**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan**
**HES – B.S. in Human Development and Family Sciences**

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**2. Department Mission:** The mission of the HDFS undergraduate program is to provide educational experiences that (1) provide students with accurate and evidence-based knowledge of the bio-ecological context of human development, (2) develop students' appreciation for the diversity in the lived experiences of individuals and families, (3) give students the cognitive tools to critically evaluate theory and research in HDFS, (4) provide students with a cognitive framework to understand and affect positive change in the lives of individuals, families, and social systems, and (5) develop students' professional skills in regard to writing, making oral presentations, and evaluating social service programs and social contexts.

**3. Program Goals:** HDFS students are expected to

1. identify and describe accurate and evidence-based knowledge of the bio-ecological context of human development to include being knowledgeable and accepting of the diversity in the lived experiences of individuals and families.
2. demonstrate the ability to identify and address complex social problems by forming solutions that are contextually appropriate and feasible.
3. critically analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, ideas, and beliefs in the process of forming conclusions and solutions to complex social issues and problems.
4. be proficient in writing, making presentations, and evaluating human service programs and/or social contexts.
5. demonstrate the application of their evidence-based knowledge of diversity, engaging in effective and appropriate interactions across a range of human development. Their behaviors, attitudes, and interactions demonstrate that they have the cultural competency needed to work effectively cross-culturally.
6. identify ethical issues and dilemmas, reflect on their own core values, and apply them to complex social problems.

**4. <u>Student Learning Outcome 1</u>:** Students will identify and describe accurate and evidence-based knowledge of the bio-ecological context of human development to include being knowledgeable and accepting of the diversity in the lived experiences of individuals and families.

**A. Assessment Measures**

*a.* Direct Measures: Student learning will be assessed by the change in scores between a pre-test administered in the freshman level Lifespan Development (HDFS 1403) course and the senior level course Critical Approaches to Research in Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS 4773). These multiple choice items will span the life course and focus on the main ideas in the field of human development and family sciences.

B. **Acceptable** and **Ideal Targets**: It is acceptable that 75% of all students and ideal that 85% of all students will improve their test scores from the pre-test to the post-test.

C. **Key Personnel**: Instructors of HDFS 1403 and HDFS 4773.

D. **Summary of Findings.**

**Student Learning Outcome 2:** Students will formulate contextually appropriate and feasible policy solutions addressing complex social problems.

**A. Assessment Measures**

**a.** Direct Measures: The *Problem Solving Rubric* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' policy proposal project in the senior level course Public Policy Advocacy for Children and Families (HESC 4493). This paper requires students to consider a public policy program and to develop feasible solutions and policies to address that problem.

**B. Acceptable** and **Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students and ideal that 85% or more of all students will score an average of 2.5 or higher on the assessment rubric.

C. **Key Personnel**: Instructor of HDFS 4493.

**D. Summary of Findings**

**Student Learning Outcome 3:** Students will be able to critically analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, ideas, and beliefs in the process of forming conclusions and solutions to complex social issues and problems.

**A. Assessment Measures**

**a.** Direct Measures: The *Critical Thinking Rubric* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' final project in the senior level course Critical Approaches to Research in Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS 4773). The final project requires students to assess data relevant to a question in that field and use those data to draw conclusion about persons and families.

B. **Acceptable** and **Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students and ideal that 85% or more of all students will score an average of 2.5 or higher on the assessment rubric.

C. **Key Personnel**: Instructor of HDFS 4773.

D. **Summary of Findings:**

**Student Learning Outcome 4:** Students will be proficient in (a) oral and (b) written communication.

A. **Assessment Measures**

**a.** Direct Measures: The written portion of the *Oral and Written Communications Rubrics* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' Lifecourse Interview Paper in the senior level course Adult Development (HDFS 4423). This paper requires students to

interview adults and to compare and contrast the life experiences of those adults with the course content.

