



Sam Houston  
State University

**2012-2013**

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**College of Criminal Justice**

# **Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology**










*Online Assessment Tracking Database*

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)  
*2012 - 2013*


**Criminal Justice And Criminology MA**

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| <b>Goal</b>          | <b>Research Competence</b>    |
|                      | Research Competence  |
| <b>Objective (L)</b> | <b>Competency In Conducting Original Criminal Justice And Criminology Research</b> <br>Competency in conducting original Criminal Justice and Criminology research  |
| <b>Indicator</b>     | <b>Successful Completion Of Original Research Study As Demonstrated By Defense Of Thesis With Average Rubric Score Of 80 Or Above</b> <br>Successful completion of original research study as demonstrated by defense of Thesis using recently revised faculty-developed rubric with a score of 80 or above.  |
| <b>Criterion</b>     | <b>Student Success In CRIJ 6398 And CRIJ 6399</b> <br>Students will demonstrate their ability to engage in an original research study within the field criminal justice or criminology during the completion of CRIJ 6398 and CRIJ 6399. The culmination of each course in the sequence will be a public defense of the student's work. First, the research proposal will be defended proximal to the conclusion of CRIJ 6398; then, the results of the final research project will be defended at the conclusion of CRIJ 6399. At minimum, a thesis will include a literature review of relevant empirical literature, well defined and defensible methodology, original statistical analysis appropriate to the methodology described, and the contextualization of the study results within the existing literature. |
| <b>Finding</b>       | <b>Thesis Results</b>  <br>During AY 2012-2013, three students defended their thesis proposal, which concluded the planning stages for original research in the field of criminal justice and criminology. Additionally, two students defended their final thesis – a product which included at minimum a literature review of relevant empirical research, an approved methodology, appropriate statistical analysis and contextualization of findings to the broader literature. The average score for these students on the faculty-developed rubric was 45 out of 45. This cohort of students was particularly strong and no weaknesses were noted by the thesis committee members.  |
| <b>Action</b>        | <b>Rubric Re-examined</b> <br>For the upcoming year, the department will re-examine the faculty developed rubric used to assess student research competency. As the quality and skill sets of our master's students improve on average, we aim to better articulate and assess associated desired skills.   |

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| <b>Goal</b> | <b>Methodological Competence</b>  |
|             | Methodological Competence  |

**Competency In Employing Elements Of Qualitative And/or Quantitative**

**Objective (L)**

**Research Methods To Design Scientific-based Projects In The Field Of Criminal Just**

Competency in employing elements of qualitative and/or quantitative research methods to design scientific-based projects in the field of criminal justice and criminology.

**Indicator**

**Successful Completion Of Research Methods And Statistical Analysis Coursework**

Successful completion of Research Methods and Statistical Analysis coursework.

**Criterion**

**Master 80% Of Material In CRIJ 5392 And CRIJ 6385**

All students in the CJ Master's program are required to complete 5392 Survey of Research Methods and 6385 Statistics for Criminal Justice Research in which they must master theory and application of social science research techniques as well as descriptive and inferential statistics as evaluated by demonstration of written, computational and oral abilities. Across this course sequence, standard tests that require application of theoretical ideas and demonstration of statistical analyses are conducted. Students are expected to master at least 80% of the material.

**Finding**

**Mastery Of Social Science Research Techniques**

During AY 2012-2013, a total of 17 students completed the Research Methods and Statistical Analysis sequence in the department with scores above 80%. This finding indicates that students have achieved a working mastery of social science research techniques including an understanding of descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Action**

**80% Master Of Specific Areas**

In the upcoming year, we will further expound upon the specific areas of competency that we expect 80% of our Master of Arts students to master prior to degree completion. Specific enhancements are anticipated in the area of statistical analysis. These areas of competency will be assessed as part of the 2014-2015 AY.

**Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"**

For the 2012-2013 academic year, an increased emphasis will be placed on writing and producing quality research proposals and thesis. Students will pay more attention to previous literature reviews to find the importance of their paper to the contribution to the field. Faculty mentoring will highlight the importance of choosing more significant topics for thesis projects so that they make a stronger contribution to the field of criminology and criminal justice.

An increased emphasis will be placed on matching students and faculty who share research interests both formally and informally. Further, students will be instructed on additional factors to consider when developing their literature review including techniques that will enable them to conduct a more exhaustive search of existing literature.

**Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.**

During the 2012-13 academic year, faculty were encouraged to work with MA students on improving their writing and quality of research proposals and theses. Students were also encouraged to focus their efforts on topics that

were increasing relevant to the field of criminal justice and criminology, rather than view their efforts as an “exercise” with less relevance. These efforts were further encouraged through an improvement of matching students with more appropriate faculty mentors.

**Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2012 - 2013 Cycle Findings.**

This year a small cohort of students (n=2) progressed through their second and final year of the Master of Arts program. Both were assessed on their ability to conduct original research within the field of criminal justice or criminology. Based on a faculty developed rubric, both students obtained perfect scores. A larger group assessed on methodological (n=17) showed the master’s cohorts are increasingly stronger. We will seek to refine our rubrics to better articulate areas of strength and weakness among our M.A. students, as well as define more specific areas of methodological knowledge to be implemented in an upcoming cycle.

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Sam Houston State University (SHSU)  
2012 - 2013

**Criminal Justice BA**

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| <b>Goal</b> | <b>Specific Knowledge Acquired By All Undergraduates</b> 🔑  |
|             | Exiting seniors should exhibit comprehensive knowledge of key concepts provided during their educational experience |

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| <b>Objective (L)</b> | <b>Exhibit Comprehensive Knowledge</b> 🔑  |
|                      | Graduating seniors will exhibit comprehensive knowledge of core criminal justice course work. |

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| <b>Indicator</b> | <b>Senior Exit Exam</b> 🔑  |
|                  | Each semester, all graduating seniors are asked to complete an exit exam, on the SHSU Blackboard academic support system, that provides faculty a means of assessing students' comprehension and retention on key concepts provided to them during their educational experience. The 60-item Exit Exam, created by faculty, assesses learning in seven core areas. |

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| <b>Criterion</b> | <b>75% Average Score On Each Competency Area</b> 🔑  |
|                  | The average on each competency area: (1) Criminal Law; (2) Corrections; (3) Law Enforcement; (4) Courts; (5) Theory/Criminology (6) Research Methods/Statistics, and (7) Diversity within the Criminal Justice System will be at least 75% for graduating seniors taking the exit exam, except for the average on Theory/Criminology. Last year this average was below 70%. We hope to see this average rise this year. |

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| <b>Finding</b> | <b>70% Competency Not Met</b> 🔑 🔑  |
|                | <p>Graduating seniors (191 out of 442) achieved an average of 67% on the overall exit exam and between 57% and 73% on the component areas representing the undergraduate curriculum.</p> <p>Senior exit exam scores for the 2012-2013 academic year indicated that students had the following averages across the six core competency areas: Criminal Law - 73%, Corrections - 70%, Policing and Law Enforcement - 71%, Courts - 69%, Criminology/Theory - 57 %, Research Methods/Statistics - 72%, Crime, Justice, and Social Diversity - 71%. Results indicated that the graduating seniors scored at or above 70% on all competency areas except for Courts and Criminology/Theory.</p> |

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| <b>Action</b> | <b>Comprehensive Knowledge</b> 🔑   |
|               | For the first time since we have been administering the exit exam, our students fell a little short of our 70% average score criterion. However, there seemed to be several new items on the exit exam that were problematic. We also had a low response rate; less than half of our graduating seniors completed the exit exam. In the next academic year we will closely examine our exit exam items and attempt to obtain a higher completion rate. |

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| <b>Goal</b> | <b>Development Of Writing And Research Skills</b> 🔑 |
|             | Development of Writing and Research Skills          |

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| <b>Objective (L)</b> | <b>Competence In Writing And Research Skills</b> 🔑 |
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Students will demonstrate competence in their writing and research skills.

**Indicator**

**Development Of Scholarly Research Proposals** 

Undergraduate criminal justice students will develop a scholarly research paper proposal in their core required Research Methods course (CRIJ 3378). Writing and research skills will be scored by a rubric agreed upon by a faculty committee. Each professor will utilize this rubric when grading the student research paper proposals. These guidelines include areas of organization, content, quality of proposed research, hypothesis construction and writing.

**Criterion**

**The Majority Of Students Will Score At 75% Or Above On The Research Paper Proposal Scoring Rubric.**  

The majority of students will score at 75% or above on the research paper proposal scoring rubric.

**Finding**

**Students Assessed Meet Goal Average**  

The 175 students, out of the 774 students who completed the Research Methods course (CRIJ 3378), were assessed by the scoring rubric and scored an average of 75% overall on the writing and research paper review. Their total average score was 3.8 out of 5. The overall score on the writing and research skills rubric is comprised of nine areas (average scores in parentheses): Relevance to the field (4.2), contribution to academic debate (3.7), structure/organization of the paper (3.7), writing and grammar (3.5), appropriateness of the research/study method (3.7), abstract information (4.0), construction of hypotheses (3.6), whether the importance of the study is made obvious (3.9), and adequate and correctly cited references (3.6). The students scored well in each area with averages between 72% and 84%. Lower scores were found in the areas of writing and grammar usage, hypothesis construction, and references.

Although the students performed well and met the goal with an overall average of 75%, we are still missing assessment from many of our students taking this course. Most sections of the Research Methods course did not utilize the rubric. Approximately 240 students were not required to complete a research paper because the course was taught in the auditorium. However, there remains approximately 350 students that were not assessed.

**Action**

**Increased Writing Projects Along With Rubric Assessment** 

Increase the quality and quantity of the writing and research skills of our undergraduates. We will also meet with the Research Methods instructors to discuss and ensure the use of the developed scoring rubric for the continued assessment of our student's writing and research skills.

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**Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"**

Moving forward into the 2012-2013 academic year we will assess and improve our undergraduate programs. During the last academic year we began implementing our updated and approved BA and BS programs. The goals for the BA/BS for the 2012-2013 academic year will include these latest objectives.

During the academic year of 2011-2012 we exceeded our goal of having our graduating seniors score at the 70th (or higher) percentile on all exit exam component areas except one. The overall score was 77%. Thus, overall our new curriculum seems to be increasing our students' knowledge. Additionally, in the majority of the component areas, our students scored very high. As in the previous years, our students scored below expectations on the area of Criminology/Theory. We will monitor the scores in the component areas for possible deficiencies or warranted changes in our courses.

During the 2012-2013 academic year we will embolden and support our undergraduates in their efforts to develop their research and writing skills by encouraging and supporting their attendance at local, regional, and national conferences. Additionally, we will meet with all Research Methods instructors to ensure the assessment rubric's application in order to obtain a larger assessment of our students' writing and research proposal skills.

**Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.**

We did continue to monitor and administer the exit exam in attempt to measure how our undergraduates were obtaining the important knowledge of their discipline. We also examined the component areas of the degree program and found Criminology Theory, again, to be the lowest score.

We also continued to assess our student's research and writing skills by scoring rubrics in their Research Methods courses. Here our students performed well. We also supported several of our undergraduate students by providing travel funds to present at regional and national conferences.

**Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2012 - 2013 Cycle Findings.**

The College of Criminal Justice will continue to assess our student's comprehensive knowledge of the discipline. We will also assess our exit exam to determine appropriate items and improve the completion rate of the exam.

We will also continue to assess and support our undergraduates in the development of research and writing skills.

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Sam Houston State University (SHSU)  
*2012 - 2013*

**Criminal Justice BS**

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**Goal** **Specific Knowledge Acquired By All Undergraduates** 

Exiting seniors should exhibit comprehensive knowledge of key concepts provided during their educational experience

**Objective (L)** **Exhibit Comprehensive Knowledge** 

Graduating seniors will exhibit comprehensive knowledge of core criminal justice course work.

**Indicator** **Senior Exit Exam** 

Each semester, all graduating seniors are asked to complete an exit exam, on the SHSU Blackboard academic support system, that provides faculty a means of assessing students' comprehension and retention on key concepts provided to them during their educational experience. The 60-item Exit Exam, created by faculty, assesses learning in seven core areas.

**Criterion** **75% Average Score On Each Competency Area** 

The average on each competency area: (1) Criminal Law; (2) Corrections; (3) Law Enforcement; (4) Courts; (5) Theory/Criminology (6) Research Methods/Statistics, and (7) Diversity within the Criminal Justice System will be at least 75% for graduating seniors taking the exit exam, except for the average on Theory/Criminology. Last year this average was below 70%. We hope to see this average rise this year.

**Finding** **Overall Competency Of 70% Not Met**  

Graduating seniors (191 out of 442) achieved an average of 67% on the overall exit exam and between 57% and 73% on the component areas representing the undergraduate curriculum.

Senior exit exam scores for the 2012-2013 academic year indicated that students had the following averages across the six core competency areas: Criminal Law - 73%, Corrections - 70%, Policing and Law Enforcement - 71%, Courts - 69%, Criminology/Theory - 57 %, Research Methods/Statistics - 72%, Crime, Justice, and Social Diversity - 71%. Results indicated that the graduating seniors scored at or above 70% on all competency areas except for Courts and Criminology/Theory.

**Action** **Comprehensive Knowledge** 

For the first time since we have been administering the exit exam, our students fell a little short of our 70% average score criterion. However, there seemed to be several new items on the exit exam that were problematic. We also had a low response rate; less than half of our graduating seniors completed the exit exam. In the next academic year we will closely examine our exit exam items and attempt to obtain a higher completion rate.

**Goal** **Development Of Writing And Research Skills** 

Development Of Writing And Research Skills

**Objective (L)**

**Competence In Writing And Research Skills**

Students will demonstrate competence in their writing and research skills.

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**Action**

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We will also continue to assess and support our undergraduates in the development of research and writing skills.

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**Department of Forensic  
Science**



*Online Assessment Tracking Database*







Sam Houston State University (SHSU)  
2012 - 2013








**Criminal Justice, Forensic Science MS**

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| <b>Goal</b>          | <p><b>Integration Of Knowledge, Skills, And Abilities</b> </p> <p>Students completing the Master of Science in Forensic Science will demonstrate integration of knowledge, skills and abilities through an independent research project conducted in an environment conducive to research and scholarly inquiry.</p>  |
| <b>Objective (L)</b> | <p><b>Students Will Demonstrate Competency In Research</b> </p> <p>Students completing the Master of Science in Forensic Science will demonstrate integration of knowledge, skills and abilities through an independent research project conducted in an environment conducive to research and scholarly inquiry.</p>   |
| <b>Indicator</b>     | <p><b>Capstone Research Report Scoring Methodology</b> </p> <p>Consistent faculty-developed scoring methodology will be applied to the capstone research report for FORS 6115 – Forensic Science Capstone Course. The scholarly report will demonstrate advanced discipline-specific knowledge, investigation, and problem-solving ability.</p>   |
| <b>Criterion</b>     | <p><b>At Least 70% Of Students Will Score Satisfactory Or Higher</b> </p> <p>At least 70% of students will be assessed as “satisfactory” or better using the uniform faculty-developed rubric. The capstone report will be scored by a minimum of two faculty members. We are particularly eager to determine if interventions regarding technical writing skills and professional communications, weaknesses that emerged last year, have been effective.</p>  |
| <b>Finding</b>       | <p><b>Capstone Research Performance</b> </p> <p>All students (100%) performed satisfactorily in their Capstone Research in accordance with the faculty-developed rubric. Of the seven graduating students, all received satisfactory final scores. Scores were assigned by a capstone research committee consisting of at least three members, one of whom was external to the department in accordance with accreditation standards (Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission). Slightly more than half of the students received a grade higher than B for the technical writing component, which might suggest some moderate improvement and positive impact associated with our efforts to increase technical writing in other graduate coursework. The limiting factor with respect to overall performance has always been technical writing. Laboratory based performance is effectively managed using a formal evaluation system consisting of interim evaluations at three strategic points during the project.</p> |
| <b>Action</b>        | <p><b>Technical Writing Improvement</b> </p> <p>Faculty have long-realized that the high number of students supervised by each faculty member can compromise their ability to develop technical writing to the fullest extent. New faculty hired in 2012 may have contributed to the slight improvement this year and additional faculty beginning during the fall 2013 semester should allow for further improvements.</p> <p>We will continue to require faculty teaching first year core courses to include a technical writing component, and beginning next year this must account for at least 20% of the final grade.</p> <p>The program could also retrospectively review performance during the capstone research project with verbal and quantitative GRE scores to determine possible correlations and predictive value.</p>   |

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| <b>Goal</b>          | <b>Develop Specific Knowledge Base</b> <br>Develop specific knowledge base in forensic science to prepare graduates for future success.   |
| <b>Objective (L)</b> | <b>Detailed Competence Of Core Course Material</b> <br>Students will command detailed competence of core course material in forensic science. The Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC) defines the core forensic science topics that must be incorporated into the graduate curriculum. These include analytical chemistry and instrumental methods of analysis, drug chemistry/toxicology, microscopy and trace evidence, forensic biology, and pattern evidence. This objective specifically addresses student learning, development and outcomes associated with the core forensic disciplines.  |
| <b>Indicator</b>     | <b>Forensic Science Assessment Test (FSAT)</b> <br>The Forensic Science Assessment Test (FSAT) was developed as an assessment tool for forensic science academic programs in the United States and is administered by the American Board of Criminalistics (ABC) and the content and administration of the examination were modeled on ABC certification exams. The FSAT exam covers core forensic disciplines including forensic biology, controlled substances, trace analysis, toxicology and latent prints.   |
| <b>Criterion</b>     | <b>FSAT Performance</b> <br>The mean raw FSAT score for SHSU students will be higher than the mean raw FSAT score for students nationally; and SHSU should be ranked in the top quartile of programs participating in the FSAT annually.  |
| <b>Finding</b>       | <b>FSAT Performance</b>  <br>Raw (unadjusted) FSAT scores were used because a full statistical evaluation of adjusted (final) scores were not provided by the American Board of Criminalistics this year.<br><br>The mean FSAT score in forensic science at SHSU was 156 with a range of 145-178. This is well above the national average of 132, with a range of 85-178. SHSU performed in the top quartile, scoring second out of sixteen universities participating in the FSAT examination in 2013.<br><br>Participation in the FSAT was not selective; all program graduates participated in the 2013 examination.<br><br>The program also offered a new Questioned Documents (QD) course this year, which may have contributed to the overall increase in score. Prior to this year, QD was not offered as part of the curriculum. |
| <b>Action</b>        | <b>FSAT</b> <br>SHSU scored favorably during the 2013 FSAT examination. However, this may be in large part due to the timing of the examination, rather than due to curriculum changes. The test was moved from finals week in May to March (immediately after spring break), to alleviate the pressure associated with final examination preparation, oral defenses and graduation. SHSU should continue to schedule the examination during March in the future.<br><br>We should continue to offer the Questioned Documents course again in the future (as resources allow).  |

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| <b>Goal</b>          | <b>Ability To Conduct Original Research</b> 🔑<br>Students engaged in faculty-sponsored research are encouraged to publish or present results externally.  |
| <b>Objective (L)</b> | <b>Students Will Produce Research Of Publishable Quality</b> 🔑<br>Students actively engaged in research projects sponsored by program faculty will publish their findings in journals or present their data at scientific meetings.   |
| <b>Indicator</b>     | <b>Preparation Of Research Materials For Publication/Presentation</b> 🔑<br>Students will contribute to the knowledge base of forensic science and produce research directed at improving the practice of forensic science. This may be demonstrated by publication of research in a peer reviewed scientific journal or national/international conference proceeding (e.g. American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Meeting). Publication of student research in journals and at national or international conferences serves to demonstrate the value and quality of the work to the forensic science and/or scientific community. |
| <b>Criterion</b>     | <b>Research Materials Accepted For External Publication/Presentation</b> 🔑<br>At least 50% of capstone course research or other program-sponsored research is accepted for external publication in either a peer-reviewed scientific journal or national/international conference proceeding.   |
| <b>Finding</b>       | <b>External Publications</b> 🔑 🔑<br>In 2013 there were a total of seven graduating students. During the academic year (2012-2013) there were a total of fourteen publications involving forensic science students. Seven manuscripts were accepted or published in scientific journals and there were seven papers presented at national/international scientific meetings.   |
| <b>Action</b>        | <b>Publication Types</b> 🔑<br>Faculty should encourage manuscript publication rather than presentation of papers at scientific meetings.<br><br>Recent hires in forensic science, more manageable workloads and fewer students supervised per faculty member should allow for this transition.  |

### Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

One additional faculty member will join the Forensic Science Department during the fall semester of 2012. This will alleviate much of the burden associated with research and technical writing which has been an ongoing issue. The American Board of Criminalistics redesigned the scoring system during 2012 and as a consequence, rather than evaluate student performance against a fixed historical score as had been done in the past, student performance must be evaluated against performance nationally during the same year. During the annual quality review, faculty and staff met to discuss improvements to curriculum and student performance. One of the action items was the addition of a questioned document examination course to broaden exposure to topics covered on the FSAT examination. This new course was scheduled during the summer and will be taught for the first time during the fall 2012 semester by a forensic document examiner (adjunct faculty). The program will be productive with respect to research and publications, but will attempt to focus more on manuscript publications rather than conference proceedings at national scientific meetings during the next academic year.

Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were

**implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.**

All of the elements described last year were implemented. The anticipated new forensic science faculty member was hired during the fall 2012 semester. The new questioned documents course was taught for the first time during the fall of 2012 and this course was a tremendous success. Faculty still struggle with the number of research students to supervise and the burden of graduate teaching laboratories that result in a very high number of instructional hours per week. A second new hire will allow the number of students per faculty member to decrease. The department will evaluate the number of laboratory sections and challenges associated with research and publications during its annual quality review.

**Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2012 - 2013 Cycle Findings.**

The department recently completed a retrospective five year review of assessment (survey) and admissions data (2009-2013). These findings will be evaluated during the upcoming annual quality review (September 2013). The program will again seek permission to offer the FSAT examination earlier in the academic year (March 2014).

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# **Department of Security Studies**





*Online Assessment Tracking Database*

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)  
*2012 - 2013*


**Criminal Justice, Security Studies MS**

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**Goal** **Application Of Security Content / Principles In Real World Settings**  


Application Of Security Content / Principles in Real World Settings

**Objective (L)** **Students Will Demonstrate The Ability To Security Principles In Vivo** 


Students preparing to graduate with a Master of Science will demonstrate the ability to apply security principles in the real world.

**Indicator** **Written Demonstration Of Application Of Principles** 


As a part of their assessed work, students will be required to apply the leadership and management principles presented in their courses to real world environments. This will take the form of essay exam questions or learning journal entries. This indicator will not be based on the examination or journal entries as a whole, but rather, on those aspects of the assignment that focus directly on the application of principles.

**Criterion** **At Least 85% Of Students Will Obtain A Rating Of Satisfactory Or Better** 


At least 85% of the students will demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge to their own working environments to sufficient depth as to receive a designation of "satisfactory" or better from the instructor.

**Finding** **Application Of Security Principles In Vivo.** 


This criterion was met as evidenced by student performance in the capstone course which requires application of theory to practice and integration of theory and practice; as well as by students' written work at their internship sites where students directly apply theory to practice and integrate the two. These were based on subjective ratings by the relevant instructors. For the 2013-2014 academic year, instructors will be asked to develop a rubric to assess these domains specifically. Rubrics developed for the M.S. program in Leadership and Management will be offered to the instructors as samples.

**Finding** **Evaluation Finding** 


More than 85% of the students evaluated received a rating of "satisfactory" or better.

**Action** **Develop Of Rubric To Assess Application Of Leadership & Mgmt. To Practice.** 

We will develop and implement a rubric assessing the application of leadership and management to practice and will employ that rubric instead of the 85% criterion.

**Goal** **Integration Of Theory And Practice** 

Integration of Theory and Practice

**Objective (L)** **Students Will Demonstrate The Ability To Integrate Theory And Practice** 

Students preparing to graduate with a Master of Science will demonstrate the ability

to integrate theory and practice.

**Indicator**

**Written Demonstration Of Integration Of Theory And Practice**

As a part of their assessed work, students will be required to integrate theory and practice. This will be in the form of essay exam questions or learning journal entries. This indicator will not be based on the examination or journal entries as a whole, but rather, on those aspects of the assignment that focus directly on the application of principles.

**Criterion**

**At Least 85% Of Students Will Obtain A Rating Of Satisfactory Or Better To Apply Knowledge**

At least 85% of the students will demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge to their own working environments to sufficient depth as to receive a designation of "satisfactory" or better from the instructor.

**Finding**

**Integration Of Theory And Practice**

This criterion was met as evidenced by student performance in the capstone course which requires application of theory to practice and integration of theory and practice; as well as by students' written work at their internship sites where students directly apply theory to practice and integrate the two. These were based on subjective ratings by the relevant instructors. For the 2013-2014 academic year, instructors will be asked to develop a rubric to assess these domains specifically. Rubrics developed for the M.S. program in Leadership and Management will be offered to the instructors as samples.

**Action**

**Develop Rubric Assessing Integration Of Theory With Practice**

We will develop and implement a rubric assessing the integration of theory and practice and will employ that rubric instead of the 85% criterion.

**Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"**

Student goals for the MS in Security Studies were largely met for this reporting period; however, additional work needs to be done in order to assure that each student receives maximum benefit from the program. During the last reporting period, student comments regarding quality of instruction were very favorable; however, students suggested the program could include additional and more focused national security-related content. To this end, in Fall 2011 semester a visiting professor was hired who taught four classes this past academic year covering subjects not normally available to students. We will continue this practice in the coming academic year in order to seek additional quality course content pertinent to the Master of Security Studies program.

Also, greater emphasis needs to be placed on following students' progress as they seek their first jobs. In fields as variable as Homeland Security or Private Security students are often lost when it comes to beginning a job search. A well maintained follow-up database of successful student job searches would be a positive step to creating an in-house capacity for getting current students in touch with former students who are already in the job market.

In summary, while we are generally pleased with our students' performance in the Security Studies program, we are constantly seeking ways to improve the curriculum's overall quality, thereby enhancing the overall educational experience for Security Studies students.

**Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.**

We have hired a full-time security studies faculty member, John Payne, who specializes in national security issues. Moreover, we have begun a database of alumni and internship placement sites to facilitate job searches for our graduates.



**Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2012 - 2013 Cycle Findings.**

With two new full-time faculty members and a revamped program we are in the process of developing assessment tools for student outcomes and faculty outcomes. We hope to implement those so they are in place by Fall, 2014. The aforementioned rubrics will be part of that process.

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