

UW-Madison Graduate School, Assessment Plan, 2006- 2007

Spanning all divisions and colleges, the Graduate School enrolls almost 9000 Masters and PhD students each year in more than 160 majors. The nature of graduate level education, coupled with the decentralized nature of the campus, dictates that most activity regarding assessment is appropriately handled within individual departments. The Graduate School does participate in assessment activities in a variety of ways, however, as indicated below.

National Research Council

First, the Graduate School has been the administrative center for the current National Research Council (NRC) survey of PhD programs. We will participate in all levels of analysis as the data from the survey becomes available over the coming months.

Program Review

On a local level, an elected member of the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC) is placed on each review committee for all graduate programs that is appointed by the deans of individual schools and colleges. That individual reports back to the GFEC. The GFEC then makes suggestions, recommendations, and sometime sanctions, in conjunction with the appropriate school or college Academic Planning Council. The Graduate School also houses two graduate programs (Biophysics and Cellular and Molecular Biology), and in their case serves as the deans office for their review. In order to prepare members of GFEC for reviews, and to help programs develop their own self-studies, the Graduate School maintains a webpage of guidelines and resources for program review:

(<http://info.gradsch.wisc.edu/admin/academicservices/programreview.html>).

New Program Development

The Graduate School is also involved in new program development, working closely with the Office of Academic Planning and Analysis. A new website to guide faculty and staff developing a new program is under construction.

Program Profiles

In order to facilitate ongoing assessment and improvement of individual programs, the Graduate School produces the Program Profiles for campus use (<http://www.wisc.edu/grad/education/progreviewprofiles/>). Available on the web since 1994, the Profiles document trends in enrollment, admissions, degrees and financial support. Departments are encouraged to access information in the profiles for purposes ranging from strategic planning to program assessment and review. We are currently in the process of updating and revising the profiles. The Graduate School also provides specialized reports, when feasible, to programs and departments seeking information for more unique needs. Finally, the Annual Report of the Graduate School documents overall trends in student-related data in aggregate.

Documenting and Maintaining Graduate Student Records

Because the Graduate School serves as the admitting office for graduate students across campus, it is in the unique position of documenting and maintaining admissions records. The Graduate School provides tools for campus use ranging from data views in the InfoAccess Campus Data Warehouse to Graduate Web Information Systems (GWIS). We are continually engaged in improving GWIS to make it as user-friendly as possible at the program level. Enrolled student information is maintained in our Student Academic Record Administration system (SARA). Efforts are underway to allow input into SARA from the program level, and to better coordinate GWIS and SARA data and views. We are also currently involved in developing a diversity tracking system for students, from time of first recruitment contact through application, admission, matriculation, and graduation. This will make it even easier to assess efforts in both recruitment and retention. The Graduate School seeks to ensure departmental personnel obtain the training they need to successfully use the information available to them on campus. To that end, the Graduate School offers workshops on GWIS and campus data resources annually, as well as on best practices in recruitment and other crucial areas.

Survey of Earned Doctorates/UW Grad Exit Survey

In the past, the Graduate School has sought more detailed information on graduate student satisfaction and life through surveys of both current students and alumni. We also monitor the results of the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), administered to each graduating Ph.D. candidate. We are also working on our own exit survey for graduate students.