

Assurance of Learning Assessment Measure Guidance - PhD

Program Overview

The Warrington College of Business Administration takes pride in its Ph.D. programs. The Ph.D. program awards two degrees: a Ph.D. in economics and a Ph.D. in business administration with a concentration in one of the departmental fields: accounting, management, marketing, finance or real estate, and information systems. The program is overseen by a committee of six members (one from each department), chaired by a seventh member, who represents no department but serves as an organizer and arbiter when needed.

The Departments function quite independently in their admissions decisions, required course work, and graduation standards. Ultimately, a successful doctoral candidate must learn in a small, customized environment. Each department therefore enrolls a relatively small number of students relative to faculty, and the majority of the faculty members are involved in their department's program.

The University of Florida's Graduate School essentially delegates the important decisions about a student's course of study to a Supervisory Committee composed of at least four members of the graduate faculty. At least two committee members (including the committee chair) must come from the home department and at least one member (the "external member") must come from an educational discipline outside the major department. The outside member is the representative of the Graduate School and is charged with guaranteeing that all University guidelines are met. The student can (and generally does) invite specific faculty to join the committee. The Supervisory Committee must be formed by the end of the first year of study. When the student is admitted to candidacy, the Supervisory Committee is replaced with a Dissertation Committee, although the committee's composition does not necessarily change.

A successful Ph.D. program must have a core of Graduate Faculty members that are actively involved in the program. Within this group, important decisions are made about the courses to be offered, standards of performance, and the level of contribution needed to receive the degree. At the departmental level, these activities are led by the Graduate Coordinator. Course offerings are often re-considered when a new faculty member joins the department. The core faculty group also examines the placement record of each year's graduating class and tries to infer what made specific students particularly successful. If necessary, these discussions elicit a change in program methods.

Program Goals and Objectives

- 1) Ph.D. recipients will be effective researchers in industrial or academic environments.
 - a. Students will understand the technical tools (theory, methodology, statistical analyses, and reporting norms) essential to the departmental area of study.
 - b. Students will utilize technical tools to create new knowledge through original research.

Assessment methods are allowed to vary by department. Assessment methods include an annual review, exams (e.g., a first year paper, a comprehensive written exam, an oral exam, a conceptual paper), and placement success.

- 2) Ph.D. recipients will be effective communicators of advanced knowledge in their area of specialization.
 - a. Students will communicate specialized information from their field of expertise verbally and in writing.
 - b. Students will communicate specialized information from their field of expertise verbally at a level understandable by an educated layman or university undergraduate student.

Assessment Method: Teaching evaluations and completion of the dissertation.

Assessment Measures

Annual review of student progress: Student progress (e.g., course grades, research performance) is periodically reviewed by the department's faculty. Each student is paired with a major adviser who takes primary responsibility for overseeing the process.

Accounting: At the end of each spring semester, the department's doctoral dissertation committee meets to review the progress of each student. Students who are not meeting departmental requirements in terms of grades, research performance, etc. are counseled out of the program.

FIRE: Each student receives an annual letter of evaluation. The Department's major retention decisions involve the comprehensive exam (administered at the end of the students' first year) and the second year paper, which is scheduled to be completed and presented by early in the student's third year.

ISOM: Each student receives an annual evaluation letter which provides an assessment for the past year and specifies appropriate goals for the students' coming year.

Management: Each student receives an annual letter of evaluation from the PhD coordinator, drawing on input from the students' advisor or major professors. The letter centers primarily on participation in research projects, bringing those projects under review, and successfully managing the review process. Feedback on course work and teaching are discussed when applicable.

Marketing: At the end of each spring semester, the department meets to review the progress of each student. Students who are not meeting departmental requirements are counseled out of the program. Each student receives an annual evaluation letter, which assesses performance in the past year and specifies appropriate goals for the students' coming year.

Exams: Exams are administered in a time window that stretches from the end of the first year of study until the middle of the third year of study. Three forms of exams are administered. First and second year papers allow faculties to assess the research and communication skills of students. Topics are chosen by students and papers are graded by faculty. Written comprehensive exams, administered in year two,

assess student competence in major topic areas within the discipline. The exam is written and graded by a committee of faculty members. A conceptual paper on a topic of the students choosing can substitute for a written exam (Marketing). The conceptual paper is completed in the first semester of year three in the program and is graded by the Supervisory Committee. Students must complete an oral exam after successfully completing the written comprehensive exam or conceptual paper. The oral exam can be on a general topic or specific to the student's area of interest.

Dissertation: Students must prepare and present a dissertation that shows independent investigation and that is acceptable in form and content to the supervisory committee and to the Graduate School. To complete a dissertation, the student must identify a gap in the profession's current knowledge and undertake research that fills the gap in a way that satisfies high professional standards. The work must be of publishable quality and must be in a form suitable for publication, using the Graduate School's format requirements.

Placement: Placement success will be assessed using the list of Carnegie Research University "Very High" institutions. This list roughly parallels Ph.D. granting institutions in business.

Communication: All students are required to teach a minimum of one course while in the Ph.D. program. Teacher evaluations will be used to assess performance.