

## 2022-2024 STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY FORM

Program Name: M.S. in Aging Studies

Dept: Human Services

College: Health and Human Services

Submitted by: Dr. Kathleen O'Rourke, Graduate Coordinator and Professor

### Part 1:

<b>CGS Learning Goal #1</b> <b>A depth of content knowledge</b>	<b>Program Learning Goal(s):</b> Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth of physical, emotional, social, and economic aspects of aging and theories of aging.
How are learners assessed?	<p>a) Certification of Comprehensive Knowledge (CCK) Written Paper Capstone Rubric [a direct measure]: Students completing the written capstone will be evaluated on their knowledge and understanding of specialized aging content.</p> <p>b) Independent Study and Internship Mid-term Self-Evaluation Forms [an indirect measure]: Students indicate perceived knowledge and understanding of aging studies content criteria and professional performance levels (e.g., aging issues/trends, communication, ethical practice).</p> <p>c) Independent Study and Internship Final Self-Evaluation Forms [an indirect measure]: Students indicate perceived knowledge and understanding of aging studies content criteria and professional performance levels (e.g., aging issues/trends, communication, ethical practice).</p> <p>d) Independent Study and Internship Mid-term Site Supervisor and Graduate Faculty Supervisor Evaluation Forms [an indirect measure]: Supervisors indicate students' knowledge and understanding of aging studies content criteria and professional performance levels (e.g., aging issues/trends, communication, ethical practice).</p>

	<p>e) Independent Study and Internship Site Supervisor and Graduate Faculty Supervisor Final Student Evaluation Forms [an indirect measure]: Site supervisors indicate students' knowledge and understanding of aging studies content criteria and professional performance levels (e.g., aging issues/trends, communication, ethical practice).</p> <p>f) Certification of Comprehensive Knowledge (CCK) Oral Presentation Capstone Rubric [direct measure; course embedded]: Students completing the oral presentation capstone are evaluated on their knowledge and understanding of specialized aging content and ability to apply knowledge/understanding to professional career development.</p> <p>g) Area Agency on Aging Paper Rubric and Assignment Grade [direct measure; course embedded]: Students enrolled in the HSL 5100 Societal Theories of Aging (a required course) synthesize and apply knowledge to evaluate an assigned statewide Area Agency on Aging plan.</p>
What are the expectations for the students?	<p>a) At least 85% of the evaluations submitted by faculty reviewers will rate students' work as 4 or higher on a 5-point scale in their knowledge and understanding of aging topics and theories. <i>The 5-point scale described here and throughout the report includes:</i>  <i>5=highly competent</i>  <i>4=competent</i>  <i>3=somewhat competent</i>  <i>2=minimally competent</i>  <i>1=not competent</i></p> <p>b), c), d), e), &amp; f) At least 85% of evaluations will achieve at least a rating of 4 on a 5-point scale.</p> <p>g) At least 85% of the evaluations submitted by faculty teaching the course will rate students as at least a 4 on a 5-point scale on the assignment. For the assignment grade, at least 85% of students will earn at least a minimum score of 85%.</p>

What are the expectations for the program?	The program expects that at least 85% of students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth of physical, emotional, social, and economic aspects of aging and theories of aging, as evidenced through CCK papers and presentations, independent study and internship evaluations, and specified course assignments (including a minimum assignment grade of 85%).
What were the results?	<p>a) Using the CCK rubric, 100% of the evaluations rated students at 90% or higher and exceeded expectations. All students earned ratings of 4.5 or higher on a 5-point scale.</p> <p>b), c), d), e), &amp; f) 100% of students' self-evaluations reached 90% or higher and exceeded expectations. All students assigned self-ratings of 4.5 or higher on a 5-point scale on the midterm self-evaluations.</p> <p>g) Rubric evaluations and assignment grades were submitted for all students taking HSL 5100. 95% of the rubric evaluations submitted by faculty rated students' work with a 4.5 or higher (4 on a 5-point scale) on the assignment. For the assignment grade, 95% of students earned at least an 85% grade.</p>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<p>a) The CCK capstone is evaluated by the student's faculty supervisor. If needed (e.g., average rubric rating below a 3, unforeseen problematic circumstances), additional Aging Studies or Human Services graduate faculty reviewers evaluate the CCK capstone. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where and how changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>b) Students completing independent studies and internships submit a self-evaluation at the mid-term of the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussions to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>c) Students completing independent studies and internships submit a final self-evaluation after the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board</p>