**b.** Direct Measures: The oral portion of the *Oral and Written Communications Rubrics* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' policy presentation in the senior level course Public Policy Advocacy for Children and Families (HESC 4493).

B. **Acceptable** and **Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students score an average of 2.5 or higher and ideal that 85% of students score an average of 2.5 or higher on the rubric.

C. **Key Personnel**: Instructor of HDFS 4423 and 4493.

D. **Summary of Findings:**

Students' written Lifecourse Interview Papers were assessed using the rubric. Seventeen randomly selected papers were assessed with the following outcomes:

| | **Below 2.5** | **Above 2.5** | **% Above 2.5** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rubric Scores | 4 | 13 | 76.5% |

In summary, these results indicated students' performance was acceptable, but less than ideal.

**Student Learning Outcome 5**: Students demonstrate the application of their evidence-based knowledge of diversity, engaging in effective and appropriate interactions across a range of human development. Their behaviors, attitudes, and interactions demonstrate that they have the cultural competency needed to work effectively cross-culturally.

A. **Assessment Measures**

**c.** Direct Measures: The *Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Rubric* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' Family Paper in the senior level course Multicultural Families (HDFS 4473). This paper requires students to examine their own cultural backgrounds and write reflectively about how their backgrounds have shaped their identity and lifecourse.

**B. Acceptable** and **Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students and ideal that 85% or more of all students will score an average of 2.5 or higher on the assessment rubric.

C. **Key Personnel**: Instructor of HDFS 4473.

D. **Summary of Findings:**

**Student Learning Outcome 6**: Students will identify ethical issues and dilemmas, reflect on their own core values, and apply them to complex social problems.

**A. Assessment Measures**

**a.** Direct Measures: The *Ethical Reasoning Competency Rubric* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' Ethical Issues assignment in the senior level course Curriculum and Assessment (HESC 4342).

B. **Acceptable** and **Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students and ideal that 85% or more of all students will score an average of 2.5 or higher on the assessment rubric.

C. **Key Personnel**: Instructor of HDFS 4342.

D. **Summary of Findings:**

**5. Recommendations for Assessed Student Outcomes**

The assessment indicated that students' written communication skills were marginally adequate. This indicated that students are learning written skills and, at the same time, the faculty should take steps to increase students' writing competencies. In that regard, the faculty proposes three recommendations. First, the assignment that is assessed needs clearer recommendations for students that emphasize the integration of persons' lifecourse experiences with course content. Second, the faculty should consider whether or not this assignment in the curriculum is the key assignment to be used as an assessment of students' written communication skills. The assessment raised questions about whether or not this assignment is appropriate to address discipline specific writing conventions as required by the rubric. Because students are reporting on interviews with individuals, their use of language might be more informal than ordinarily required by the discipline. Finally, the faculty proposes to inventory students' key writing experiences in the program and determine whether or not students are receiving proper feedback to enhance their development.

**6. Overall Recommendations**

This is the first year the program has been assessed. Overall recommendations include completing the entire assessment in the next academic year. Completing the entire assessment will enable the faculty to examine the program holistically to address gaps in student learning. In addition, as the faculty gain experience in assessment, it is clear that the assessment tools will be refined and gain greater specificity so that they better reflect a quality undergraduate program and an effective measurement of quality.

**7. Action Plan**

To address students' written communication skills, the assignment will be modified to more clearly explain the requirement of integrating persons' lived experiences with the academic concepts in class. Students will be required to reflect on the lived experiences of interviewees and compare and contrast their lifecourses with the core concepts in the class. The timeline for implementing these changes will be making the changes to the assignment in the weeks before the class begins in the fall. The class syllabus will reflect the changes for the Fall, 2016 semester.

Second, the faculty will again examine the syllabi of course programs to determine whether or not this is the key and appropriate assignment for assessing writing skills within the discipline. The assessment requires students to demonstrate discipline specific usage of language and conventions. However, the assignment requires students to report on individuals' particular life experiences. The faculty will consider the question of whether or not this assignment is able to be used to address discipline specific writing style which is more formalized than the language that students might use when writing interview results.

