

**TEMPLATE**  
**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements**  
**Department of Biology**  
**Undergraduate B.A./B.S. Program in Biology**

**Key Assessment Findings**

There were 69 students who took the undergraduate comprehensive examination over the 5-year period beginning AY10-11 (Table 1). All of those students passed this key assessment milestone for their B.S. or B.A. degree in Biology. Further, between 7 and 20% of the students exceeded expectations for the comprehensive exam performance based on the rubric data shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Undergraduate Comprehensive Examination Data from AY2010-15

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

**UNDERGRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS**  
**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY**  
**AY2010-2011 to AY2014-2015**

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2010-2011	0	0.00%	12	100.00%	0	0.00%		0.00%	<b>12</b>
AY2011-2012	0	0.00%	5	62.50%	3	37.50%		0.00%	<b>8</b>
AY2012-2013	0	0.00%	13	92.86%	1	7.14%		0.00%	<b>14</b>
AY2013-2014	0	0.00%	16	80.00%	4	20.00%		0.00%	<b>20</b>
AY2014-2015	0	0.00%	15	100.00%	0	0.00%		0.00%	<b>15</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>88.41%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11.59%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>69</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.

Table 2. Undergraduate Comprehensive Examination Rubric Data from AY2014-15

**Table of Results**  
**Student Learning Assessment Rubric**  
**Department of Biology**  
**B.S. and B.A. in Biology**  
**Rubric for Senior Comprehensive Exam**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
<b>1) Proficiency in curricular content and biological concepts</b>	1	7%	14	93%	0	0%	2.07	0.26	15
<b>2) Written presentation of scientific topics</b>	3	20%	12	80%	0	0%	2.20	0.41	15
<b>3) Effective use of peer-reviewed scientific literature</b>	3	20%	12	80%	0	0%	2.20	0.41	15

- Note: 1) The "N" represents the number of students at each level of performance for each trait.  
 2) The "%" represents the percentage of the number of students falling at the level performance for each trait against the total number of students.  
 3) The mean is the average of all scores across the levels within the trait.  
 4) The standard deviation (SD) is the measure of the variability of the data set, indicating how "spread out" these data are from the mean value.

**Curricular Improvements**

We did not make major curriculum modifications in AY 2014-2015. Our students have had very high pass rates on their comprehensive examinations, and they have all met or exceeded our expectations. We are shifting some of our required courses—moving Genetics (a traditionally sophomore course) to junior year, Biochemistry (a traditionally senior course) to junior year, and Microbiology (a traditionally junior course). This change is to accommodate the time commitment that students now have with our sophomore laboratory sequence, moving genetics to junior year to be taken with biochemistry a course that does not have an associated laboratory. Further, the standardized test for medical school admission, the MCAT, has expanded the subjects being examined to include biochemistry. Students frequently take the MCAT after their junior year, so having Biochemistry as a junior and not a senior course is helpful for performing well on the MCAT.