

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Library and Information Science
Graduate Program in Library and Information Science
Academic Year 2014-2015

Introduction

The purpose of the MSLIS program is to educate highly competent and ethical librarians and information professionals with the essential knowledge and practical skills necessary for successful careers in libraries and information environments. The program provides professional education and supports lifelong learning in the tradition of The Catholic University of America. The Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS) envisions that its graduates will become innovative leaders with professional values informed by the CUA core values of reason, faith and service; and DSLIS values of collaboration, community, innovation and excellence.

To ensure quality and relevance to the LIS discipline, the faculty developed the program around six core competencies derived from those demanded by the profession: professional identity, management, resources, services, information organization, and technology. These core competencies incorporate the foundational knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by professionals graduating from the program. The MSLIS curriculum reflects these core competencies which address the philosophy, principles, and ethics of the field of library and information science.

As an ongoing effort, the faculty collects and analyzes data from a comprehensive examination and an exit survey to assess students' learning in these core competencies. Both of these instruments provide an important source of information for faculty as they work to improve the program. This report summarizes DLIS's key assessment results for the comprehensive examinations for AY 2014-2015.

Part I: Key Assessment
The Comprehensive Examination Results

One of central indicators of students' learning in the program is the comprehensive examination required for completion of the MSLIS degree. It is designed for students to demonstrate mastery and comprehensive understanding of the core knowledge of the LIS profession. The comprehensive examination is offered three times a year.

The analysis of the comprehensive examination results is one key assessment by the Department's faculty in ensuring that students are mastering the program objectives. It informs whether curricular improvements for the program are needed. The faculty analyzes the results of the comprehensive examination each semester to evaluate the extent to which the students in the MSLIS program demonstrate mastery of knowledge.

Data on the DLIS pass/fail rate from AY 2009-2010 to AY 2014-2015 are provided below in the table. The data show that the comprehensive examination pass rate has ranged between 84% and 93% with an overall average of 87%.

**OVERALL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCES
AY2010-2011 to AY2014-2015**

Overall Comprehensive Exams

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2010-2011	13	13.13%	86	86.87%		0.00%		0.00%	99
AY2011-2012	14	14.29%	84	85.71%		0.00%		0.00%	98
AY2012-2013	15	15.46%	82	84.54%		0.00%		0.00%	97
AY2013-2014	10	14.49%	59	85.51%		0.00%		0.00%	69
AY2014-2015	5	6.49%	72	93.51%		0.00%		0.00%	77
TOTAL	57	12.95%	383	87.05%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	440

The faculty developed the rubric for scoring the comprehensive examination in 2012 to determine how well students could demonstrate their learning outcomes in the six areas as indicated in rubric in Appendix A, using a 3-point scale: 3 = exceeding expectations, 2 = meeting expectations, and 1 = failure to meet expectations. The rubric is intended for the program-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning; a separate decision is made by the faculty on whether a student passes or fails the examination.

The following table presents the results of the scoring on the rubric for the students who took the comprehensive examination during AY 2014-2015 (Summer, 2014; Fall, 2014; and Spring, 2015).

Criterion	Fails to Meet Expectations (1)		Meets Expectations (2)		Exceeds Expectations (3)		Mean	Total ¹
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Demonstrated understanding of relevant information, principles and concepts	12	8%	84	54%	58	38%	2.30	154
Demonstrated ability to apply relevant theories, principles and concepts appropriately in response to the question	22	14%	87	57%	45	29%	2.15	154
Demonstrated ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant principles in response to the question	20	13%	90	58%	44	29%	2.16	154
Ability to locate and retrieve relevant, appropriate, and authoritative information	18	12%	81	53%	55	36%	2.24	154
Ability to analyze and synthesize the information found	10	7%	90	58%	54	35%	2.29	154
Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing, with use of graphical elements if appropriate	19	12%	94	61%	41	27%	2.14	154

Overall, students demonstrated the highest levels of competency in the ability to locate relevant and authoritative information, ability to analyze and synthesize the information found, and the ability to understand and apply relevant theories and concepts appropriately. The students were somewhat less competent in their ability to apply relevant theories and analyze and synthesize the relevant information in response to the question, and in their ability to communicate clearly effectively in writing. The faculty scored approximately 11% of the total scores as not meeting expectations. The criteria most affected were in the application of relevant theories, the analysis and synthesis of relevant principles, the ability to locate and retrieve appropriate information and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.

