

Subject: cas-heads: F18 CAS Assessment Tasks
Date: Friday, October 12, 2018 at 9:59:46 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: cas-heads-bounces@lists.uoregon.edu on behalf of Dana Johnston
To: cas-heads@lists.uoregon.edu, casbudmgr@lists.uoregon.edu
CC: A Dana Johnston, Ron Bramhall
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

Dear CAS department heads and program directors,

Since some of you are new in your roles this year, let me begin by introducing myself, Dana Johnston. I am an emeritus professor in the Department of Earth Sciences and the former occupant of the position now occupied by Hal Sadofsky, currently titled divisional dean of the natural sciences. I am working half-time for CAS this term helping the College with several things including assessment of our undergraduate majors and, new this year, our graduate programs. This quite substantial effort is a requirement of our accreditation and I am happy to report that much of the work is already done.

In a February 7, 2018 memo from Executive Vice Provost Scott Pratt, all schools and colleges were assigned three tasks to accomplish by a hard deadline of December 14, a bit over two months from now. I will be your contact for this process. A good starting point for each of you is the Office of the Provost (OtP) website where each of your departments or programs has an entry under which your unit policies are posted: <https://provost.uoregon.edu/department-unit-policies>. These include your policies related to the Collective Bargaining Agreement with United Academics, as well as other materials such as the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Plans your unit has provided previously for your undergraduate majors.

We now have three tasks ahead of us for this term.

1.) Undergraduate Major Assessment Reports

You will need to submit an Assessment Report for each of your undergraduate majors representing your assessment effort for AY 2017–18. Please note that this applies to all registrar-recognized majors, but not emphasis areas within majors. For example, the Department of Romance Languages offers several distinct majors, French, Italian, Spanish and Romance Languages. Similarly, the Department of Biology offers majors in Biology and Marine Biology, and the Department of Geography offers majors in Geography and Spatial Data Science & Technology. There are still other such examples and each of these will need an Assessment Report this term. However many departments offer only a single major with several emphasis areas. In such instances, only a single report will be required. These reports need not be major undertakings; a couple of pages will likely suffice in most cases. Please use the template found here for your reports: <https://provost.uoregon.edu/curriculum-assessment-resources>.

I recommend beginning by refreshing your memory of the posted Learning Outcomes and Assessment Plan for each of your undergraduate majors at the website given in the second paragraph above. Then, choose a single element of your undergraduate major(s), evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and, if issues are identified, make a plan for how to improve that element. Then, write up the results of this exercise as an Assessment Report, using the template link above, and submit it to me. Examples might include: How well does your introductory sequence prepare students for advanced course work in the major? How does your capstone seminar or field course integrate all students have learned previously in your major? How well does core course X prepare students for core course X+1? Many other examples come to mind but the main point here is to choose a single element and evaluate how well your unit is succeeding with it. This can be as simple as a written summary of such discussion among your

curriculum committee, preferably informed by data of some sort, and resulting in a short report. This report should conclude by identifying the element of your major that you will assess during the coming year for next year's Assessment Report. This will be an annual activity, with reports due late each fall term.

2.) Graduate Degree Learning Outcomes

Here, I recommend that you review the Learning Outcomes already posted for your undergraduate major(s) (for some of you, these are imbedded in your Assessment Plan(s)) and discuss among yourselves, perhaps at a curriculum committee meeting or a meeting of your full faculty, how you wish to adapt your thinking along these lines to your graduate degrees. To get you started, I might suggest such outcomes as: 1) acquiring familiarity with the current literature; becoming proficient in data analysis; becoming proficient in literary or artistic criticism; learning to manipulate large data sets; developing certain skill sets, e.g., GIS, set design, statistics software packages, bibliometric analysis techniques etc. Additional very helpful suggestions appear in the Graduate Degree Assessment Guidelines posted here: <https://provost.uoregon.edu/curriculum-assessment-resources>. You will also want to distinguish between your different graduate degrees, e.g., M.A., M.S., Ph.D. Again, a couple of pages will likely suffice in most cases.

3.) Graduate Degree Assessment Plans

Most of you already have much of this in place in the form of your qualifying exams, comprehensive exams, course work requirements, expectation of a thesis or dissertation etc. describing original scholarship or creativity etc. So, here I recommend you simply review your handbook for graduate study if you have such a document, or perhaps your UO Catalog copy, and prepare a summary report that encapsulates what you are already doing. Perhaps the best measure of the success of your graduate programs would be the record of appropriate job placement of your graduates. If you already track this, great. If not, you should make an effort to begin doing so. Here too, a couple of pages will likely suffice in most cases.

Final words: Although this email is rather long (sorry!), you should not view this as a major onerous task. Consider delegating tasks to your curriculum committee if you have one, or your graduate and undergraduate faculty advisors. In the end, I will be looking for three submissions, each a couple of pages and, in most cases, summaries of things you are already doing. But, the hard deadline at OtP is December 14, so I would like to request your materials by no later than December 7, to give me a week to review and collate appropriately before final submission to the Office of the Provost. Email is the best way to submit your materials (adjohn@uoregon.edu).

Many thanks in advance—Dana