

General Information

Academic Year:	2019-2020
College:	Liberal Arts
Department:	Political Science
Program:	Public Administration (MPA)
Program Code:	44.04
Outcome Type:	Student Learning (GR)
Degree:	Masters
Coordinator/Contact:	Nandhini Rangarajan
Status:	Data Entry Closed

Mission Statement

The Master of Public Administration Program's Mission is to cultivate practical, research-oriented students for careers as reflective practitioners guided by democratic values, integrity, and service.

Evidence of Improvement

Comparison of 2018-2019 results with 2019-2020 results indicates that significant improvements are evident in outcome 1 [use of scholarly references (7% increase from last year)] outcome 2 [Comprehension of legal framework of public policy and management (5% increase from last year); outcome 3 (students' ability to communicate clearly (organization, professional delivery, and mastery of content). 100% met or exceeded standards in the organization of the presentation, 100% made a professional delivery, and 100% exhibited mastery of the content) as rated by external reviewers. Significant improvements were also observable in results pertaining to outcome 4 (ability to see patterns, classify information and concepts in public administration and policy) as rated by faculty increased from 95% last year to 100% this year. Outcome 5 [ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in the literature review and results saw both external and faculty reviewers indicating that 100% of students demonstrated this ability through their work] These improvements can be attributed to last year's action plan of more attention on the part of faculty advising applied research projects with the use of a common rubric to provide consistent/detailed feedback. Major improvements in average time to completion (Outcome 7) were evident. It reduced from 9 semesters in the 2018-2019 cycle to 4.9 semesters in the 2019-2020 cycle.

Action Plan

Given the following results: 1) [failure to meet benchmarks (based on external reviewer ratings) in grammar and style] 2) failure to meet benchmarks (based on faculty ratings) in structure, grammar and style, paragraphing, and use of scholarly references) the MPA faculty will continue to use a common rubric to provide students with consistent and detailed feedback on their grammar/style and emphasize the importance of grammar and style by mandating students to attend workshops conducted by the University Writing Center and the Graduate College Shop Talk series on academic writing. The faculty will also include more assessments of written work in graduate courses across the board. The MPA director will continue to organize a few more customized workshops to help improve student writing skills. Three new pathways to graduation were formally approved in 2019 in lieu of the traditional "Applied Research Project" (ARP) that include a written comprehensive examination, a written prospectus, and a thesis track. The improvements in outcome 7 (average time to completion) can be attributed to students having additional pathways to graduation since returning students were able to avail of the comprehensive exam option. The MPA director, working with University Marketing Division, is putting together a digital marketing campaign to attract more graduate students to the program to increase student enrollment in the program.

Outcome 1 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate student Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams were assessed using a rubric. They were assessed in order to measure the quality of the writing. The rubric incorporated items on how well the students structured their Applied Research Project and comprehensive exams (purpose, headings and subheadings, connections between headings and text and transitions between headings), the quality of the student's grammar, punctuation and style, the student's ability to write a quality paragraph (use of key terms, thesis statement, well-argued body of the paragraph, cohesion and coherence across paragraphs), and the student's ability to use scholarly references (citations, quotations, integration of sources and quality of sources). The applied research projects and exams were assessed both on individual items in the rubric (e.g., thesis statement) and on the four categories which aggregated the items conceptually (structure, grammar/punctuation, paragraph and use of scholarly references). External reviewers' ratings for the four criteria measuring outcome 1 are presented as follows: External Review Ratings: Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding the Criteria - Outcome 1 Structure 85 %; Grammar & Style 70% Paragraphs 86 % ; Use of Scholarly References 100%. Based on these results, the students failed to meet the benchmark targets for the grammar and style category. However, there were marked improvements in use of scholarly references while ratings for paragraphs remained the same as last time.

Outcome 1 - Method 2 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate student Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams were assessed using a rubric. They were assessed in order to measure the quality of the writing in the Applied Research Projects and Exams. The rubric incorporated items on how well the students structured their Applied Research Projects and Exams (purpose, headings and subheadings, connections between headings and text and transitions between headings), the quality of the student's grammar, punctuation and style, the student's ability to write a quality paragraph (use of key terms, thesis statement, well-argued body of the paragraph, cohesion and coherence across paragraphs), and the student's ability to use scholarly references (citations, quotations, integration of sources and quality of sources). The applied research projects and exams were assessed both on individual items in the rubric (e.g., thesis statement) and on the four categories which aggregated the items conceptually (structure, grammar/punctuation, paragraph and use of scholarly references). Faculty ratings of these categories are presented as follows: Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding the Criteria - Outcome 1 Structure 77% ; Grammar & Style 77%; Paragraphs 76% ; Use of Scholarly References 76% Based on these results, the students did not meet the benchmark targets on of the categories despite minor improvements in each category.

