















Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2014 - 2015

Criminal Justice And Criminology MA

Goal	Research Competence  Enhance and develop student's ability to conceptualize and deliver an original research paper.
Objective (L)	Competency In Conducting Original Criminal Justice And Criminological Research  Students will demonstrate integration of knowledge, skills and abilities needed to conduct original research in criminal justice and criminology.
Indicator	Conceptualization And Delivery Of The Thesis   Successful conceptualization and delivery of an original research study as demonstrated by the defense of a Thesis using a faculty-developed rubric. The rubric uses a 1 (insignificant) to 5 (critically significant) rating of specific criteria pertaining to conceptualization and delivery of an original research paper. These elements include: choice of problem, theoretical framework, written presentation, originality of idea and/or approach, and contribution to the field.
Criterion	Students Will Score At Least An 80% On Each Of The Related Elements Of The Thesis Rubric   Students will demonstrate their ability to conceptualize and write an original research study within the field of criminal justice or criminology by completing a thesis. Students will score at least an 80% on each of the related elements of the faculty-developed rubric.
Finding	Majority Of Students Scored 80% Or Above On The Conceptualization And Writing Elements Of The Thesis  Overall, students demonstrated competency in conducting original criminal justice and criminological research. When assessing the conceptualization and writing elements of the thesis, 1 students did not achieve the 80% threshold for "choice of problem". Furthermore, 50% (3/6), 67% (4/6), 50% (3/6), and 83% (5/6) of students scored a 4/5 (the minimum requirement) on the criteria of choice of problem, theoretical framework, written presentation, and contribution to the field, respectively. The area that students seem to excel at is originality of idea with 83% of the students scoring 5/5 on this element.
Action	Strengthen Student Ability To Conceptualize And Deliver Original Research  The Department will focus on strengthening students' abilities to conceptualize and write original research in criminal justice or criminology. This may be accomplished by 1. providing a workshop on how to identify criminological problems to study that make a significant contribution to

the field , 2. encouraging students to use the University's writing center, and 3. offering more theory-based elective courses to further develop their theoretical knowledge base.

Goal	Methodological And Statistical Competency  Enhance and develop student's methodological and statistical abilities.
Objective (L)	Competency In Employing Elements Of Qualitative And/or Quantitative Research Methods And Relevant Statistics  Competency in employing elements of qualitative and/or quantitative research methods and appropriate statistical analyses in a well designed scientific-based project in the field of criminal justice and criminology.
Indicator	Successful Execution Of Study And Statistics  Students will successfully execute the methodology and statistical analyses needed for their thesis. They will also recognize the assumptions and limitations underlying the research methods and statistical techniques used and accurately interpret the results.
Criterion	Score At Least 80% On The Methodological And Statistical Elements Of The Thesis   Students will score at least an 80% on each section of the methodological and statistical sections of the thesis rubric. These include 1. mode of inquiry, 2. execution of study, 3. interpretation of results, and 4. analysis.
Finding	Majority Of Students Scored An 80% Or Above On The 4 Criteria  Overall, the majority of students achieved a working mastery of social science research methods techniques including an understanding of statistics as measured by the 4 criteria outlined in the thesis rubric. The findings reveal that the area that most students (67%; 4/6) excel at is selecting their mode of inquiry. Only 1 student fell below the 80% benchmark in one category (execution of study). It is also important to note that 50% (3/6) and 67% (4/6) of the students scored a 4/5 (80%) on the interpretation of results and analysis section, respectively, which is the minimum standard.
Action	Enhance Methodological And Statistical Skills  In the upcoming year, the Department will focus on strengthening students' methodological and statistical skills. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on basic statistics and research methods the summer prior to starting the MA program, 2. offering a Statistics II elective course for 2nd year MA students who are beginning to work on their thesis, and 3. providing additional statistical and methodological

workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

For the 2014-2015 academic year, an emphasis will be placed on increasing student research skills. To accomplish this, we will seek to match students and faculty based on similar research interests both formally and informally. Furthermore, Statistics II will be offered as an elective to increase research and statistical skills to conduct original research projects. Students will also be encouraged to present their original research at University-sponsored events and/or national professional conferences.

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 MA students were introduced to faculty member(s) with similar research interests either formally through their assistantship or informally through conversations.

In AY14-15, 5 students enrolled in Statistics II as an elective. Of these students, 100% (5/5) scored an 80% or above.

8 MA students presented their research at the American Society of Criminology conference in San Diego, CA in November 2014 and 4 MA students presented their research at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Orlando, FL in March 2015.

7 MA students presented their research at SHSU's Graduate Research Exchange in February 2015 and 7 MA students presented their research at The Woodlands Center Research Symposium in April 2015.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2014 - 2015 Cycle Findings.

For the 2015-2016 academic year, continued emphasis will be placed on strengthening student research and statistical skills with an overall goal of preparing our MA students for the PhD program. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a workshop on how to identify criminological problems to study that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the field, 2. encouraging students to use the University's writing center, 3. offering more theory-based elective courses to further develop their theoretical knowledge base, 4. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on basic statistics and research methods the summer prior to starting the MA program, 5. offering a Statistics II elective course for 2nd year MA students who are beginning to work on their thesis, and 6. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Students will also be encouraged to publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journal articles with faculty assistance as well as present their research at national conferences and University-sponsored events.

The development of our MA students statistical and research skills is contingent on 1. access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.), 2. student travel and professional development funds, and 3. summer research scholarships.