

Anthropology PhD

Program Mission Statement

Mission Statement (Full Description):

The mission of the PhD program in Anthropology is to provide the highest quality graduate instruction and professional training for students in anthropology. All graduates at the doctorate level will have gained theoretical and methodological expertise in a specific sub-discipline of anthropology, developed the research skills to carry out original field and/or laboratory investigations, and will have made independent contributions to anthropological knowledge. These will enable them to fulfill SMU's overall mission of producing students who will excel in their profession, whether it be an academic or applied venue.

Does your program offer courses at an off-campus instructional site (not at SMU Dallas campus)?:

No

Does your program offer courses through distance education technology (e.g., asynchronous, synchronous, or both)?:

No

During which academic year were students first enrolled in this program?:

Prior to AY2022-2023

Progress:

Complete

SLO 1: Anthropological Theory

Step 1A: SLO Number:

1

Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will demonstrate command of the discipline's theoretical and methodological foundations and articulate a sophisticated argument as well as demonstrate a very good command of concepts and theoretical approaches in the discipline.

Step 2A: Measure:

Commented [SS1]: Suggestions for Improvement

1. Highlight Distinctive Features of the Program:

Mention any unique strengths of the PhD program, such as specialized research facilities, fieldwork opportunities, or partnerships with external organizations, to make the mission statement more compelling to prospective students.

2. Clarify Alignment with SMU's Broader Mission:

Emphasize how the program contributes to SMU's larger goals of fostering academic excellence, promoting global impact, or advancing research in areas of societal importance, reinforcing the connection between the program and the university's mission.

3. Expand on Professional Preparation: While the mission highlights preparation for both academic and applied careers, expanding on specific skills or training that set students up for success in these areas would add clarity and specificity.

Suggested Template:

The mission of the PhD program in Anthropology at Southern Methodist University (SMU) is to provide the highest quality graduate instruction and professional training, equipping students with advanced theoretical and methodological expertise in a specific sub-discipline of anthropology. Graduates will develop the research skills needed to carry out original field and/or laboratory investigations, contributing to the advancement of anthropological knowledge through independent research.

Commented [SS2]: Suggestions for Improvement

1. Specify Key Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks:

Define the core theoretical and methodological foundations that students should be familiar with. For example, if the discipline is anthropology, this could include key anthropological theories such as structuralism, cultural materialism, or ethnographic methodologies.

2. Develop Measurable Performance Indicators: Add specific indicators for assessing the sophistication of student arguments, the depth of their understanding of concepts, and the application of theoretical approaches. For example, create a rubric that evaluates the clarity, depth, and originality of arguments, as well as the correct application of methods.

3. Include a Time-Bound Component: Specify the timeframe within which students must demonstrate proficiency in the theoretical and methodological foundations, such as by the end of their second year or during comprehensive exams.

Suggested Template:

By the end of [specific course or semester], students will demonstrate a command of the discipline's theoretical and methodological foundations, and articulate sophisticated arguments that demonstrate a strong understanding of key concepts and theoretical approaches. This includes:

Students will complete a PhD Qualifying Exam in which they must demonstrate command of the relevant anthropological theory for their proposed research. The qualifying exam will be assessed by a three-person committee using the attached rubric for "Mastery of anthropological theory."

Attached Files

[Qualifying exams rubric MASTER 2023-2024.pdf](#)

[Qualifying Exam Artifact 1.pdf](#)

[Qualifying exams rubric 2024 FINAL.pdf](#)

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):

Qualifying exam, Rubric

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:

Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

At least 70% of students will achieve 3 or better on this metric based on our rubric for this SLO.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:

Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

Superficially, we met our goals with 100% of students scoring above 3 for the theory category on the rubric. However, with such a small annual sample size (N=1 in this case), a longer window of observation would probably be more useful for assessing the program (see below).

Attached Files

[Qualifying exams rubric MASTER 2023-2024.pdf](#)

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:

It is difficult to reliably interpret the results with such a small sample size, although it appears that we are meeting our target. Perhaps expanding the window of observation would provide more robust results for interpretation.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):

Results of the students' assessment and our current goals have been shared with the Curriculum Committee. The Assessment Coordinator (Roos) suggests looking at scores averaged over a three year window for more robust results.

