

**Department of Political Science
Current Assessment Plan (May 2000, Revised May 2005)**

Department of Political Science Mission Statement

The concentration program in political science has many purposes:

- to develop the skills of critical thinking and analysis
- to develop understanding of political institutions and processes in the U.S., other countries, and world
- to develop the interest and skills required for active and responsible citizenship

Program	Learning Objectives/ Educational Outcomes	Program Requirement	Assessment Method	Outcome Measure
General Program (Majors)	<i>1. Critical thinking</i>	Coursework: Term papers, essays, exams	A) portfolio of written coursework	at least 60% meets/exceeds Dept. criteria
	<i>2. Substantive knowledge:</i> facts, concepts, theories, etc.			
	<i>3. Research, writing skills</i>			
	<i>4. Interest/skills for citizenship</i>	Coursework and Internship	B) Graduate Survey, portfolio, Internship paper	at least 60% meet expectations
TCP Program	same for 1-3 above	coursework only	A and B above	As for majors

A) Assessment of Student Course Materials

Method for collecting student materials

1. Faculty deposit into the student's assessment file at least one representative paper per course for each major in her/his junior and senior year.
2. Faculty make copies of these materials BEFORE grading.
3. Copies of student written materials are held in a central location until the graduation assessment.

Student materials and information to be collected

1. Each instructor selects a paper representative of coursework for each course in which a major participates in her/his junior and senior years
2. The faculty member attaches a copy of the assignment or exam to which student was responding (when relevant).

3. The following data may also be assembled for departmental information purposes: Student Age; Gender; Years in Program; Status (Sophomore, Junior, Senior etc); number of political science credit hours completed; number of General Education credit hours completed; GPA; Final grade in the course
4. The internship coordinator collects and deposits the major's internship paper.

Assessment Procedures/Implementation

1. The Department as a whole engages in assessment.
2. A minimum of 2 faculty will assess each piece of student material using established criteria.
3. Disputes/border-line cases will be discussed and resolved by readers.
4. The committee will generate summary information from the assessment, and tabulate data.

Scoring Rubric for Assessment of Student Written Materials (May 2005)

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectation	Meets Expectation	Partially meets expectation	Does not meet expectation
1. Provides a sense of context, and demonstrates a solid grasp of the topic				
2. Uses evidence, cases, textual evident to support arguments				
3. Uses political/social science concepts to frame topic				
4. Demonstrates awareness of alternative theories, explanations, interpretations, for evidence				
5. Demonstrates knowledge of criticisms of categories, languages, theories used				
6. Presents ideas/material in logical, organized sequences				
7. Writes clearly and correctly				

1. Provides a sense of context, and demonstrates a solid grasp of the topic

Meeting Expectations: Demonstrates knowledge of both the conceptual/theoretical and the empirical/historical context of the topic.

Exceeding Expectations: Demonstrates knowledge of both conceptual/theoretical and the empirical/historical context of the topic, as well as the implications of the topic for theory, research, policy.

Partially Meeting Expectations: Some awareness of the empirical/historical context, but little or no conceptual/theoretical context presented.

Does Not Meet Expectations: Neither empirical/historical or conceptual/theoretical context presented in the paper.

2. Uses evidence, cases, textual evidence to support arguments

Meeting Expectations: Relevant relationships established between claims and evidence. Major points substantiated with evidence.

Exceeding expectations: Student presents relevant relationships established between claims and evidence and major points are substantiated with evidence. Student suggests alternative sources of evidence, or evidence/data needed to make alternative arguments.

Partially Meeting Expectations: Some relevant relationships are established between claims and evidence. Major points only partially substantiated with evidence

Does Not Meet Expectations: No connection between arguments and evidence, or no evidence provided to substantiate major points.

3. Uses political/social science concepts to frame topic

Meeting Expectations: Student uses a major concept in the paper (concept can be either a macro, micro or intermediate level concept used in the explanation of political/social phenomena).

Exceeding Expectations: Student systematically uses and analyzes more than one major concept in depth.

Partially Meeting Expectations: Student shows some awareness of one concept, and makes marginal use of it in the paper.

Does Not Meet Expectations: No knowledge of concepts, and little use of any.

4. Demonstrates awareness of alternative theories, explanations, interpretations, for evidence

Meeting Expectations: Student presents two alternative theories, explanations, interpretations, that can be used to explain the evidence presented in the paper.

Exceeding Expectations: Student presents more than two alternative theories, explanations, interpretations, that can be used to explain the evidence presented in the paper.

Partially Meeting Expectations: Student presents one alternative theory, explanation, interpretation, that can be used to explain the evidence presented in the paper.

Does Not Meet Expectations: No awareness of alternative theories, explanations, interpretations.

5. Demonstrates knowledge of criticisms of categories, languages, theories used

Meeting Expectations: Student presents one limitation or criticism of theories and interpretations used in the paper.

Exceeding Expectations: Student presents more than one limitation or criticism of theories and interpretations used in the paper.

Partially Meeting Expectations: Student presents a minimal, fragmented, or implicit discussion of the limitations or criticisms of theories and interpretations used in the paper.

Does Not Meet Expectations: No presentation of limitations or criticisms.

6. Presents ideas/materials in logical, organized sequences

Meeting Expectations: Use of Subsections. A clear Introduction and Conclusion. Ordered paragraphs. Logical transitions between subsections. Absence of non-sequiturs.