	<p>faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussions to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>d) Faculty and site supervisors complete an evaluation of the student at the mid-term of the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>e) Faculty and site supervisors complete an evaluation of the student after the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>f) The CCK capstone is evaluated by the student's faculty supervisor. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where and how changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>g) Faculty teaching HSL 5100 evaluate each student's paper. Assessment data, including course assignment samples/outcomes, are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made. Follow-up discussion is initiated with the course instructor, as needed. Students are encouraged to showcase their work at the annual spring EIU Graduate Expo and EIU Student Research and Creative Activity Fair.</p>
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<b>CGS Learning Goal #2:</b> <b>Critical thinking and problem-solving skills</b>	<b>Program Learning Goal(s):</b> Students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills about aging/older adulthood topics and older adulthood.
How are learners assessed?	<p>a) CCK Capstone Rubric [direct measure]: Students completing CCK capstone written papers and oral presentations will be evaluated on their ability to think critically and problem-solve about aging topics.</p> <p>b) Research Proposal Assignment Grade [direct and indirect measure; course embedded]: Students enrolled in HSL 5900 Research Methods (a required course) will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate an understanding of research design, sampling techniques, measurement, procedures for data collection, and data analysis in the context of current issues and theoretical applications in human services.</p> <p>The research proposal assignment allows students to showcase their expertise on a topic of interest throughout the semester. Students ultimately design and propose a research study. Although students do not implement the study and collect data, the goal is to write the research proposal paper and develop the presentation as if they would implement the study in the future. Students' completed papers will look similar to a small-scale version of the first three chapters of an APA-formatted master's thesis. The research proposal paper includes three sections: Introduction, Review of Literature, and Methodology. Most, if not all, of the articles and portions of course assignments should be integrated into the research proposal paper. We provide feedback on course assignments to ensure that students understand the research process and develop their papers correctly. Additional research articles and professional resources are to be integrated into the paper as well.</p>
What are the expectations for the students?	<p>a) At least 85% of the evaluations submitted by faculty reviewers will rate students' work as 4 or higher on a 5-point scale on their ability to think critically and problem-solve about aging topics and older adulthood.</p>

	b) For the research proposal assignment grade, at least 85% of students will earn at least a minimum score of 85%.
What are the expectations for the program?	The program expects that at least 85% of students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills about aging topics and older adulthood, as evidenced through CCK papers and specified course assignments (including a minimum assignment grade of 85%).
What were the results?	<p>a) 100% of evaluations rated students' work as 5 on a 5-point scale in their ability to think critically and problem-solve about aging and older adulthood topics.</p> <p>b) Assignment grades were submitted for students taking HSL 5900. For the assignment grades, 65% of students' scores met the minimum grade expectation of 85% or higher.</p> <p>Instructors of HSL 5900 summarized the following:  The issue surrounding lower grades for this assignment was due to a few reasons. First, many students did not follow directions, such as meeting page requirements, utilizing enough references, or using proper APA formatting. Students were told throughout the semester that an increasing number of points would be deducted if they did not adhere to APA formatting. We provided APA feedback in every assignment leading up to this final paper along with numerous APA resources and their required APA manual. It appeared as if the formatting was an afterthought, yet with this being a research methods course, they needed to master correct formatting and overall academic writing. Concerning proper academic writing, early in the semester students were told to sparingly use direct quotes. Rather, they needed to develop the skill of translating research into their own words while still citing their sources. A number of final papers still heavily relied on direct quotes when discussing research, which was not the goal of this paper. Additionally, writing quality in general was poor (e.g., grammatical issues) and was often not at the graduate level. Detailed feedback was provided to each student on the breakdown of their grade.</p>

