

**Program Assessment Report
HESC Master's Program
University of Arkansas
Academic Year 2019-2020**

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 1. Students will be able to master accurate, evidence-based knowledge appropriate to their area of concentration.

Items A-D apply to each Learning Outcome measured.

A. Assessment Measure 1.

a. Direct measures:

- i. for thesis students, assessment of written and oral thesis defense (see attached rubric)
- ii. for non-thesis students, assessment of written comprehensive exam (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 (not required for indirect measures).

- a. It is acceptable that 75% of all students will perform at a satisfactory (2.5) or higher level in the subject area portion of the rubric; it is ideal that 95% of all students will perform at a satisfactory (2.5) or higher level in the subject area portion of the rubric.
- b. All of students (5 out of 5) in thesis-track either met or exceeded expectations at written and oral thesis defense. In both written and oral thesis defense, two students performed at an exceeded level (>3) and three students performed at a satisfactory level (>2.5) in the subject area portion of the rubric.
- c. All of students (3 out of 3) in non-thesis track met or exceeded expectations at written and oral comprehensive exam. One student performed at an exceeded level (>3) and two students performed at a satisfactory level (>2.5) in the subject area portion of the rubric.

C. Summary of Findings

- Five graduate students in thesis track and three students in non-thesis track successfully achieved the learning outcome 1 with completion of degree requirements. Students' theses demonstrated their knowledge on specific issues and potential solutions in the field of study. Students showed their comprehensive understanding of theoretical approaches and various research methods in their theses.
- In 2018-2019, four students successfully completed their degree requirements including thesis writing. Two students in non-thesis track completed their degree requirements by passing comprehensive exams. Compared to the last year, the school produced two more graduate students who earned Master's degree within two years.

D. Recommendations (not required for indirect measures)

- It is recommended that students attend a professional conference in their discipline during the degree program, ideally as a presenter.
- It is recommended that students complete their thesis proposal and defense meetings in a timely manner.

5. Overall Recommendations

- It continues to be 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, or at the very least, a pre-proposal should occur before data collection begins for original research or before data analysis commences when using existing data.

- It is also recommend that a better communication mechanism be established so that that the Graduate Coordinator and School Director are better informed about the timing of students' final examinations.

6. Action Plan

Because of Covid-19-related uncertainties in academia, an action plan will be detailed at a later date. It is likely that rubrics will need to be adjusted for the virtual world. Said plan will involve the direct assessments of additional Student Learning Outcomes.

7. Supporting Attachments

- Attached are oral and written communication rubrics

Written Exam Rubric for HESC MS Students in Non-Thesis Track

Student Name: _____

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

	Insufficient Attempt (0-5)	Emerging (6-10)	Competence/Mastery (11-15)
Appropriate use of critical perspective and analysis	Do not choose an appropriate lens or applied insufficiently. Do not make a cogent argument.	Choose a workable lens for the text at hand. Sufficiently thorough and accurate application. Make an acceptable argument that may not be completely appropriate or convincing.	Choose the most appropriate lens for the text at hand. Apply thoroughly and accurately. Make an appropriate, thorough, and convincing argument.
Research	Find inappropriate or insufficient number of scholarly articles in the area of focus (less than 5).	Find sufficient number of scholarly articles in the area of focus (7-10). Most articles are appropriate to the topic and are used to begin situating the topic within the existing research.	Find appropriate scholarly articles in the area of focus, sufficient in number (more than 10), and used to properly situate the topic within a larger body of scholarly work.
Identification of main issues in the area of focus	Do not identify or analysis the issues addressed in the literature.	Identify and analysis some of the issues addressed in the literature.	Describe detailed summary of the main issues and provide thorough analysis of the main issues addressed in the literature.
Organization	Not logically organized. Does not follow the guideline.	Logically organized but uneven at either the paper, paragraph, or sentence level.	Logically organized at the paper, paragraph, and sentence level in all of three sections.
Detail/Evidence	Do not provide enough details or evidence in all of three sections.	Provide good evidence but may be lacking in detail.	Provide enough details and evidence to fully support analysis.
Format, mechanics, grammar	Do not follow APA style. Lots of grammatical errors distract from content of the paper.	Follow APA style. Some mistakes in formatting or a few mechanical or grammar errors.	Properly format following APA style. No mechanical or grammar errors.

Note: 5 points: Overall quality of the paper; 5 points: Submit a paper by deadline.

Final Score (100 maximum points): _____

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.	
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.	
Content: Depth and Accuracy	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.

Research Effort

	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.
	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.
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
	--Uses the unexpected to full advantage; very original, clever, and creative approach that captures audience's attention.	--Some originality apparent; clever at times; good variety and blending of materials/media.	--Little or no variation; a few original touches but for the most part material presented with little originality or interpretation.	-- Bland, predictable, and lacked "zip." Repetitive with little or no variety; little creative energy used.

