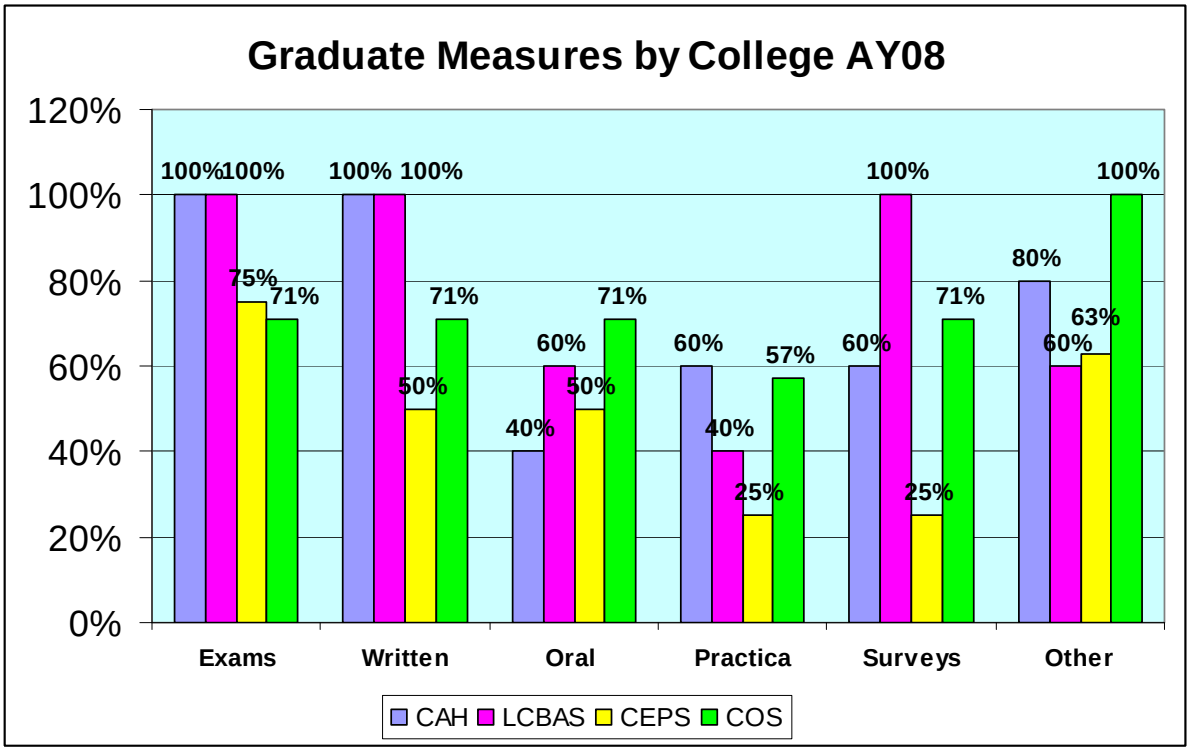
Graduate Assessment Report AY08[1]

This report offers information concerning graduate program assessment at Eastern Ilinois University. In AY08 twenty-five graduate programs submitted annual assessment plans to the Director of the Center for Academic Support and Achievement. Reports were not received from the Departments of Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Music, and Psychology.

The following chart indicates how many graduate programs in the four colleges are using the various measures for assessment purposes.[2]

