



## Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report (Due October 1, 2023)

See: [SLU rubric](#) for assessing these plans

Program Name (no acronyms): **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION and EDUCATION POLICY AND EQUITY**

Department: **Educational Studies**

Degree or Certificate Level: **PhD**

College/School: **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Date (Month/Year): **OCT 1, 2023**

Assessment Contact: **Kathryn Mitchell Pierce, Program Director**

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? **FALL 2022-SPRING 2023**

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? **PLAN HAS NOT BEEN UPDATED**

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization or subject to state/licensure requirements? **NO**

If yes, please share how this affects the program's assessment process (e.g., number of learning outcomes assessed, mandated exams or other assessment methods, schedule or timing of assessment, etc.):

### 1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please provide the complete list of the program's learning outcome statements and **bold** the SLOs assessed in this cycle.)

For the 2021-2022 annual assessment cycle, we looked closely at student performance on their comprehensive exams for both the PhD in Curriculum & Instruction and the PhD in Education Policy and Equity as well as recruitment and retention data. In 2022-2023 we began implementing program changes designed to better prepare students for the comprehensive exams including programmatic changes and developed plans for changes in mentoring/advising.

In November 2022, following review of the prior assessment plan and conversations with our Dean, we identified the following questions to guide our work during the 2022-2023 assessment cycle:

1. What does our review of student information suggest about ways to improve our program(s)?
2. How do we want to revise our PhD program/s, including the ways we organize ourselves within our Program Faculty?
3. How can we strengthen our advising/communication with our graduate students?
4. How are our PhD students progressing through their programs?

### 2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail, identify the course(s) in which they were collected, and if they are from program majors/graduates and/or other students. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

We used the following data sources connected to each guiding question above:

1. Review of comprehensive exam papers; faculty advisor observations of student readiness for dissertation proposals
2. Enrollment data and descriptions of the students we are successfully recruiting for the C&I and EPE programs; organizational structures in benchmark and aspirant programs
3. Student feedback on mentoring/advising from Dean's Office survey, FAQ reported by faculty advisors

4. Matriculation data for PhD students – specifically time-to-degree and completion rates

### 3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

The full Graduate Educational Studies faculty met monthly to discuss data and plan responses. In addition, the faculty divided into 4 self-selected working groups to engage in closer study of portions of the data and to develop proposals for the full faculty to consider. The four working groups focused on:

1. Improving Mentoring and Advising
2. Updating the Professional Seminar course from PhD in EPE to reflect the needs of both the EPE and C&I PhD students
3. Exploring Options for Online Learning Opportunities for Students (individual courses, strands within a degree, a full degree)
4. Revising the current PhD Programs to support a move toward a combined/umbrella PhD

### 4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Results are aligned to the four working groups identified above:

1. Students feel they are not getting sufficient “advice” about extracurricular opportunities to engage in research, publications/presentations, and service; students want accurate and timely information about the next steps in the program
2. Students are struggling with academic writing, particularly use of APA 7 for in-text citations and references as well as analysis and synthesis across sources; students aren’t experiencing an “arc” in their program – rather, they are focused on completing a list of courses; students are not being consistently supported in reading deeply as part of preparing to impact the field
3. We need a school-wide (or at least program-wide) vision of what we want to offer online and how these offerings will intersect with campus-based programs
4. Enrollment patterns suggest that we cannot sustain two separate PhD programs with the number of faculty we have; enrollment patterns are making it challenging to offer courses in a predictable cycle that allows long-range planning toward graduation

### 5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you? Address both a) learning gaps and possible curricular or pedagogical remedies, and b) strengths of curriculum and pedagogy.

Completed or proposed curricular remedies, connected to the working groups numbered above:

1. Developed a protocol for counseling students on topics beyond coursework; Developed an updated plan for conducting the annual graduate student review; Proposed “Group Advising” events (including updated ProSem – see #2 below) and changes in the New Graduate Student Orientation held August 17, 2023.
2. Created an updated outline for the ProSem that addresses identified concerns with level of academic reading and writing; builds community across all PhD students; provides a common foundation for thinking about one of the two comprehensive exam papers (the Theorization of Learning Paper)
3. Explored qualifications and approvals required to offer online programming; initiated gathering of marketing data relative to online options
4. Created new courses and made changes in program requirements as a first step toward an umbrella PhD

### 6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

- A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss the results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Working Groups 1 and 2 (see numbered groups above) reported to the Graduate Educational Studies faculty on February 23, 2023; Working Groups 3 and 4 reported to the faculty on April 19, 2023.

New actions in response to this assessment work were communicated to PhD students via our Grad Student Newsletter and during our Fall 2023 Graduate Student Event (combined New Student Orientation with Returning Student group Advising and Peer Mentoring of New Students)

**B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:**

**Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies**

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

**Changes to the Assessment Plan**

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

Numbered items refer to guiding questions in section 1 above. Each reflects changes to the Curriculum.

