

## **PhD in Communication Assessment for AY 2021-2022**

### **Communication: PhD in Communication Mission Statement**

The PhD in communication is a research degree that prepares students to independently execute and publish high quality scholarship. The program encompasses the full range of quantitative, qualitative, rhetorical, and critical approaches to the study of human communication.

### **Communication: PhD in Communication Learning Outcomes**

1. Review literature in the communication field to identify new research questions.
2. Conduct a study using appropriate methodology to answer a research question.
3. Communicate one's own and other's research in a public setting.
4. Adhere to ethical guidelines for work in the discipline.

### **Communication: PhD in Communication Assessment Method #1**

#### **Assessment Method:**

Analysis of dissertation prospectuses submitted

To assess doctoral students' ability to identify appropriate research questions through a review of the literature, the Graduate Committee developed a rubric for assessing dissertation prospectuses. Advisers are surveyed at the end of each semester and asked to provide assessments of how prospectuses they have supervised address the learning outcome goals.

Rationale: Identifying original, theory-driven questions is a building block of the research process, and the prospectus stage builds on the qualifying exams to draw doctoral candidates out on their potential to generate new knowledge in their fields. Committees and advisers expect the prospectus to be well enough developed methodologically that they can fairly assess the candidate's likelihood of addressing original question to the candidate's and committee's satisfaction.

After the prospectus defense, advisers are asked to rate the document on a 4-point scale, from excellent (4) to unacceptable (1), in each of four categories: Description of the research problem, its scope and significance; synthesis of current literature; adherence to academic style in matters like citations, references and tables; and writing mechanics. A score of 3 (Good) is our baseline for "Meets Expectations" for this LO.

For AY2021-2022, we have seven sample prospectuses to assess.

## Assessment Rubrics:

See separate Assessment Rubric for PhD LO1 and LO2

## Data:

Student code	Problem	Lit Rvw	Style	Writing
Student C	3	3	4	4
Student D	3	4	4	4
Student E	4	4	4	4
Student F	4	3	4	3
Student G	3	3	4	4
Student H	4	3	3	4
Student I	3	3	3	2
	3.42	3.29	3.71	3.57

## Results:

Results on seven prospectuses were reported for 2021-2022. Average ratings on individual prospectuses ranged from 3.29-3.71. This is an improvement from AY 2020-2021 results (3.0-3.5). Evaluations by category indicate that prospectuses were weakest in literature review, although the average score remains above expectation (3.29; expectation is 3.0). This is similar to AY2020-2021 findings that synthesis of literature remains a weak category.

Of the seven prospectuses, all seven met or exceeded expectations.

## Program Action Plan:

We will continue to work to provide appropriate theory courses for students and to mentor better engagement with relevant scholarship. This finding mirrors problems found in MA assessment, so this is something for us to consider across the entire graduate program. The Graduate Committee will discuss this issue for both the MA and PhD programs, examining how we can improve students' synthesis and evaluation of existing literature in our introductory courses (Intro to MA Studies; Intro to PhD Studies) and theory course offerings.

## Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:

In September, the Graduate Committee will discuss this issue for both the MA and PhD programs, examining how we can improve students' synthesis and evaluation of existing literature in our introductory courses (Intro to MA Studies; Intro to PhD Studies) and theory course offerings.

**Reporting to Stakeholders:**

The results of the assessment will be put as a discussion item on the agenda for a meeting of the graduate committee, posted on our department website, and distributed to graduate faculty and students by September 2022.

## **Communication: PhD in Communication Assessment Method #2**

### **Assessment Method:**

Analysis of dissertations defended

To assess doctoral students' ability to identify appropriate research questions through a review of the literature, the Graduate Committee developed a rubric for assessing dissertation prospectuses. Advisers are surveyed at the end of each semester and asked to provide assessments of how prospectuses they have supervised address the learning outcome goals.

Rationale: Identifying original, theory-driven questions is a building block of the research process, and the prospectus stage builds on the qualifying exams to draw doctoral candidates out on their potential to generate new knowledge in their fields. Committees and advisers expect the prospectus to be well enough developed methodologically that they can fairly assess the candidate's likelihood of addressing original scholarly questions to the candidate's and committee's satisfaction.

Dissertations are rated on a 1-4 scale (1=unacceptable; 4=excellent) in six categories: Research problem scope and significance; methods; review of literature; analysis, results and discussion; adherence to academic style; and mechanics of writing. A score of 3 (good) is our meets expectation level.

For AY2021-2022, we had five dissertation samples to assess.

**Ph.D. Assessment: Rubric for Assessment of Dissertation for Assessing Student Learning Outcome 2**

See separate assessment rubric for PhD LO1 and LO2

**Data:**

Student code	Problem	Methods	Lit Rvw	Analysis	Style	Writing
Student A	4	4	4	4	4	3
Student B	3	4	4	4	4	4
Student C	4	3	4	4	4	4
Student D	4	4	4	4	4	3
Student E	4	4	4	3	4	4
	3.8	3.8	4	3.8	4	3.6

**Results:**

Range 3.6-4.0). Average 3.83. Strongest categories were literature review and following style guide (4.0 average). Weakest category was writing mechanics (3.6).

Of the five dissertations assessed, all five well exceeded expectations.

**Program Action Plan:**

The results suggest that from prospectus to dissertation, students are doing a better job locating, evaluating, and synthesizing literature.

Writing mechanics need to be developed across the PhD curriculum, as our students continue to show problems with their writing in both prospectus and dissertation stages.

**Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:**

We will examine reasons why students struggle as the prospectus stage with literature review. Perhaps lessons from how faculty advisors mentor students on use of existing literature might help us with advising students prior to the prospectus stage.

Writing mentoring is an on-going concern that we regularly discuss in graduate committee and as graduate faculty. While these results are strong, students always need more mentoring in this area.

## **Reporting to Stakeholders:**

The results of the assessment will be put as a discussion item on the agenda for a meeting of the graduate committee, posted on our department website, and distributed to graduate faculty and students in September 2022.

## **Communication: PhD in Communication Assessment Method #3**

### **Assessment Method:**

Qualtrics survey of PhD students

To assess doctoral students' ability to communicate their own and other's research in a public setting, current PhD students are surveyed by the graduate director at the end of the academic year and asked to note how many international, national, and regional academic conferences they submitted to and how many of those submissions were accepted. New for this academic year, we also asked students how many manuscripts were submitted and accepted by academic journals.

Rationale: Submission and acceptance to international, national, and regional academic conferences and journals is the primary means by which scholars and practitioners in our field present their research publicly. Students are expected to submit and present at conference as part of their professional development.

## **Program evaluation, 2021-22: Conference submissions and publications**

Q1

We are surveying doctoral students about academic conference submission and publications as part of WSU's larger effort at program evaluation. Data will be used only in the aggregate, and answers won't be a part of any individual evaluations. Please answer as completely as you can, please use numbers for numeric answers, and please don't use your name.

Please only include information regarding presentations or publications that were accepted for academic year 2021-2022 (September 2021-now). For instance, 2022 NCA submissions should not be included, because those presentations won't happen until next academic year.

Q2 How many sole or lead author papers or presentations did you submit to national and international conferences this academic year (Fall 2021-Winter 2022)?

Q12 How many of those submission were accepted?

Q3 How many co-authored and not lead author papers or presentations did you submit to national and international conferences this academic year (Fall 2021-Winter 2022)?

Q13 How many of those submissions were accepted?

Q5 How many sole or lead authored papers or presentations did you submit to regional conferences (e.g., Central, Eastern, Western, or Southern conferences) this academic year?

Q14 How many of those submissions were accepted?

Q15 How many coauthored but not lead authored papers or presentations did you submit to regional conferences (e.g., Central, Eastern, Western, or Southern conferences) this academic year?

Q16 How many of those submissions were accepted?

Q6 How many sole or lead authored papers did you submit for specialized conferences (e.g., State health conference, argument conference) this academic year?

Q18 How many of those submissions were accepted?

Q17 How many co-authored but not lead authored papers did you present at specialized conferences (e.g., State health conference, argument conference) this academic year?

Q19 How many of those submissions were accepted?

Q20 How many sole or lead authored manuscripts did you submit for publication this academic year?

Q21 How many were accepted for publication? Please do not include papers that are currently under review or revise and submit.

Q25 Please list the name(s) of the journals where your sole or lead authored work was published in this academic year.

Q22 How many co-authored but not lead authored manuscripts did you submit for publication this academic year?

Q23 How many were accepted for publication? Please do not include papers that are currently under review or revise and submit.

Q24 Please list the name(s) of the journals where your co-authored work was published in this academic year.

Q7 What year did you enter the Wayne State Communication PhD program?

Q8 Thanks for helping us gather data about the doctoral program. Again, this information will be used for program evaluation, not individual evaluation. You are encouraged to discuss conference and publication submission with your adviser and in your annual self-assessment.

End of Block: Default Question Block

**Data:**

See separate PhD LO3 data PDF

**Results:**

The survey had 18 responses. During the AY 2021-2022, the respondents submitted 62 papers and panel submissions to international, national, regional, and specialized conferences (average 3.44 per response). Of the 62 submissions, 47 were accepted by conferences (76%).

54 of the 62 submissions were to national or international conferences (87%).

Our baseline for average number of acceptances per year is 2. Based on our average of 3.44, we are above expectations. Seven (38.9%) of the respondents have met or exceeded two acceptances.

This is less than the 85 submissions of 2020-2021. However, last year, conferences were online, which made many of them cheaper for students due to large graduate student discounts. Additionally, with the return of in-person conferences, costs for the conferences this academic year were much higher due to the location of the conferences (e.g., Seattle, Paris). This may have limited the number of submissions this year. Additionally, students fairly new to the program have reported that they are struggling to get acclimated to the research culture of the department.

New for this assessment cycle, we asked students about academic journal submissions. Nine (50%) of the respondents reported submitting at least one sole/lead authored or co-authored/not lead authored article manuscript (23 total submissions). Average acceptance rate was 47.8% (n = 11). Respondents who did not submit a manuscript started the program in 2019 or later.

**Program Action Plan:**

We are pleased with the results in general and we note that our graduate students tend to be rather active with submitting and attending conferences. While only seven respondents met or exceeded expectations, the unique circumstances of this academic year likely explain the change from last year.

We improved the survey to get more specific information about which conferences students are submitting to and how many submissions were accepted. It is good to see that most (87%) submissions are to national and international conferences. However, we should encourage students who are newer to the program to submit to regional conferences.

For next year, we will establish a baseline number of submission to academic journals for students after their second year for program assessment.

**Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:**

In September, the graduate committee will discuss the results and we will contact graduate faculty to encourage students to submit to more regional conferences, especially students who started the program since 2020.

**Reporting to Stakeholders:**

In September 2022, the results of the assessment will be put as a discussion item on the agenda for a meeting of the graduate committee, posted on our department website, and distributed to graduate faculty and students.

**Communication: PhD in Communication Assessment Method #4****Assessment Method:**

Not measured in AY 21-22.