



HPU Graduate Assessment

Overview

From Fall 2024 through Spring 2025, the Academic Assessment and Program Review Committee (AAPRC) conducted an ILO assessment of our graduate student population. We assessed graduate ILOs at a single point during a student's final coursework at HPU (e.g., final project or presentation, thesis defense) in the following programs:

<i>Master's Programs</i>	<i>Doctoral Programs</i>
Business Administration Business Analytics Marine Science Nursing Public Health Criminal Justice Diplomacy and Military Studies Strategic Communication Sustainability TESOL Social Work	Nursing Practice Clinical Psychology Physical Therapy

These programs represent 75% of the doctoral programs at HPU, and 65% of all eligible (established before 2024) master's programs. The list of programs included in this assessment project also covers all graduate modalities: online, hybrid, and in-person learning. New programs, established in 2024 or later, will be included in the AY 2025 - 2026 ILO assessment project.

Method

In AY 24-25, a rubric slightly modified from previous graduate assessment projects was used. Because oral communication is not an endorsed HPU graduate ILO, it was removed from the rubric. However, several programs wanted the option to score both scholarly mastery and critical thinking as demonstrated during an oral defense or presentation, as well as in a written product. Therefore, though not required, those scores were included in the AY 24-25 assessment project for those programs that scored oral communication.

The AAPRC deployed the AY 24-25 graduate rubric to assess the four graduate ILOs: Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Scholarly or Creative Mastery. Specifically,

at mid-semester, the College or School's AAPRC representative notified their graduate faculty that an assessment was due for students completing their programs. Graduate faculty were asked to use the rubric to assess students in their final coursework at HPU (e.g., capstone course, thesis defense, portfolio review). Faculty were asked to mark the rubric form and return the completed rubric to the AAPRC co-chair. For those programs in which graduate students have a committee of multiple readers, all committee members were invited to mark the rubric, and the scores for that student were averaged for this report. Programs could choose which version of the rubric was most appropriate for their assessment needs (with or without an oral communication category). During summer 2025, the AAPRC Administrative Chair collated the rubric scores, analyzed the assessment data, and drafted this report. The full AAPRC approved the report at their final spring meeting of the academic year. Results were presented at Fall 2026 Assessment Day and made available to the public on the Student Success webpage.

Assessment Findings

The work of 273 graduate students was assessed against the rubric, more than doubling the 125-student sample from AY 23-24. This sample represents 134 doctoral students from three doctoral programs (100 from Doctor of Physical Therapy, 30 from Doctor of Nursing Practice, and 4 from Doctor of Clinical Psychology) and 139 students from eleven master's programs.

It was anticipated that some programs would not be scoring scholarly mastery or critical thinking as demonstrated during the oral defense or oral presentation, given that oral communication is not a required ILO. However, one master's program scored only an oral, not a written artifact, providing scores only for scholarly mastery and critical thinking; and one master's program and one doctoral program scored only written communication and scholarly mastery, omitting critical thinking and information literacy.

Table 1. Number of Graduate Students Scoring in Each Rubric Category

Rubric Criteria	Number of Students Scoring in Each Category				
	<i>N</i>	<i>1-Deficient</i>	<i>2-Acceptable</i>	<i>3-Proficient</i>	<i>4-Exemplary</i>
Scholarly Mastery- Written	273	8	24	75	166
Scholarly Mastery-Oral	148	6	22	69	51
Critical Thinking- Written	145	8	25	52	60
Critical Thinking Oral	120	5	23	45	47
Written Communication	273	8	22	93	150
Information Literacy	145	1	27	48	69

Table 2. Percentages of Graduate Students Scoring in Each Rubric Category

Rubric Criteria	N	Percentage of Students Scoring in Each Category			
		1-Deficient	2-Acceptable	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
Scholarly Mastery- Written	273	3	9	27	61
Scholarly Mastery-Oral	148	4	15	47	34
Critical Thinking- Written	145	6	17	36	41
Critical Thinking Oral	120	4	19	38	39
Written Communication	273	3	8	34	55
Information Literacy	145	1	19	33	48

Table 3. Mean scores in each Rubric Category for the Master's and Doctoral Candidates

Rubric Criteria	Scholarly Mastery		Critical Thinking		Written Communication	Information Literacy
	written	oral	written	oral		(written)
Overall mean	3.5±0.8	3.1±0.8	3.1±0.9	3.1±0.9	3.4±0.8	3.3±0.8
Masters	3.1±0.9	3.0±0.8	3.0±0.9	2.91±0.9	3.1±0.8	3.1±0.8
n	139	120	111	92	139	111
Doctoral	3.8±0.5	3.7±0.6	3.7±0.6	3.8±0.4	3.8±0.4	3.8±0.4
n	134	28	34	28	134	34

Table 4: Results by program

MBA		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.6	3.0	4.0		3.6	4.0
	stdev	0.5	0.0	0.0		0.5	0.0
	n	29	28	1	0	29	1

(spring artifact (n=1) scored for different criteria than Fall artifacts n=28)

MSBA		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	2.2	2.6	2.2	2.6	2.2	2.7
	stdev	1.3	0.8	1.3	0.8	1.3	0.8
	n	14	14	14	14	14	14

MSMS		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6
	stdev	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	n	8	8	8	8	8	8

MSN		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8
	stdev	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9
	n	11	11	11	11	11	11

MPH		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.2	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.1
	stdev	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8
	n	24	24	24	24	24	24

DNP		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8
	stdev	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4
	n	30	24	30	24	30	30

MSCJ		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.9	3.2	3.8	3.3	3.1	4.0
	stdev	0.3	0.8	0.6	1.0	0.5	0.0
	n	9	9	9	9	9	9

MADMS/ DGS		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.1		2.9		2.9	2.9
	stdev	0.7		0.7		0.7	0.6
	n	7		7		7	7

MASC		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.8
	stdev	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0
	n	5	5	5	5	5	5

MA SUST		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.2	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.1
	stdev	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8
	n	8	8	8	8	8	8

MA TESOL		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.2
	stdev	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.5	0.5
	n	8	8	8	8	8	8

MSW		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.6		3.5		3.4	3.5
	stdev	0.5		0.5		0.5	0.5
	n	11		11		11	11

DCPSY		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
	stdev	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	n	4	4	4	4	4	4

DPT- HNL		Scholarly Mastery Writ.	Scholarly Mastery Oral	Critical Thinking Writ.	Critical Thinking Oral	Written Com	Info. Lit
	mean	3.8				3.8	
	stdev	0.4				0.4	
	n	100				100	

Discussion

- *How closely do we think these findings reflect the actual level of competence of our students?*
 - Overall mean scores were > 3.0 on a 4.0 rubric scale across all disciplines and graduate degrees, consistent with expectations for graduate work at HPU, and meeting the pre-established target score.
 - Doctoral students scored higher than master's students, which seems a reasonable outcome and also consistent with the AAPRC's expectations for graduate student performance.
 - As was expected, there were variations in scores among programs, which may reflect differing standards among graduate faculty reviewers and/or differing disciplinary standards.
- *Were there any problems with the process?*
 - The process of collecting the artifacts went relatively smoothly with a high level of program participation. During the next academic year, collection and assessment of artifacts will be slightly more difficult given the delivery of Mandarin Chinese programs in Business and Artificial Intelligence.

- Some programs may need to assess their students at multiple points rather than a single point if these programs are unable to score all 4 learning outcomes. In future assessment projects, faculty in these programs will determine how to best assess their students' progress against the ILO rubric.

Closing the Loop

- *How shall we use these findings?*
 - This report will be distributed to graduate programs along with the data specific to their programs for use in their Program Review self-study and/or external accreditation reporting. With this assessment data, programs can have "closing the loop" discussions and make recommendations about programmatic changes, if necessary, as this is not the purview of the AAPRC.
 - The AAPRC will report these results to the University during our annual Assessment Day in August. The report will also be uploaded to our Student Success website, making the graduate ILO assessment results public.
- *Are we satisfied with the results? If not, what are we going to do about it?*
 - The AAPRC is satisfied with the results in that they met or exceeded the pre-established target (3.0/4.0). Some programs may wish to consider ways to improve their students' scores with additional practice or assessment of multiple (or additional) artifacts that more accurately reflect the Critical Thinking ILO, for example.
 - We are pleased to have included more programs in the AY 24-25 assessment project than in years past. These additional student scores make our assessment of graduate work at HPU more robust. Finally, with the inclusion of external partner programs in AY 25-26, future graduate assessment projects will cover all modalities, semester lengths, and learning management systems.