

Evaluating Graduate Education

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Preparation for Presentation

Please prepare your thoughts regarding the following practices:

- Graduate students taking an undergraduate course and doing extra work to make it graduate credit.
- Graduate program with only one professor teaching.
- All graduate faculty have terminal degrees from the same institution.
- Graduate education merely means digging deeper into the facts.
- Graduate education rigor means longer papers, more papers, and harder tests.

Workshop Agenda

1. Undergraduate vs Graduate Education
2. Faculty
3. Learning Resources
4. Assessment and Evaluation
5. ABHE Standards
6. Admissions

1. Undergraduate vs Graduate

There must be a difference!

Undergraduate vs Graduate instruction

- How do we distinguish between undergraduate and graduate?
- Undergraduate
 - Foundation is built (history, Theology, general beliefs of the cognate area)
 - Establish through study of depth and breadth of the cognate area
 - What are the topics to be discussed, applied, etc.
 - Evaluation of the facts

Undergraduate vs Graduate, *continued*

- Graduate
 - Foundation is based upon philosophy of the cognate area
 - Why the cognate area developed as it did?
 - Why does the cognate area include the associated components?
 - Critical thinking about the cognate area development, progress?

Undergraduate vs Graduate - Rigor

- Is there an institutional statement of rigor that defines the levels related to the degrees? (11a, ee. 1, 7, 8, 16)
- Do tests merely ask for more information, facts, details of the cognate area?
- Do tests ask for pieces and parts and how they fit, like a jigsaw puzzle?
- Do tests / assessments ask for integration of philosophy, values, and facts?

2. Faculty

Qualifications and Number

Faculty Qualifications

- Principle: Graduate study requires faculty with terminal degrees. (see 9a, 1, 2, 4-specifically). All other requirements apply also.
- Approaches . . .
 - A terminal degree in the specific cognate area
 - A terminal degree in a related area and at least masters in the specific cognate area – provide justification (not just graduate hours, a graduate degree!).
 - A masters degree in a related area and significant experience of quality in the specific area of teaching: Demonstrated quality of experience. Justification include documentation of experience—more than “worked for 25 years.”

Faculty Number

- A graduate degree should be built upon a community of scholars (ATS language).
- One faculty member teaching a graduate degree – lacks the kind of diversity of education and thought to challenge the student at the graduate level.
- At least two people with terminal degrees in the degree area—three would be better, particularly for doctoral programs.
- Example: MDiv: Bible, Philosophy, ministry area. More than one person!
 - Bible and Ministry person
 - Philosophy and Theology person

Faculty Involvement

- The graduate faculty (seminary or university model) are part of the institutional faculty (9b).
- Involved in library development, faculty governance, etc.
- Suggestion: graduate faculty should not be outside of the institutional faculty circles, decision making, etc.

3. Learning Resources

Depth and Breadth



Learning Resources Depth

- Collection Development Policy should identify clearly the cognate areas resources:
 - General Collection
 - Classroom Support
 - Research
- MA, MTh, PhD are research degrees (although research distinction questioned)
- MDiv, DMin are professional degrees
- Both require research, although different

Learning Resources: Breadth

- For research degrees, the library must consider that a thesis and dissertation expands beyond the specific class resources.
- Need for building resources for related research.
 - Online
 - Other libraries
 - Decide: Own or Access
- Well Defined: Information Literacy program defined and instructed (10, ee. 13)
- Clear involvement of graduate faculty in library development.

4. Assessment and Evaluation

Graduate Level

Assessment Plans

- Less about facts and details
- More about integration of facts and details to reflect, use, or develop a philosophy
- Critical Thinking
- Analytical Research
- Teaching: less pedagogy and more andragogy methodologies

Evaluation

- The standards are qualitative – evaluative judgments should be qualitative also.
- Evaluation rubrics should reflect qualitative criteria
- Evaluation rubrics should have criteria beyond merely the use of information only; instead, clearly require integration of a philosophy of the field, a theology of the field, spiritual formation, and the integration of information and action.
- Effectiveness!

5. Degrees

Standard 11a, ee. 14-20

Graduate Program Essential Elements

14. A minimum of 30 semester (45 quarter) hours
15. Curricula and resources support programs that foster progressively more advanced student educational achievement and more effective ministry-leadership than undergraduate education
16. Curricula providing for the development of research and independent thinking at an advanced level or appropriate level of professional practice
17. Programs that ensure students develop and demonstrate significant ability to think biblically in relation to their academic or professional disciplines through prerequisites, curricular requirements, or program-level learning outcomes

Graduate Essential Elements, continued

18. Appropriate prerequisite or curricular requirements to ensure that students are capable of pursuing advanced studies in the discipline.
19. A culture of learning that cultivates critical thinking, theological reflection, spiritual formation, and effective ministry or professional practices.
20. The delineation of expectations for ministry-oriented and professionally-oriented programs that include practical experiences and applied knowledge through practicums, internships, or other appropriate means. *Note that 11b also applies to graduate instruction.*

Admissions

Ensure the Student is Prepared

Demonstrated Preparation

- Bachelors to begin Masters
- Appropriate Masters to begin Doctoral work
- Transcripts providing evidence of ability to meet degree requirements

Transfer of Credit

- Transfer is generally limited in graduate programs – protect the quality of institution's graduate degree
- If transfer, criteria established and followed strictly to protect the institution's degree quality
- **CONSIDER:** The graduate degree – the institution's Measure of Quality

Discussion?

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