources from Center for Teaching Excellence.

We have been coordinating classes taught by our students. We can give feedback on their teaching materials in addition to teaching style. Moreover, we can ask our students to review each other's teaching for another sources of peer review.

PhD ECON LO5 Action Plan Form