Outcome 2 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure their comprehension of policy/program formation and political/legal institutions and processes. Of all the External reviewers, 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the student demonstrated comprehension of public policy formation, 90% program implementation, 90% institutional framework, 90% legal framework of public policy and management thus meeting or exceeding standards in all the areas included in this outcome.

Outcome 2 - Method 2 - Result

Of those faculty committee members who did rate the student on Outcome 2, 96 % agreed or strongly agreed on program formulation; 96% agreed or strongly agreed on program implementation; 96% agreed or strongly agreed on institutional framework; and 96% agreed or strongly agreed on legal framework. These results show that student performance exceeded the benchmark target. These findings compared to 98%, 98%, 100%, and 91% respectively in the last assessment cycle indicate an improvement in performance specifically for legal framework.

Outcome 3 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the students' ability to communicate clearly (organization, professional delivery, and mastery of content). 100% met or exceeded standards in the organization of the presentation, 100% made a professional delivery, and 100% exhibited mastery of the content. Based on these results, the students exceeded the benchmark target.

Outcome 3 - Method 2 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed by faculty in order to measure the student's ability to communicate clearly (organization, professional delivery, and mastery of content). 86% met or exceeded standards in the organization of the presentation, 88% made a professional delivery and 83% exhibited mastery of the content. Based on these results, the students exceeded the benchmark target.

Outcome 4 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the student's ability to see patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration. The external reviewers found 90% of the students met or exceeded standards with respect to their ability to see patterns and classify information and concepts in public administration and policy. Based on these results, the students met the benchmark target.

Outcome 4 - Method 2 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the student's ability to see patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration. The faculty committee members found 100 % (in comparison to 95% in the 2018-2019 cycle) of the students met or exceeded standards with respect to their ability to see patterns and classify information and concepts in public administration and policy. Based on these results the students met the benchmark target.

Outcome 5 - Method 1 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the student's ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in the literature review and results chapters of the Applied Research Project. 100% of alumni reported that students met or exceeded standards in the ability to use reasoned arguments and 100% reported that the students used reasons arguments to make recommendations in the public interest. Based on these results, the students met the benchmark target.

Outcome 5 - Method 2 - Result

In academic year 2019-2020, 32 graduate students defended their Applied Research Projects and Comprehensive Exams in an oral examination. They were assessed in order to measure the student's ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in the literature review and results chapters of the Applied Research Project. 100 % of faculty reported that students met or exceeded standards in the ability to use reasoned arguments and 100% reported that the students used reasons arguments to make recommendations in the public interest. Based on these results, the students met the benchmark target.

Outcome 6 - Method 1 - Result

Data on the number of entering students enrolled in the academic program who returned the second year was used to assess retention. In this program, 16 of the 30 entering students in fall of 2018 returned for their second year in fall of 2019 for a one-year retention rate of 53.3%, below the university average of 80%. The 2018-2019 retention rate fell 47% below the perfect 100% retention rate in 2017- 2018.

Outcome 6 - Method 2 - Result

The number of students graduating from the degree program during the 2018-2019 summer, fall and spring semesters along with the total number of students enrolled in the program provided the data to assess student graduation success. 26 of the total 119 students enrolled in the program graduated in the summer, fall and spring semesters of 2018-2019 for a graduation percentage of 22%, below the university master's average of 51% and not meeting the expected target.

Outcome 7 - Method 1 - Result

The total number of students enrolled in the degree program during the fall semester this year compared to last year provided the data to evaluate delivery efficiency. In the fall of 2018, the program had 108 declared students and in the fall of 2019 the program had 85 declared students for a 22% year to year decrease.

Outcome 7 - Method 2 - Result

The average time-to-completion rates of students graduating from the degree program during the 2018-2019 fall, spring, and summer semesters provided the data to assess completion efficiency. In the fall, spring, and summer semesters of 2018-2019, students took an average of 4.9 semesters or approximately 2.3 years to graduate, exceeding the university master's average of 1.9 and not meeting the expected target. The 2017-2018 average time-to-completion rate was 9 semesters. Hence there was a big improvement in time-to-completion rate in 2018-2019.