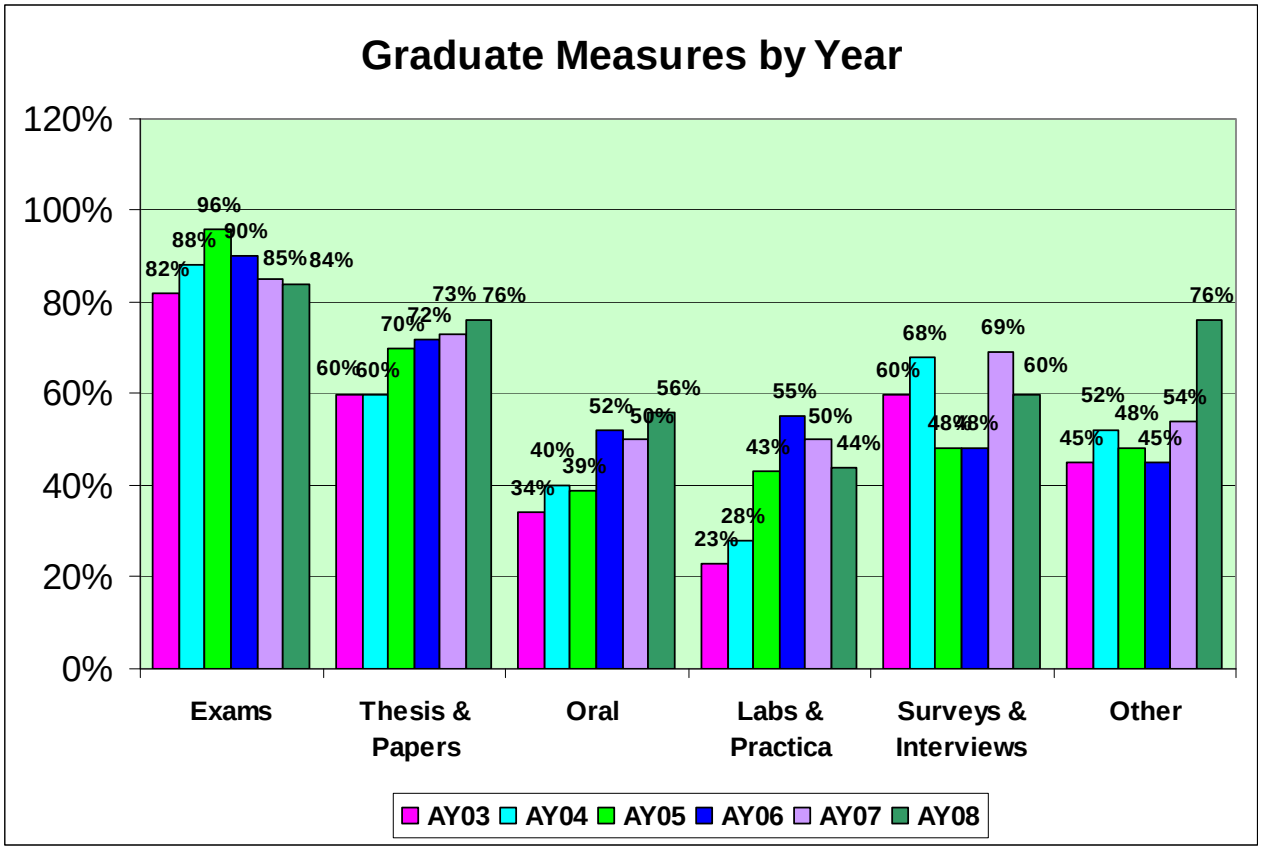


[1] All information provided in this chart was taken from the annual assessment summaries submitted to the Director of CASA by July 25, 2008.

[2] Twenty-five programs submitted plans. In the College of Arts and Humanities, these five programs included: Art, M.A.; Communication Studies, M.A.; English, M.A.; Historical Administration, M.A.; and History, M.A. In the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences, the following five summaries were submitted: Business Administration, M.B.A.; Family and Consumer Sciences, M.S., Dietetics; Family and Consumer Sciences, M.S.; Gerontology, M.A.; and Technology, M.S. The following eight summaries were submitted from the College of Education and Professional Studies: College Student Affairs, M.S.; Counseling, M.S.; Education Administration, M.S.Ed./Specialist in Education; Elementary Education, M.S.Ed.; Physical Education, M.S.; Physical Education, M.S., Exercise Science; Physical Education, M.S., Sport Administration, Pedagogy, and Coaching; and Special Education, M.S. Seven graduate summaries were received from the College of Sciences: Biological Sciences, M.S.; Chemistry, M.S.; Communication Disorders and Sciences, M.S.; Economics, M.A.; Natural Sciences, Biological Sciences, M.S.; Political Science, M.A.; and Psychology, Clinical Psychology, M.A.