<p>How are the results shared? How will these results be used?</p>	<p>a) The CCK capstone is evaluated by the faculty advisor. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where and how changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>b) Faculty teaching HSL 5900 evaluate each student's paper. Assessment data, including course assignment samples/outcomes, are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made. Follow-up discussion is initiated with the course instructor, as needed. Students are encouraged to showcase their work at the annual spring EIU Graduate Expo and EIU Student Research and Creative Activity Fair.</p> <p>In early Fall 2024, our faculty continued the discussion of students' lowered grades in HSL 5900. To address issues of concern, the decision was made to adopt the APA manual as a required textbook for all required Human Services graduate courses beginning in Spring 2025. In addition, instructors of all Human Services required graduate courses (n=6) will assign at least one APA-specific assignment in the respective courses and modify other assignment directions in ways to incorporate a more specific focus on APA formatting and writing. Historically, instructors of all Human Services courses have required APA formatting for all course assignments. HSL 5900 grades demonstrate the need to elevate more concentrated and enhanced means of assessment and evaluation. All faculty are supportively in agreement with such changes and practices in their respective courses.</p>
<p><b>CGS Learning Goal #3: Effective oral and written communication skills</b></p>	<p>Program Learning Goal(s): Students will effectively and professionally communicate information about aging and older adulthood in their written and oral work.</p>
<p>How are learners assessed?</p>	<p>a) CCK Capstone Rubric [a direct measure]: Students completing the CCK Capstone will be evaluated on their communication effectiveness and professionalism.</p>

	<p>b) Independent Study and Internship Site Supervisor and Graduate Faculty Supervisor Evaluation Forms (Mid-term): Supervisors evaluate students on effective and professional communication in their written and oral work.</p> <p>c) Independent Study and Internship Site Supervisor and Graduate Faculty Advisor Evaluation Forms (Final): Supervisors evaluate students on effective and professional communication in their written and oral work.</p> <p>d) Policy Brief Assignment [direct measure; course embedded]: Students enrolled in HSL 5400 Aging Policy in Action (a required course) are evaluated on the following assignment. The purpose of the Policy Brief is to convince the target audience of the urgency of the current aging/older adulthood problem and the need to adopt the preferred alternative or course of action outlined and therefore, serve as an impetus for action.</p>
What are the expectations for the students?	<p>a), b), &amp; c) At least 85% of the evaluations will rate students' work as 4 or higher on a 5-point scale in their ability to effectively and professionally communicate (oral and written) information about aging and older adulthood.</p> <p>d) For the Policy Brief assignment grade, at least 85% of students will earn at least a minimum score of 85%.</p>
What are the expectations for the program?	<p>The program expects that at least 85% of students will display the ability to effectively and professionally communicate information about aging and older adulthood in their written and oral work, as evidenced through CCK mid-term and final evaluations by students and supervisors and specified course assignments (including a minimum assignment grade of 85%).</p> <p>The program expects that at least 85% of students will display the ability to effectively and professionally communicate information about aging and older adulthood in their written and oral work, as evidenced through CCK papers, independent study and</p>



	internship evaluations, and specified course assignments (including a minimum assignment grade of 85%).
What were the results?	<p>a), b), &amp; c) 100% of evaluations rated students' work as 5 on a 5-point scale in their ability to effectively and professionally communicate (oral and written) information about aging and older adulthood.</p> <p>d) Rubric evaluations and assignment grades were submitted for all students (N=19) in HSL 5400. 81% (n=14) of the rubric evaluations submitted by faculty rated students' work with a 4 or higher (4 on a 5-point scale) on the assignment. For the assignment grade, 81% of students earned at least an 85% grade.</p>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<p>a) The CCK capstone is evaluated by the faculty advisor. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where and how changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>b) Faculty and site supervisors complete an evaluation of the student at the mid-term of the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>c) Faculty and site supervisors complete an evaluation of the student after the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>d) Faculty teaching HSL 5400 evaluate each student's paper in the course. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made. Follow-up discussion is initiated with the course instructor to provide feedback</p>

	<p>opportunities, as needed. Students are also encouraged to showcase their work at the annual spring EIU Graduate Expo and EIU Student Research and Creative Activity Fair.</p> <p>Based on the result of 81% rather than the target of 85% of students achieving rubric ratings of 2 or higher and assignment grades of 85% or higher, the future HSL 5400 course instructor(s) will identify parts of the assignment where students struggled most and provide additional guidance and direction in those areas. It has also been observed that, as opposed to a deficiency in this or other graduate learning goal outcomes, the larger issues and more common reasons for lowered grades are failure to submit assignments in full or missed assignment deadlines. Our faculty will continue to emphasize the importance of timely and complete assignment submissions.</p>
<b>CGS Learning Goal #4: Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity.</b>	<p>Program Learning Goal: Students will demonstrate an understanding of research proposal development, including appropriate research methodology, for a specialized topic related to aging and older adulthood.</p>
How are learners assessed?	<p>a) Research Proposal Assignment Grade [direct and indirect measure; course embedded]: Students enrolled in HSL 5900 Research Methods (a required course) will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate an understanding of research design, sampling techniques, measurement, procedures for data collection, and data analysis in the context of current issues and theoretical applications in human services.</p> <p>The research proposal assignment allows students to showcase their expertise on a topic of interest throughout the semester. Students ultimately design and propose a research study. Although students do not implement the study and collect data, the goal is to write the research proposal paper and develop the presentation as if they would implement the study in the future. Students' completed papers will look similar to a small-scale version of the first three chapters of an APA-formatted master's thesis. The research</p>

	<p>proposal paper includes three sections: Introduction, Review of Literature, and Methodology. Most, if not all, of the articles and portions of course assignments should be integrated into the research proposal paper. We provide feedback on course assignments to ensure that students understand the research process and develop their papers correctly. Additional research articles and professional resources are to be integrated into the paper as well.</p> <p>b) Area Agency on Aging Paper Rubric and Assignment Grade [direct measure; course embedded]: Students enrolled in the HSL 5100 Societal Theories of Aging (a required course) synthesize and apply knowledge to evaluate an assigned statewide Area Agency on Aging plan.</p>
What are the expectations for the students?	<p>a) At least 85% of students will earn at least a minimum score of 85%.</p> <p>b) At least 85% of the evaluations submitted by faculty teaching the course will rate students as at least a 4 on a 5-point scale on the Policy Brief assignment. For the assignment grade, at least 85% of students will earn at least a minimum score of 85%.</p>
What are the expectations for the program?	<p>The program expects that at least 85% of students will demonstrate an understanding of research proposal development, including appropriate methodology, for a specialized topic related to aging and older adulthood, as evidenced in the specified course assignment (including a minimum assignment grade of 85%).</p> <p>Furthermore, the program expects that at least 85% of students will demonstrate advanced scholarship through research and analysis related to governmental strategic plans on aging, as evidenced by the specified course assignments (including a minimum assignment grade of 85%).</p>
What were the results?	<p>a) Assignment grades were submitted for students taking HSL 5900. For the assignment grades, 65% of students' scores met the minimum grade expectation of 85% or higher.</p>

