**Questions to Guide Designing Master’s Degree Assessment Studies**

Programs may choose to initiate their annual program assessment planning by opening the process to faculty discussion. The questions below are offered as suggestions for organizing discussion. Note that the various program activities are listed to stimulate your thinking; progress in your program may follow a different path, or activities may occur at different times in your program. Programs may develop their own questions as well.

Once a question is chosen by program faculty, a faculty meeting could be devoted to outlining and detailing key issues and observations. As an example of next steps, a faculty group might then be asked to further articulate issues for investigation. That group may also specify assessment methods and begin designing a process and tools for the study.

As another example of next steps, a faculty group may also be commissioned to draft details of student competencies that mark each phase of graduate study, and how these competencies are addressed in formal student learning activities.

*Program faculty are always welcomed to consult with the OPAIR Assessment Liaisons to help guide or facilitate faculty discussion.*

**Master’s degree: Sample degree assessment study questions**

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| **Program Component** | **Sample Degree Assessment Study Questions** |
| **Program Activities**  **Introductory/Practice level**: seminars, required coursework, research assistant work, etc.  **Mastery level**: advanced seminars, thesis, internship project, capstone experience, licensure exam, etc… | Are activities contributing as expected to development of program learning objectives?  What aspects of the program are contributing most/least to student success during the current program?  What special opportunities or challenges do the various required student activities present for current students and/or faculty? How can these be addressed to improve achievement of program learning objectives? |
| **Students** | What backgrounds (academic, economic, study skills, etc…), program perceptions, or career expectations do students have that contribute to or constrain success in the program, and therefore potentially affect achievement of program learning objectives?  To what extent do students’ changing perceptions or career expectations affect achievement of program learning objectives? How successfully do various phases of the program of the program address these changes?  To what extent do student needs, goals, expectations, perceptions need to be balanced against those of program? |
| **Objectives** | How well are objectives being achieved in the current program?  To what extent are current program learning objectives realistic and appropriate for program activities?  To what extent do faculty articulate expected level of performance for each program learning objective and program phase? |
| **Context** | What are current contextual factors that are affecting what happens in the program? In the department, college, campus? In the larger disciplinary community beyond the University? These factors could include economic, political or cultural trends at regional, national or international levels.  Which of those factors are helpful/constraining during various phases of the program? |