As indicated by the previous chart, the majority of programs (71%-100%) are employing exams and tests as the primary direct measure. The most prevalent measures used for assessment purposes are masters' exams and theses. Theses and seminar papers are used by 50%-100% of programs. Fewer programs are assessing oral competency with a range from 40% (CAH) to 71% (COS). Laboratory experiments/exercises and internships/practica make up 25%-60% of the measures. The widest range in usage of measures in the indirect measures with 25% (CEPS) to 100% (LCBAS) employing surveys and/or interviews. Measures by college and program are included as Appendix A or can be found on the submitted plans themselves, which are available on-line at www.eiu.edu/~assess.

The following chart follows the changes in measures from AY03 to AY08 with all graduate programs submitted for each year included.

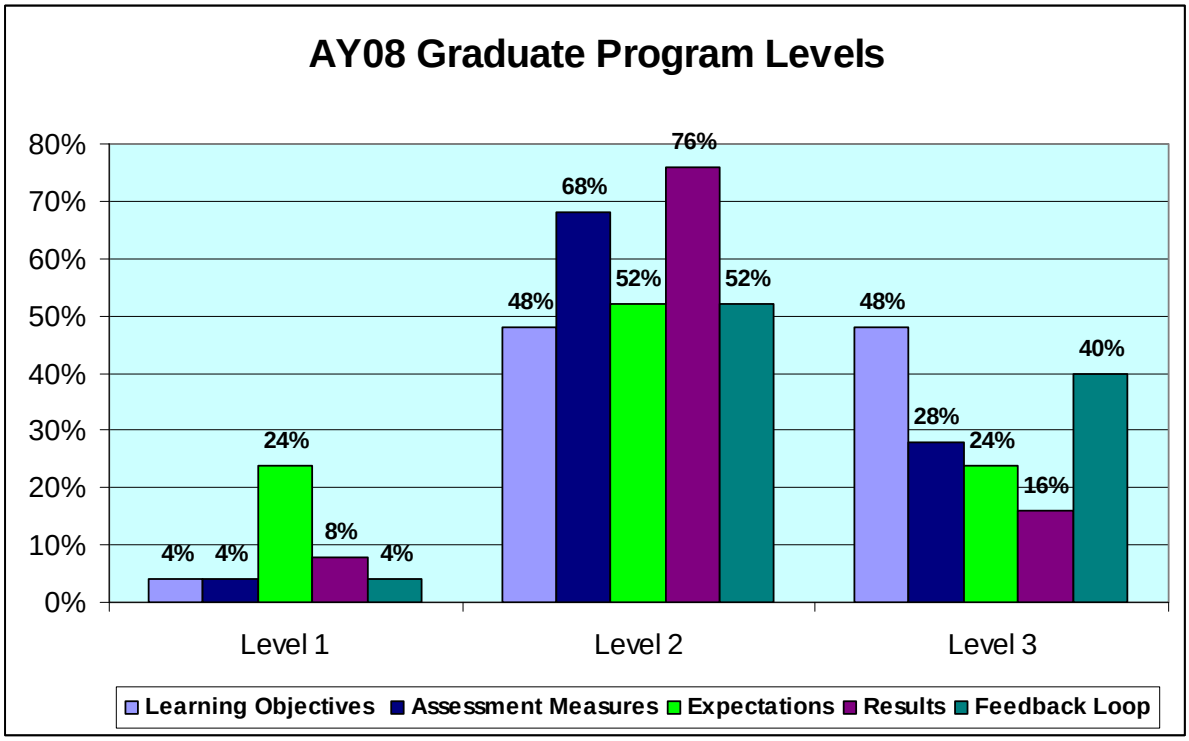


The "other" category in the above chart refers to a variety of measures that are either not measures assessing student learning outcomes directly (such as numbers of students presenting at conferences or receiving awards/scholarships, employment rates, admission requirements, numbers of theses completed, and number of students applying to and being accepted by Ph.D. programs) or are very field/program specific (such as participation with peers in coursework).

