

**Program Assessment Report
HESC Master's Program
University of Arkansas
Academic Year 2018-2019**

1. Department Name & Contact Information

School of Human Environmental Sciences
Betsy Garrison, 479-575-4307, megarris@uark.edu
Eunjoo Cho, 479-575-4599, ejcho@uark.edu

2. Department Mission

The School will inspire people and organizations to reach their full potential through delivery of innovative research, education, and service focused on individuals, families, communities and their environments.

3. Program Goals

- 1) Students can evaluate the depth and limitations of the current knowledge in human environmental sciences and its related disciplines;
- 2) Students develop an attitude of inquiry and independent thinking by promoting analytic study, integration, and application of information and concepts derived from research in the various areas of human environmental sciences;
- 3) Students understand the need for research in human environmental sciences and related disciplines and the role of research in the continual growth of knowledge and in the viability of academic disciplines; and
- 4) Students learn to communicate accurately and effectively

4. Student Learning Outcome 3. Students will demonstrate proficient communication skills.

A. Assessment Measure 1.

A-1. Effective interpersonal and oral communication

a. Direct measures:

- i. for thesis students, assessment of oral presentation at the annual graduate student research symposium (see attached rubric)
 - ii. for non-thesis students, assessment of oral comprehensive exams (see attached rubric)
- b. Key personnel:** graduate studies committee members; committee members for each individual student; committees are comprised of graduate faculty; faculty members attended the annual graduate student research symposium

A-2. Effective written communication

a. Direct measures:

- i. for thesis students, assessment of written thesis defense (see attached rubrics)
 - ii. for non-thesis students, assessment of written comprehensive exams (see attached rubric)
- b. **Key personnel:** graduate studies committee members; committee members for each individual student; committees are comprised of graduate faculty

B. Acceptable and Ideal Targets

Oral communication:

- i. Majority of students (10 out of 11) in thesis-track either met or exceeded expectations at the annual graduate student research symposium.
- ii. A student in non-thesis track exceeded expectations at the oral comprehensive exam. However, one student is not enough to measure performance of non-thesis students.

Written communication:

A decision has been made to postpone our assessment of written communication until 2020 because less than five students defended their thesis as of April 30th, 2019. We will transfer data obtained this year to next year.

C. Summary of Findings.

- Thesis students successfully achieved proficient oral communication skills. A number of faculty attended and provided both written (using assessment rubrics) and oral feedback to student presenters. Compared to the average score students achieved in 2018, students showed noticeable improvement in oral communication skills.
- In 2018, eight graduate students achieved 83% (4.15/5.00) at the graduate student research symposium. In 2019, 10 students achieved 89% (4.44/5.00) on the average from their oral presentation.
- Oral feedback from faculty indicated both presentation content and techniques were superior compared to those shown at the previous graduate student research symposium.

D. Recommendations

- Oral communication: It is recommended that students present their research at a major conference in their discipline during the degree program.
- Written communication: It is recommended that students complete their thesis proposal and defense meetings in a timely manner in order to graduate on time.

5. Overall Recommendations

- It is recommended that students complete their thesis proposal meeting during their third semester and defend their theses in the fourth semester. Approval of the research proposal must occur before data collection begins for original research or before data analysis commences when using secondary data.

6. Action Plan

- To improve written communication skills,
 - Two new graduate courses (i.e., HESC 5111 and 5211) will help thesis students with writing, forms and deadlines, and time management
 - A thesis proposal approval form will be collected in the third semester of the degree program.

7. Supporting Attachments

- Attached are oral and written communication rubrics

ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Student Name: _____

PRESENCE	5	4	3	2	1	0
-appropriate body language & eye contact						
-contact with the public, responsive						
-clarifies, restates, & responds to questions						
-poised, comfortable						
-maintained audience interest						
LANGUAGE SKILLS	5	4	3	2	1	0
-correct usage						
-appropriate vocabulary and grammar						
-understandable (rhythm/pace, intonation, accent)						
-spoken loud enough to hear easily						
ORGANIZATION	5	4	3	2	1	0
-clear objectives						
-logical structure/flow						
-signposting						
-clear conclusions, "take home message"						
-appropriate amount of info, finished on time						
MASTERY OF THE SUBJECT	5	4	3	2	1	0
-provided adequate background, justification						
-pertinence, accuracy						
-depth of commentary						
-spoken, not read, no notes						
-able to answer questions						
-draws on relevant literature/evidence & critically assesses it						
-main issues clearly identified						
-competing explanations dealt with properly						
-addressed strengths and weaknesses of methods used						
VISUAL AIDS	5	4	3	2	1	0
-enhance presentation						
-readable fonts, no blurry graphics						
-maximizes audience comprehension						
-minimal text, not text-heavy						
-appropriate color contrast						
OVERALL IMPRESSION	5	4	3	2	1	0
-very interesting vs. very boring						
-pleasant vs. unpleasant to listen to						
-very good vs. poor communication						

