

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
School of Theology and Religious Studies
Graduate Programs, AY 2009-2010

Key Assessment Findings

During the Academic Year 2009-10, a total of **32** students took graduate comprehensive examinations across all degree programs. During this time the data available for tracking their progress was the pass/fail rate as voted by the faculty of the academic areas based on the recommendations of exam readers. While the results show that students are generally prepared adequately for the examinations, they are clearly limited and do not yield any more detailed assessment of various elements of success in each program. The results were as follows:

	#	Fail %	#	Pass %	Totals
Master's Program	0	0%	5	100%	5
Doctoral Program	0	0%	12	100%	12
Licentiate Program	1	33%	2	66%	3
STB Program	2	16.5%	10	83.5%	12

Curricular Improvements

During the academic year 2009-10, the STRS implemented rubrics for comprehensive examinations at the Master's and Doctoral levels in order to assess the effectiveness of the coursework portion of our graduate programs. A set of rubrics for each of these levels is currently in use, and faculty are using the rubrics (grids) to assess each examination according to the traits corresponding to expected competencies at each of the two levels. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies is keeping these grids in order to generate information about the rates at which students exceed expectations, meet expectations, or fall below expectations for each trait.

The traits being assessed are as follows: (1) Addressing the question; (2) Mastery of content; (3) Mechanics of writing; (4) Clarity of expression, and (5) Critical thinking. While these traits are the same for both the Master's and Doctoral examination rubrics, the detailed descriptions of each trait (i.e., what constitutes meeting, exceeding, or falling below expectations) differs to reflect the higher expectations of doctoral students.

At the beginning of the academic year 2010-2011, the grids from AY 2009-10 were totaled and the results distributed to the directors of all STRS degree programs in order to evaluate the level to which they prepare students for comprehensive examinations.

The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies has also made a study of all syllabi for courses numbered 700 and above, taking care to see that appropriate assessment practices are built into each course and that the means and standards for computing final grades are clear.