

The Graduate School 
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY™

TO: Graduate Program Leaders
FROM: Ryan C. Hendrickson, L.M. Hamand Dean
RE: Graduate Program Assessment in AY 2021-2022
DATE: August 30, 2021

At the provost's request and due to university-wide changes in assessment policies and procedures, the Graduate School also began the process of revising its graduate program assessment procedures in Academic Year, 2020-2021. These changes resulted in a reevaluation of the Graduate School's established learning goals, a revised timeline for submission of graduate assessment reports, and the appointment of a graduate program assessment coordinator.

As established by the Council on Graduate Studies, the Graduate School's five learning goals are the following:

- **A depth of content knowledge.** The depth of content knowledge can include program learning objectives related specifically to the knowledge base as defined by the discipline; specific skill sets in the areas of technology, leadership, management, or laboratory procedures; application of theory into practice; and/or competency as a performer, educator, artist, or conductor
- **Critical thinking and problem-solving skills.** Critical thinking and problem solving can be assessed through various class assignments including laboratory procedures and reports; application of case studies and other simulated situations; and evaluations of health/medical status as well as by performance on the program's comprehensive knowledge component.
- **Effective oral and written communication skills.** Oral and written communication skills typically are assessed throughout the students' degree program. Regular course assignments, including position papers, lab reports, research reviews, technical presentations, debates, and facilitated discussions as well as performance as a graduate assistant, if appropriate, can be utilized.
- **Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity.** Advanced scholarship through research and creative activity is a critical component of all graduate degree programs. Evidence of scholarly activity might include formulating, conducting, and presenting original research, critically reviewing and synthesizing existing research, designing artwork or other creative works and composing a musical piece.
- **Ethical and professional responsibility** is an important component of graduate-level training and may include awareness of specific codes of ethics in a discipline, integrity in scholarship and research

practices, professional disposition, respect and value for diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to respectful and responsible discourses within and beyond a discipline.

The Council on Graduate Studies adopted the “Ethical and Professional Responsibility” learning goal in the fall semester 2020. All programs were requested to implement this additional learning goal into their assessment plans with data to be presented no later than fall 2022 on this learning goal.

To clarify graduate assessment program efforts moving forward in Academic Year 2021-2022, all graduate programs should provide a graduate assessment report addressing all learning goals. For programs that submitted a report in AY 2020-2021, please use the response from the graduate program assessment coordinator as a guide for improvements and revisions as necessary.

All assessment reports are due by October 15, and may be sent to Dr. Nikki Hillier at nhillier@eiu.edu

For graduate programs seeking an exception to the annual assessment reports, such that the program feels that a reporting cycle every two years better serves the program, the graduate coordinator and/or department chair, must request an exception to the Dean of the Graduate School. In order to receive an exception, the graduate program must demonstrate that the following standards have been met:

- a) Have a sustained record of assessment over the previous two years through the Graduate School
- b) Provide evidence of robust direct and indirect assessment measures of CGS learning goals
- c) Provide evidence of how the program has used assessment data to evaluate the graduate program and where appropriate has used assessment findings to strengthen the program.
- d) Received positive responses from the graduate assessment coordinator

Thank you for your assessment efforts. When done well with intentionality, assessment activities positively impact our students’ experience, which helps our graduate programs remain accessible and superior with current content knowledge that results in well-trained and highly skilled graduates. Thank you for your commitment to program assessment.