

# **Ph.D. in Anthropology Academic Assessment Plan**

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Susan deFrance  
sdef@ufl.edu

*Office of the Provost*

*University of Florida*

*Institutional  
Assessment*

*Continuous Quality  
Enhancement*

## Table of Contents

Academic Assessment Plan for Ph.D. in Anthropology .....	3
A. Mission .....	3
B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures .....	4
C. Research.....	5
D. Assessment Timeline .....	5
E. Assessment Cycle .....	6
F. Measurement Tools.....	6
G. Assessment Oversight.....	7
Figure 1. University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric.....	9
University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric, continued.....	10

# Academic Assessment Plan for Ph.D. in Anthropology

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

## A. Mission

### Department Mission

Anthropology is the study of humankind. Of all the disciplines that examine aspects of human existence and accomplishments, only anthropology explores the entire panorama of the human experience from human origins to contemporary forms of culture and social life. It is a generalizing and comparative discipline with a concern for understanding human diversity on a global scale. Anthropologists engage in empirical research with established theories, methods, and analytical techniques. They conduct field-based research as well as laboratory analyses and archival investigations.

A hallmark of anthropology is its holistic perspective – understanding humankind in terms of the dynamic interrelationships of all aspects of human existence. Different aspects of culture and society exhibit patterned interrelationships (e.g., political economy, social configurations, religion and ideology). Culture cannot be divorced from biology and adaptation, nor language from culture. Contemporary societies cannot be understood without consideration of historical and evolutionary processes. With this perspective, anthropology intersects the multiple approaches to the study of humankind – biological, social, cultural, historical, linguistic, cognitive, material, technological, affective, and aesthetic. This interdisciplinarity is integrated within anthropology as a whole and formalized in the four major subfields that compose the discipline – archaeological, biological, linguistic, and sociocultural anthropology – although many anthropologists also conduct research across these subfields.

### Anthropology and CLAS/University Mission

Anthropology students benefit from the holistic approach that intersects natural science, social science, and humanistic perspectives of the human condition. They become adept at understanding the cultural, biological, environmental, and historical bases for behaviors and precepts in their own and other societies. The self-reflection that results from applying the holistic approach and comparative method provides a broadened world view, one that rejects naive ethnocentrism and is more open to acceptance of other ways of living. The development of these skillsets dovetails well with the intellectual core mission of both CLAS and the University of Florida. Students develop as global citizens, aware of the world around them—their similarities, differences, and inequalities with other peoples or groups. These skills closely match with the internationalization goals of the University of Florida.

The department's mission is to maintain the vision of anthropology encapsulated in our traditional strengths among its faculty, graduate students, undergraduate majors, and other students taking anthropology courses, and to foster an understanding of anthropology within the university community and beyond. At the Graduate level, we draw strength from the rich heritage of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity that characterizes the missions of the college, and we actively investigate the biological and cultural bases for that diversity. Our mission focuses on understanding the human experience, both in terms of understanding the forces that help shape societies and their relations with each other and with their environments. Through our work as scholars, teachers, and through our service, we prepare outstanding practitioners and scholars in

anthropology to generate and disseminate new knowledge about and across these subfields, and, indeed, across other disciplines.

The mission of the University of Florida is to offer a broad-based, public education, one that brings together faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students to participate in the educational process that links the history of Western Europe with the traditions and cultures of all societies. Our research, teaching, and service in Anthropology directly support the mission of the University. Our traditionally holistic approach to cultural and natural phenomena, our traditional focus on the NonWestern “other,” and the comparative methods employed by anthropologists provide some of the foundational knowledge for the support of the University’s mission. Our teaching helps to train the next generation of scholars to tackle the important problems and questions of the discipline, our research generates new knowledge about these processes, and our service shares the benefits of this knowledge for the public good.

## B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

SLO Type	Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Degree Delivery
Knowledge	Identify, define and describe the foundational concepts of the discipline of Anthropology and its subfields.	Three essay questions administered as part of the PhD qualifying exam by a committee of at least three Department of Anthropology graduate faculty and one graduate faculty member from another UF unit.	Campus
Professional Behavior	Prepare and deliver conference-level presentations.	Review of conference participation conducted by sub-field faculty as part of annual evaluation of doctoral students by Department of Anthropology graduate faculty with expertise in the doctoral candidate’s primary field of study.	Campus
Skills	Students apply appropriate research methods and skills in the discipline to formulate a cogent research problem for the Ph.D. thesis.	Completion of departmental coursework providing training in an Anthropological research method. This includes laboratories, field schools, supervised research and research project courses, followed by successful defense of the Ph.D. thesis.	Campus

## C. Research

All students in anthropology are required to take our two Proseminar courses during their first year in the program. The purpose of the Proseminar courses is to provide our students with the historical, theoretical, methodological, and ethical foundations of the discipline, and begin the process of professionalization for our students. Because anthropology is a broad and holistic discipline, and one with multiple subfields, these courses provide the foundational material that links all anthropologists to each other.

As part of the process for training our students to conduct research, students work closely with their mentors to develop a curricular plan that will allow them to acquire the specific research skills and techniques that they need, whether by taking courses offered elsewhere in the college (as in the case of Statistics or Network Analysis) or by taking the appropriate research methods courses offered in the department itself. Because anthropology is a holistic discipline with multiple subfields, each student's specific needs are tailored to their subdiscipline and their own needs.

Anthropology as a discipline generally requires students to conduct research that is at least partly field-based, rather than being confined to a laboratory setting. As such, our students, as part of the process of their training, engage in research and data collection that is not located on the UF campus. Consequently, upon arrival during their first semester, they begin to work immediately with their faculty mentor to develop a their educational and research plan so that they may immediately begin the process of developing their research and applying for field research grants – many via external funding sources, so they may undertake their work.

As a component of professionalization, students are expected to present the results of their original research at state, regional, national, and, if possible, international conferences. The department provides limited support for conference travel for purposes of presenting research results. In-house travel funds derive from departmental fund-raising events and private funds. The department likewise awards several research grants from private funds to conduct summer fieldwork (Doughty, Goggin, Amaya-Burns, and Waggoner awards). We encourage our students working in Latin American to apply for research grants administered by Latin American Studies.

As one method of measuring student progress and professionalization, students are required to complete a self-report of their annual accomplishments. Students are then evaluated by their faculty mentors, and, following this, each subfield unit holds an annual meeting in which student performance is evaluated. Each student is evaluated on coursework performance, completion of graduate school milestones, publications and conference presentations, and overall progress through the program.

## D. Assessment Timeline

Program Ph.D. in Anthropology

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Assessment SLOs	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3
<b>Knowledge</b>			
Understanding Development of Discipline	Completion of Proseminar Courses	Ph.D. Qualifying Exam	Dissertation Defense
In-Depth Knowledge of Chosen Subfield	Ph.D. Qualifying Exam	Dissertation Defense	
<b>Skills</b>			
Research Methodology	Upon Completion of Each Advanced-Level Class	Dissertation Defense	
<b>Professional Behavior</b>			
Presentation of Original Research	Annual Evaluation by Faculty Supervisor	Annual Evaluation by Faculty in Candidate's Subfield	

## E. Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle for:

Program Ph.D. in Anthropology College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Analysis and Interpretation:

May-June

Program Modifications:

Completed by: August 31

Dissemination:

Completed by September 30

SLOs	Year	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
<b>Content Knowledge</b>							
Understanding Development of Discipline				x	x	x	x
In-Depth Knowledge of Chosen Subfield				x	x	x	x
<b>Skills</b>							
Research Methodology				x	x	x	x
<b>Professional Behavior</b>							
Presentation of Original Research				x	x	x	x

## F. Measurement Tools

The measurement tools for assessing outcomes involve a combination of tools. The **content knowledge** SLOs are measured through several different mechanisms. The faculty members who teach the two Proseminar courses provide one assessment of a student's understanding of the

discipline; they decide, based on the performance of the student, whether he or she has mastered the knowledge necessary for understanding anthropology. Students are assessed by their faculty supervisor and the members of the supervisory committee in two stages. The first stage is during their qualifying exam, and the second is at their dissertation defense. Students either pass or fail their qualifying exam. Likewise, the dissertation defense is assessed on a pass/fail basis. The rubric for the dissertation defense is in Appendix A.

Research methodology **Skills** are measured through the methods courses by the faculty who teach the classes.

**Professional Behavior** SLOs of students – in this case the presentation of original research – is measured annually by the faculty mentor, who writes an annual evaluation of the student's progress (which is partly based on student annual self-reports), and by the committee of faculty whose expertise mostly closely matches the student's work. Each year, for example, the faculty whose research expertise lies in cultural anthropology meet to evaluate all of the students who are specializing in that subfield.

### G. Assessment Oversight

Name	Department Affiliation	Email Address	Phone Number
Dr. Susan deFrance	Chair	<a href="mailto:sdef@ufl.edu">sdef@ufl.edu</a>	352-294-7531
Dr. Peter Collings	Graduate Coordinator	<a href="mailto:pcollings@ufl.edu">pcollings@ufl.edu</a>	352-294-7593

## Appendix A. Ph.D. Thesis Rubric – Ph.D. in Anthropology

### Ph.D. Dissertation Rubric Ph.D. in Anthropology

	Passes	Fails
Clear and appropriate explanation of research problem and/or program	Thesis statement is clear and places the problem within a larger research tradition in Anthropology.	Thesis statement is insufficiently defined, the research problem is not sufficiently developed, or the problem is inappropriate for the scope of the discipline.
Appropriate use of advanced theoretical and/or analytical methodologies	Research methodologies employed in the thesis are appropriate for the problem, and executed properly.	Research methodologies are inappropriate for the research problem, or the methods are employed incorrectly.
Appropriate presentation strategies (written and/or oral) for scholarly audience	Presentation of thesis is competent such that it would be suitable for presentation at a national conference.	Presentation is not competent or substantive enough to be presented at an academic conference.
Clear explanation of research outcomes and/or implications	Thesis makes appropriate conclusions and connects the research findings to the broader research tradition in the discipline.	Research outcomes are insufficiently addressed, inadequately explained, or unconnected to prior work in the discipline.



## Figure 1. University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric

Related resources are found at <http://www.ua.assessment.edu>

Program:		Year:			
Component	Criterion	Rating			Comments
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
Mission Statement	Mission statement is articulated clearly.				
	The program mission clearly supports the College and University missions, and includes specific statements describing how it supports these missions.				
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Assessment Measures	SLOs are stated clearly.				
	SLOs focus on demonstration of student learning.				
	SLOs are measurable.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLO.				
Research	Research expectations for the program are clear, concise, and appropriate for the discipline.				
Assessment Map	The Assessment Map indicates the times in the program where the SLOs are assessed and measured.				
	The Assessment Map identifies the assessments used for each SLO.				
Assessment Cycle	The assessment cycle is clear.				
	All student learning outcomes are measured.				
	Data is collected at least once in the cycle.				
	The cycle includes a date or time period for data analysis and interpretation.				
	The cycle includes a date for planning improvement actions based on the data analysis.				
	The cycle includes a date for dissemination of results to the appropriate stakeholders.				

University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric, continued

Component	Criterion	Rating			Comments
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
<b>Measurement Tools</b>	Measurement tools are described clearly and concisely.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLOs.				
	Methods and procedures reflect an appropriate balance of direct and indirect methods.				
	The report presents examples of at least one measurement tool.				
<b>Assessment Oversight</b>	Appropriate personnel (coordinator, committee, etc.) charged with assessment responsibilities are identified				