**1. Mentoring /Advising**

- A new protocol for Annual Graduate Student Review was implemented in Spring 2023.
- Faculty advisors met with the Program Director to review student progress-toward-degree and to update information in DegreeWorks.
- Four “lingering” students were supported in developing ambitious timelines for degree completion, with the support of a one-semester or one-year extension on time-to-degree.
- New Graduate Student Orientation was expanded to include returning students as peer mentors and discussion leaders; and included program advising conversations by cohort.
- A quarterly newsletter was established to communicate with all graduate students, including extracurricular opportunities, timelines/reminders of deadlines, helpful forms, specific guidance by group (MA, new PhD, returning PhD, students preparing for dissertation work).
- With the School of Education changing from a dissertation committee of 5 to a committee of 3, specific guidelines for the selection of the 3 members were developed and implemented in the summer of 2023.

**2. Professional Seminar**

- The updated ProSem (EPE 5050 Proseminar on Ed Research) initiated for Fall 2023, enrolling all new students as well as recent students (to ensure they received the foundational information. The revised syllabus was “crowd-sourced” with faculty meeting in small groups several times to respond to iterations of the design.

**3. Online Learning**

- Marketing data for MA and PhD students was requested from MarCom
- Foundational research courses were offered online during Summer 2023
- Two courses are in development for online offering in 2024-2025

**4. Revised PhDs**

- See also: Updated ProSem in #2 above.
- A new course, EDI 6930 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks for Education Researchers, was offered in Spring 2023 for new and current students in both PhD programs to address concerns about preparation for developing dissertation proposals.
- Program and catalog changes were made in 2022-2023 to create a foundation for moving toward an umbrella PhD. These include:
  - Reducing the number of options within the set of required courses in favor of a specific set of courses that all students will take.

- Eliminating from electives lists those courses that no longer meet the needs of students.
- Increasing elective choices for those in the EPE program to allow greater scheduling flexibility and individualization.
- Clarifying required foundational research courses and making the requirements consistent across both the C&I and EPE PhD programs.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

## 7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

### A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of previous assessment data?

- A. Previous assessment cycles led to significant changes in the Comprehensive Exam process – changing from writing “cold” essays in a writing-on-demand environment to development of two academic papers.
- B. Our goal for 2021-2022 was to update our PhD program. This morphed into discussions of an “umbrella” PhD program that would incorporate both the Curriculum and Instruction and the Education Policy and Equity PhDs. This work laid the foundation for the significant changes made in program requirements during the 2022-2023 academic year.

### B. How has the change/have these changes identified in 7A been assessed?

- A. During the Summer of 2023 faculty involved in mentoring students in the Comprehensive Exam process reviewed the quality of the papers to determine if the changes were indeed a better assessment of student learning in the program and preparation for conducting independent doctoral research.
- B. We are still in the process of implementing the changes.

### C. What were the findings of the assessment?

- A. The consensus of the faculty review of student papers was that the exam process was indeed a better assessment of student learning/preparation, and that we have work to do to better prepare students for success on the Comprehensive Exams. Beginning with Fall 2023 courses, we have begun to make changes in content/emphasis. We have also added Group Advising based on student “phase” in the program.
- B. NA

### D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

- A. We have implemented advising/mentoring changes and programmatic changes that we hope will improve the quality of the Comprehensive Exam papers. We will engage in a formal review of Exam papers during the 2024-2025 academic year in hopes of documenting improvement in student work.

**IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted/appended into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document. Thank you.**

**DRAFT ADDENDA** *Not sure how many of these will actually be submitted.*

- GRADUATE EDUCATION STUDIES FACULTY MEETINGS
  - [Agendas/Minutes at a Glance](#)
- COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS
  - [Criteria for Evaluating](#)
  - [Reflections on Exam Data](#)
  - Results Table
- WORKING GROUPS – Actions taken in response to data analysis:
  - Mentoring/Advising
    - [Charge](#)
    - [Proposal](#)
  - Pro-Sem Course
    - [Charge, Discussion Notes/Plans for Updating Course](#)
  - Creating an Umbrella PhD (C&I plus EPE plus ...)
    - [Charge and Talking Points](#)
  - Online Programming
    - [Charge and Discussion](#)
- NEW or UPDATED FORMS/DOCUMENTS:
  - New [Comprehensive Exams Readiness Exceptions Form](#)
  - New [“What’s Next After Comps” Advising Letter](#)
  - New [Selection of Dissertation Committee Proposal Form](#)
  - New [Dissertation Committee Composition Guidelines](#)
  - Updated [Comps Orientation Session Slides, Summer 2023](#)
  - Updated [Written Comprehensive Exams Guidelines](#) document.