

Major Field Assessment Report  
M.A. in Health and Kinesiology  
Spring 2006

Kinesiology and Health Studies Educational Goal: The educational goal of the Kinesiology and Health Studies Department is to prepare prospective Health and Kinesiology professionals with a quality foundation that will allow them to assume professional roles in society through a career in business, industry, agencies, hospitals, or educational settings. The M.A. in Health and Kinesiology is comprised of four concentrations from which students can select: Health Studies, Health Promotion and Exercise Science, Exercise Science and Kinesiology.

Change from Oral to Written Comprehensive Examination.

The 2003 major field assessment report contained information about reasons for changing from the comprehensive oral examination to the comprehensive written examination. Faculty had expressed dissatisfaction with the oral comprehensive exam and procedures associated with it because the oral examination varied from student to student and from different groups of professors who were asking the questions. At that time, the Kinesiology and Health Studies Graduate Faculty voted to change from administering oral comprehensive examinations to written comprehensive examinations, and rubrics used to evaluate comprehensive exams and thesis defenses were global in nature, and not created necessarily to provide useful information that aligned with major field assessment goals. Upon realizing this limitation, these rubrics have been modified. However, the rubrics used to evaluate comprehensive exams and thesis defenses, which make up a significant part of the data for this major field assessment, due to their global nature resulted in a failure to provide data on many graduates of this program germane to this report. As a result, several assessment indicate limited data.

Changes to evaluation strategies starting spring of 2006: This spring of 2006, Thesis students will be evaluated on their writing and communication skills, thinking skills, level of knowledge regarding writing the literature review and the discussion chapter. An evaluation form that will be used to rate graduate students writing the Thesis has been developed and is attached. No data will be included in this report because we will utilize the form for the first time this April, 2006.

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GOAL 1: M.A. in Health and Kinesiology graduates will demonstrate professional proficiencies, skills and competencies related to their particular area of study.

Data collection strategies.

- Students are expected to obtain a 3.0 average at time of graduation.
- Data from students not writing a Thesis are collected from the graduate Written Comprehensive Exam.
- Students writing a Thesis prove competency by evaluation of the Thesis by graduate faculty, student graduate committee, graduate coordinator and Department Head.

A. *Expected Outcome: Graduates will demonstrate competence in written communication.*

Assessment: 90% of graduates will score satisfactory or better on the Graduate Written Comprehensive Exam item(s) focusing on “communication skills.”

Assessment: 90% of graduates who present their Thesis Defense will score satisfactory or better on the Thesis Evaluation item focusing on “communication skills.”

**DATA: No data is available for this outcome due to changes in the comprehensive exam and thesis defense scoring system. Rubrics used have been revised and data will be collected starting Spring 2006.**

B. *Expected Outcome: Graduates will demonstrate an ability to synthesize, apply, and interpret/evaluate research and literature in their respective specialized areas of study.*

Assessment: 90% of graduates will score satisfactory or better on the Graduate Written Comprehensive Exam item(s) focusing on “thinking skills.”

Assessment: 90% of graduates who present their Thesis Defense will score satisfactory or better on the Thesis Evaluation item focusing on “thinking skills.”

**DATA: No data is available for this outcome due to changes in the comprehensive exam and thesis defense scoring system. Rubrics used have been revised and data will be collected starting Spring 2006.**

C. *Expected Outcome: Graduates will demonstrate an adequate knowledge of statistics and research methods applied to studies in their respective specialized areas.*

Assessment: 90% of graduates will score satisfactory or better on the Graduate Written Comprehensive Exam item(s) focusing on “statistics and research.”

**DATA: 87% of examined students over this time period reached this criterion.**

Assessment: 90% of graduates who present their Thesis Defense will score satisfactory or better on the Thesis Evaluation item focusing on “statistics and research.”

**DATA: No data is available for this outcome due to changes in the comprehensive exam and thesis defense scoring system. Rubrics used have been revised and data will be collected starting Spring 2006.**

- D. *Expected Outcome: Graduates will demonstrate the ability to integrate and synthesize knowledge content acquired from courses taken in his/her individualized M.A. program of study.*

Assessment: 90% of graduates will score satisfactory or better on the Graduate Written Comprehensive Exam item(s) focusing on “knowledge of specific content areas.”

**DATA: 92% of examined students over this time period reached this criterion.**

Assessment: 90% of graduates who present their Thesis Defense will score satisfactory or better on the Thesis Evaluation item focusing on their level of knowledge of the Literature Review and the Discussion (analysis of the study).

**DATA: No data is available for this outcome due to changes in the comprehensive exam and thesis defense scoring system. Rubrics used have been revised and data will be collected starting Spring 2006.**

**GOAL 2: M.A. in Health and Kinesiology graduates will evaluate aspects of their graduate program and preparation favorably on the Exit Survey, Alumni Survey, and Graduate Student Opinion of Program survey (collected by the department).**

- A. Expected Outcome: Graduates will express satisfaction with the preparation they received relative to specific items pertaining to the quality of instruction and experiences.

