

**Agricultural Education, Communications, and Technology**  
**AEED-MS Assessment Report 2023-24**

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**A. AEED-MS Program Goals**

- Develop technology transfer specialists with strong communication skills and problem-solving abilities who are prepared to serve diverse populations.
- Stimulate intellectual capacity in students for integrating multi-disciplinary knowledge, technology and values.
- Enhance the leadership skills of future professionals in agriculture, food and natural resource careers.
- Produce graduates with broad technical skills in agricultural science and technology.

**B. Key Expected Outcomes for Graduate Students, 2023-24**

Assessment efforts in 2023-24 focused on the AEED MS theses completed. This same outcome was the focus of the 2021-22 report, so a comparison between the two years' assessments is possible this year.

**C. Student Learning Outcome 2 (from assessment plan).** AEED MS students will demonstrate problem solving skills in a supporting area of agriculture, education, technology or communications.

**Assessment Measure 1**

Master's student theses and oral exams will be evaluated for expertise in problem solving related to a specific research problem.

**Acceptable and Ideal Targets** (not required for indirect measures)

- Minimum score for passing is 60 out of 100 possible points on the rubric.
- Acceptable target: 70% of AEED MS students pass thesis defense
- Ideal target: 100% of AEED MS students score 70 or above on thesis defense

**Key Personnel** (who is responsible for the assessment of this measure)

- Jill Rucker, Graduate Coordinator and all faculty advising AEED MS students

**D. Analysis of Results**

Analysis of the rubrics provided by supervising faculty show that the ideal target was met, with 100% of AEED MS students scoring 70 or above on the thesis evaluation rubric. The average score on the thesis evaluation rubric was 93.5 out of 100 (n=8), Compared the 2021-22 assessment data (average score of 91, n=3), this represents a slight improvement.

**Recommendations** (not required for indirect measures)

The 2021-22 assessment report mentioned that Improving MS thesis student's understanding of the thesis writing process had been an area of focus in the AECT department for several years. Item analysis showed lower scores mostly on concepts in the methodology (sampling and instrumentation) and conclusion/discussion (conclusions relevant to purpose and appropriately uses literature to interpret findings) portions of the written theses. In this year's analysis, scores

on the methodology section improved, but scores on the conclusions/discussion section have fallen further.

### **Action Plan**

The following actions should continue so the department can maintain and continue to improve AEED MS students' retention, completion, and placement:

1. Continue to prepare students to design quality methodological approaches in their thesis research projects through the department's research methods course, leading to research projects that solve problems in the students' disciplines. **(Research methods instructor and all advisors)**
2. Add emphasis in the Technical Communication course as well as in thesis advising sessions on the importance of drawing concrete conclusions problem-solving recommendations couched in the selected theoretical framework and delivered in the context of related literature on the topic. **(Technical Communication instructor and all advisors)**

### **Supporting Attachments**

- Appendix A: AECT thesis and dissertation evaluation rubric

## Appendix A: AECT Thesis and Dissertation Rubric

Research Project Grading Rubric

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title is appropriately representative of project \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

Need for the Study (brief, use lit. and/or cite problem in the field) \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Statement of the Problem \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Overview of Literature \_\_\_\_\_ 2 pts

Significance of the Problem \_\_\_\_\_ 2 pts

Research Questions (or Objectives or Hypotheses) \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Assumptions (which underlie the problem) \_\_\_\_\_ 2 pts

Limitations (here or chapter 3) \_\_\_\_\_ 2 pts

**Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework**

Background of the Problem (from the related literature) \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Presentation of the Literature (to address the research questions) \_\_\_\_\_ 5 pts

Conclusions from the Literature \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

**Chapter 3: Methods**

Statement of the Problem (same as Chapter 1) \_\_\_\_\_ xx

Purpose of the Study \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Research Questions / Objectives / Hypotheses (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ 2 pts

Design of the Study – explained / illustrated \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Subjects \_\_\_\_\_ xx

Subject Selection \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Population / Sample \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Sampling Procedure/process \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Instrumentation \_\_\_\_\_ xx

Instrument Development -- explained \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Instrument Validity – how established? \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Instrument Reliability – how established? \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Treatments (if experimental; or variations among subjects) \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Conditions of Testing (if experimental; or variations among subjects) \_\_\_\_\_ 2 pts

Procedures for Data Collection \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Analysis Plans \_\_\_\_\_ 2 pts

**Chapter 4: Analyses / Findings**

Analyses are appropriate to the study \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Analyses match the purpose/objectives \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Analyses are detailed and well-presented \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Are the findings appropriately interpreted \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

**Chapter 5: Conclusions / Discussion / Recommendations**

Summary of the findings \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Are relevant to the purpose/objectives \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Appropriately uses knowledge base / literature to interpret findings \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Ties everything together \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Identifies strengths and weaknesses of the study \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Includes implications for practice \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

Provides direction for future research \_\_\_\_\_ 3 pts

General comments:

Overall student demonstrated an understanding of the research process.

Overall Score: \_\_\_\_\_ 100 pts