

Ph.D. Degree Learning Goals and Assessment in the Graduate School-New Brunswick December 3 2007

The goal of the PhD degree in the Graduate School-New Brunswick is to train students at an advanced level in specific fields of study in order for them to assume positions of leadership in research, teaching, and service in industry, business, and government.

Learning Goal 1 for Students: Attain marked ability, scholarship and research skills in a broad field of learning

Assessment of student achievement of Goal 1:

- Grades in graduate courses
- Qualifying examinations assessing depth and breadth of knowledge
- Review by faculty of student progress with close advising and mentoring
- Self-reported student learning outcomes as indicated in exit surveys
- Placement in positions and careers that require ability and scholarship in this field.

Roles of the Graduate School and the 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
 - Through exit surveys completed by students upon graduation
- 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
- Seek funds for the support of students

Learning Goal 2 for Students: Engage in and conduct original research

Assessment of graduate student achievement of Goal 2:

- Preparation of and defense of Ph.D. dissertation proposal
- Assessment of quality of Ph.D. dissertation:
 - Public defense of dissertation
 - Critical reading of dissertation by committee of graduate faculty members and a committee member from outside of the specific Rutgers graduate program
 - Submission and acceptance of peer-reviewed articles and conference papers based on the dissertation
- Achievement of students as evidenced by professional placement, selection for conference presentations, peer-reviewed publications and individual grant attainment.

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
- Maintain adequate funding levels through the research phase
- Provide comprehensive advising and assist in the identification of mentors
- Provide assistance to students seeking external funding via Chaser-The Resource Center for Graduate Student External Support
- Provide (on a competitive basis) supplemental funding for graduate student travel:
 - To develop dissertation proposals
 - To participate in special study opportunities
 - To present research results at conferences.
- Establish standards for membership and outside members of student committees
- Make awards to students for research accomplishments

Role of the Graduate School in evaluating the effectiveness of graduate programs in helping students to achieve goal 2 and using these evaluations to enhance effectiveness of the programs:

- Host individual program reviews
- Collect data, including time-to-degree and rates of completion
 - Compared to benchmark data from peer programs
 - Review these data with programs, including indicators of achievement such as papers, awards, and grants and fellowships
- Survey graduate students, including those who do not persist, and follow-up with programs
- Review and distribute national surveys.

Learning Goal 3 for Students: Prepare to be professionals in their discipline

Assessment of graduate student achievement of Goal 3:

- Review evidence of papers presented, publications and professional networking
- Collection of data on learning outcomes from participation in future faculty programs as part of assessment of all activities associated with the Teaching Assistant Project (TAP) and presented through our participation in the Carnegie Academy for Scholarship on Teaching and Learning (CASTL)
- Aggregate evaluations of teaching effectiveness of graduate student instructors
- Collection of placement data
- 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 and promote programs associated with the Teaching Assistant Project
- Host CASTL Project Programs
- Encourage enrollment in Introduction to College Teaching I and II
- Host and promote professional development programs in such areas as human subjects research, library use, course management software, interview skills, presentation skills, development of cvs, use of research tools, and proposal writing
- Teach students how to do assessments in their future professional capacities
- Facilitate flexible options for students with interdisciplinary interests
- Develop or enhance programs related to job and networking skills, including activity in professional societies and preparation for necessary certifications.

- Acquaint students with non-academic career opportunities.

Evaluation of Graduate School and graduate program efforts developed to help students achieve Goal 3:

- Number of participants and student responses to evaluation sheets distributed at all future faculty development conferences and workshops and in classes such as Introduction to College Teaching I and II
- Number of participants and student responses to evaluation sheets distributed at discipline-specific TA training activities
- Student responses from qualitative research conducted by the Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research.
- Number of participants and student responses to evaluation sheets distributed at all professional development and career exploration workshops

The Graduate School-New Brunswick should play a leadership role in understanding best practices in Ph.D. education, disseminating these best practices to graduate programs across the campus, and developing policies to establish best practices, when appropriate

- Play a highly effective role in collecting data on graduate student support, external awards of current students, student success within programs, and placement and career advancement of its graduates, as well as survey graduates and those who do not complete the degree
- Participate in nation-wide initiatives to increase the effectiveness of Ph.D. education, such as the Ph.D. Completion Project of the Council of Graduate Schools
 - Collect data from programs, compare Rutgers data with benchmarks from peer programs, share results of nation-wide surveys with programs
- Hold regular meetings with leaders of all programs to learn about initiatives and challenges in the programs, share results from surveys of comparative data, disseminate best practices
- Participate in reviews of Ph.D. programs across the campus, working with programs to prepare for reviews and implement recommendations, as appropriate
- Develop school-wide policies that serve to enhance the effectiveness of Ph.D. education, including shortening time to degree and enhancing completion rates
 - Establish and enforce guidelines for timely completion of the degree
- Sponsor and support efforts to maintain and enhance diversity of backgrounds of graduate students and their opportunities for study and research