Attached Files

[August 15 2024 Assessment Committee Meeting Notes.pdf](#)

Step 5B: Type of Action:

Faculty involvement

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):

Administrator, Committee, Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:

The Curriculum Committee met on August 15th to discuss current and future assessments for anthropology programs. Ongoing email exchanges among the Committee occurred throughout September 2024.

Attached Files

[August 15 2024 Assessment Committee Meeting Notes.pdf](#)

Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

The 2024-2025 will be when action plans are made and put into effect now that we have constituted a Curriculum Committee to regularly review our programmatic assessment outcomes. Our first plan of action is to expand the learning window (data accumulation) to cover three years of PhD graduates to provide a more reliable dataset for interpretation and further action plans.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):
In progress

Progress:
Complete

SLO 2: Mastery of Topical and Regional Expertise

Step 1A: SLO Number:
2

Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will demonstrate a mastery of the relevant research and literature that pertains to their topical and regional areas of research.

Step 2A: Measure:

Students will complete a PhD dissertation in which they must demonstrate command of the research and literature for their proposed research. The dissertation will be assessed by a four-person committee using the attached rubric for "Mastery of student's area of expertise."

Attached Files

[Dissertation Approval Page Artifact 1.pdf](#)
[Phd dissertation rubric_2024 FINAL.pdf](#)

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):
Dissertation defense ,Rubric,Written paper/project

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:
Direct

Commented [SS3]: Suggestions for Improvement

- 1.Specify Key Research Areas:** Define the key areas of literature and research that students are expected to master, including foundational studies, contemporary debates, and region-specific research. This would give students a clearer understanding of what is required.
- 2.Develop Measurable Performance Indicators:** Create a detailed rubric that assesses students' ability to critically evaluate the literature, synthesize key findings, and apply them to their research topics. Indicators could include depth of understanding, quality of synthesis, and originality in applying existing research to their topical areas.
- 3.Clarity the Timeframe for Mastery:** Indicate when students are expected to demonstrate mastery, such as by the time of their dissertation proposal or PhD qualifying exam, to ensure they have adequate time to build this competency.

Suggested Template

By the time of their [dissertation proposal or comprehensive exam], students will demonstrate mastery of the relevant research and literature that pertains to their topical and regional areas of research. This includes:

- Comprehensive Literature Review:** Demonstrating an understanding of foundational and current research in their field, including key theoretical frameworks, debates, and empirical studies related to [specific topical and regional areas].
 - Critical Evaluation:** Critically analyzing existing research, identifying gaps in the literature, and synthesizing findings that are relevant to their research questions.
 - Application of Research:** Applying relevant literature to their research topics, demonstrating how their work builds on or challenges existing studies.
- Students' mastery will be assessed through [literature reviews, research papers, or dissertation proposals], evaluated using a rubric that measures:

- 1.Depth of Understanding:** Mastery of key literature and the ability to contextualize it within broader academic debates.
- 2.Synthesis and Analysis:** The ability to integrate diverse sources of literature into a coherent framework that supports the student's research.
- 3.Application to Research:** The extent to which the student effectively applies relevant literature to their own research questions and regional focus.

The target is for at least 80% of students to achieve a score of 3 or higher on this metric based on the rubric's criteria for literature mastery.

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

At least 70% of students will achieve 3 or better on this metric based on our rubric for this SLO.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:

Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

Superficially, we met our goals with 100% of students scoring above 3 for the "Mastery of student's area of expertise" category on the rubric. However, with such a small annual sample size (N=1 in this case), a longer window of observation would probably be more useful for assessing the program (see below).

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)

[Dissertation Approval Page Artifact 1.pdf](#)

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:

It is difficult to reliably interpret the results with such a small sample size, although it appears that we are meeting our target. Perhaps expanding the window of observation would provide more robust results for interpretation.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):

Results of the students' assessment and our current goals have been shared with the Curriculum Committee. The Assessment Coordinator (Roos) suggests looking at scores averaged over a three year window for more robust results.

