

Master of Science in Food and Resource Economics Academic Assessment Plan 2013-14

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Dr. Sherry Larkin, Graduate Coordinator, slarkin@ufl.edu
Dr. Rodney Clouser, Chair, rclouser@ufl.edu

Office of the Provost

*University of
Florida*

*Institutional
Assessment*

*Continuous Quality
Enhancement*

Table of Contents

2013-14 Academic Assessment Plan for M.S. Thesis in Food and Resource Economics.....	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.....	6
Appendix A: M.S. Thesis Checklist	7

2013-14 Academic Assessment Plan for M.S. Thesis in Food and Resource Economics

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

A. Mission

Through a distinctive tradition of core-discipline excellence, interdisciplinary collaborations and productive partnerships, the Food and Resource Economics Department (FRED) teaches students to think critically, objectively and creatively and to be lifelong learners, engaged leaders and productive citizens; pursues research to advance knowledge and to address state, national and global challenges; and engages and educates the public.

The Food and Resource Economics Department 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 Measures	Degree Delivery
Knowledge	Explain relevant economic principles and apply economic theory to address problems relevant to agriculture and natural resources.	(1) Minimum GPA in core economic classes.	Campus
Skills	Identify relevant economic problem, complete research project, and present results to an appropriate audience.	(1) Successful presentation and defense of the thesis.	Campus
Professional Behavior	Display honesty and integrity in research and professional activities.	(1) Attends UF Student Services Honesty and Ethics training. (2) Adheres to the University of Florida's Honor Code.	Campus

C. Research

During new student orientation in the department, M.S. students are required to visit with at least three Graduate Faculty to share research background and interests, and seek advice on potential funding opportunities. Students are encouraged to identify their supervisory committee chair as quickly as possible (but no later than at the end of their second semester of classes), and begin to work with these faculties as research mentors.

Students in the M.S. thesis program are expected to conduct a research project, the results of which contribute to the discipline's knowledge, and communicate those results to appropriate audiences including presentation of research paper(s) on campus and, if possible, at discipline related conferences.

Students prepare for their research project by completing core classes in Food and Resource Economics and a minimum of 12 elective hours. This can include AEB courses in finance, marketing, agribusiness, natural resources and the environment and quantitative methods. In all AEB courses, students are exposed to current peer-reviewed literature and applied applications of economics to agricultural and natural resources issues.

Finally, to facilitate and encourage presentation of research results at professional conferences, students are eligible for a portion of travel expenses to be paid by the department when the student is an author and presenter. Students are encouraged to augment these internal funds with matching support from the college and university.

D. Assessment Timeline

MS thesis in Food and Resource Economics College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Assessment: SLOs	GPA in core courses	Thesis presentation and defense	Honesty and ethics training	Honor code
Knowledge #1	X			
Skills #2		X		
Professional Behavior #3			X	X

E. Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle for:

MS thesis, Food and Resource Economics College of Agricultural and Life Science

Analysis and Interpretation: August 31

Program Modifications: Completed by October 15

Dissemination: Completed by December 15

Year:	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2016-17
SLOs				
Knowledge #1	X	X	X	X
Skills #2	X	X	X	X
Professional Behavior #3	X	X	X	X

F. Measurement Tools

SLO #1 is assessed using the “M.S. Thesis Checklist” in Appendix A. The graduate coordinators office maintains the checklist and will identify (during summer term) students that do not have a 3.0 in the four core courses, which include: AEB 6106 Microeconomic Principles and Analysis, AEB 6225 Public Policy and the Agribusiness Firm, AEB 6553 Elements of Econometrics, and AEB 6817 Survey Research Methods for Economists. The grades of these core classes are summarized on the Checklist and are reflective of knowledge as follows: C=improvement needed, B=satisfactory skills achieved and A=superior skill achievement. An overall skill level of B, measured by cumulative GPA in the core classes, is required to indicate a sufficient level of knowledge. Any student failing to achieve either standard is counseled by the graduate coordinator to discuss options, such as re-taking the course.

SLO #2 is assessed by the student’s graduate committee with feedback from department members present during the defense; students that “pass” the defense are deemed to have the described research skills.

SLO #3 is assessed by (a) required attendance at a UF Student Services Honesty and Ethics training offered during FRED graduate student orientation and recorded on the student checklist, and (b) noting whether any comments were recorded on the Checklist (e.g., violations of the UF Honor Code had been reported to the Dean of Students Office).

G. Assessment Oversight

Name and title	Department Affiliation	Email Address	Phone
Sherry Larkin, Graduate Coordinator	Food and Resource Economics	slarkin@ufl.edu	352-294-7676
Rod Clouser, Chair	Food and Resource Economics	rclouser@ufl.edu	352-294-7623
Zhifeng Gao	Food and Resource Economics	zfgao@ufl.edu	352-294-7672
Jaclyn Kropp	Food and Resource Economics	jkropp@ufl.edu	352-294-7631

Appendix A: M.S. Thesis Checklist

Name: _____ UFID: _____

First Term/Year: _____ Final Term/Year: _____

Funding: ____ Yes ____ No ____ State ____ Grant \$ _____

Comments: _____

Year 1	1 st Semester		
	Fall	FRED Orientation	_____
		Bio for website	_____
		Assistantship Hire	_____
		Signed LOA	_____
		Performance Evaluation	_____

Student completed UF Student Services Honesty/Ethics Training that will help them to understand and display Professional Behavior during their graduate program (SLO #3):

Achieved: Yes No

2 nd Semester	Signed LOA	_____
Spring	Transfer of Credit from BA/BS	_____
	Supervisory committee	_____
	Program of Study Complete	_____
	Performance Evaluation	_____
3 rd Semester	Signed LOA	_____
Summer	Performance Evaluation	_____

Comments regarding professional behavior during year 1 (SLO #3):

Year 2	1 st Semester	Signed LOA	_____
	Fall	Performance Evaluation	_____
	2 nd Semester	Signed LOA	_____
	Spring	Thesis Proposal Seminar	_____
		Performance Evaluation	_____
	3 rd Semester	Signed LOA	_____
	Summer	Degree Application	_____
		Graduation Check	_____
		Defense	_____
		Submit Defense/Pub Agreement	_____
		First Submission ETD	_____
		Final Submission ETD	_____
	ETD Signature Page	_____	
	Exit Surveys	_____	
	Performance Evaluation	_____	
	Assistantship Termination	_____	

Student applied, analyzed and synthesized content knowledge to address an agricultural or natural resourced related economic issue during thesis defense and, as a result, “passed” their defense (SLO #2):

Achieved: Yes No Incomplete

Comments regarding professional behavior during year 2 (SLO #3):

Comments: _____

Core Courses

Grade (SLO #1)

AEB 6106	_____
AEB 6225	_____
AEB 6553	_____
AEB 6817	_____