	<p>Instructors of HSL 5900 summarized the following:  The issue surrounding lower grades for this assignment was due to a few reasons. First, many students did not follow directions, such as meeting page requirements, utilizing enough references, or using proper APA formatting. Students were told throughout the semester that an increasing number of points would be deducted if they did not adhere to APA formatting. We provided APA feedback in every assignment leading up to this final paper along with numerous APA resources and their required APA manual. It appeared as if the formatting was an afterthought, yet with this being a research methods course, they needed to master correct formatting and overall academic writing. Concerning proper academic writing, early in the semester students were told to sparingly use direct quotes. Rather, they needed to develop the skill of translating research into their own words while still citing their sources. A number of final papers still heavily relied on direct quotes when discussing research, which was not the goal of this paper. Additionally, writing quality in general was poor (e.g., grammatical issues) and was often not at the graduate level. Detailed feedback was provided to each student on the breakdown of their grade.</p> <p>b) Rubric evaluations and assignment grades were submitted for all students (N=19) taking HSL 5100. 95% (n=18) of the rubric evaluations submitted by faculty rated students' work with a 4.5 or higher (4 on a 5-point scale) on the assignment. For the assignment grade, 95% of students earned at least an 85% grade.</p>
<p>How are the results shared? How will these results be used?</p>	<p>a) Faculty teaching HSL 5900 evaluate each student's paper. Assessment data, including course assignment samples/outcomes, are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made. Follow-up discussion is initiated with the course instructor, as needed. Students are encouraged to showcase their work at the annual spring EIU Graduate Expo and EIU Student Research and Creative Activity Fair.</p> <p>In early Fall 2024, our faculty continued the discussion of students' lowered grades in HSL 5900. To address issues of concern, the decision was made to adopt the APA manual as a</p>

	<p>required textbook for all required Human Services graduate courses beginning in Spring 2025. In addition, instructors of all Human Services required graduate courses (n=6) will assign at least one APA-specific assignment in the respective courses and modify other assignment directions in ways to incorporate a more specific focus on APA formatting and writing. Historically, instructors of all Human Services courses have required APA formatting for all course assignments. HSL 5900 grades demonstrate the need to elevate more concentrated and enhanced means of assessment and evaluation. All faculty are supportively in agreement with such changes and practices in their respective courses.</p> <p>b) Faculty teaching HSL 5100 evaluate each student's paper. Assessment data, including course assignment samples/outcomes, are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made. Follow-up discussion is initiated with the course instructor, as needed. Students are encouraged to showcase their work at the annual spring EIU Graduate Expo and EIU Student Research and Creative Activity Fair.</p>
<b>CGS Learning Goal #5: Ethics and Professional Responsibility</b>	<p>Program Learning Goals: Students will interact professionally and ethically in academic and other professional settings; demonstrate understanding of and sensitivity to the cognitive, physical, emotional, and sociocultural challenges of older adulthood; and exhibit awareness of and respect for diversity among older adults and their families and caregivers and academic/professional peers and colleagues.</p>
How are learners assessed?	<p>a) Site Supervisor and Graduate Faculty Mid-Term Evaluations (Forms) of Independent Study and Internship Students [a direct measure]: On a 5-point competency rating scale, supervisors evaluate students on their level of ethical behaviors and professional responsibilities, understanding of/sensitivity to challenges of older adults, and awareness of/respect for diversity.</p>

	<p>b) Site Supervisor and Graduate Faculty Final Evaluations (Forms) of Independent Study and Internship Students [a direct measure]: On a 5-point competency rating scale, supervisors evaluate students on their level of ethical behaviors and professional responsibilities, understanding of/sensitivity to challenges of older adults, and awareness of/respect for diversity.</p> <p>c) Independent Study and Internship Mid-Term Self-Evaluation Form [an indirect measure]: On a 5-point competency rating scale, students evaluate their perceived level of ethical behaviors and professional responsibilities, understanding of/sensitivity to challenges of older adults, and awareness of/respect for diversity.</p> <p>d) Independent Study and Internship Final Self-Evaluation Form [an indirect measure]: On a 5-point competency rating scale, students evaluate their perceived level of ethical behaviors and professional responsibilities, understanding of/sensitivity to challenges of older adults, and awareness of/respect for diversity.</p> <p>e) CITI Training [direct measure; course embedded]: Students will complete CITI training and earn certificates of completion as part of HSL 5900 Research Methods.</p>
What are the expectations for the students?	<p>a), b), c), &amp; d) At least 85% of evaluations will achieve at least a rating of 4 on a 5-point scale.</p> <p>e) 100% of students will complete the CITI training and earn a certificate of completion.</p>
What are the expectations for the program?	<p>The program expects that at least 85% of students will interact professionally and ethically in academic and other professional settings; demonstrate understanding of and sensitivity to the cognitive, physical, emotional, and sociocultural challenges of older adulthood; and exhibit awareness of and respect for diversity among older adults and their families and caregivers and academic/professional peers and colleagues. In addition, the program expects that 100% of students will complete the CITI training and earn a certificate of completion.</p>

