

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
School of Canon Law
Graduate Programs
Licentiate Program in Canon Law
AY 2014-2015

Key Assessment Findings

During the academic year 2014-2015 (including Summer and Fall 2014, and Spring 2015), 19 students in the JCL program passed the Licentiate Comprehensive Exams (Table 1).

Table 1: JCL Program Comps Result Data (AY 2013-14)

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	
JCL program	0	0.00%	19	100.00%	19

For the Licentiate oral comprehensive exam, each of the 19 students in the sample was rated by 3 Board members. As shown in Table 2, most ratings reflect faculty judgments that students are “exceeding expectations” (32%). The remaining ratings are divided among “exceptional” (10%), “meeting expectations” (32%) and falling “below expectations” (26%). Although the majority of students met or exceeded expectations, an increased number of students fell below expectations. This might be due to students delaying the comprehensive examination by a semester or two after completing course work, or the strict grading system where a passing grade of a “C” was rated “1”, by examiners.

The School of Canon Law piloted two rubrics with small samples of students. The faculty holistically assessed student’s presentations and papers across the rubric traits. For the Licentiate theses, each of the 23 students in the sample was rated by one director and one reader. Most ratings reflect that students exceeded expectations; the ratings are as follows: “exceptional” (30%), “exceeded expectations” (52%), “meet expectations” (9%) and falling “below expectations” (9%) (Table 2).

Table 2: Overall Judgments on
Licentiate Oral Comprehensive Exam and Licentiate Theses
Based on Pilot Rubric

Milestone	Level								Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceptional (3pts)		Exceeding Expectations (2.5-2.99pts)		Meeting Expectations (2-2.49pts)		Below Expectations (1-1.99pts)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Licentiate Oral Comprehensive Exam ^a	6	32%	2	10%	6	32%	5	26%	2.29	0.67	19
2) Licentiate Theses ^b	7	30%	12	52%	2	9%	2	9%	2.89	0.38	23

* Note: a) N= # of ratings based on 19 students and 3 Board members per student.

b) N= # of ratings based on 23 students, 1 director and 1 reader per student.

Curricular Improvements

There has been a marked improvement in thesis writing skills as evident by the number of students who have exceeded expectation and/or performed exceptionally due to Pro-Seminars, and deliberate faculty emphasis on good writing techniques. This is a 7% overall increase from the previous year. In AY 2014-2015 students were encouraged to work throughout the semester prior to the comprehensive examination in small group work to help them improve their skills in viva voce examinations. Additionally, students were encouraged to use the University writing center to help them develop as writers.

For the AY 2014-2015 there was no Comprehensive examination review, but students were advised to form study groups and practice exam-like scenarios. Students with exceptional grades increased by 6%, however, students performing above “exceeding expectation” improved by 1%, and those performed at “meeting expectation” and “below expectation” was equivalent to the previous academic year.

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
School of Canon Law
Graduate Programs
Doctoral Program in Canon Law

Key Assessment Findings

The School of Canon Law faculty piloted a rubric based on a small sample of students. The faculty holistically assessed students’ dissertations across all rubric traits.

Table 1 shows the number of ratings of doctoral dissertations. The sample consisted of one student rated by 3 Board members. All ratings indicate that students exceeded (100%) expectations.

Table 1: Overall Judgments on
 Doctoral Dissertation Based on Pilot Rubric

Milestone	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Doctoral Dissertation ^a	1	100					3	0	1

* Note: a) N= # of ratings based on 1 students and 3 Board members per student, not including the Chair and Secretary.

The doctoral candidate completed his dissertation within two academic years and “passed with distinction”. Although the rubric was based on one student, the “pass with distinction” is based on comparison with previous dissertations; “pass with distinction” is rarely given.