Graduate Learning Goals Policy

Departments/interdisciplinary groups with graduate programs in their purview shall be required to establish Graduate Goals, Program Learning Outcomes with an associated curriculum map, and an assessment plan with an associated action plan, to be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. These documents must be reviewed and, if necessary, updated by May 30 of each academic year.

The Institutional Graduate Learning Goals listed in section A express a shared, campus-wide articulation of minimum requirements for recipients of graduate degrees. Each graduate program may set Program Learning Goals in addition to the required Institutional Graduate Learning Goals.

A. Institutional Graduate Learning Goals

For each Institutional Graduate Learning Goal, students are expected to achieve a level of competency associated with an advanced degree, as appropriate to the discipline.

Institutional Graduate Learning Goals for Masters Programs

1. **Disciplinary knowledge**: Master, integrate, and apply disciplinary knowledge and skills to current, practical, and important contexts and situations.
2. **Communication**: Communicate key knowledge with clarity and purpose both within the discipline and in broader contexts.
3. **Critical thinking/analysis**: Demonstrate the ability to be creative, analytical, and critical thinkers.
4. **Information literacy**: Demonstrate the ability to obtain, assess, and analyze information from a myriad of sources.
5. **Professionalism**: Demonstrate an understanding of professional integrity.
6. **Intercultural/Global Perspectives**: Demonstrate relevant knowledge and application of intercultural and/or global perspectives.

Institutional Graduate Learning Goals for Doctoral Programs

All of the above Institutional Graduate Learning Goals for Masters Programs, with the addition of:

7. **Research**: Conduct independent research resulting in an original contribution to knowledge in the focused areas of their graduate program.

B. Program Learning Outcomes

Graduate programs shall develop Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) that represent their unique perspectives and which demonstrate achievement of Graduate Learning Goals. Each graduate program shall define its own set of learning outcomes, specific to the level of study and to the discipline, which are clearly more advanced in content than those defined for related undergraduate work. For some programs, these might already be defined, at least in part, by external accrediting agencies. Such defined outcomes shall also form the basis for assessment plans within graduate programs and offer foci for future academic program review teams.

Program Learning Outcomes are designed with the goal of placing graduated master's or doctoral students into post-degree positions in secondary education, non-profits, business and consulting, government and private agencies, and other fields that draw on the knowledge and skills of graduates in the focused areas of their degree preparation.

C. Curriculum Map

Each program shall create a curriculum map:
1. List all courses, both required and elective, as well as other required graduate education activities.

2. Indicate where in the curriculum each PLO is addressed through development of a curriculum map. The curriculum map may be presented in many formats, including tabular form as in the following example:

Coursework	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4	PLO 5	PLO 6
GRAD 201 (core course)	X		X			
GRAD 202 (core course)				X		X
GRAD 203 (core course)		X		X		
GRAD 204 (core course)	X				X	
GRAD 205 (core course)			X			
GRAD 206 (core course)	X	X	X	X		
GRAD 252 (elective)	X				X	
GRAD 252 (elective)		X				X
GRAD 500 Culminating Experience	X	X	X	X	X	X

D. Assessment Plan

Each graduate program shall develop a plan for assessing student achievement of its Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify graduate program-specific direct and indirect lines of evidence for each of the PLOs.
   The table below summarizes the kinds of direct and indirect evaluative data programs might draw on to assess PLOs related to two of the Institutional Graduate Learning Goals:

		Example of Lines of Evidence for Assessing Graduate Program Learning Outcomes	
		Lines of Evidence	
Institutional Graduate-Goal	*PLO*	*Direct*	*Indirect*
Disciplinary Knowledge	1. PLO1 2. PLO2 3. PLO3	1. Assignments in core courses 2. Completion of culminating experience	1. Mid-course assessments 2. Program exit interview 3. Alumni survey
Communication	1. PLO1 2. PLO2	1. Assignments in content courses 2. Early writing assessment 3. Pre-Candidacy project or examination 4. Presentation at scholarly meetings or in colloquia series 5. Papers/articles/books/grants 6. Thesis or Doctoral dissertation proposal 7. Culminating experience Doctoral dissertation	1. Mid-course assessments 2. Program exit interview 3. Alumni survey

2. Articulate evaluation parameters for measuring introductory and advanced levels of graduate student development for each PLO.
3. Evaluate each of the PLOs based on direct lines of evidence such as those identified above, collectively supporting the evaluation of introductory and advanced levels of development over the course of each student's program trajectory. Emphasis should be placed on early assessment of indicators that predict success in the graduate experience.

E. Action Plan Based on Assessment Data

Based on the assessment data collected, each graduate program shall provide detailed information about ongoing action steps to be taken to maintain and improve program quality and/or address identified deficiencies.

FS 15-16-115 Approved by the Faculty Senate, April 21, 2016.
Approved by President Nelsen, June 3, 2016.