What were the results?	<p>a), b), c), &amp; d) 100% of evaluations reached 90% or higher and exceeded expectations with ratings of 4.5 and above.</p> <p>e) 100% of students in HSL 5900 completed the CITI training and earned a certificate of completion.</p>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<p>a) Faculty and site supervisors complete an evaluation of the student at the mid-term of the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>b) Faculty and site supervisors complete an evaluation of the student after the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussion to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>c) Students completing independent studies and internships submit a self-evaluation at the mid-term of the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussions to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>d) Students completing independent studies and internships submit a final self-evaluation after the semester. Results are available to the Aging Studies Board faculty/administrators during semester meetings for discussions to ascertain where, how, and if changes or improvements need to be made.</p> <p>e) Faculty teaching HSL 5900 monitor completion of CITI training and verify certification of completion. Information is reported to the graduate coordinator and follow-up discussion is initiated with the course instructor if needed.</p>

## Part 2

**Describe what your program's assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the Graduate Assessment Summary Response from last year's report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.**

***Program's assessment accomplishments since the last report:***

- Our Aging Studies program and degree revisions launched in Fall 2022 have been in place for 2 years. The change from M.A. to M.S. in Aging Studies has been well received and most students who began while the M.A. was still in place changed to the M.S. degree designation. Of our program's two degree options – the M.S. in Aging Studies and the M.S. in Aging Studies: Long Term Care Administration – the M.S. in Aging Studies carries the higher enrollment. The Long Term Care Administration option has exhibited slow but steady growth with a small percentage of students seeking to specialize in the aging field by choosing this latter option. Being only 4 years out of the height of COVID, residential aging programs have continued to endure staffing and other numerous challenges -some spanning long before COVID - and a number of programs continue to promote from only within for administrative positions. The steady but still slow growth rate in administrative positions for external candidates helps to explain a main reason for our smaller enrollment numbers in the Long Term Care Administration option. However, well-documented critical needs and gaps in the aging field and the continuing growth of the aging population are two central reasons that we plan to retain the Long Term Care Administration option for the foreseeable future. With Long Term Care Administration being under the Aging Studies umbrella, an additional degree option costs us no more in personnel and resources and remains one of the few specialized Long Term Care Administration graduate programs in the U.S.
- In 2022, the Aging Studies program was awarded EIU's Hamand Fund for Innovation in Graduate Studies. In 2022 and 2023, we used a partial amount of these funds for our National Program of Merit Designation through the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education. In 2023, the Program of Merit was paused for applicants and we expect it to resume accepting applications later this year or in 2025. At that time, we plan to submit our application. Aging Studies also used partial funding for recruitment marketing and promotional items.
- We have seen enrollment growth in the Aging Studies Accelerated Graduate Program and the Aging Studies Interdisciplinary Minor (undergraduate). Students in both are contacted at least twice per semester with the intent of fostering their



continued interest in Aging Studies and pursuing the master's degree program and our Human Services Advisor also plays an instrumental role in our collaboration.

