

# **Master's Degree Learning Goals and Assessments in the Graduate School-New Brunswick Draft December 4, 2007**

The goal of Master's degrees in the Graduate School-New Brunswick is to train students at an advanced level in specific fields of study in order for them to continue graduate studies or to meet professional goals.

## **Learning Goal 1 for Students: Attain mastery of a broad field of learning**

Assessment of student achievement of Goal 1:

- Grades in graduate courses
- Review by faculty of student progress with close advising and mentoring
- Comprehensive examinations assessing depth and breadth of knowledge or a capstone paper or project or a research thesis
  - Assessment of student's performance by committee of graduate faculty members
- Continuation of graduate studies or placement in a position that requires ability in this field.

Roles of the Graduate School and graduate programs in helping students to achieve Goal 1:

- Evaluate teaching effectiveness of instructors in graduate courses
  - If effectiveness is below expectations, work with instructors to improve effectiveness
- Periodic review of curricular offerings and assessment tools
  - By program faculty
  - With leadership of the Graduate School
  - Via curricular review by school-wide faculty committees and Graduate Faculty
- Host regular meetings by the dean with individual program directors
- Host best practices sessions for graduate program directors
- Provide benchmarks from comparable disciplines at other institutions

## **Learning Goal 2 for Students: Engage in and conduct original research (for Master's degrees with thesis options)**

Assessment of graduate student achievement of Goal 2:

- Assessment of quality of Master's thesis:
  - Public defense of thesis
  - Critical reading of thesis by committee of graduate faculty members
  - Submission and acceptance of peer-reviewed articles and conference papers based on the thesis
- Achievement of students as evidenced by continuation of graduate studies or professional placement.

Roles of the Graduate School and the graduate programs in helping graduate students to achieve Goal 2:

- Provide early introduction to research methods and opportunities for research
- Provide opportunities to present research and receive feedback
- Provide comprehensive advising and assist in the identification of mentors

- Establish standards for membership of student committees

### **Learning Goal 3 for Students: Prepare to be professionals in the discipline**

Assessment of graduate student achievement of Goal 3:

- Participation in internships and other work tailored to career goals, assessed accordingly
- Collection of data on professional placement or continuation of graduate studies
- Review by external advisory committees, both inside of and external to the academy.

Role of the Graduate School and its programs in helping students achieve Goal 3:

- Host professional development and career exploration activities
- Develop internship opportunities
- Host external advisory committees
- Develop curricular projects for teachers (M.A.T. or M.S.T. programs)

**Leaders of Master's degree programs** should regularly review the structure and content of their programs and the feedback received from assessments and surveys. These reviews should be used to provide the best possible education to their students, one that meets current needs for professionals in the discipline.

**The Graduate School-New Brunswick should play a leadership role** in understanding best practices in Master's education, disseminating these best practices to graduate programs across the campus, and developing policies to establish best practices, when appropriate:

- Hold regular meetings with leaders of all programs to learn about initiatives and challenges in the programs and to disseminate best practices
- Develop school-wide policies that serve to enhance the effectiveness of Master's education