Use of indirect measures such as surveys of students or employers or exit interviews has increased in the past year. Fifteen of the twenty-five submitted programs are using at least one indirect measure. Every plan submitted from the Lumpkin College

of Business and Applied Sciences and all but two submitted from the College of Sciences have included both direct and indirect measures in their plans. This incorporation of both kinds of assessment measures indicates maturation in assessment work. While all program plans submitted have included direct measures, some programs still do not have multiple measures but are using one summative measure only.

The following chart indicates the level of progress for the graduate programs by the five criteria on the primary trait analysis. These levels have been given to department chairs and coordinators on their 2008 Response to Summary Report. These responses are also on the assessment web site.

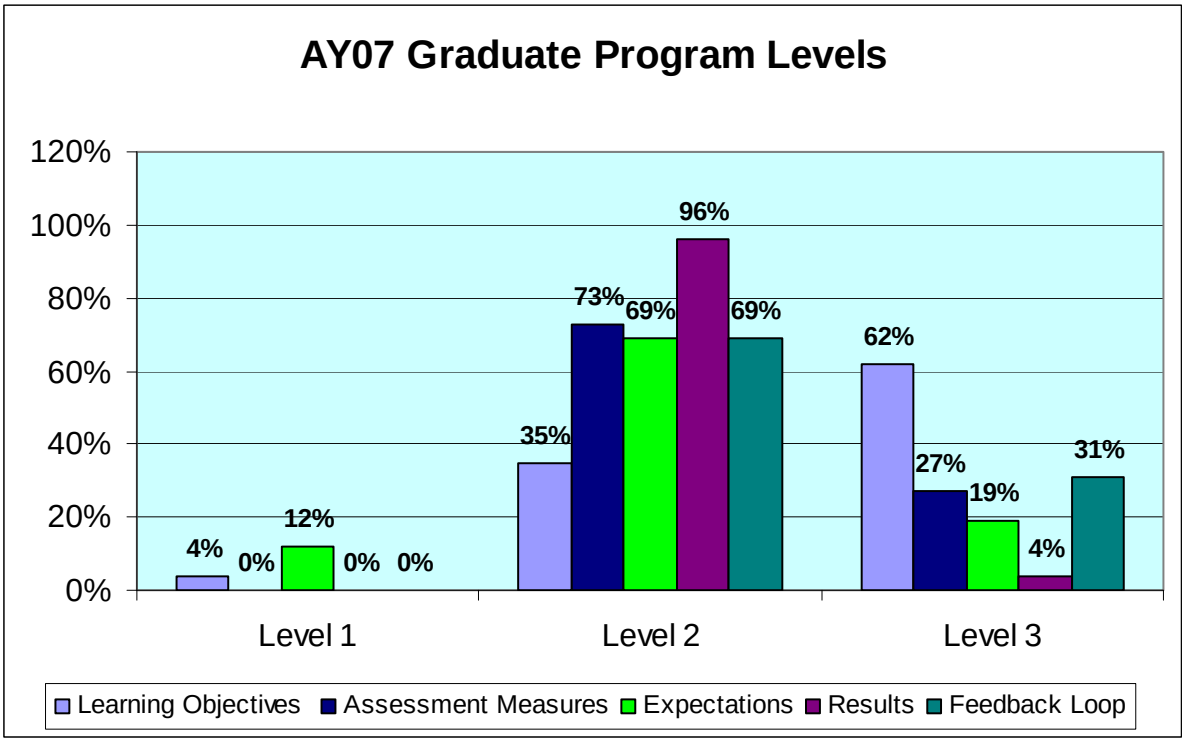


While our goal is to move more programs into level three in all categories, each year there are fewer and fewer programs still at level one, which does show progress. A chart listing progress by college is included as Appendix B. The best gauge of each program's progress is the analysis provided on the summary reports in Parts Two and Three.