- Aging Studies faculty members, Departmental Chairs, Graduate Coordinators, and the Graduate School Dean comprise EIU's Aging Studies Board, which meets at least once each academic year. In 2024, we have added and welcomed the expertise of two additional members from Communication Studies and two from Public Health to the Board. Assessment plans and the assessment response report are disseminated to the Board, the plans and response reports are discussed, and feedback is solicited. There continues to be 100% "buy-in" of the Board on the direction of assessment (e.g., rubrics, assignment grading, selected courses, independent study and internship evaluations, capstone experience).
- The same goals were retained from the previous report and continue to align with the graduate learning goals established by CGS. Direct measures of rubrics were retained and used to collect/analyze data from students' work. Indirect measures of student and faculty or site supervisor evaluations of internships and independent studies were retained. Direct measures embedded in courses/assignments in HSL 5100, HSL 5400, and HSL 5900 were retained, as they demonstrate assessment breadth and diversity in types of major assignments. A continued Aging Studies assessment strength is that the selected courses/course assignments reflect a comprehensive and holistic picture of three fundamental tenets of a graduate program's courses: research (HSL 5900 Research Methods), theory (HSL 5100 Societal Theories of Aging), and policy/practice (HSL 5400 Aging Policy in Action). The CITI training data, which has been a requirement of students enrolled in HSL 5900 Research Methods, was retained.
- Rating expectations of a minimum of 4 on a 5-point scale for rubric items were retained and demonstrated appropriate rigor of graduate study expectations. Percentage benchmarks for all expectations were retained at a minimum of 85% and all student outcomes met or exceeded the 85% expectations.
- The Aging Studies Board continues as a cohesive and valuable advisory group comprised of faculty and administrators. The last Student Learning Assessment Program Response to Summary Form was well received by all and, since 2022, assessment discussion and critical reflection on assessment outcomes has continued with the Board. The 33 required program hours, the online program delivery mode, and the 6-(two required summer courses) or 8-week (two required courses in fall and spring, respectively) scheduling of some of the classes continue to benefit the program, Aging Studies students/demographics, and degree accessibility. At present and as in the last report, all Aging Studies students are employed full- or part-time (many in the aging or human services fields), all reside outside of the Charleston area/East Central Illinois region, and most fall into

middle-aged brackets with family/personal/financial/health care obligations different from a younger student demographic cohort. To successfully continue with recruitment/enrollment, retention, and academic performance levels, Aging Studies needs to continue offering a high-quality online graduate degree program with ease in accessibility, flexibility for diverse student demographics, maximum online campus engagement options for participation (e.g., GSAC meetings, Graduate School student events, University advisory council meetings with graduate student representatives), and cost efficiency/transparency in tuition and fees costs. These key considerations assist in guiding all program efforts, including assessment.

- In addition, we have responded to the 2022 Graduate Assessment Summary Response in the following ways. In italics, we have included Drs. Nikki Hillier's and Ryan Hendrickson's responses to our 2022 report and followed up with how we have addressed each point.
  - *"One thing to clarify in the report is the expectations for students."*
    - For all five of the goals, we have worked to clarify how our student and program expectations are expressed and reported with targeted achievement percentages and rating scores. We have continued with 85% as a minimum benchmark across all five goals and a minimum score of 4 out of 5 on our rating scales. In this report, we hope to have clarified those with greater effectiveness.

### Part 3

**Summarize changes and improvements in curriculum, instruction, and learning that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?**

Curriculum content, learning goals, assessment measures, expectations, results, and dissemination practices are sound at this time. Formal and anecdotal student evaluation feedback has been positive. The interdisciplinary Aging Studies Board and the College of Health and Human Services continue to be supportive of the program and curriculum. In closing, our plans for the future are listed here. Plans include:

- Continue to increase strategic and broader marketing and recruitment of students to boost program enrollment through such avenues as professional meeting exhibits, virtual Zoom recruitment presentations, EIU recruitment fairs, and social media presence;

- Re-examine the curriculum at our next Aging Studies Board meeting later this fall to identify if any program or curriculum revisions may need to be pursued in 2025 (likely, we will add additional elective course options from Human Services and Public Health as those Departments have added new courses since our last major Aging Studies revisions in 2022);
- Continue with current assessment expectations and measures and incorporate assessment feedback from the upcoming 2024 CGS response report to us;
- Apply for the National Program of Merit designation as soon as applications are accepted again;
- Require the APA Manual in HSL 5400 and HSL 5100 in addition to the book already being required in HSL 5900; and
- Increase emphasis with students on the importance of timely and complete submission of assignments.