Second, students' communication skills will be addressed by examining other courses and assignments wherein students write and receive feedback. The faculty will provide input on those assignments so that they are implemented in a way that is likely to improve students' written communication skills. The examination of these assignments will take place in the Fall semester of 2016 and syllabi suggestions will be offered for courses beginning in the Spring, 2017 semester.

The action plan also includes two action items that addresses the overall program. First, the program assessment for all student learning outcomes will be completed by the end of January, 2017. The entire HDFS faculty will be included in this effort and enable the faculty to assess the program holistically. Second, the assessment plan itself will be refined concurrently and also completed by the end of January 2017. The concurrent refinements of the program and the

assessment plan will ensure that the assessment plan is specific, as well as an effective and valid measure of student learning outcomes.

**8. Supporting Attachments**

The written assessment rubric used to assess students' written communication skills is attached.

**NOTES:**

**Completed by:**_____ **Date:**_____ **Student ID:** _____

## Comprehensive Written Exam Rubric

**Instructions for scoring: Use the check boxes for detailed feedback, then make global judgments for each criterion rating and overall assessment.**

| Criterion | Does not meet expectations = 1 | Meets expectations = 2 | Exceeds expectations = 3 | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Mastery of theories and concepts in the field demonstrated | ☐ Arguments are sometimes incorrect, incoherent, or flawed<br>☐ Objectives are poorly defined<br>☐ Demonstrates limited critical thinking skills<br>☐ Reflects limited understanding of subject matter and associated literature<br>☐ Demonstrates limited understanding of theoretical concepts<br>☐ Documentation is weak | ☐ Arguments are coherent and reasonably clear<br>☐ Objectives are clear<br>☐ Demonstrates acceptable critical thinking skills<br>☐ Reflects understanding of subject matter and literature<br>☐ Demonstrates understanding of theoretical concepts<br>☐ Documentation is adequate | ☐ Arguments are superior<br>☐ Objectives are well defined<br>☐ Exhibits mature, refined critical thinking skills<br>☐ Reflects mastery of subject matter and associated literature.<br>☐ Demonstrates mastery of theoretical concepts<br>☐ Documentation is excellent | |
| 2. Organization of material or discussion | ☐ Organization is weak.<br>☐ Confused or ineffective argument<br>☐ Few linkages made between sections | ☐ Organization present but hard unclear occasionally.<br>☐ Reader can link sections sometimes but not clear how all material relates to question(s) | ☐ Design, organization excellent<br>☐ Reader can easily follow discussion and flow | |
| 3. Quality of writing | ☐ Writing is weak<br>☐ Numerous grammatical and spelling errors apparent<br>☐ Organization is poor<br>☐ Style is not appropriate to discipline | ☐ Writing is adequate<br>☐ Some grammatical and spelling errors apparent<br>☐ Organization is logical<br>☐ Style is appropriate to discipline | ☐ Writing is publication quality<br>☐ No grammatical or spelling errors apparent<br>☐ Organization is excellent<br>☐ Style is exemplary | |
| | | | | |
| 4. Policy applications | ☐ Limited understanding of application to public policy problems<br>☐ Weak or missing formulation of potential solutions | ☐ Acceptable understanding of application to public policy problems<br>☐ Formulation of potential solutions but some are naive | ☐ Exceptional potential for application to public policy<br>Exceptional and creative formulation of solutions | |
| Additional criterion #2: | | | | |
| Additional criterion #3: | | | | |
| **Overall judgment** | ☐ **Does not meet expectations** | ☐ **Meets expectations** | ☐ **Exceeds expectations** | |

Adapted from materials found at http://web.uri.edu/assessment/uri/rubrics/

**Comments:**