Student Learning Assessment Program

## Response to Summary Form

**Graduate Program 2017**

Department: Biological Sciences

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| **Category** | **Level[[1]](#footnote-1)\*** | Comments |
| Learning Objectives | Level 3, M.S. Biological Sciences | Objectives are clear, measurable, and span multiple domains. This plan has adopted all four of the graduate learning goals. Part Three indicates that your curriculum is flexible to serve student needs, so you may not need more detail on content here. Do you have a set of courses connected to certain options for students? If so, you might have learning objectives related to those options or tracks. |
| **How, Where, and When Assessed** | Level 2, M.S. Biological Sciences | You have a blend of direct and indirect measures here that appear to be collected at various points in the curriculum, so that’s good. Using the thesis and comprehensive exam are common measures for graduate programs because they offer rich artifacts to assess student learning outcomes. It appears that the rubric being used for oral defenses is working as well. Are you using something similar for writing? Students who write a thesis can have their writing assessed as part of a rubric or evaluation that looks at the thesis, which could offer data on all your objectives. But, how are you assessing oral and written skills for the non-thesis option students? BIO 5150 appears to provide a way to assess presentation skills, but the written assessment isn’t clear. You might also elaborate on the evaluation being done for objective 4 for the non-thesis students. How do you determine the students have good critical thinking skills? Having a plan for an internship on file may not provide the data that could show problem-solving or critical thinking. |
| **Expectations** | Level 2, M.S. Biological Sciences | Expectations are established for the measures listed. Again, grades can cover a multitude of skills, so it is hard to know what a course grade signifies about a specific objective although for program content it is probably telling. The comprehensive exam is also a good measure for content and the expectations here are rigorous and appropriate for graduate study. More specific expectations could be given for writing like you have for oral presentations. |
| **Results** | Level 3, M.S. Biological Sciences | Your results show program rigor and your students’ achievement of your learning outcomes, so that is very positive. Results are provided for both direct and indirect assessment measures, so that is very good. Your students are clearly productive scholars, which is something the department can be proud of. |
| **How Results Will be Used** | Level 3, M.S. Biological Sciences | Feedback loop appears to be in place with graduate coordinator and faculty sharing results and discussing data. |

This program’s assessment plan has reached the mature stages overall, so the next assessment report will be due **June 15, 2019**. Good work!

1. \* Levels should not be interpreted as grades or scores; they are stages of implementation based on patterns of characteristics described by North Central Association. These levels are approximations based on the information provided in the summaries. Please refer to the checklist for the Primary Traits listed for each level. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)