# Program Assessment Plan

## American University

### Academic Program: CAS: Economics - PhD

**Contact Person for Assessment:** Mary Hansen/Robert Feinberg  
**Unit's Primary Department:** Economics

## Learning Outcome: Theory

Graduates of the PhD Program will be able to demonstrate a mastery of one branch of economic theory: micro, macro, or heterodox analysis.

**Outcome Year:** 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013  
**Start Date:** 11/18/2010  
**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

## Assessment Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measure</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Schedule/Cycle</th>
<th>Active</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Advanced-theory Comp Exam Graders' Report.  
**Measure Type:** Quiz/ Exam | Under development. | Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will ask faculty members who grade the advanced-theory comprehensive exams to assess the strengths and weakness of PhD candidates based on their written answers to comp questions. The Committee will include notes from the comp graders' comments in the Assessment Report presented to the Chair and the Council each March. | Yes |
| Focus Group.  
**Measure Type:** Focus Group | 75% of students respond that they feel they have mastered a branch of theory. | Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will convene a focus group of students. The Committee will summarize the proceedings of the focus group in the Ph.D. Assessment report presented to the Chair and the Council each March. | Yes |
| Survey of students.  
**Measure Type:** Survey | 75% of students feel confident about their ability. | Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will conduct a survey of students. The Committee will summarize the proceedings of the focus group in the Ph.D. Assessment report presented to the Chair and the Council each March. | No |
| Questions asking about the extent to which students agreed or disagreed that they had acquired: (a) a solid mastery of the modeling techniques used in this branch of economic theory, (b) solid exposure to key issues with which theorists in this area have been concerned, and (c) ability to read, work through, and understand theoretical work relevant to their dissertation.  
**Measure Type:** | 75% of Students respond positively | Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will conduct an online survey of 3rd and 4th year PhD students. The Committee will summarize the results in the Ph.D. Assessment report presented to the Chair and | No |
Learning Outcome: Original Question

Graduates of the PhD Program will be able to formulate and answer empirically an original question in a field of economics.

Outcome Year: 2010-2011
   2011-2012
   2012-2013
Start Date: 11/18/2010
Outcome Status: Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan

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<tr>
<td>Dissertation Chairs' Report</td>
<td>Under development.</td>
<td>Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will ask dissertation chairs to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their advisees in formulating and empirically investigating an original research question. The Committee will include notes from chairs' comments in the meeting in the Assessment Report presented to the Chair each March.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measure Type:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper/ Final Project</td>
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Survey of 3rd and 4th year students asking about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that they (a) were familiar with data sources relevant to their dissertation, and/or knew how to find it, (b) were able to develop a good conceptual or theoretical framework for empirical research, (c) had solid preparation in econometric methodology, (d) had solid command of relevant econometric software, and (e) knew how to choose the most appropriate econometric method for their research question

Measure Type: Survey

Measure Type: Survey

Focus Group.

Measure Type: Focus Group

75% of students are confident in their ability to formulate and answer an original empirical question.

Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will convene a focus group of students [amended April 2010]. The Committee will summarize the proceedings of the focus group in the Ph.D. Assessment report presented to the Chair and the Council each March.

Learning Outcome: Fields of Knowledge

Graduates of the PhD Program will be able to demonstrate mastery of an applied field of knowledge within the discipline of economics.

Outcome Year: 2010-2011
   2011-2012
   2012-2013
Start Date: 11/18/2010
Outcome Status: Active Learning Outcome
### Assessment Plan

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<tr>
<td>Dissertation chairs' report</td>
<td>Under development.</td>
<td>Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will ask dissertation chairs to assess the mastery of an applied field of knowledge in economics of PhD candidates working under their supervision. The Committee will include notes from their comments in the Assessment Report presented to the Chair each March.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td><strong>Measure Type:</strong> Final Paper/ Final Project</td>
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<td>Survey of 3rd and 4th year students asking about the extent to which they agree or disagree that they had acquired: (1) solid mastery of the applied econometric methods used in their field(s) of specialization, (2) solid exposure to key issues with which contemporary research in this field has been concerned, and (3) sufficient preparation for reading, working through, and understanding research articles in the field.</td>
<td>75% report confidence.</td>
<td>Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will conduct a survey of students. The Committee will summarize the results of the survey in the Ph.D. Assessment report presented to the Chair and the Council each March.</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td><strong>Measure Type:</strong> Survey</td>
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<td>Field comp graders’ report</td>
<td>Under development</td>
<td>Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will convene a focus group of students. The Committee will summarize the proceedings of the focus group in the Ph.D. Assessment report presented to the Chair and the Council each March.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td><strong>Measure Type:</strong> Quiz/ Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus Group.</td>
<td>75% report confidence in mastery of a field.</td>
<td>Prior to March 1 each year, the Graduate Studies Committee will convene a focus group of students. The Committee will summarize the proceedings of the focus group in the Ph.D. Assessment report presented to the Chair and the Council each March.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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### Related Action Steps

* Supporting Assessment: Design survey

**Description:** In order to increase the number and representative of student input, design a PhD assessment survey and administer to students for spring 2012 assessment cycle.