

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Anthropology
Master's Program in Anthropology
Doctoral Program in Anthropology (suspended admissions)
AY 2009-2010

Assessment Measures

The Department of Anthropology uses the following measures to assess departmental learning outcomes:

- Grades and enrollments
- Comprehensive examination
- Progression through the programs, April Audit
- Other

Assessment Findings

Enrollments:

PhD Students: During AY 2009-10, the Anthropology department had 5 doctoral students (admitted before admissions were closed, enrolled for Dissertation Guidance only), of whom 2 defended and graduated in the May 2010 commencement. No new PhD students were admitted.

MA Students: Three MA students were in residence during AY 2009-10, two continuing, one admitted in Fall 2009.

Grades in Courses:

Graduate students are evaluated individually in courses by the instructors, with progress reviewed annually by the Department in our April faculty meeting. All were found to be proceeding satisfactorily in their course work (receiving A or B in each), to be completing core courses and taking appropriate topics and area courses.

Comprehensive Examinations:

The number of students who took M.A. comprehensive examinations in AY2008-2009 – one in Spring 2010 who passed – is too small for statistical analysis. The data will be aggregated and reported in the department's five year report.

Progression Data:

Graduate enrollment has declined since admission for the PhD was terminated in 2002, and the population of MA students has shifted from those preparing for the PhD to students seeking either to improve their credentials or to test their interest/abilities for graduate-level work. We expect remaining doctoral students to finish within the next academic year.

Time to Degree: Now that our MA is no longer a step toward the PhD, times to completion of the MA, have shrunk to the nominally anticipated two years.

Comprehensive Examinations: MA students are now taking comprehensive examinations in their fourth semester, as expected, instead of accumulating additional coursework in anticipation of continuing for the PhD.

Curricular Improvements

WE have in place a structure for the MA to accommodate more diverse student interests and goals in seeking the MA (as described in our report for 2003-07) than preparation for the PhD. It requires core courses (in theory and methods) in the first two semesters, and a distribution of topical and area (regional) courses, with options to write a thesis or to take a non-thesis option (research papers developed in student/faculty research tutorials). This is not a 'program' of set courses but a framework for graduate study that matches student interests with existing faculty expertise that we review annually in conjunction with our long-range plans to add faculty specializing in contemporary population movements.

The Department has long-standing reputations in applied – particularly medical – anthropology. Since the retirement of Prof. William Gardner, who was not replaced, the 'market' niche for mid-Atlantic archaeology that he developed has shifted to American University. We continue to discuss enhancements in applied anthropology. Our long-range plan is to grow the applied dimension with emphasis on contemporary population issues in global contexts, and several courses are prepared to support this emphasis (including Migrants & Refugees, Globalization & the Culture of Capitalism, Islam in the Modern World, Latino/a in the USA, Latin America in the New Millennium, Identity & Community in America). We use graduate enrollment in these courses to review them annually in conjunction with the April graduate student audit. In the meantime, our graduate teaching focuses on students who want to work with particular professors or on topics we offer. This year we added no new graduate courses and accommodate students instead with individual tutorials.