Creativity

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

Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--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.	--While graphics relate and aid presentation thesis, media are not as varied and not as well connected to presentation thesis.	-- 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.	--Student uses superfluous graphics, no graphics, or graphics that are so poorly prepared that they detract from the presentation.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Visual aids were colorful, contrasting, and large enough to be seen by all, even those in back of the class	--Font size is appropriate for reading. Some visual aids.	--Font is too small to be easily seen. Few visual aids.	--Font is too small to be easily seen, No visual aids.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Media are prepared in a professional manner. Details are minimized so that main points stand out.	--Appropriate amount of information is prepared. Some material is not supported by visual aids.	--Communication aids are poorly prepared or used inappropriately. Too much information is included. Unimportant material is highlighted.	--Use of blurry graphics.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	--Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	--Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	--Presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Involved the audience in the presentation; held the audience's attention throughout.	--Presented facts with some interesting "twists"; held the audience's attention most of the time.	--Some related facts but went off topic and lost the audience.	--Incoherent; audience lost interest.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Poised, clear articulation; proper volume; steady rate; enthusiasm; confidence; speaker is clearly comfortable in front of the group.	--Clear articulation but not as polished; slightly uncomfortable at times. Most can hear presentation.	--Audience occasionally has trouble hearing the presentation; seems uncomfortable.	--Presenter is obviously anxious and cannot be heard or is monotone with little or no expression.
Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
--Correct, precise pronunciation of terms.	--Student pronounces most words correctly.	--Student incorrectly pronounces terms.	--Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms.

Audience Response

Use of Language: Grammar, Word Choice, Voice

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
	--Selects rich and varied words appropriate for context and uses correct grammar.	--Selects words appropriate for context and uses mostly correct grammar.	--Selects some words inappropriate for context; uses some incorrect grammar.	--Selects many words inappropriate for context; Uses much incorrect grammar.
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
	--Sentences are complete and grammatical, and they flow together easily. Words are chosen for their precise meaning.	--For the most part, sentences are complete and grammatical, and they flow together easily. With a few exceptions, words are chosen for their precise meaning.	--Can follow the presentation, but some grammatical errors and use of slang are evident. Some sentences are incomplete/ halting, and/or vocabulary is somewhat limited or inappropriate.	-- Audience cannot focus on the ideas presented because of errors with grammar and inappropriate vocabulary.
<i>Eye Contact</i>	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.
<i>Personal Appearance</i>	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.
<i>Length of Presentation</i>	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
	--Appropriate length	-- Could have added additional information to lengthen presentation	-- Needs more information to make an appropriate length presentation	-- Too short to give adequate information
<i>Number in each category</i>	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unacceptable
<i>Sum in each category</i>	Distinguished = 4	Proficient = 3	Basic = 2	Unacceptable = 1

Final Score (96 maximum points): _____

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Student ID: _____

Thesis/Dissertation Proposal 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 Documentation is weak Inadequate statement of hypotheses	<input type="checkbox"/> Arguments are coherent and reasonably clear Objectives are clear Demonstrates acceptable critical thinking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Reflects understanding of subject matter and literature <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates understanding of theoretical concepts Documentation is adequate Generates adequate hypotheses	Arguments are superior Objectives are well defined 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 Documentation is excellent Generates well-reasoned and well-supported hypotheses	
2. Mastery of methods of inquiry	Design inappropriate to questions Confused or ineffective plan for analysis Lacks anticipation of regulatory compliance requirements	Design reasonable for questions Plan for analysis reasonable, acknowledges some limitations <input type="checkbox"/> Considers regulatory compliance	Design, analysis plan, excellent Plan for analysis goes beyond the obvious, acknowledges limitations and critically considers alternatives <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates regulatory compliance	
3. Quality of writing	Writing is weak Numerous grammatical and spelling errors apparent Organization is poor Style is not appropriate to discipline	Writing is adequate Some grammatical and spelling errors apparent Organization is logical Style is appropriate to discipline	Writing is publication quality No grammatical or spelling errors apparent Organization is excellent Style is exemplary	
4. Originality and potential for contribution to discipline and policy	Limited potential for discovery Limited extension of previous published work in the field <input type="checkbox"/> Limited theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Limited publication potential	Some potential for discovery Builds upon previous work Reasonable theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable publication potential	Exceptional potential for discovery Greatly extends previous work Exceptional theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional publication potential	
Additional criterion #1:				
Additional criterion #2:				
Overall judgment	Δ Does not meet expectations	Δ Meets expectations	Δ Exceeds expectations	

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

Comments: