

M.S. in Forest Resources and Conservation Academic Assessment Plan 2012-2013

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
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Office of the Provost

*University of
Florida*

*Institutional
Assessment*

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Enhancement*

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2012-2013 Academic Assessment Plan for M.S. in Forest Resources and Conservation

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

A. Mission

The School of Forest Resource and Conservation's mission is to develop and communicate new knowledge and technologies that advance the production, management and conservation of natural resources in an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable manner on local, regional, national and global levels.

The School of Forest Resources and Conservation supports the missions of the college and university to serve the nation's and state's critical needs by contributing to a well-qualified and broadly diverse citizenry, leadership and workforce through graduate education and to expand our understanding of the natural world, the intellect and the senses through graduate student research.

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

SLO Type	Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Degree Delivery
Knowledge	Describes and explains theories and concepts in major-specific and related subject matter areas relevant to the individualized focus of the degree program.	1) Supervisory committee evaluation of individualized Program of Study (scope, depth, rigor) utilizing a faculty developed rubric. 2) Supervisory committee evaluation of thesis defense and/or final examination utilizing a faculty developed rubric. 3) Students are periodically assessed regarding their progress towards meeting this SLO by their faculty advisor, and these data are annually collected and tabulated.	Both

SLO Type	Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Degree Delivery
Skills	Critically evaluates literature, analyzes and synthesizes information, understands and applies experimental and/or descriptive research methodologies, creates new knowledge through discovery, and effectively communicates information.	1) Supervisory committee evaluation of individualized Program of Study (scope, depth, rigor) utilizing a faculty developed rubric. 2) Supervisory committee evaluation of thesis defense and/or final examination utilizing a faculty developed rubric. 3) Students are periodically assessed regarding their progress towards meeting this SLO by their faculty advisor, and these data are annually collected and tabulated.	Both
Professional Behavior	Displays honest, ethical, and culturally sensitive behavior and practices in all scholarly activities including teaching, research, and outreach.	1) Compliance with the University of Florida's Honor Code. 2) Faculty observations of behavior and practices in the classroom, in the conduct of scholarly work, and during all examinations utilizing a faculty developed rubric. 3) Students are periodically assessed regarding their progress towards meeting this SLO by their faculty advisor, and these data are annually collected and tabulated.	Both

C. Research

Students have two options to receive an M.S. in Forest Resources and Conservation (FRC): 1) Thesis or 2) Non-Thesis. Students choosing the Thesis option are expected to be trained as researchers and there are a variety of methods designed to help students become researchers in Forest Resources and Conservation. First, they are required to take and pass FNR 5608: Research Planning. Second, students work closely with a faculty advisory and supervisory committee who suggest appropriate courses that will provide students with the research methods and theoretical framework for their topic of study. Based on their experiences working with their advisor, committee, and courses, students are expected to write and defend a research proposal, develop

and conduct a research project, and write and successfully defend a thesis. MS Non-thesis students are not required to attain strong research knowledge. However, they are expected to have a basic understanding of forest-based research, which is provided to students through their required FRC courses. Successful completion of these courses indicates that students have met this requirement.

D. Assessment Timeline

M.S. in Forest Resources and Conservation

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Assessment SLOs	Program of Study Review	Project Defense and Examination	Annual Evaluations
Knowledge			
#1	X	X	X
Skills			
#2	X	X	X
Professional Behavior			
#3			X

E. Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle for:

M.S. in Forest Resources and Conservation

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Analysis and Interpretation:

Annually in June

Program Modifications:

Completed upon evaluation of results July through September of 2014 and 2017

Dissemination:

Completed by July, 2014 and July, 2017

Year	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
SLOs					
Content Knowledge					
#1	X	X	X	X	X
Skills					
#2	X	X	X	X	X
Professional Behavior					
#3	X	X	X	X	X

F. Measurement Tools

Students working towards a Master of Science in Forest Resources and Conservation (MS FRC) specialize in a diversity of topics and disciplines ranging from geomatics and forest management to environmental education and ecotourism. Therefore, there is no set of courses or specific area of knowledge all MS FRC students can be assessed in terms of SLOs. Each student's major advisor and supervisory committee are charged with helping to develop the student's program of study and project. They are also the most appropriate group to evaluate the student's progress towards

achieving SLOs. Therefore, SLO assessment will be based on the process and procedures all MS FRC students move through to obtain their degree. Three tools will be used to assess progress toward attaining SLOs:

1. SLO Assessment Rubric will be developed based on the SLOs for the MS FRC degree and conducted throughout students' programs (see below);
2. Evaluation of students' final oral exam, completed when students have finished their courses and research; and
3. Evaluation of students' thesis (for MS-Thesis students only).

The SLO Assessment Rubric will be completed by students' major advisors (working with the supervisory committee, where appropriate) several times for students during key evaluation events already required as part of the degree: 1) annual evaluations (normally will occur twice for MS FRC students), 2) initial proposal review by MS FRC committee (MS Thesis students), and 3) thesis defense (MS Thesis students) or final exam (MS Non-thesis students).

Data for each MS FRC student will be compiled as the students move through their program and compiled within a SLO report. All students' reports will be filed with the Education/Training Coordinator, a senior staff position within the School of Forest Resources and Conservation. Data will be analyzed from each report to determine an overall assessment of SLO achievement for the MS FRC degree at the completion of an academic year. Results will be interpreted over the summer in years 2014 and 2017 – noting improvements to instruction if SLO assessment scores trend negative.

G. Assessment Oversight

Name	Department Affiliation	Email Address	Phone Number
Amr Abd-Elraham	Forest Resources and Conservation	aamr@ufl.edu	813-757-2283
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Figure 1. SFRC SLO Assessment Rubric



Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Term of Evaluation: Spring 2012

Anonymous Faculty Code: xxxx

Academic Program: Choose an item.

Degree: ☐ PhD ☐ MS ☐ MFRC ☐ MS non-thesis

How many years has the student been enrolled in this degree program? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Check milestone for this assessment: ☐ Annual Evaluation ☐ Qualifying Exam ☐ Final Exam ☐ Defense of Thesis/Dissertation

Assessment of progress toward SLOs is an opportunity for vital reflection and feedback. This process also generates critical data for ongoing evaluations of FRC degree programs for University SACS Accreditation and as required by the Florida legislature. We expect that students, during their graduate education, will advance toward ever higher achievement of program SLOs. Please take this aspect of mentoring and program accountability seriously.

For each SLO, select an integer score on a 10-point scale, from 1 = Fails to Demonstrate to 10 = Fully Demonstrates

Student Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

1. **Competency in major-specific and related subject matter areas relevant to the individualized focus of the degree program, e.g. physiology, genetics, ecology, economics, geomatics, management, environmental education, silviculture, pathology, and policy.**

Choose rating below

Skills

2. **Competence in critical evaluation of literature, analysis and synthesis of information, understanding and applying experimental and/or descriptive research methodologies (as applicable), creating new knowledge through discovery (as applicable), and effectively communicating information and ideas relevant to their specific program of study.**

Choose rating below

Professional Behavior

3. **Honest, ethical, and culturally sensitive behavior and practices in all scholarly activities including teaching, research, and outreach.**

Choose rating below