Part 2: Program Improvement and Assessment Plan

The Comprehensive Examination Format

In 2012, the faculty changed the format of the comprehensive examination from writing multiple essays in-class based on memorization into writing a research paper over several days

¹ The total represents the scores on each of the 77 examinees by two readers (77 examinees x 2 readers = 154 scores).

in a take-home format. The purpose of writing a paper is to have students demonstrate the competencies required by the question and reflect learning from coursework, knowledge of the literature, analytical ability, and the ability to synthesize knowledge or ideas from various sources. This new format was considered not only to reduce student’s stress level, but also to emphasize writing skills and the professional value of research. The faculty developed a new rubric to reflect the expectations of paper quality (See Appendix A). The information for the comprehensive exam is available at <http://slis.cua.edu/courses/comps/index.cfm>.

Reviewing Advanced-Level Courses

Over the past several years and as part of the Self Study developed for the American Library Association in the Summer and Fall of 2015, the faculty has conducted a thorough review of 25 mid-level courses. The reviews resulted in the deletion of outdated courses, the change of several course titles to reflect course coverage fully, and clear statements in course syllabi on how technologies were used to enhance teaching and learning.

Planning outcomes assessment

The faculty created a two-year plan of academic program-level student learning outcomes assessment. To obtain a good understanding of the learning, development and growth of students, the faculty felt that the program needed a systematic, holistic, and ongoing method of gathering, analyzing and using information from various sources about the program and measuring program outcomes. The program has begun to implement this plan to measure some outcomes annually and to measure all priority outcomes at least once over two consecutive two-year review cycles.

Appendix A

Rubric for Grading Comprehensive Examination

Criterion	Fails to Meet Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (2)	Exceeds Expectations (3)
Demonstrated understanding of relevant information, principles and concepts	Response demonstrates unsatisfactory knowledge and understanding of required courses and issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question. There are major inconsistencies and/or inaccuracies; overall knowledge is unsatisfactory. Fails to provide or provides impractical solution, opinion, or analysis to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of required courses in regard to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question. There may be minor inconsistencies and/or inaccuracies; however, overall knowledge is satisfactory. Provides basic but practical solution, opinion, and/or analysis to issue(s)/problem(s) raised	Response demonstrates superior knowledge and understanding of required courses in regard to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question – and in the broader LIS context. Provides thoughtful and detailed solution, opinion, and/or analysis

		in the question	
Demonstrated ability to apply relevant theories, principles and concepts appropriately in response to the question	Response demonstrates inappropriate application of theoretical and/or professional principles and concepts to the question. Response fails to apply any theoretical and/or professional principles to the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory application of the appropriate theoretical and/or professional principles and concepts to the question. Some connections may be unclear or in appropriate – but overall application is satisfactory	Response demonstrates superior application of the appropriate theoretical and/or professional principle(s) and concepts to the question
Demonstrated ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant principles in response to the question	Response does not provide sufficient synthesis or analysis of ideas. Conclusion does not adequately support ideas raised in the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate critical and relevant information. Response may or may not demonstrate an understanding of theoretical and/or professional principles in a broader LIS context	Response demonstrates superior ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate critical, relevant, and consistent connections from theoretical principles to practice
Ability to locate and retrieve relevant, appropriate, and authoritative information	Response demonstrates inadequate integration of information literacy skills, inadequate use of primary and secondary sources and citations. Response fails to utilize the literature to support/strengthen discussion. References are incomplete and there are significant errors using APA	Response demonstrates adequate evidence of broad information literacy skills including a variety of primary and secondary sources. In most cases student integrates relevant research, demonstrates understanding and uses it appropriately (quantitative evidence, quotations etc.) Cites to a sufficient number of sources correctly throughout most of the essay. Complete and correctly cited references using APA – There may be instances of minor inaccuracies in citation and in application of the sources	Response successfully integrates information literacy skills, demonstrates superior understanding and uses it appropriately (quantitative evidence, quotations etc. Uses a variety of appropriate primary and secondary sources showing different perspectives. Complete and correctly cited references using APA
Ability to analyze and synthesize the information found	Response does not provide sufficient synthesis or analysis of ideas of information located. Conclusion does not adequately support ideas	Response demonstrates adequate conclusions that show an analysis and synthesis of ideas and information. Some of the conclusions are not supported in the literature review or other information sources	Response demonstrates succinct and precise conclusions that show a superior analysis and synthesis of ideas based on the information located from the and other sources
Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing, with use of graphical elements if appropriate	Response is poorly organized and lacks focus/clarity. Discussion is difficult to follow. Fails to demonstrate the satisfactory written communication skills	Response is satisfactorily organized & intelligible, although there may be minor issues with flow and/or organization. Demonstrates satisfactory to good written communication skills	Response is well organized and flows logically. The answer is clearly written, easy to understand, and demonstrates superior written communication skills