Sam Houston State University

2013-2014

College of Criminal Justice

Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2013 - 2014

Criminal Justice BA/BS

View & Request Level Feedback

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, through Survey Monkey, an online data collection/response validation website. This survey 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   **70% Average Not Achieved In All Areas** 🔑

A senior exit knowledge survey was conducted with the 2013-2014 graduates using Survey Monkey in an online capacity. Last year, 43 percent of graduates (191 of 442 students) responded to the exit survey; this year, 40 percent of graduates (144 of 362 students) responded. Although we aimed to increase our response rate this year, we failed to do so. Our criterion for this objective was a 70% average score across seven content areas. These areas and average student achievement was: Criminal Law – 67%; Law Enforcement – 66%; Courts – 67%; Corrections = 61%; Theory – 46%; Methods – 59%; Diversity – 62%. With dropping the lowest scoring question from each area achievement was: Criminal Law – 73%; Law Enforcement – 70%; Courts – 74%; Corrections = 65%; Theory – 51%; Methods – 66%; Diversity – 65%.

Action   **Undergraduate Program Committee To Examine Survey** 🔑

Our undergraduate program committee will strategize this year to determine a more effective approach in garnering a greater than 50 percent response rate. Since our failure to achieve our stated benchmark in four of the seven areas (accounting for outlier questions), it is evident that a two pronged approach is needed: [1] Increased participation rates from our undergraduate students to an acceptable rate. This will increase the validity of our findings; and [2] a review of current course content and exit exam questions to ensure that question accurately reflect the most recent material. A second consideration for next year's assessment is also needed: It is increasingly apparent that the exit survey targets courses offered at the 200 level. A reasonably large proportion of our students complete these courses at the community college level. Thus, we may not be measuring knowledge transfer occurring at SHSU. At minimum, we need to include questions on the exit survey that query whether the courses were completed within our Department or credit was

transferred. It may also be more reasonable to include questions on the exit survey that target 300 and 400 level courses thereby ensuring a more accurate assessment of our program.

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.

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   **Research Methods CRIJ 3378 Writing Assessment** 📎 🔑

A total of 115 students from four different sections of CRIJ 3378 Research Methods had their writing ability assessed by the common scoring rubric attached here. Student scores, which ranged from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent), were averaged by each of the nine domains measured by the rubric within each instructor's section. Further, the domain scores were averaged to determine the overall score achieved by this subset of Research Methods students on the reading and writing research paper review. The overall average score across sections was 3.56 of 5, or 71.2 percent, which was slightly below our previously stated goal of 75 percent or above achievement levels. Regarding the average scores across the nine domains, the "relevance to the field" and "whether the importance of the study is made obvious" of the paper garnered the highest scores. The seven remaining domains received relatively similar scores with the "contribution to the academic debate" and "appropriateness of the research/study method" domains having slightly lower scores than the rest.

Specifically, the following averages were found for each domain in the rubric: Relevance to the field (4.64), contribution to the academic debate (3.46), structure/organization of the paper (3.52), writing and grammar (3.55), appropriateness of the research/study method (3.44), abstract information (3.50), construction of hypothesis (3.60), whether the importance of the study is made obvious (4.12), and adequately and correctly cited references (3.51). In comparison to findings from the prior academic assessment cycle, the domains related to broader, contextual skills such as selecting relevant topics and emphasizing the importance of the study improved; whereas, structural components of writing did not improve.

Action

Reexamine Assessment 🔑

Similar to our prior assessment cycle, we will continue to encourage the assignment of writing projects across our criminal justice and criminology courses including our lower division classes. This approach will enable student growth throughout the academic careers. We will also consider whether our assessment efforts regarding writing should focus only on our research methods course. It is possible that many of our students in CRIJ 3378 are recent transfers into our 4 year program and have had only limited exposure to SHSU instruction. Perhaps another course will be more suitable for assessment. We will also provide specific feedback to all of our faculty and instructors regarding the strengths and weaknesses displayed by our students in their writing so that broad based efforts can be made by all faculty members to develop our student's writing ability.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

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.

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 elements from the 2012-2013 cycle were implemented this past year. We plan to maintain these two primary assessment approaches to allow for the development of baseline student data for our program, especially as other organizational aspects of the department are established.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2013 - 2014 Cycle Findings.

As indicated in detail in our findings on comprehensive knowledge, this assessment cycle our Departmental faculty will need to reexamine the undergraduate curriculum and its alignment with assessment protocol. We have been utilizing the same survey questions for a number of years and must update both our process of assessment and likely the content of our assessment materials. Regarding the assessment of writing and research skills, our primary goal will be to capture a greater number of research methods sections taught by our faculty to more fully assess student ability. These steps will provide us better data upon which we can improve our undergraduate program performance.

Certainly a first step is to determine a better approach to assessment that will include a large subset of our undergraduate students. The current sample size is small by comparison and limited to four sections of a course that used a common assessment rubric. Additional faculty "buy in" will be needed to achieve this goal. The Department Chair will accept the responsibility for strongly encouraging faculty utilize this common rubric (or a redesigned version of the rubric) to grade a research paper. Further, faculty will provide consideration if perhaps assessing papers in senior level writing enhanced classes will increase the validity of our efforts.

Jump to Top

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2013 - 2014

Criminal Justice MS

View & Request Level Feedback

Goal	Integration Of Knowledge, Skills, And Abilities 🔑	⊟
	Integration of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities	

Objective (L) **Demonstrate Ability To Integrate Knowledge, Skills, And Abilities** 🔑

As students prepare to graduate with a Master of Science in Criminal Justice, they will demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge, skills, and other abilities.

Indicator **Research And Publication Portfolio** 📎 🔑

A research and publication portfolio developed in the program's capstone course, CJ 6388, Emergent Issues in Criminal Justice Leadership, is reviewed using a predetermined set of criteria.

Criterion **80%+ Of Students With Acceptable Portfolio** 🔑

At least 80% of the students enrolled in CRIJ 6388 will complete a portfolio judged to be "acceptable" by portfolio/paper rubric.

Finding **Acceptable Portfolio** 🔑

100% of students enrolled in the CJ 6388 completed their portfolio with an acceable rating determined by the attached rubric containing the five required elements.

Action **Rubric Re-examined For Portfolio** 🔑

For the upcoming year, the department will re-examine the rubric used to assess student research competency to further articulate and assess "acceptable" portfolios.

Goal	Professional Literature Reviews 🔑
	Professional Literature Reviews

Objective (L) **Master Of Science Students Will Be Able To Write A Professionally Oriented Literature Review To Demonstrate Workforce Preparedness** 🔑

Students completing the M.S. program will demonstrate the necessary tools and knowledge to produce an empirically based review of the academic literature on an emerging criminal justice issue relevant to their area of interest in the criminal justice workforce.

Indicator **Rubric Evaluating A Selected Element Submitted As Part Of Research And Publication Portfolio** 📎 🔑

A literature review developed in the program's capstone course CRIJ 6388 Emerging Issues in Criminal Justice Leadership or other substantive course in the degree plan will be appraised using the attached rubric.

Criterion **5 Required Elements Will Be Developed On Portfolio** 🔑

Five required elements should be developed in the students' portfolio/paper. Each element will be assessed by the attached rubric noting the area the majority of students have problems expanding.

Finding

Professional Development Activities Problem Area 🔑

The one area that students struggle with is the Professional Development Activities, Applications, and Points (20 points). They can show evidence of the activities however when designating what each actively is worth they have a hard time with personal assessment. The goal is to help the student understand the importance of leadership development opportunities and to decide what each element is worth (points). This element tends to be challenging for students as they don't know what point(s) to assign. The element is also designed to learn how to evaluate and assess credentials of others. Students currently work in the field, or will be put in future situations where they decide on someone's credentials or experience. What better way to learn than to start with self-assessment.

Action

Better Detail On Syllabus 🔑

Instructor will expand in both the syllabus and in the element description/details how this is to be submitted. The student is to take an intrapersonal perspective on the assignment. The goal is that the student will produced the element in that way. There will be more explanation of why this is important for them to do and learn from it.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

The relatively new nature of the degree program does not provide for end stage assessment data. The upcoming year is anticipated to have students eligible for engagement in program components associated with the program goals. The upcoming assessment cycle will provide initial insight for curricular/ program improvement.

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.

Due to the newness of this program, there was no "plan for continuous improvement" last year.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2013 - 2014 Cycle Findings.

As this program is still relatively new, one of the goals for the 2014-2015 academic year is to continue to increase student enrollment through marketing efforts. Another goal is to increase our retention rates by encouraging students to take advantage of the services offered by the department and university that are geared towards online education. A review of the current curriculum is also needed to ensure that the required and elective courses are meeting students needs and are aligned with program objectives.

Jump to Top

SH SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2013 - 2014

Criminal Justice PhD

View & Request Level Feedback

Goal	Conduct Scientific Research 🔑	⊟
	Conduct Scientific Research	

Objective (L)

Doctoral Students Will Be Able To Write An Empirically-based Research Paper. 🔑

Students completing the Ph.D. program will demonstrate the necessary tools and knowledge to produce an empirically-based research manuscript eligible for submission to a peer reviewed academic journal.

Indicator

Grading Form Evaluating Selected Elements Of Portfolio 🔑

Doctoral students are required to submit and defend a portfolio of selected written research products that were developed during their tenure in the doctoral program to a panel of faculty members. The portfolio committee chair will select one written component that best demonstrates the student's ability to conduct scientific research. The portfolio chair will utilize the attached grading form, which lists the key aspects of a quality scientific manuscript, to assess the selected element.

Criterion

A Vote Of High Pass Or Pass On The Portfolio Grading Form 🖇 🔑

Students will receive a High Pass or Pass on the elements included in the grading form with items weighted equally. Within the selected element, students will have integrated the various disparate components of the literature on a specific CJ topic into a cogent review of literature, presented a well-defined research question, quantitative or qualitative analysis of data, a summary of results, and contextualized those results. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the research will be included.

Finding

All Students Defending Portfolio Receive A Pass Or High Pass 🔑

All students who defended their portfolio were admitted to candidacy and formally approved to work on his/her dissertation. 60% of the students received a Pass and 40% of the students received a High Pass vote by their committee.

Action

Portfolio Rubric And Process Re-examined 🔑

For the upcoming year, the department will re-examine the portfolio grading form used to assess student research competency by developing a rubric to better articulate and assess associated desired skills. Also, as additional PhD students progress through the program, an increased number of portfolios will be examined with an eye toward determining the feasibility of this process in measuring research competency and breadth of knowledge.

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Goal	Doctoral Teaching Fellows Provide Quality Classroom Teaching 🔑
	Doctoral Teaching Fellows Provide Quality Classroom Teaching

Objective (L)

Doctoral Teaching Fellows Provide Quality Classroom Teaching 🔑

Advanced doctoral students will develop and demonstrate their aptitude for providing high quality classroom instruction for undergraduate students.

Indicator

Doctoral Teaching Fellows IDEA Evaluation Forms And Direct Observation By Faculty 🔑

Doctoral Teaching Fellows IDEA Evaluation Forms and Direct Observation by Faculty

Criterion

Score Of 4.0+ On IDEA, 80+ On Observation 📎 🔑

Doctoral Teaching Fellows will perform at or above the similar/middle 40% box on the IDEA evaluation form. Summary Evaluation will be 4.0 or above for teaching evaluations. The attached rubric will be used by faculty observers of a selected DTF led lecture. Students will obtain an average score of 80 or above on the overall rubric.

Finding

Performance On IDEA Evaluations 🔑

66% of Doctoral Teaching Fellows scored at 4.0 or above on teaching evaluations given in Fall 2013. 69% of Doctoral Teaching Fellows scored at 4.0 or above on teaching evaluations given in Spring 2014. In Spring 2014, 8/8 of the incoming doctoral teaching fellows provided a guest lecture in the undergraduate classroom and received feedback from a faculty observer. 100% of the students received a score of 80% or above on the attached rubric.

Action

Newly Developed GSDAC 🔑

For the upcoming year, DTFs will be observed by committee members of the newly developed Graduate Student Development and Assessment committee. Using the newly created rubric and feedback form (see attachment), faculty will provide detailed feedback to DTFs to help improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Refinements of the doctoral curriculum will also be made to provide students with additional opportunities to learn, develop, and reflect upon their teaching pedagogy both within the residential classroom and the online teaching environment.

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Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

During the 2013-2014 AY, a committee of faculty will be developed to provide an increased level of assessment and feedback to doctoral students on their strengths and areas for improvement in teaching. Further, the utilization of the portfolio process as evidence of doctoral student writing ability and research competency will be examined to determine its feasibility in future assessment cycles. Faculty led development of a standard rubric will occur if deemed necessary by the Director of the Criminal Justice and Criminology graduate programs.

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 2013-2014 academic year, the department outlined a new graduate committee, the Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee. Goals were defined throughout the year and include: 1) increased feedback to doctoral teaching fellows through a revised rubric and feedback form (see attachment), 2) increased feedback to graduate students on their research practice presentations to attend University-sponsored events and/or national professional conferences, 3) provide observations and recommendations pertaining to the current portfolio process, and 4) conduct mock interviews with PhD students who on the job market to assist and enhance job placement.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2013 - 2014 Cycle Findings.

For the 2014-2015 academic year, an increased emphasis will be on strengthening our doctoral teaching fellows teaching skills by providing detailed feedback by faculty observers.   Students will also be encouraged to present their original research at University-sponsored events and/or national professional conferences. The development of our PhD students statistical skills is contingent on access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.). Further, the utilization of the portfolio process as evidence of doctoral student writing ability and research competency will be examined to determine its feasibility in future assessment cycles.   A review of the current curriculum is also needed to ensure that we remain current and competitive.

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2013 - 2014

Criminal Justice, Victim Studies BA/BS

View & Request Level Feedback

Goal	**Development Of Oral Presentation Skills As Exhibited In Senior Capstone Course** 🔑	⊟
	Development of Oral Presentation Skills as Exhibited in Senior Capstone Course.	

Objective (L)   **Improvement Of Oral Presentation Skills** 🔑

Improvement of Oral Presentation Skills

Indicator   **Senior Level Capstone Course Oral Presentation** 🔑

Senior Level Capstone Course Oral Presentation

Criterion   **70% Competency Overall** 📎 🔑

70% Competency Overall on presentation

Finding   **Students Assessed Met Goal Average** 🔑

The 2013-2014 academic year was the first time that the senior seminar capstone class was offered in this degree plan. As a result, only a small cohort of students (n = 7) remained in the class during the entire semester allowing for their assessment. The attached rubric was used to assess the quality of the student's oral presentation to the class. According to the grading of the presentations, 6 of the 7 students scored higher than 70% during the presentation. One student was found to require remediation in many areas (knowledge and skill set).

Action   **Method Of Assessment Reviewed** 🔑

Since this was the first year the senior seminar was needed within the degree program, a full review of process and course sequence will be considered. Specific to this goal, faculty will work to review the findings from this assessment to determine the extent to which the method of assessment was satisfactory. Faculty will focus on determining whether the indicators on the rubric used and the oral presentation itself were of sufficient depth to determine the student's demonstration of this skill.

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Goal	**Practical Application Of Knowledge** 🔑	
	Practical Application of Knowledge	

Objective (L)   **Gain Knowledge In Applied Victim Services Program** 🔑

Gain Knowledge in Applied Victim Services Program

Indicator   **Research Paper Written On Practical Aspect Of Victim Services Setting** 📎 🔑

Research Paper Written on Practical Aspect of Victim Services Setting.

Criterion   **70% Average Score Achieved On Research Paper** 🔑

70% Average score on rubric evaluating final research paper.

Finding **6 Of The 7 Students Met The Goal Set Receiving An Overall Score Of 70% Or Greater On Their Proposal.** 🔑

While the original assessment plan intended to have students write a paper based on their experience while participating in an internship or ACE course, it was quickly realized that an alternative approach was necessary. Based on the instructor's discussion with students during the first class meeting and after consultation with the Chair and other faculty members, it was determined that the student's level of preparation at the outset of the course regarding base research knowledge and written ability, that an enhanced examination of victim services and programs in the typical applied setting required more attention prior to graduation. Accordingly, the assessment was modified to focus on a research paper that proposed a victim services program. Students engaged in research on victim related issues and available programs, discussed ideas regarding new programs with area practitioners, and subsequently wrote a detailed program proposal. The attached rubric was utilized to assess each student's written proposal. Findings indicated that 6 of the 7 students met the goal set – receiving an overall score of 70% or greater on their proposal. Once again, one student was found to be inadequately prepared for the course and will require remedial work prior to graduation from this degree plan.

Action **Increased Writing And Research Skills Within This Degree Plan** 🔑

The vast majority of students completing in the BA/BS in Victim Studies were found to be adequately prepared in the areas assessed, yet, one student was under prepared in both skills and knowledge. Given that the 2013-2014 academic year was the first program cohort completing this degree program, it is possible that other students in the degree plan "pipeline" are also inadequately prepared. We plan to make program modifications to ensure that all students are prepared to successful matriculate through the BA/BS in Victim Studies. Faculty members with expertise in the victimology area and the Department Chair will work together to develop course sections that are specifically offered for victim studies students. This will allow for increased specialization in course material and needed skills as they are applied within a victim services setting.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

The Victim Studies undergraduate BA and BS program committee will plan for ways to increase student participation and completion in the exit exam to assess content knowledge. Additionally, alternative methods of assessing the practical application of knowledge will be formulated and implemented.

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.

In 2013-2014, the exit exam was not used to assess content knowledge. The committee and chair instead used the research paper detailed above to assess knowledge.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2013 - 2014 Cycle Findings.

Increased attention to the organizational flow of students within this degree appears to be needed. Designing a suggested matriculation through the required and elective courses will provide a better opportunity for students to

further enhance their skills. The assessment process uncovered the possibility that a student could enroll in the senior capstone course without adequate completion of the necessary base knowledge (i.e., simultaneous enrollment in an abundance of prerequisite courses along with the senior capstone course). Overall, this finding suggests that skills needed, especially those that are gained through a step-wise process might not be gained by a small percentage of students in the future as well. The Department Chair will with work with advising staff and faculty members to develop a suggested course sequence that will increase the students' likelihood of success in the upcoming academic years.

Jump to Top

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2013 - 2014

Criminal Justice, Victim Services Management MS

View & Request Level Feedback

Goal	Complete Curriculum And Begin Offering Courses In Fall 2013 🔑	⊟

Complete Curriculum and Begin Offering Courses in Fall 2013. Two full semester online courses were offered beginning Fall 2013 for the first cohort of 16 students. CRIJ 6394 - Victimology and CRIJ 6334 - Research Methods and Quantitative Analysis.

Objective (L)   **Students Learn Basic Statistic Skills** 🔑

Students learn basic statistic skills in CRIJ 6334 - Research Methods and Quantitative Analysis

Indicator   **Students Complete A Series Of Statistics-oriented Homework Assignments And A Final Exam For The Course.** 🔑

MS students will be able to use basic statistics commonly applied in social science research. The use of these statistics will be applicable to examination of data distributions, hypothesis testing, and related tasks commonly encountered using "real world" data from criminal justice agencies. Although functional use of these skills is practiced in the course, the main objective is to produce better consumers of research upon graduation.

Criterion   **Statistics Portion Of Homework Assignments And Final Exam** 🔑

Students have homework assignments and final exam questions graded by the instructor. In order to pass those assignments and earn credit for the statistics portion of the final exam, students must successfully answer a series of multiple choice/true-false questions in addition to showing manual calculation steps for test statistics such as chi-square using sample data provided by the instructor.

Finding   **Fewer Than 20% Earn Full Credit** 🔑

Many students struggle with computational aspects of statistics, despite relatively simple mathematics involved (e.g. simple division). Fewer than 20% earned full credit for the hand-calculation sections of the final exam. However, conceptually, students can identify key concepts related to statistics and most are capable of choosing the correct test statistic when provided with a basic vignette-style example. One persistent challenge is that students in the MS program have relatively little exposure to statistics coursework prior to the research methods class.

Action   **Additional Supplemental Materials Will Be Added** 🔑

Instructor will seek out additional supplemental materials related to statistics that are especially pertinent to real-world scenarios and practitioners seeking terminal graduate degrees. The research methods course should also be carefully considered relative to the overall curriculum for this degree program. Many students selecting into this degree program lack fundamental mathematical and statistics skills.

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Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

The Victim Services Management online Master of Science degree committee admitted 16 students, of whom, all have enrolled in two online MS courses during the Fall 2013 semester. For the Spring 2013 semester, the committee anticipates recruiting, at minimum, an additional 15 students. Marketing strategies for recruitment will

entail MS in Victim Services Management Program advertisements at major Texas and National-level conferences designed for victim services field workers. Additionally, 409 higher education campuses across the country that offer Women's Studies degree programs have been identified and letters detailing the new MS in Victim Services Management will be sent to Department and Program Chairs encouraging graduates to apply to our MS program. Finally, victim service agencies in the state of Texas will receive notification letters with information about the new MS online program in order to facilitate support and enhance interest and enrollment.

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 elements from the 2012-2013 cycle were implemented this past year.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2013 - 2014 Cycle Findings.

The MS in VSM is fully planned and implemented with strong student interest. The next step for our Department will be to engage in discussion and planning activities to appropriately assess content and learning objectives within the program. A working group of faculty members who actively teach in the program will examine program assessment activities of the MS in CJ Leadership and Management program as one possible source of criteria. This program has a somewhat similar target population insofar as attracting professionals who are active in victim service provider agencies. We anticipate the development of these criteria in the beginning of the 2014-2015 assessment cycle with a goal of enhanced assessment of the program.

Jump to Top

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Department of Forensic Science

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2013 - 2014

Criminal Justice, Forensic Science MS

View & Request Level Feedback

Goal	Integration Of Knowledge, Skills, And Abilities 🔑	⊟

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.

Objective (L)   **Students Will Demonstrate Competency In Research** 🔑

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.

Indicator   **Capstone Research Report Scoring Methodology** 🔑

Consistent faculty-developed scoring methodology will be applied to the capstone research report for FORS 6094 – Forensic Science Capstone Research. The scholarly report will demonstrate advanced discipline-specific knowledge, investigation, and problem-solving ability.

Criterion   **At Least 70% Of Students Will Score Satisfactory Or Higher** 🔑

At least 70% of students will be assessed as "satisfactory" or higher using the uniform faculty-developed rubric. The final report will be scored by each member of the committee, consisting of a minimum of three individuals (one of whom must be external to the department).

Finding   **Capstone Research Performance** 🔑

All students (100%) performed satisfactorily in their Capstone Research in accordance with the faculty-developed rubric. Of the sixteen graduating students, all received satisfactory final scores and satisfactory scores in their final technical report (which has consistently presented the greatest challenge to students). 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). A total of forty-eight reviews were received for the sixteen graduating students, eighteen of whom were external reviewers. Nine were deemed satisfactory (acceptable) and seven were rated as excellent. Laboratory or experimental performance has been effectively managed using a formal evaluation system consisting of interim evaluations at three strategic points during the project and faculty are expected to provide formal and timely feedback to students with respect to technical writing and the final report. Although the review is formal, the timeline for the review has been informal and has not been documented in the syllabus at the request of faculty, who prefer a more flexible arrangement for managing reviews. However, the administration receives feedback each year regarding the timeliness and quality of the review process to the extent that the process requires a more formalized approach.

Action   **Final Report Review** 🔑

The timeline for review of the final report review will be documented in the syllabus for FORS 6094 and faculty will be notified of the change at the beginning of the academic year. The timeline will be developed with faculty input, such that the responsibilities of students and faculty to submit and review reports, respectively, are well-understood.

Goal	Develop Specific Knowledge Base 🔑
	Develop specific knowledge base in forensic science to prepare graduates for future success.

Objective (L)   **Detailed Competence Of Core Course Material** 🔑

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.

Indicator   **Forensic Science Assessment Test (FSAT)** 🔑

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). The content and administration of the examination were modeled on ABC certification exams and is used by the program to assess trends which may indicate strenghts and weaknesses within the curriculum and to evaluate its relevance. The FSAT exam covers a wide variety of forensic disciplines including some that are not part of the core FEPAC curriculum, such as firearms, toolmarks and questioned documents.

Criterion   **FSAT Performance** 🔑

The average FSAT score for SHSU students will be higher than the average FSAT score for students nationally; and SHSU should be ranked in the top quartile of programs participating in the FSAT annually.

Finding   **FSAT Performance** 📎 🔑

All second year MSFS students participated in the FSAT examination in March 2014, immediately following spring break. One limitation associated with the timeline is that the examination takes place prior to completion of the core curriculum. As a result students may be tested on information yet to be covered by faculty. Previous attempts to schedule the examination at the end of semester have not been successful due to conflicts during finals week and the relocation of students post-graduation.

In 2014, 202 students in sixteen institutions participated in the FSAT examination. The average score for SHSU students enrolled in the MSFS was 318, greater than the national average of 278. There was a broad range of overall scores among SHSU participants (240-386), compared with students nationally (160-424).

SHSU performed above the national average and ranked in the top quartile of programs participating nationally.

Action   **FSAT** 🔑

Due to scheduling we will continue to offer the FSAT following spring break despite the fact that students have not yet completed all curricular requirements. We must continue to offer both Questioned Documents and Firearms/Toolmarks courses so that FSAT scores are not adversely affected.

Goal	Ability To Conduct Original Research 🔑

Students engaged in faculty-sponsored research are encouraged to publish or present results externally.

Objective (L)   **Students Will Produce Research Of Publishable Quality** 🔑

Students actively engaged in research projects sponsored by program faculty will publish their findings in journals or present their data at scientific meetings.

Indicator   **Preparation Of Research Materials For Publication/Presentation** 🔑

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.

Criterion   **Research Materials Accepted For External Publication/Presentation** 🔑

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.

Finding   **Published Research** 📎 🔑

In 2014 there were a total of sixteen graduating students. During the academic year (2013-2014) there were a total of twenty-four publications involving forensic science students. Eleven manuscripts were accepted or published in scientific journals and there were thirteen papers presented at national/international scientific meetings.

Action   **Publication Types** 🔑

Efforts to increase emphasis on manuscript publication rather than conference proceedings have been successful. Manuscript publications increased from seven to eleven this year and overall publications from fourteen to twenty-four. Continued emphasis on manuscript publication is necessary.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

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).

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.

Retrospective five-year reviews of assessment and admissions data were evaluated by faculty, staff and administrators during the 2013 Annual Quality Review. This process is effective and highly inclusive - encompassing feedback from students, faculty, employers and administrators. It serves as the principal means by which academic and departmental functions are comprehensively evaluated on an ongoing basis. Specific recommendations related to curriculum, instruction, applications and the admissions process were implemented

following the summer 2013 review. The agenda, minutes and a summary of the 2013 Annual Quality Review are attached. The program was successful gaining permission from the American Board of Criminalistics to hold the FSAT examination in March 2014 and plans to do the same next year. The 2014 review is currently pending.

Not all of the action items identified in the 2013 Annual Quality Review were addressed due to the administrative burden within the department which arose from the college reorganization and loss of centralized administrative support. These additional responsibilities and the training necessary to complete new functions presented several challenges. An additional staff member was requested as a new initiative during the last budget cycle and the department is confident it will have the necessary institutional support to address the shortfall moving forward.

Attachments

1. 2013 Quality Review Agenda
2. 2013 Quality Review Minutes
3. 2013 Quality Review Summary

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2013 - 2014 Cycle Findings.

The program must secure sufficient administrative support to maintain existing academic programs in addition to those that are anticipated in the near future, such as the doctoral program in forensic science. Continued emphasis will be placed on research productivity, publications and maintaining a rigorous and industrially-relevant curriculum in forensic science.

Additionally, a mid-year review of action items following the Annual Quality Review is recommended. This interim review will specifically identify outstanding action items in an effort to improve outcomes and follow through related to the review.

Jump to Top

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Department of Security Studies

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

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Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2013 - 2014

Criminal Justice, Security Studies MS

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Goal	**Practical Application Of National Security Principles** 🔑 ➖
	Practical application of national security principles

Objective (L)   **Demonstrate Practical Solutions And Knowledge Base** 🔑

Students completing the Master of Science degree in Security Studies will be able to provide comprehensive analysis and apply problem solving techniques to complex issues applicable to defense of the Homeland.

Indicator   **Successful Performance In Practical Exercises And Internship** 🔑

Integration of theroetical approaches to problem solving with practical analytical solutions is a primary indicator of the success of the program's learning objectives. During the internship experience, security studies graduate students reoutinely recevie critiques and personal evaluations from both the facutly member monitoring the student (internship director) and the employer who supervises the student intern. In addition, students provide written progress reports during the internship process.

Criterion   **85% Of The Security Studies Students Will Score Greater Than 85% For Their Internship Practical Exercises** 🔑

It is not enough to perform well in the classroom. Nearly each course students take in the Security Studies program requires successful completion of some measurable out-of-class project or outcome. Students will score greater than 85% on these practical excercises at the apex of their training experience during their internship.

Finding   **100% Of Security Study Graduate Students Scored Greater Than 85% For Their Practical Application Of Knowledge During Their Internship Experience** 🔑

A total of four students completed their internship experience in the fall of 2013 and nine security study graduate students completed their internship during the spring 2014 semester. During this academic year the students exceeded expectations with all of our students scoring above 90% on their practical application of knowledge during their internship experience.

Action   **Continued Practical Application Of Knowledge Assessment** 🔑

We will continue to assess our student's application of knowledge during their internship experience. Addtitionally, with the modifications made this academic year to the curriculum, we will be working to increase our learning objective assessments throughout the program.

- -

Goal	**Demonstrate Core Knowledge Competency** 🔑
	Demonstrate that students are learning the core competency areas required in the field.

Objective (L)   **Demonstrate Knowledge And Integration Of Core Competencies** 🔑

Students graduating with a master's degree in Security Studies will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and assessment of the major issues and pinciples related to Homeland Security.

Indicator　　　　**Integrated Major Paper** 🔑

The Capstone course, CRIJ 6388, for Security Studies graduate students requires substantial research and integration of theories and principles of completed coursework in the program. The culminating project in this course requires students to state a Homeland Security or related issue and place it in context of the related security field. This paper requires a comprehensive literature reivew, analysis of the issue in relation to national threat, explanation of how the issue was reslolved, and how the issue may have been resolved differently. Through this anaylsis, core competencies in the field should be demonstrated.

Criterion　　　　**A Score Of 80% On The Assessment Rubric** 🔑

The scoring rubric for the core competency project in the Capston course consists of four areas; 1) statement of the issue, 2) review of the salient literature, 3) appropriate sources cited, and 4) reflections of how the curriculum contribted to your abiltiy to solve the issue. Each student completing the capstone course will score 80% or higher on the rubric.

Finding　　　　**90% Of The Students Scored 80% Or Higher** 🔑

Ten Security Studies masters of science students completed the capstone integration project. Rubric scores on the four criteria ranged from 220 to a perfect score of 300. While one student performed below expectations (220; 73%), the remaining students scored between 80 and 100%.

Action　　　　**Integration Of Core Competency** 🔑

We will continue to assess our Security Studies student's knowledge and integration of core competency areas. We will also, with the development of the new curriculum for this program, will work towards assessing our student's ability to integrate and apply what they have learned in other ways as well.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

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.

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 this year of curriculum change and adding two new faculty members, we continued to assess and utilize rubrics developed to assess the integration of core competency areas.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2013 - 2014 Cycle Findings.

As the new curriculum was put into place this last academic year, we will work to develop additional assessment methods of our student's learning and successful application of acquired knowledge.

Jump to Top