TOTAL SCORE _____ / 30

Master's Non-Thesis Student Oral Comprehensive Exam Grading Rubric

Student: __

Completed by: ____ Date: __

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Score</i>			
Organization	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
	-- Extremely well organized.	-- Generally well organized.	-- Somewhat organized.	-- Poor or non-existent organization.
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
	-- Introduces the purpose of the presentation clearly and cogently.	-- Introduces the purpose of the presentation clearly.	-- Introduces the purpose of the presentation.	-- Does not clearly introduce the purpose of the presentation.
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
	-- Effectively includes smooth, clever transitions, which are succinct but not choppy, in order to connect key points.	-- Includes transitions to connect key points but better transitions from idea to idea are needed.	-- includes some transitions to connect key points but There is difficulty in following presentation.	--Uses no or ineffective transitions that rarely connect points.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable	
-- Presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.	-- Most information presented in logical sequence; a few minor points may be confusing.	-- Jumps around topics. Several points are confusing.	-- Presentation is choppy and disjointed; no apparent logical order of presentation.	

Content: Depth and Accuracy

Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
-- Ends with an accurate conclusion showing thoughtful, strong evaluation of the research-based evidence presented.	-- Ends with a summary of main points showing some evaluation of the research-based evidence presented.	-- Ends with a summary or conclusion; little evaluation of content based on research evidence.	-- Ends without a summary or conclusion.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Provides an accurate and complete explanation of key concepts and theories, drawing upon relevant literature. Applications of theory are included to illuminate issues.	--Explanations of concepts and theories are mostly accurate and complete. Some helpful applications of theory are included.	--Explanations of concepts and/or theories are inaccurate or incomplete. Little attempt is made to tie in theory. There is a great deal of information that is not connected to the presentation thesis.	--No reference is made to literature or theory. Thesis not clear; information included that does not support thesis in any way.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Provides evidence of extensive and valid research with multiple (you provide number) and varied sources.	--Presents evidence of valid research with multiple sources.	--Presents evidence of research with sources.	--Presents little or no evidence of valid research.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Combines, integrates and evaluates existing ideas to form new and original insights	--Combines existing ideas to form new insights	--Combines existing ideas.	--Shows little evidence of the combination of ideas.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable

--Information completely accurate; all names and facts were precise and explicit.

--No significant errors are made; a few inconsistencies or errors in information.

--Enough errors are made to distract a knowledgeable listener, but some information is accurate.

--Information included is sufficiently inaccurate that the listener cannot depend on the presentation as a source of accurate information.

Distinguished

Proficient

Basic

Unacceptable

--Level of presentation is appropriate for the audience.

--Level of presentation is generally appropriate.

--Portions of presentation are too elementary or too sophisticated for audience.

--Presentation consistently is too elementary or too sophisticated for the audience.

Research Effort

Distinguished

Proficient

Basic

Unacceptable

--Went above and beyond to research information; solicited material in addition to what was provided; brought in personal ideas and information to enhance project; and utilized more than eight types of resources to make project effective.

--Did a very good job of researching; utilized materials provided to their full potential; solicited more than six types of research to enhance project; at times took the initiative to find information outside of school.

--Used the material provided in an acceptable manner, but did not consult any additional resources.

--Did not utilize resources effectively; did little or no fact gathering on the topic.

Creativity

Distinguished

Proficient

Basic

Unacceptable

***Use of Communication Aids
(e.g., Transparencies, Slides,
Posters, Handouts,
Computer-Generated
Materials)***

<p>--Uses the unexpected to full advantage; very original, clever, and creative approach that captures audience's attention.</p>	<p>--Some originality apparent; clever at times; good variety and blending of materials/media.</p>	<p>--Little or no variation; a few original touches but for the most part material presented with little originality or interpretation.</p>	<p>-- Bland, predictable, and lacked "zip." Repetitive with little or no variety; little creative energy used.</p>
<p>Distinguished</p>	<p>Proficient</p>	<p>Basic</p>	<p>Unacceptable</p>
<p>--Graphics are designed to reinforce presentation thesis and maximize audience understanding; use of media is varied and appropriate with media not being added simply for the sake of use.</p>	<p>--While graphics relate and aid presentation thesis, media are not as varied and not as well connected to presentation thesis.</p>	<p>-- Occasional use of graphics that rarely support presentation thesis; visual aids were not colorful or clear. Choppy, time wasting use of multimedia; lacks smooth transition from one medium to another.</p>	<p>--Student uses superfluous graphics, no graphics, or graphics that are so poorly prepared that they detract from the presentation.</p>
<p>Distinguished</p>	<p>Proficient</p>	<p>Basic</p>	<p>Unacceptable</p>
<p>--Visual aids were colorful, contrasting, and large enough to be seen by all, even those in back of the class</p>	<p>--Font size is appropriate for reading. Some visual aids.</p>	<p>--Font is too small to be easily seen. Few visual aids.</p>	<p>--Font is too small to be easily seen, No visual aids.</p>
<p>Distinguished</p>	<p>Proficient</p>	<p>Basic</p>	<p>Unacceptable</p>
<p>--Media are prepared in a professional manner. Details are minimized so that main points</p>	<p>--Appropriate amount of information is prepared. Some material is not</p>	<p>--Communication aids are poorly prepared or used inappropriately. Too</p>	<p>--Use of blurry graphics.</p>

