

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements  
Department of Psychology  
Master's and PhD Programs**

**Key Assessment Findings  
2010-2011**

**Comprehensive Exam**

Eighteen of the nineteen students who took graduate comprehensive exams in AY2010-2011 passed. Seven students passed the MA comprehensive exam, and five more passed with honors; one student who failed plans to retake the exam in the fall. Four students passed the doctoral comprehensives, and two additional students did so with honors. Overall passage rates were very high as in the previous year. Passing with honors rates are highly dependent on individual students, so the change in those percentages with small samples is not considered to provide a useful year-to-year basis for program assessment. The overall rate of honors passage, however, does reflect on the high quality of the graduate students that we have been able to recruit.

**GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS  
Department of Psychology  
AY2008-2009 through AY2009-2010**

	Fail		Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
2010-2011							
Master's program	1	7.69	7	53.85%	5	38.46%	13
Doctoral program	0	0%	4	66.67%	2	33.33%	6
2009-2010							
Master's program	1	6.67%	7	46.67%	7	46.67%	15
Doctoral program	0	0.00%	5	71.43%	2	28.57%	7
2008-2009							
Master's program	0	0.00%	10	83.33%	2	16.67%	12
Doctoral program	0	0.00%	2	33.33%	4	66.67%	6

In addition to Statistics and Research Methods, the Department has a well-established process for tailoring the content of the comprehensive exams to individual students' areas of expertise. A scoring rubric that applies across all content areas was developed to include the extent to which responses (1) address the question, (2) show mastery of content, and (3) present material in a clear and organized way. Two graders independently score each question, providing a composite score for the three aspects of scoring. Discrepancies on any individual question of more than 1 point on a 4-point scale are reviewed by a third reader, and a composite grade across all three raters is assigned for that question.

## **Graduation and Internship**

Twenty students graduated with an MA degree in Psychology; thirteen of these were in a terminal MA program, and seven are in a continuing PhD program. The terminal MA is designed as a two-year program. Eleven of the graduating MA students completed the program within two years or less; one student took 2 ½ years and one took 3 1/2 year. Eight PhD students also graduated. On average, those students passed their oral defense within 6 years. All students who had an oral defense of their PhD dissertation passed. Clinical students must also complete a one-year internship, and average time to graduation for six of the clinical students was 6 ¼ years. One clinical student moved to an area where no internship was available. Once her circumstances changed she was reinstated and graduated eight years later. Two students (one Clinical, one Applied Experimental) withdrew from the program for personal reasons before completing the Ph.D. degree.

For Clinical PhD students, there is a required 1-year internship in addition to the comprehensive examination, the dissertation, and the oral defense. All Clinical students who applied for internships for 2011-2012 were successful in obtaining paid APA-accredited positions. Licensure rates were last determined for students who graduated between 2001 and 2009. All 53 graduates during that period responded. Forty-six (87%) were licensed. Five respondents had not yet attempted licensure, and two were in the process of applying.

## **Curricular Improvements for Master's Program and Ph.D. Program**

Graduate student performance was reviewed at the Department's annual review meeting. Results from the comprehensive examinations were very positive, and no changes were made to the procedures for preparation of the examinations.

The increased competition for quality MA students was considered, and an overall review of the MA programs was initiated. A smaller committee will review possible new programs during the coming year.

The graduate Foundations courses, Historical and Biological Foundations (PSY709), and Cognitive and Social Foundations (PSY710) were successfully run again in the 2010-2011 academic year. The revised format of PSY710 worked well. Students and faculty raised some concerns about the shortened time-frame of these courses, which were designed in response to accreditation issues. Given that there is a re-accreditation by the American Psychological Association scheduled for the coming year, it was decided to continue these courses in their current format at least for the coming year.

The revised two-course graduate statistics sequence (PSY 705, 706) has provided students with a better grounding in some advanced techniques. We hired a new faculty member who will be able to add specialized statistical training to our existing curriculum.

Typically, MA students take courses with the PhD students. In general that model has worked well, although it is a challenge for weaker MA students. As planned, we monitored the student

progress in those courses and found that the MA students in general are able to function well in this context.

The Applied Experimental Program initiated a regular non-credit Cognitive Science Seminar to discuss ongoing research. The seminar included faculty, Ph.D. and MA students and included both formal and informal presentations.

Our specialization in Children, Families, and Cultures continues to attract quality students, but there is a demand for additional expertise in Developmental Psychology. We initiated the reinstatement of the Human Development Ph.D. program, which is now being considered as part of the University's Strategic Plan.