

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements  
School of Theology and Religious Studies  
MA, Ph.D., and Pastoral Degrees**

**Key Assessment Findings**

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
Financial Planning, Institutional Research and Assessment

**GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
AY2009-2010 to AY2013-2014**

Master's Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2009-2010	9	30.00%	21	70.00%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>30</b>
AY2010-2011	2	14.29%	12	85.71%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>14</b>
AY2011-2012	1	11.11%	8	88.89%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>9</b>
AY2012-2013	1	7.14%	13	92.86%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>14</b>
AY2013-2014		0.00%	6	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>6</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17.81%</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82.19%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>73</b>

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2009-2010	1	4.17%	23	95.83%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>24</b>
AY2010-2011	1	4.55%	21	95.45%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>22</b>
AY2011-2012		0.00%	21	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>21</b>
AY2012-2013	3	10.00%	27	90.00%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>30</b>
AY2013-2014		0.00%	19	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>19</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>116</b>

Note:

- 1) Milestone outcomes were included in the categories High Pass and Pass with Honors if these designations were explicitly indicated in the students' milestone record.
- 2) Category "High Pass" includes both "High Pass" and "Pass with distinction".
- 3) The count in this table is based on the exam outcomes of all attempts in an academic year.
- 4) Level of the comps, i.e. Master's and doctoral, is based on the milestone activities; if there is no specification of the level in the record, students' degree level is used to determine the level.

Comprehensive Exam Results:

During the Academic Year 2013-14, a total of **19 students** took the Doctoral comprehensive examinations across all degree programs. This data shows a 100% percent pass rate compared to the previous year 92%. This is consistent with the program initiative and quality of students that are in the degree programs. Also, the Master level programs has 100% pass rate with all the 6 students that took the comprehensive exams.

## **Curricular Improvements**

- MA Proseminars created by the Dean and the Executive Council with the purpose of initiating M.A. students into the research culture of the School, and have been adjusted in number and content in part in response to student feedback. In the fall of 2012 the format of the pro-seminar was changed from a series of stand-alone workshops to a single course in order to facilitate attendance and simplify the recording of milestones. The STRS also revised the number and types of topics covered in order to make it more useful to students.
- Updates and revisions of M.A. reading lists. Individual areas occasionally review and update the reading lists used for the comprehensive exam.
- Student advising by creating academic requirements and using that to track student academic progression within each academic area
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## **Civil Degrees: Ph.D. Programs**

- The introduction of Ph.D. pro-seminars on careers, learned societies and publishing, and dissertation procedures. As with the M.A. pro-seminar, this was also reformatted from independent workshops to a course so as to cover more topics in both graduate studies and professional preparation, facilitate attendance, and simplify the recording of milestones.
- The development of a common procedure for vetting doctoral dissertation proposals, with a school-wide reviewing body (the Ph.D. dissertation committee) and standardized procedures for review within the areas. This procedure is once again under review to ensure a rigorous yet timely approval process.
- The development of a set of professional socialization measures designed to prepare students for the job market and careers, including a “Teaching and Learning” program focused on pedagogical training and various other workshops dealing with publications, presenting at conferences, interviewing, and assembling a teaching dossier.
- The use of tracking sheets. Areas have developed tracking sheets for the use of area directors and faculty to assist in advising and gathering data on students. These have been incorporated into Cardinal Station so as to automatically populate milestones and give advisors and the deans an accurate picture of the student’s performance in his or her degree program.
- The improvement of the STRS website. Under the leadership of the Dean, various student resources have been incorporated on the website to make information, forms, and course materials more accessible to students.
- The development of common standards for dissertation advising. The Dean has initiated an effort, presently underway, to improve coordination in regard to procedures for directing and evaluating dissertations.

- The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies has implemented procedures that go into operation at the end of every semester to detect low GPAs, excessive registration for comprehensive examinations, and dissertations past deadline.

## **Pastoral Degree and Graduate Certificate Programs**

STRS offers pastoral degrees, including the Master of Divinity, and the Doctor of Ministry, and graduate certificates in pastoral Ministry and Hispanic Ministry. Of these programs, the D.Min. Experienced the most significant changes in recent years, having undergone a complete overhaul the last three years creating a cohort system that tracks student by year and offering a robust academic curriculum that is specialized in Spirituality; Liturgical Catechesis; and New Evangelization. Tracking student in project to offer support and enable them to be on time to graduation

The creation of a Master of Catechesis program: The Master of Catechesis, a professional degree concentrating on catechesis and the Catholic tradition, is designed for adults who intend to or who currently serve the Church. Applicants in roles of parish pastoral leadership or teaching positions in catechesis and the new evangelization on the parish or diocesan level, or in parochial schools, and volunteer lay ministers can profit by an in depth examination of the catechetical, liturgical, and theological teachings of the Church. This degree provides a broad background fostering a professional approach to catechesis with an interdisciplinary approach that draws upon theology, scripture, liturgy, spirituality, history of catechetical, and psychology within the context of contemporary culture.

## **Ecclesiastical Degrees**

The individual areas periodically revise reading lists for the program, with the approval of the Ecclesiastical Degree Committee, and also adjust course offerings that might serve these degrees. However, because the requirements of ecclesiastical degrees are structured according to the apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* and the international Norms of Application issued by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, significant changes to the programs have not been undertaken.

The S.T.L. and S.T.D. degrees both function much as the civil Ph.D. degrees, and so many of the School-level curricular changes noted above apply to these degrees as well. For example, these students also attend the pro-seminars and benefit from the changes made to the dissertation proposal process.