

GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT TEAM, 2009-2010

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I. Two types of assessment – Program Profile and Outcomes-Based Assessments

- 1) Program Profile Assessment: Conducted regularly and focuses on program quality and success. What is the quality of the incoming student pool? How productive is the department in terms of making a contribution to the field?
- 2) Outcomes-Based Assessment: Conducted less often than Program Profile Assessments and focuses on evaluating graduate program goals and the degree to which those goals are met. The ultimate objective is to use this self-analysis to improve graduate education and to promote program success. Are our graduate students really gaining the knowledge and skills necessary for their success in the field?

II. Benefits of creating our own assessment programs at URI

- 1) The timely creation of both Program Profile and Outcomes-Based Assessments will address NEASC and RIBGHE mandates and will give us the opportunity to devise an overarching assessment process that will be most applicable to our needs. The alternative is to have the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education dictate the process we will use in assessing our graduate programs.
 - 2) Developing such a dual-approach assessment program should allow departments/programs to gain important insights into the areas of graduate education in which they are succeeding, and the areas which can be improved. Since building excellence in our graduate programs is a primary focus of the Graduate School, we, along with Lori Ciccomascolo, Elaine Finan, and Bob Shea, have taken the initiative to promote, develop, and implement a comprehensive assessment program aimed at elevating the success and stature of all of our graduate programs at the University of Rhode Island.
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Outtakes from the most recent New England Association of Schools and Colleges report

“However, the team was concerned about the adequacy of the process for graduate program review. In general, the institution does not review graduate programs on a regular basis. Several programs are, of course, reviewed by professional accrediting organizations. But for the non-professional programs, the team found a lack of benchmarking of performance to similar disciplines in other institutions. These tasks are generally carried out at most institutions by institutional research or the Graduate School. The lack of periodic reviews or regular monitoring of graduate programs is of concern

“The institution must continue to work on the assessment of learning outcomes and embed such assessment in the culture and ways of doing business of the institution.”