Assessment

1. On the exit survey, 75% of graduates will express satisfaction with the preparation they received (indicate 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) on the following items:
2. 75% of graduate students who complete the Survey of Graduate Alumni will express satisfaction (indicate 4 or 5 out on a 5-point scale) on the following items:
  - Effectiveness of the faculty as teachers
  - Quality of instruction in advanced courses
  - Practicum, internship, clinical, or other hands-on experiences outside the classroom
  - Overall quality of your degree program

**Assessments 1 and 2: Students rated the effectiveness of the faculty as teacher highly on both instruments (averaging 91% indicating positive opinions). However, values for the three other items used in this report failed to reach the goal of 75% positive responses (when averaging both instruments). This was particularly evident on the Survey of Graduate Alumni where only approximately 50% reported positive opinions of the quality of practicum, internship, clinical experiences, and the overall quality of the degree.**

**Relative to practica/internship/clinical experiences, graduate students in our program have the option of engaging in practica/internship experiences as part of their degree, but few actually include this in their degree plan (approximately 1 in 20 students). As a result, most students complete their programs by taking 36 hours of coursework, or taking coursework**

**and completing a thesis. It is possible that many fail to evaluate the practical aspects of their program highly simply because it is not present in their degree plans.**

**Relative to “overall quality of the degree program,” 100% of students completing the Exit Survey indicated positive responses, whereas only 56% of those who completed the Survey of Graduate Alumni responded positively.**

3. On the “Student Opinion of Program Survey,” 75% of students will favorably evaluate the program (indicate a score of 3 or 4 on a 4-point scale) on the following items:
  - Adequacy of the graduate curriculum in preparing me for career advancement
  - Adequacy of the graduate curriculum in preparing me for further education
  - Availability of opportunities for me to have meaningful participation in research projects
  - Overall quality of my graduate degree program

**Assessment 4: Upon immediate completion of the degree, students expressed high opinions of the program in terms of its adequacy for preparing them for career advancement and further education, opportunity to participate in research projects, and overall quality (100% of graduates responding to these items with a value of 3 or better on a 4-point scale).**

**GOAL 3: M.A. in Health and Kinesiology graduates will have an awareness of multi-cultural issues in their field, and express positive attitudes toward working with diverse colleagues, students, and clients.**

NOTE: Students completing the M.A. in Health and Kinesiology are exposed to issues related to diversity, and cultural and global perspectives in several courses including: HS 617 (Spiritual Health), HS 619 (Traditional and Complementary/Alternative Health Practices), HS 621 (Sexuality Education Programming), HS 624 (Health Counseling), HS 626 (Health Aspects of Aging, Death and Dying), and KIN 623 (Human Behavior in Exercise and Sport).

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Changes to the program: We have recently made several changes to the program in response to these data as well as events in recent years. One major change is the requirement of students in the graduate program to be advised prior to registering for courses for upcoming semesters. Prior to this change, students were expected to conform to graduate program regulations and policies regarding the selection of a committee, creation of a degree plan, completion of the GRE and achieving an acceptable score, taking courses approved/indicated on the degree plan, etc. However, we have had many students who have failed to follow the guidelines, and as a result, have difficulties completing the degree in the expected time, or have run into problems continuing their program.

It is not surprising that some students evaluate the program less positively as a result of the problems they have had matriculating through the program. In addition to changing the advising process, a renewed emphasis has been placed on strict adherence to the graduate program guidelines. It is expected that these changes will reduce the number of students who find themselves at a point where they, for example, can no longer take courses because they have failed to achieve the GRE score, have taken more than the 12 hours allowed before completing

the GRE, have taken more than the 12 hours allowed prior to completing a degree plan, etc. In addition, the new advisement process should ensure that more students are aware of practica/internship opportunities as part of their graduate program.

Other changes to the program, which may be reflected in higher perceptions of the program include the deletion of courses from the SLU catalog which are no longer taught (some entering students have examined the catalog and are disappointed that certain courses they had hoped to take are not offered); and the addition of new courses to the program in response to student feedback and expertise of faculty. These curricular changes are expected to improve the overall quality of the program and student opinion of it.

#### Future MFA plans

- With the modification of the comprehensive examination format, the MFA plan will need to be revised to reflect the scoring of the new exam format.
- At present, students who complete a thesis are scored pass/fail at their defense. The assessment tools used to evaluate theses needs to be revised to reflect a variety of factors (e.g., quality of professional writing, quality of the oral defense, quality of responses to questions following the defense), and this assessment added to the MFA plan.
- Creation of a set of questions to be added to the Exit Survey and Survey of Graduate Alumni.