Not Meeting Expectations: Disorganized, no clear development of argument or presentation of data or information.

7. Writes clearly and correctly

Meeting expectations: Student uses standard rules of grammar and composition [Rules as enumerated in Chicago Manual of Style, for example]. Minimal errors in sentence construction, grammar, spelling etc.

Exceeding expectations: Sophisticated and flexible writing style, using multiple sentence construction formats, absence of errors.

Partially meeting expectations: Student writes clearly, but presence of errors in sentence construction, grammar, spelling etc.

Does Not Meet Expectations: Multiple and significant errors in grammar, sentence construction and spelling.

B) Graduate Survey

Implementation

1. The survey (attached) will be conducted on the population of Political Science graduates five years after graduation from UM-Flint. For the first time the population will include all graduates for this period between 5-10 years after graduation. From then forward it will include graduates 5-6 years after graduation every 5 years.
2. Questions in the graduate survey fall into three categories: those relating to the program in Political Science (#s 1-3), those relating to civic responsibility (#s 4-7), and those relating to work and family (#s 8-9). The goal for the questions relating to the program in Political Science is that all students will average 60% or higher on at least two in the series; the goal for the questions relating to civic responsibility is that all students will average at least 60% on at least two in the series; the goal for the questions relating to work and family is that students will average at or above 50% on at least one in the series.

D) Assessment of the Internship Paper

The examination of the paper will involve the following criteria:

- Knowledge of organization's purpose and relationship to broader processes of government and politics
- Knowledge of organization's rules, policies, procedures and practices, including its decision-making structure
- Knowledge of citizens, clients, constituencies with which the organization is most concerned
- Knowledge of how citizens, clients, constituencies gain access to the organization and its resources
- Knowledge of the contributions and impacts of the organization (and the limits of the organization in solving problems, meeting needs, organizing public politics)
- Critical thinking with respect to all of the above. Such critical thinking might include use of social science and political science concepts (their use to discuss the organization, or a critique of such concepts based upon practical experience), alternative explanations for agency/organization practices, suggested alternative operating procedures and practices, or critical discussion of the political or social environment in which the organization operates.

The paper will be rated as:

- 1 = unacceptable
- 2 = acceptable
- 3 = outstanding

It is anticipated at least 75% will achieve a rating of outstanding or acceptable on at least four criteria.

Students will also be asked to assess the internship on a questionnaire, in terms of its effectiveness as an experience in learning about organizational functioning. They will rate the internship experience's educational element as:

- very effective
- somewhat effective
- not very effective

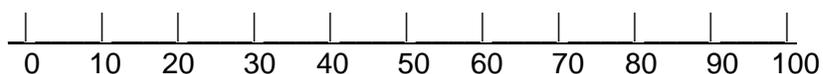
It is anticipated that at least 75% will assess the learning experience as somewhat effective or very effective.

POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSESSMENT SURVEY OF GRADUATES

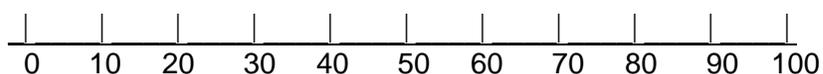
The following survey consists of open-ended (back of page) and closed-ended (below) questions. The survey is anonymous and the results will remain confidential and no individual will be identified in the analysis of the survey.

The following questions utilize a 100 point scale. Below each statement indicate how closely the statement reflects your feelings with 0 being least closely and 100 being most closely.

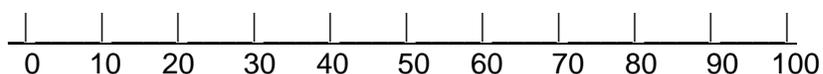
- 1) I was satisfied with my Political Science education at UM-Flint.



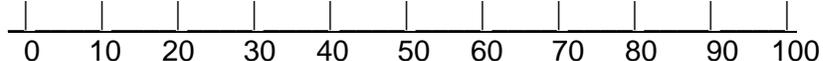
- 2) My Internship in Public Service was a positive experience.



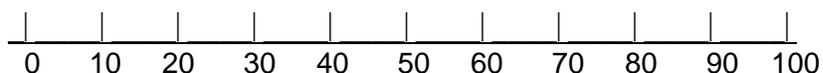
- 3) I was advised competently during my education in Political Science at UM-Flint.



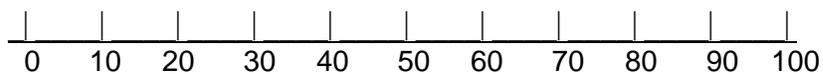
- 4) My Political Science education prepared me for active participation in politics or the community.



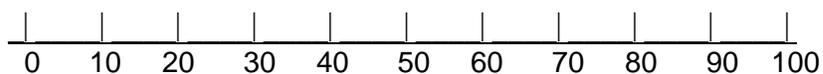
- 5) I participate regularly in electoral politics (e.g., voting, working on campaigns).



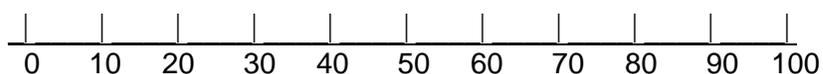
- 6) I participate in community-based organizations (e.g., unions, religious organizations, service organizations).



- 7) My Political Science education has increased my awareness of social and political issues.



- 8) My Political Science education has helped me in my work or career.



- 9) My Political Science education has helped me meet the needs of my family.