Several programs are making great progress at the graduate level. The percentage of programs at level three for the expectations, results, and feedback loop has grown since last year. The highest number of programs at level one is in the expectations section of the plan. Twenty-four percent of programs are still at this level—primarily because faculty members are having difficulty understanding how to write or set expectations for student learning in their programs. Objectives and the feedback loop have the most programs at level three. These categories tend to be the most stable; once a program has a solid set of objectives and a plan for sharing and using data, it tends to leave these parts of the plan alone. Plans cannot reach a level

three designation in measures until they use both direct and indirect measures and employ multiple measures of assessment, so the majority of plans are at level two. Reaching level three for results takes time; programs must display several years of collection and analysis of data and use of data for program improvement in order to reach level 3 for the results section of the plan.

The following chart shows the program levels in AY07 for the sake of comparison.

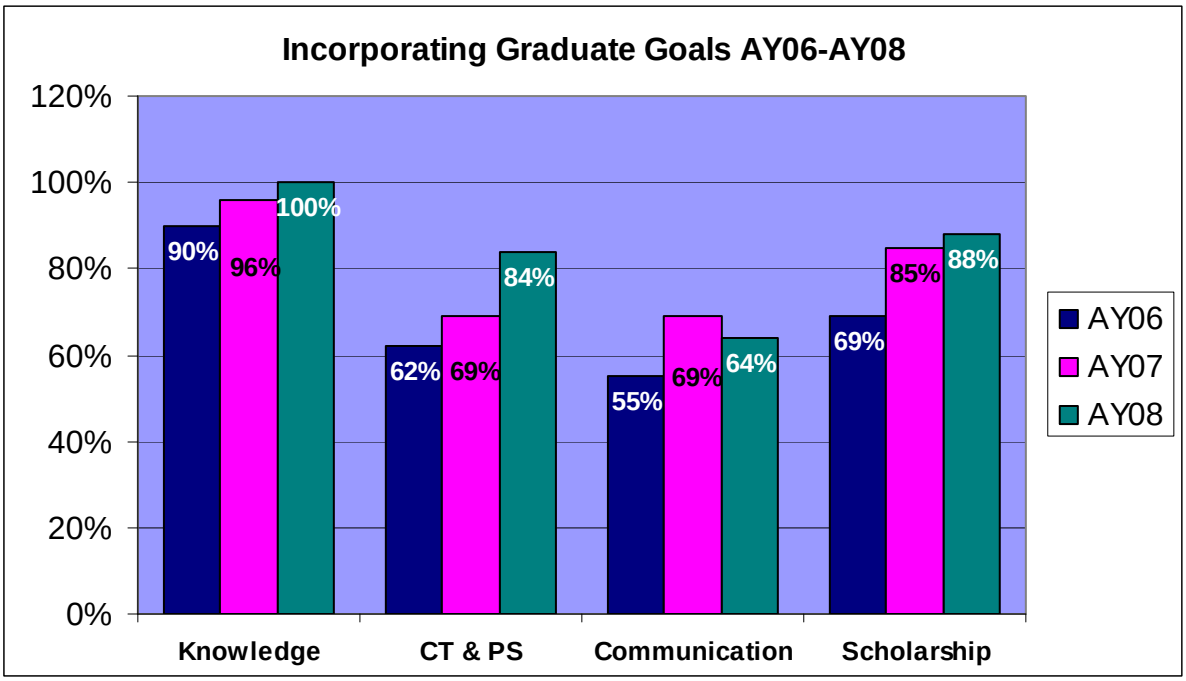


In AY08 some programs are still at level one while in AY07 in several areas there were no programs still at this level. This change can be attributed to different programs submitting in this academic year than in the previous one, changes in graduate coordinators who include different information on the reports, and changes in programs that require changes in the assessment reports themselves. An example of a change could be a program that decided to eliminate internships and create an exam instead. This kind of change could mean that some data were not collected for a year while new instruments were developed.

