

# Political Science MA

## Knowledge and Skills

### Goal Description:

The program serves students preparing for doctoral studies or law school, high school teachers seeking to improve their professional credentials, individuals wanting to teach in the community colleges, and individuals preparing for careers or advancement in nonprofit organizations (international and domestic) and the public sector.

**Providing Department:** Political Science MA

**Progress:** Ongoing

### RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### MA-level Understanding of at Least One of the Major Subfields

#### Learning Objective Description:

Upon completion of the MA in Political Science program, students will be able to evaluate political theories and discuss the significant research in one of the program's three major subfields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, or International Relations.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### Written Comprehensive Exam Outcomes

#### Indicator Description:

We utilize written comprehensive exams as a tool for measuring graduate students' knowledge and skills. Prior to graduation, students complete two written comprehensive exams in areas relevant to their coursework. Exam questions are written by faculty with expertise in the students' areas of study and the questions are based on the content of the overview courses (i.e., POLS 5330, POLS 5371, POLS 5373). Students' exams are graded by at least three faculty members who have expertise in the areas of study pursued by students. Exams are assigned one of the following scores: high pass, pass, and fail.

#### Criterion Description:

We expect that at least 80% of our students will pass their exams on the first attempt and that 100% of the students who have to take the exam a second time will pass.

#### Findings Description:

During the 2021-2022 academic year, 18 students took the comprehensive exam for the MA in Political Science program:

- Fall 2021: 6 students took the exam; 4 (67%) passed on the first attempt; of the 2 that did not pass, 100% passed after remediation (on the second attempt)
- Spring 2022: 12 students took the exam; 9 (75%) passed on the first attempt; of the 3 that did not pass, 100% passed after remediation (on the second attempt)

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### Written Comprehensive Amount Outcomes

#### Action Description:

We will continue to measure MA students' knowledge and skills by assessing whether at least 80% pass their comprehensive exams on the first attempt and 100% pass on their second attempt.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

##### **Analyze program assessment instruments and procedures**

###### **Performance Objective Description:**

The program will assess the utility of comprehensive exams as the primary means of assessing learning outcomes in the program, comparing comprehensive exams with other possibilities. This will be done with an eye toward (1) improving our ability to assess student learning outcomes and (2) potentially improve student recruitment (long-term program resilience).

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

##### **Meetings to analyze comprehensive exams**

###### **KPI Description:**

During 2021, the program director and MA faculty will meet to discuss the utility of comprehensive exams as the primary means of assessing learning outcomes in the program, comparing comprehensive exams with other possibilities.

###### **Results Description:**

MA faculty met several times in AY 2021-2022 and have decided to move away from comprehensive exams as the primary means of assessing learning outcomes. In Fall 2022, MA faculty will be developing a portfolio project that will eventually become the new means of assessment.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

##### **Meetings to analyze comprehensive exams**

###### **Action Description:**

The MA program director, working with the full MA faculty, will design the dossier project as the new assessment mechanism for the program.

## **Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):**

#### **Closing Summary**

For the coming year, we have the following plans for the MA program

1. Work with the new MA director to establish specific goals underlying objectives, KPIs, etc. for the MA program.
2. Work with the new MA director to establish specific goals underlying objectives, KPIs, etc. for the 18-hour Cert Program. (This program will be a separate item in the 2021-2022 Assessment Cycle.)
3. Review the data from the summer 2021 digital marketing campaign and come up with longer-term strategy (in consultation with EMC) for recruitment.
4. Review the assessment mechanism for the program.
5. Continue to develop the new MA in History & Political Science program in conjunction with the History Department.

The MA program director and department chair will take the lead on these working with the dean and associate deans as appropriate.

#### **Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

In 2021-2022, we made good progress on all of the goals above. We are very close to establishing a new assessment mechanism for the MA program which will replace comprehensive exams; the MA in History and Politics program continues to move forward; and the digital marketing campaign was successful and should be continued in 2022-2023.

## **New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Closing Summary:**

For the coming 2022-23 academic year, we have the following plans for the MA program:

1. Review the data from the latest digital marketing campaign and come up with a longer-term strategy (in consultation with EMC) for recruitment.
2. Design the dossier project as the new assessment mechanism for the program.
3. Continue to develop the new MA in History & Political Studies program in conjunction with the History Department.

The MA program director and department chair will take the lead on these working with the dean and associate deans as appropriate.