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Step 5B: Type of Action:

Faculty involvement

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):

Administrator, Committee, Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:

The Curriculum Committee met on August 15th to discuss current and future assessments for anthropology programs. Ongoing email exchanges among the Committee occurred throughout September 2024.

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[August 15 2024 Assessment Committee Meeting Notes.pdf](#)

Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

The 2024-2025 will be when action plans are made and put into effect now that we have constituted a Curriculum Committee to regularly review our programmatic assessment outcomes. Our first plan of action is to expand the learning window (data accumulation) to cover three years of PhD graduates to provide a more reliable dataset for interpretation and further action plans.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):

In progress

Progress:

Complete

SLO 3: Mastery of Anthropology Methods

Step 1A: SLO Number:

3

Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will demonstrate the ability to develop research questions that are well-defined and connected to the theoretical framework using appropriate anthropological methods to conduct doctoral-level research.

Step 2A: Measure:

Students will complete a PhD dissertation in which they must demonstrate ability to develop well-defined research questions that can be evaluated with appropriate methods. The dissertation will be assessed by a four-person committee using the attached rubric for "Research questions and methodology."

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)
[Dissertation Approval Page Artifact 1.pdf](#)
[Phd dissertation rubric 2024 FINAL.pdf](#)

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):

Dissertation defense ,Rubric,Written paper/project

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:

Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

At least 70% of students will achieve 3 or better on this metric based on our rubric for this SLO.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:

Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

Superficially, we met our goals with 100% of students scoring above 3 for the "Research questions and methodology" category on the rubric. However, with such a small annual sample size (N=1 in this case), a longer window of observation would probably be more useful for assessing the program (see below).

Commented [SS4]: Suggestions for Improvement

1.Specify Key Research Areas: Define the key areas of literature and research that students are expected to master, including foundational studies, contemporary debates, and region-specific research. This would give students a clearer understanding of what is required.

2.Develop Measurable Performance Indicators: Create a detailed rubric that assesses students' ability to critically evaluate the literature, synthesize key findings, and apply them to their research topics. Indicators could include depth of understanding, quality of synthesis, and originality in applying existing research to their topical areas.

3.Clarity the Timeframe for Mastery: Indicate when students are expected to demonstrate mastery, such as by the time of their dissertation proposal or PhD qualifying exam, to ensure they have adequate time to build this competency.

Suggested Template

By the time of [dissertation proposal or comprehensive exam], students will demonstrate the ability to develop well-defined research questions that are directly connected to relevant theoretical frameworks and use appropriate anthropological methods to conduct doctoral-level research. This includes:

- Research Question Development:** Crafting precise, focused, and answerable research questions that address significant gaps or problems within the field of anthropology.

- Theoretical Integration:** Clearly articulating the connection between research questions and relevant theoretical frameworks, demonstrating how the theory informs and shapes the research direction.

- Methodological Application:** Choosing and applying appropriate anthropological methods, such as [ethnographic fieldwork, quantitative analysis, comparative studies, etc.], to address the research questions in a rigorous manner.

Students' ability to develop research questions and connect them to theory will be assessed through [dissertation proposals, research plans, or qualifying exams], using a rubric that evaluates:

1.Clarity and Focus: The research question is precise, clear, and well-defined.

2.Theoretical Connection: The question is deeply connected to a relevant theoretical framework, and the student demonstrates how the theory informs their approach.

3.Methodological Rigor: The chosen methods are appropriate for addressing the research question and demonstrate sound anthropological research practices.

The target is for **at least 80% of students** to achieve a score of **3 or higher** on this metric, based on the rubric's criteria for research question development and theoretical integration.

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)

[Dissertation Approval Page Artifact 1.pdf](#)

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:

It is difficult to reliably interpret the results with such a small sample size, although it appears that we are meeting our target. Perhaps expanding the window of observation would provide more robust results for interpretation.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):

Results of the students' assessment and our current goals have been shared with the Curriculum Committee. The Assessment Coordinator (Roos) suggests looking at scores averaged over a three year window for more robust results.

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Step 5B: Type of Action:

Faculty involvement

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):

Administrator, Committee, Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:

The Curriculum Committee met on August 15th to discuss current and future assessments for anthropology programs. Ongoing email exchanges among the Committee occurred throughout September 2024.

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Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

The 2024-2025 will be when action plans are made and put into effect now that we have constituted a Curriculum Committee to regularly review our programmatic assessment outcomes. Our first plan of action is to expand the learning window (data accumulation) to cover three years of PhD graduates to provide a more reliable dataset for interpretation and further action plans.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):

In progress

Progress:

Complete

SLO 4: Ability to Analyze the Academic Literature and Original Data

Step 1A: SLO Number:

4

Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):

Student will demonstrate the ability to conduct competent analysis of the academic literature and original data and then demonstrate the ability to provide competent arguments and solid answers to research question(s).

Commented [SS5]: See previous Comment on SLO

Step 2A: Measure:

Students will complete a PhD dissertation in which they must demonstrate ability to conduct competent analysis of the academic literature and original data. The dissertation will be assessed by a four-person committee using the attached rubric for "Analysis and Findings."

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)

[Dissertation Approval Page Artifact 1.pdf](#)

[Phd dissertation rubric_2024 FINAL.pdf](#)

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):

Dissertation defense ,Rubric,Written paper/project

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:

Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

At least 70% of students will achieve 3 or better on this metric based on our rubric for this SLO.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:

Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

Superficially, we met our goals with 100% of students scoring above 3 for the "Analysis and Findings" category on the rubric. However, with such a small annual sample size (N=1 in this case), a longer window of observation would probably be more useful for assessing the program (see below).

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)

[Dissertation Approval Page Artifact 1.pdf](#)

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:

It is difficult to reliably interpret the results with such a small sample size, although it appears that we are meeting our target. Perhaps expanding the window of observation would provide more robust results for interpretation.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):

Results of the students' assessment and our current goals have been shared with the Curriculum Committee. The Assessment Coordinator (Roos) suggests looking at scores averaged over a three year window for more robust results.

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Step 5B: Type of Action:

Faculty involvement

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):

Administrator, Committee, Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:

The Curriculum Committee met on August 15th to discuss current and future assessments for anthropology programs. Ongoing email exchanges among the Committee occurred throughout September 2024.

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Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):**Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):****Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):**

The 2024-2025 will be when action plans are made and put into effect now that we have constituted a Curriculum Committee to regularly review our programmatic assessment outcomes. Our first plan of action is to expand the learning window (data accumulation) to cover three years of PhD graduates to provide a more reliable dataset for interpretation and further action plans.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):

In progress

Progress:

Complete

SLO 5: Mastery of Writing

Step 1A: SLO Number:

5

Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will demonstrate written work that is well presented and organized with confident use of grammar and style.

Step 2A: Measure:

Students will complete a PhD dissertation in which they must demonstrate written work that is well presented and organized with confident use of grammar and style. The dissertation will be assessed by a four-person committee using the attached rubric for "Writing."

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)

[Dissertation Approval Page Artifact 1.pdf](#)

[Phd dissertation rubric 2024 FINAL.pdf](#)

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):

Dissertation defense ,Rubric,Written paper/project

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:

Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

At least 70% of students will achieve 3 or better on this metric based on our rubric for this SLO.

Commented [SS6]: Suggested Template

By the end of [specific course or term], students will demonstrate written work that is well-presented, well-organized, and exhibits confident use of grammar and style. This includes:

- Clear and Logical Structure:** Organizing ideas in a coherent and logical manner, ensuring that the flow of the argument or discussion is easy to follow.
- Grammar and Style:** Using correct and confident grammar, punctuation, and style that are appropriate to the discipline and the writing assignment.
- Adherence to Academic Standards:** Applying appropriate citation and formatting styles, such as [specific citation style, e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.], and adhering to the conventions of academic writing in the discipline.

Students' writing will be assessed through [essays, research papers, or written assignments], using a rubric that evaluates:

1. **Organization and Clarity:** The written work is well-organized and ideas are presented in a clear and logical manner.
2. **Grammar and Style:** The student demonstrates confident use of grammar, punctuation, and style appropriate for the discipline.
3. **Adherence to Writing Conventions:** The student adheres to appropriate citation styles, formatting, and disciplinary conventions.

The target is for at least 80% of students to achieve a score of 3 or higher on this metric, based on the rubric's criteria for writing quality, organization, and style.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:

Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

Superficially, we met our goals with 100% of students scoring above 3 for the "Writing" category on the rubric. However, with such a small annual sample size (N=1 in this case), a longer window of observation would probably be more useful for assessing the program (see below).

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)

[Dissertation Approval Page Artifact 1.pdf](#)

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:

It is difficult to reliably interpret the results with such a small sample size, although it appears that we are meeting our target. Perhaps expanding the window of observation would provide more robust results for interpretation.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):

Results of the students' assessment and our current goals have been shared with the Curriculum Committee. The Assessment Coordinator (Roos) suggests looking at scores averaged over a three year window for more robust results.

Attached Files

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Step 5B: Type of Action:

Faculty involvement

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):

Administrator, Committee, Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:

The Curriculum Committee met on August 15th to discuss current and future assessments for anthropology programs. Ongoing email exchanges among the Committee occurred throughout September 2024.

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[August 15 2024 Assessment Committee Meeting Notes.pdf](#)

Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

The 2024-2025 will be when action plans are made and put into effect now that we have constituted a Curriculum Committee to regularly review our programmatic assessment outcomes. Our first plan of action is to expand the learning window (data accumulation) to cover three years of PhD graduates to provide a more reliable dataset for interpretation and further action plans.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):

In progress

Progress:

In Progress

SLO 6: Oral Presentation

Step 1A: SLO Number:

6

Step 1C: SLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will present their dissertation research successfully and engage with the committee in appropriate discussion.

Commented [SS7]: By the end of the PhD program, students will demonstrate the ability to successfully defend their dissertation, showcasing a deep mastery of their research area, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches in anthropology. This includes:

- Mastery of Research Topic:** Demonstrating comprehensive knowledge of the dissertation's subject area, including the key theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions of their research to the field of anthropology.

- Critical Analysis and Argumentation:** Effectively presenting and defending original arguments and findings, providing a critical evaluation of the data, and addressing potential limitations or alternative interpretations with intellectual rigor.

- Oral Communication Skills:** Delivering a clear, organized, and persuasive oral presentation that effectively communicates the research process, findings, and significance to a committee of faculty experts.

- Engagement with Committee Feedback:** Responding thoughtfully to questions and critiques from the dissertation committee, demonstrating the ability to engage in scholarly dialogue and justify methodological and theoretical choices.

Assessment: Students' dissertation defense will be evaluated by a **dissertation committee** using a rubric that assesses:

- 1.**Depth of Knowledge:** The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the research topic and its broader significance within the field.

- 2.**Critical Thinking and Argumentation:** The student presents and defends their research with coherent, evidence-based arguments and demonstrates the ability to critique and refine their own work.

- 3.**Oral Communication:** The student effectively communicates their research process and findings in a clear, well-organized oral presentation.

- 4.**Engagement with Feedback:** The student engages constructively with questions and critiques from the committee, demonstrating intellectual flexibility and depth of understanding.

The target is for **at least 90% of students** to successfully pass their dissertation defense on the first attempt, with a minimum score of **3 or higher** in all rubric categories.

Suggested Rubric

Step 2A: Measure:

Students will provide an oral presentation of their PhD dissertation research and field questions from their committee. The presentation and response to questioning will be assessed by a four-person committee using the attached rubric for "Oral Defense."

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)

[Phd dissertation rubric 2024 FINAL.pdf](#)

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply):

Dissertation defense ,Presentation ,Rubric

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?:

Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

At least 70% of students will achieve 3 or better on this metric based on our rubric for this SLO.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:

Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

Superficially, we met our goals with 100% of students scoring above 3 for the "Oral Defense" category on the rubric. However, with such a small annual sample size (N=1 in this case), a longer window of observation would probably be more useful for assessing the program (see below).

Attached Files

[Phd dissertation rubric Master.pdf](#)

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:

It is difficult to reliably interpret the results with such a small sample size, although it appears that we are meeting our target. Perhaps expanding the window of observation would provide more robust results for interpretation.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):

Results of the students' assessment and our current goals have been shared with the Curriculum Committee. The Assessment Coordinator (Roos) suggests looking at scores averaged over a three year window for more robust results.

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Step 5B: Type of Action:

Faculty involvement

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):

Administrator, Committee, Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue:

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Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Attached Files

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Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

The 2024-2025 will be when action plans are made and put into effect now that we have constituted a Curriculum Committee to regularly review our programmatic assessment outcomes. Our first plan of action is to expand the learning window (data accumulation) to cover three years of PhD graduates to provide a more reliable dataset for interpretation and further action plans.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):

In progress

Progress:

Complete

PG 1: Timeliness of completion

Step 1A: PG Number:

1

Step 1C: PG Statement (Full Description):

The Department of Anthropology will prepare PhD students to complete their degree in a timely fashion.

Step 2A: Measure:

The assessment of this Program Goal will be done by tallying the time-to-completion for each PhD graduate at the time of graduation.

Step 2B: Is Measure direct or indirect?:

Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

Commented [SS8]: Suggested Template

The Anthropology PhD program at Southern Methodist University (SMU) aims to ensure that students complete their degree within a **timely manner**, with the majority finishing within **5 to 7 years** of initial enrollment. To achieve this, the program will:

- Monitor student progress** at key milestones, including coursework completion, qualifying exams, dissertation proposal approval, and the final dissertation defense.

- Provide structured support through **advising, writing workshops, and regular progress reviews**, ensuring that students receive guidance at each stage of their doctoral journey.

- Implement intervention strategies for students who are not on track, including **additional advising, timeline adjustments, and resources to address challenges**.

Measure: The program will track the **average time-to-degree completion** and regularly assess progress through institutional data and student surveys. Key milestones will be reviewed annually to identify and address any potential delays.

Target: At least **80% of PhD students** will complete their degree within **5 to 7 years** of enrollment. The program will work to identify and remove barriers to timely completion, ensuring students are well-supported throughout their academic journey.

The national average completion time for a PhD in Anthropology is 8.3 years. Our goal is that at least 50% of our PhD graduates will complete their degree in 8 years or less.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:

Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

With only one PhD graduate, we have met our goal (time-to-completion of 5 years in this case). However, with such a small annual sample size (N=1 in this case), a longer window of observation would probably be more useful for assessing the program (see below).

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:

It is difficult to reliably interpret the results with such a small sample size, although it appears that we are meeting our target. Perhaps expanding the window of observation would provide more robust results for interpretation.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):

Results of the students' assessment and our current goals have been shared with the Curriculum Committee. The Assessment Coordinator (Roos) suggests looking at scores averaged over a three year window for more robust results.

Step 5B: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):

Administrator ,Committee, Faculty

Step 5C: Evidence of Dialogue:

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Step 5D: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Other

Step 5E: Other Improvements (Full Description):

The current Program Goal is new and reflects ongoing dialog among the faculty and specifically among the Curriculum Committee on how to best align programmatic goals with the goals of the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness and the Moody Graduate School. The outcome of this dialog includes two newly created PGs for the PhD program.

Attached Files

[Myers Email PhD 091624 v1.pdf](#)

[Myers Email PhD 091624 v2.pdf](#)

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

Since this PG did not exist during the prior cycle, there could not be any action plans made. The 2024-2025 will be when action plans are made and put into effect. However, the creation of this newly defined PG was part of the last cycle action plans to align our programmatic assessment with recommendations from our APR, and OIPE assessment guidelines.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):

In progress

Progress:

Complete

PG 2: Post-PhD placement

Step 1A: PG Number:

2

Step 1C: PG Statement (Full Description):

The Department of Anthropology will prepare students for success in both academic and non-academic employment sectors within the field of anthropology.

Commented [SS9]: This program goal sound more like an SLO. These are some possible Program Goals that fit what the department is already doing.