In addition to measures and progress levels, the number of programs that had incorporated the graduate learning goals was also tracked. These goals are:

- A depth of content knowledge (including technology skills and ethical behaviors)
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Effective oral and written communication skills
- Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity

The percentage of programs currently incorporating these goals into their program objectives is given in the chart below:[3]

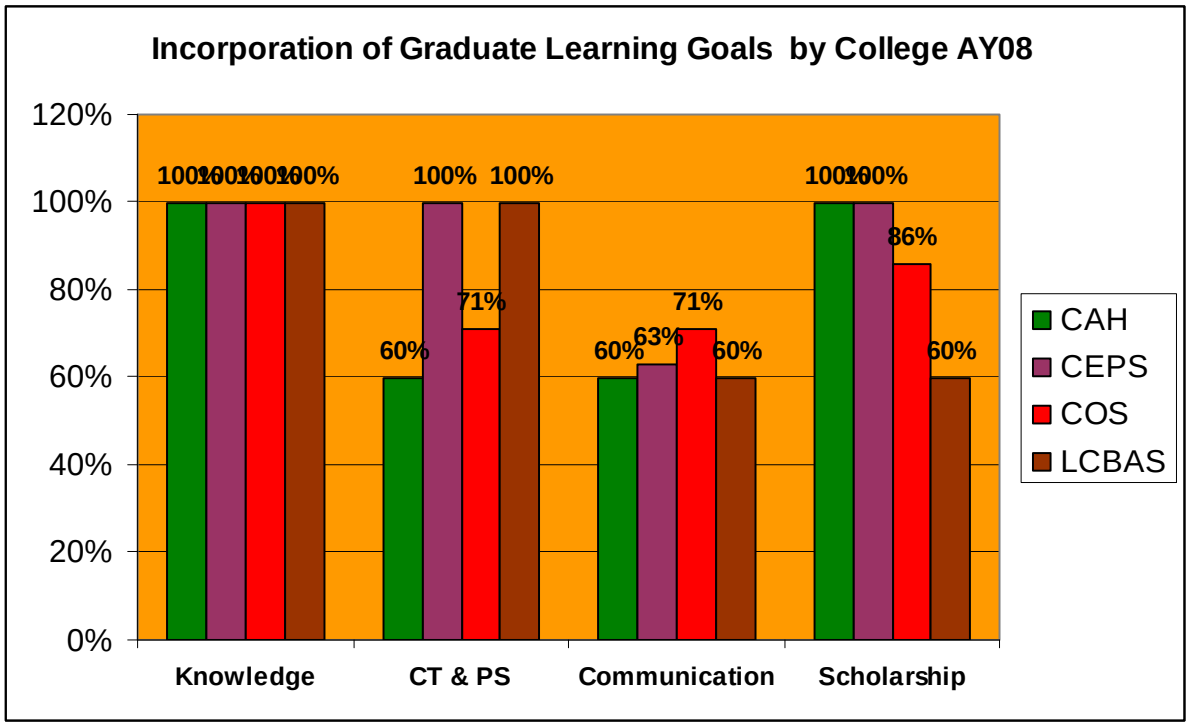


The total number of programs represented is 25. The depth of knowledge was the goal that the majority of programs had already incorporated; 100% represents all programs that submitted plans. Critical thinking and problem solving have been incorporated into the 21 graduate programs. Oral and written communication skills are part of the program objectives for sixteen of the graduate programs. Twenty-two graduate programs currently articulate advanced scholarship through research or creative activity as a program objective (more programs are using scholarship activities such as the thesis as a measure to show depth of knowledge or more program-specific objectives).

Some programs may be examining student learning of these goals, but because these goals have not been specifically articulated in their program objectives, they have not been included in the numbers given here. I suggest that in the next couple of years, programs should be encouraged to respond to these goals in their annual summaries as part of the information given in Part Two.

[3] These data are based on the assessment summaries and the Director's understanding of those summaries and the graduate learning goals themselves.

The following chart shows adoption of graduate learning goals by college. The College of Education and Professional Studies has attained 100% adoption for three of the goals; communication skills was the only goal not articulated by all programs. The College of Arts and Humanities has reached 100% adoption of content knowledge and research and scholarship. Many of these programs are using written and verbal communication instruments as measures but have not fully articulated these goals as objectives that are assessed in the program. Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences had 100% of its programs incorporate the content knowledge and critical thinking goals into their program objectives. The College of Sciences reached 100% adoption of the content knowledge and had the highest adoption rate of communication skills among the four colleges.



As this report shows, the graduate programs have been making steady progress over the last three years with their assessment plans.