

## University Graduate Studies Assessment Plan: Executive Summary

1. **Mission:** University Graduate Studies has the mission to support and enhance the quality of graduate education at the University of Rochester by issuing and monitoring regulations for graduate study and overseeing PhD education that occurs in all schools.
2. **Program Goals:** At the completion of a PhD program at the University of Rochester, all graduates will have demonstrated the ability to:
  - a. Select and defend important problem or topic for study
  - b. Demonstrate mastery of relevant knowledge in the field
  - c. Apply rigorous methods of the discipline
  - d. Produce a valuable product and accurately appraise its importance
  - e. Communicate effectively in academic writing
  - f. Effectively defend the work when questioned.
3. **Data Collection Tools and Approaches:** **Formative** evaluations of **individual** students are conducted by each PhD program as appropriate to the scholarly discipline, in the form of course grades, annual reviews, and other feedback. All PhD programs include a qualifying exam as part of that process. **Summative** evaluations on the **individual** level include the final oral defense of the dissertation, which is judged as passed or failed by a supervising committee chaired by a faculty member from outside the student's program. Summative data also are collected in two post-defense surveys: Each faculty member of each final oral defense committee completes a confidential evaluation of the rigor of the defense process and of the candidate's degree of achievement of the University's PhD Learning Outcomes listed above. Each graduate completes an exit survey on satisfaction with a number of aspects of the PhD program just completed. Using data from these 2 surveys and the UR student information system, **periodic analyses** are conducted at the **program, school and University levels** of time to degree completion, completion rates, students' defense performance and satisfaction, and other metrics.
4. **Use of the Evidence:** The school and University data above are collected continually and analyzed and reported at least annually in aggregated and de-identified form. Results are reported to the University Council on Graduate Studies and leaders of graduate programs to inform program improvements.
5. **Assessing the Process:** Tools for evaluation and frequency and mode of reporting are discussed by the Council on Graduate Studies annually and when questions arise. For example, despite little change in survey results over 4 years, in fall 2018 the Council on Graduate Studies supported continued use of the 2 surveys to monitor performance over time.