Advise Students to Choose the Right Anthropology Program (BA/BS, MA, or PhD)

•**Goal:** Improve student advising to ensure students are placed in the program that best aligns with their academic interests and career goals, leading to higher retention and satisfaction across BA/BS, MA, and PhD programs.

•**Measure:**

•

•Conduct advising surveys to assess students' satisfaction with the guidance they receive when selecting between the BA, BS, MA, or PhD programs.

•Track retention rates across the various programs to identify alignment between advising and successful program placement.

•Monitor the percentage of students who switch between BA/BS programs or graduate programs and assess the reasons for transitions.

•**Target:** Achieve a **90% satisfaction rate** from students on advising surveys and maintain **80% or higher retention** across the BA/BS, MA, and PhD programs over the next three years.

Improve Quality of the Programs and Alignment with Assessment

•**Goal:** Enhance the quality of the Anthropology curriculum and ensure strong alignment between program content and assessment outcomes through consistent review and improvement processes.

•**Measure:**

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•Use programmatic assessment data and collaborate with the **SMU IPE office** to evaluate program quality and curriculum alignment.

•Expand the window of observation for program assessments to provide more robust results.

•Redesign assessment instruments to track data over a three-year period, ensuring a comprehensive view of program performance.

•The Curriculum Committee will review assessment outcomes annually to identify areas for curriculum improvement and ensure alignment with student learning outcomes.

•**Target:** Ensure that **85% of courses** show clear alignment between curriculum content, learning outcomes, and assessment measures by the end of year three. Expand observation windows and redesign assessment tools to yield more interpretable results.

Increase Employability of Anthropology Graduates

•**Goal:** Improve the career outcomes of Anthropology graduates by strengthening ties with employers and ensuring students are well-prepared for both academic and non-academic careers.

...

Step 2A: Measure:

Each year in April, we will survey our recent (<5 years) PhD graduates on their employment status. Data from this five-year moving window will be used to assess our program's performance with respect to this objective.

Step 2B: Is Measure direct or indirect?:

Indirect

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

We expect that at least 25% of our recent PhD graduates will be in an academic appointment (e.g., post-doc, lecturer, visiting assistant professor, assistant/associate professor) within 5 years of PhD graduation. We expect that 50% of our recent PhD graduates will be employed in the private sector in a job related to their anthropological training within 5 years of PhD graduation.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?:

No data collected/reported this cycle (provided explanation in Step 4B)

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

This is a new Program Goal so we do not have any results for this measure yet.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results:

No data have been collected yet to provide results or interpretation.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan):

This PG will be assessed during the next cycle since it is a new PG and was not in place for the cycle currently being assessed.

Step 5B: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply):

Administrator ,Committee, Faculty

Step 5C: Evidence of Dialogue:

The Curriculum Committee met on August 15th to discuss current and future assessments for anthropology programs. Ongoing email exchanges among the Committee occurred throughout September 2024.

Attached Files

[Myers Email PhD 091624 v2.pdf](#)

[Myers Email PhD 091624 v1.pdf](#)

Step 5D: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Addition or change to Off Campus Instructional Site (OCIS), Other

Step 5E: Other Improvements (Full Description):

The current SLOs and PGs reflect ongoing dialog among the faculty and specifically among the Curriculum Committee on how to best align programmatic goals with the goals of the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. The outcomes include these entirely redesigned SLOs and PGs for each of our degree programs. Unfortunately, that means that this PG does not have data from the past cycle as it has been designed for the new implementation of our assessment and the new demands of Planning software and OIPE.

Attached Files

[Myers Email PhD 091624 v1.pdf](#)

[Myers Email PhD 091624 v2.pdf](#)

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

Since this PG did not exist during the prior cycle, there could not be any action plans made. The 2024-2025 will be when action plans are made and put into effect. However, the creation of these newly defined PGs were part of the last cycle action plans to align our programmatic assessment with our new

undergraduate curriculum, recommendations from our APR (including changes to our undergraduate curriculum), and OIPE assessment guidelines.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s):

Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

Progress:

Complete