the group.			expression.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Correct, precise pronunciation of terms.	-Student pronounces most words correctly.	--Student incorrectly pronounces terms.	--Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Selects rich and varied words	--Selects words appropriate	--Selects some words	-Selects many words
appropriate for context and uses	for context and uses mostly	inappropriate for context;	inappropriate for context;
correct grammar.	correct grammar.	uses some incorrect	Uses much incorrect
		grammar.	grammar.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Sentences are complete and	--For the most part, sentences	--Can follow the	-- Audience cannot focus
grammatical, and they flow	are complete and	presentation, but some	on the ideas presented
together easily. Words are	grammatical, and they flow	grammatical errors and	because of errors with
chosen for their precise	together easily. With a few	use of slang are evident.	grammar and
meaning.	exceptions, words are chosen	Some sentences are	inappropriate vocabulary.
	for their precise meaning.	incomplete/ halting,	

and/or vocabulary is somewhat limited or inappropriate.

Eye Contact

Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Maintains eye contact; seldom returns to notes; presentation is like a planned conversation.	-- Maintains eye contact most of the time but frequently returns to notes.	--Some eye contact, but not maintained and at reads at least half the time.	-- Reads all or most of the time with no eye contact.

Personal Appearance

Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Personal appearance is completely appropriate for the occasion and the audience, not distracting.	--For the most part, personal appearance is appropriate for the occasion and the audience.	--Personal appearance is somewhat inappropriate for the occasion and audience.	--Personal appearance is inappropriate for the occasion and audience, is distracting.

Length of Presentation

Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Appropriate length	-- Could have added additional information to lengthen presentation	-- Needs more information to make an appropriate length	-- Too short to give adequate information

presentation

Number in each category

Distinguished

Proficient

Basic

Unacceptable

Sum in each category

Distinguished = 4

Proficient = 3

Basic = 2

Unacceptable = 1

Final Score (96 maximum points): _____

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Student ID: _ Written Thesis and

Comprehensive 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 in problem statement and literature review	<input type="checkbox"/> Arguments are sometimes incorrect, incoherent, or flawed <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives are poorly defined <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates limited critical thinking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Reflects limited understanding of subject matter and associated literature <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates limited understanding of theoretical concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation is weak <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate statement of hypotheses	<input type="checkbox"/> Arguments are coherent and reasonably clear <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives are clear <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates acceptable critical thinking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Reflects understanding of subject matter and literature <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates understanding of theoretical concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation is adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Generates adequate hypotheses	<input type="checkbox"/> Arguments are superior <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives are well defined <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits mature, refined critical thinking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Reflects mastery of subject matter and associated literature. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates mastery of theoretical concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation is excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Generates well-reasoned and well-supported hypotheses	
2. Mastery of methods of inquiry	<input type="checkbox"/> Design inappropriate to questions <input type="checkbox"/> Confused or ineffective plan for analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks anticipation of regulatory compliance requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Design reasonable for questions <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for analysis reasonable, acknowledges some limitations <input type="checkbox"/> Considers regulatory compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Design, analysis plan, excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for analysis goes beyond the obvious, acknowledges limitations and critically considers alternatives <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates regulatory compliance	
3. Quality of writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing is weak <input type="checkbox"/> Numerous grammatical and spelling errors apparent <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is poor <input type="checkbox"/> Style is not appropriate to discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing is adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Some grammatical and spelling errors apparent <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is logical <input type="checkbox"/> Style is appropriate to discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing is publication quality <input type="checkbox"/> No grammatical or spelling errors apparent <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Style is exemplary	

4. Originality and potential for contribution to discipline and policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited potential for discovery <input type="checkbox"/> Limited extension of previous published work in the field <input type="checkbox"/> Limited theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Limited publication potential	<input type="checkbox"/> Some potential for discovery <input type="checkbox"/> Builds upon previous work <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable publication potential	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional potential for discovery <input type="checkbox"/> Greatly extends previous work <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional publication potential	
Additional criterion #1:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Additional criterion #2:				
Overall judgment	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds expectations	

[Adapted from materials found at http://web.uri.edu/assessment/uri/rubrics/](http://web.uri.edu/assessment/uri/rubrics/)

Comments: