Academic Program
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
College of Arts and Sciences
The University of New Mexico

A. College, Department and Date

1. College: *Arts and Sciences*
2. Department: *Economics*
3. Date: *11/28/2016*

B. Academic Program of Study*

MA Economics
Note: This assessment ONLY covers the terminal MA degree, not students who achieve an MA enroute to the PhD.

C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan

Jennifer Thacher, Graduate Director, jthacher@unm.edu

D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

☐ *[Attach Cover Sheet for Student Learning Outcomes and associated materials.]*

OR

[List below:]

1. Broad Program Learning Goals for this Degree/Certificate Program

A. Students develop a solid understanding of economic theory and methods that will prepare them for professional careers.

B. Students develop strong written and oral communication skills

2. List of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this Degree/Certificate Program [Your program should have at least 3 and these should be aligned with the program Goals (as indicated by A, B, C, etc.) and UNM's broad learning goals]

A.1. By the end of the program, students can explain and manipulate economic models

UNM Goals (___ Knowledge   __X_ Skills   ___ Responsibility)

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* Academic Program of Study is defined as an approved course of study leading to a certificate or degree reflected on a UNM transcript. A graduate-level program of study typically includes a capstone experience (e.g. thesis, dissertation, professional paper or project, comprehensive exam, etc.).

A.2 By the end of the program, students can use appropriate econometrics to explore economic issues and test hypotheses

UNM Goals (___ Knowledge   _X__ Skills   ___ Responsibility)

B.1 By the end of the program, students can effectively present economic ideas to peers and PhD economists

UNM Goals (___ Knowledge   __X_ Skills   ___ Responsibility)

E. <u>Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan</u>
All programs are expected to measure some outcomes and report annually and to measure all program outcomes at least once over a three-year review cycle.

1. Timeline for Assessment

Year/Semester	Assessment Activities
Year 1, Fall	SLO A1, assessed
Year 1, Spring	Results discussed with faculty at grad assessment meeting (2nd Weds in February) – Calls for action directed to graduate committee
Year 2, Fall	SLO A2 assessed.
Year 2, Spring	Results discussed with faculty at grad assessment meeting (2nd Weds in February) – Calls for action directed to graduate committee
Year 3, Fall	SLO B1 assessed.
Year 3, Spring	Results discussed with faculty at grad assessment meeting (2nd Weds in February) – Calls for action directed to graduate committee

2. How will learning outcomes be assessed?

By the end of the program, students demonstrate applied understanding of economic models and their application (K,S)				
Assessment measure	**Description (2.A.I)**	**Type (2.A.II)**	**Criteria for success (2.A.III)**	**Who (2.B)**
Measure #1: MA exam	Students take an 8 hour exam in the Departmental Conference room. Exam questions cover core theory in microeconomic/macroeconomic theory, or a field area. The faculty committee blind-evaluates and scores the exams.	*DIRECT*	50% pass	All Plan II MA students
Measure #2: MA Thesis Defense	committees evaluate student work according to professional standards. Committee completes an evaluation form that asks how well the student performs on this SLO. Each objective is scored out of five points, where a five is best (1=inferior, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent).	*DIRECT*	Average score is "good" or better	All Plan I MA students in final year
Measure #3: Focus group	Focus group of past MA students	*INDIRECT*	Majority of MA graduates believe the program prepared them to achieve this SLO	Past MA students working in New Mexico

A2: By the end of the program, students demonstrate mastery in applying appropriate econometrics to explore economic issues and test hypotheses (S,K)

Assessment measure	Description (2.A.I)	Type (2.A.II)	Criteria for success (2.A.III)	Who (2.B)
Measure #1: MA field exam in Econometrics	Students take an 8 hour exam in the Departmental Conference room. The design of the field exam in econometrics allows the examination committee to ascertain if the individual student has a complete knowledge of the material covered in the two-course MA sequence in econometrics. The faculty committee blind-evaluates and scores the exams.	*DIRECT*	50% pass	All Plan II MA students
Measure #2: MA Thesis Defense	Thesis committees evaluate student work according to professional standards. Each member of their committee scores their thesis on methodology. MA thesis have a strong applied econometric components, making this a reasonable criteria to examine. Each objective is scored out of five points, where a five is best (1=inferior, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent). **Action item**: Replace Gray Sheets with evaluation form with SLO	*DIRECT*	Average score is "good" or better	All Plan I MA students in final year
Measure #3: Focus group	Focus group of past MA students	*INDIRECT*	Majority of MA graduates believe the program prepared them to achieve this SLO	Past MA students working in New Mexico

B1: By the end of the program, students can effectively present economic ideas to peers and PhD economists (S,K,R)				
Assessment measure	Description (2.A.I)	Type (2.A.II)	Criteria for success (2.A.III)	Who (2.B)
Measure #1: MA Thesis Defense	Dissertation committees evaluate student work according to professional standards. Each member of their committee scores their dissertation on style. The objective is scored out of five points, where a five is best (1=inferior, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent **Action item**: Replace Gray Sheets with evaluation form with SLO	*DIRECT*	Average score is "good" or better	All Plan I MA students in final year
Measure #2: Job/Graduate Placements	Assessment by external job market and graduate institutions. Number of students on job market/applying to graduate school and count of placement type.	*INDIRECT*	75% of students have job or acceptance in a graduate program	All graduating students
Measure #3: Focus group	Focus group of past MA students	*INDIRECT*	Majority of MA graduates believe the program prepared them to achieve this SLO	Past MA students working in New Mexico

3. **What is the unit's process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?**
   Briefly describe:
   1. *who will participate in the assessment process (the gathering of evidence, the analysis/interpretation, recommendations).*

      The assessment data for the direct measures is gathered by specific committees and provided to the Graduate Coordinator. Specifically:
      - The Theory and Field committee are in charge of creating the MA exam instruments, grading the exams, and providing recommendations. The overall faculty then discusses and votes on final results.
      - The Econometrics committee is in charge of creating the MA field exam instrument, grading the exams, and providing recommendations. The overall faculty then discusses and votes on final results.
      - The Thesis committee for each student is in charge of evaluating that student's thesis.

      The assessment data for the indirect measures is gathered by the Graduate Coordinator.

      The Graduate Director analyzes the aggregated data and assembles a report with initial recommendations. This information is communicated annually via a faculty meeting. In addition, in the case of the MA exams and econometrics exam, we have scheduled times to discuss these results during faculty meeting (if any MA exam is taken). Each faculty meeting also includes scheduled time for the Graduate Director to provide a brief report on graduate issues. In past years, annual assessment meetings have generated discussion, which then gets sent to the Graduate Committee for more discussion and possible action.

   2. *the process for consideration of the implications of assessment for change:*

      The process of changing assessment mechanisms depends on specific faculty committees, the Graduate Director, and the faculty. For example, the Econometrics and Field Committees revise the actual exams each year. Any change in the process of the exam (e.g.., conversion from a full-day exam to 2 hour exam or conversion from a written exam to an oral exam) would require discussion and approval by the faculty and a change to the Graduate Handbook. Changes to the mechanisms used for the other direct measures and the indirect measures would occur based on input from the Graduate Committee and/or larger faculty.

      Any change to curriculum design goes first through the Graduate Committee, with discussions with any affected groups (i.e., Micro, Macro, or Econometrics committees; departmental fields). They then bring any proposed changes and rationale for these changes to a faculty meeting for discussion. Any curriculum design changes must be approved by the faculty.

      Any individual faculty member teaching a class has the right to make their pedagogical decisions. Faculty meetings, assessment meetings, and informal faculty times (lunches, coffee, etc) provide an opportunity for discussions about pedagogy and how assessment results might suggest specific pedagogical methods.

3. *How, when, and to whom will recommendations be communicated?*

Initial recommendations based on the assessment report are communicated to faculty at the annual assessment meeting, in addition to overall results. Inevitably, discussion at these meetings focuses on one or two particular issues that then go back to the Graduate Committee for more discussion. The Graduate Committee then brings recommendations back to the full faculty for a vote.