**SFU** OFFICE OF THE
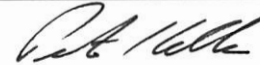VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

## MEMORANDUM

| ATTENTION: Senate | TEL |
|---|---|
| FROM: Peter Keller, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP | |
| RE: External Review Mid-Cycle Report for the Department of Gerontology (SCUP 18-50) | |

| DATE: December 11, 2018 | TIME |
|---|---|

At its December 5, 2018 meeting, SCUP reviewed the Mid-Cycle Report for the Department of Gerontology which resulted from its 2015 external review. The report is attached for the information of Senate.

**OFFICE OF THE
VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC**

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Burnaby BC
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## MEMORANDUM

| ATTENTION: Peter Keller, Chair, SCUP | TEL |
|---|---|

FROM: Wade Parkhouse, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic

RE: External Review Mid-Cycle Report for the Department of Gerontology

| DATE: November 22, 2018 | TIME |
|---|---|

The External Review of the Department of Gerontology was undertaken in March 2015. As per the Senate guidelines, the Unit is required to submit a mid-cycle report describing its progress in implementing the External Review Action Plan. The mid-cycle report, together with a copy of the Action Plan approved by Senate, and the mid-cycle report on the Unit's assessment of its Educational Goals are attached for the information of SCUP.

c:     Habib Chaudhury, Chair, Department of Gerontology
       Jane Pulkingham, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

MEMO

2800-515 West Hastings St.
Vancouver BC Canada V6B 5K3

T: 778.782.5062
F: 778.782.5066
E: geradmin@sfu.ca

| ATTENTION **Glynn Nicholls, Director, Academic Planning and Quality Assurance** | TEL |
|---|---|
| FROM **Habib Chaudhury, Chair Gerontology** | |
| RE **Gerontology Mid-Cycle Report** | |
| Cc: | |
| DATE **November 5, 2018** | TIME |

Dear Glynn,

Attached please find the Mid-Cycle Report for the Department of Gerontology which details our progress with the Action Plan stemming from the 2015 External Review. The assessment of our Educational Goals is also attached.

Thanks and regards,

Habib Chaudhury, PhD
Professor & Chair, Dep't of Gerontology

# External Review Update for the Department of Gerontology

| Action | Progress Made |
|---|---|
| **1. Programming** | |
| **1.1.1 Undergraduate** | |
| • The Department has made formal requests and have engaged in several discussions with FASS Dean John Craig to secure a CRC in longitudinal health and aging research and a CFL position in mental health and aging. It is critically important that the two positions be filled by 2016 to not only implement a more permanent instructional faculty, but also to have stronger links among pedagogy in undergraduate classrooms, graduate programs and faculty research. Our succession plan for sessional instructors will entail three strategies: 1) increased use of ABD doctoral students from our program; and 2) attracting new sessionals from our academic and community networks; and 3) integrating sessional teaching with the teaching loads of the 2 new CFL positions. | We received approval for a CRC Tier 1 position in 2016 and after an extensive national search, we were successful in hiring a noted scholar in Aging and Health. With the help of the Dean's office we put together the Nomination Package for the CRC Secretariat. The position was approved in April, 2018. Professor Zheng Wu has joined the department starting from July 1, 2018. We also got approval for a CFL position in Mental Health and Aging in 2018 and after a national search, have hired Dr. Theodore Cosco who comes with a strong research background in this area. Dr. Cosco will join the Department as a full-time faculty member from January 1, 2019. |
| • Currently, robust communication is maintained between the Dean's office and the Department. Department Chair attends the monthly DAC meetings and schedules meetings with the Dean as and when needed specific departmental issues arise. Also, Dept. Manager communicates with the Dean's office regularly in terms of TA/TI budget, etc. Moving forward, we intend to discuss possible ways of further improvement in communication (e.g., scheduled periodic meetings between the Dean and the Chair). It is worth noting that FASS Associate Dean Jane Pulkingham, Dept. Chair Habib Chaudhury and Dept. Manager Anne Marie Barrett have recently met to discuss plans of increasing enrollment caps in Gerontology undergraduate courses, and the need for increased TA/TI support. | Department Chair Dr. Chaudhury maintains close communication with FASS Dean Jane Pulkingham on specific matters related to the unit as needed. There is general interaction on a monthly basis at the DAC meetings. Dept. Manager Anne Marie Barret maintains regular communication with Bonnie Leung, FASS Director, Finance and Nicola Kuchta, Director, Faculty Affairs |

| **1.1.2  Graduate** | |
|---|---|
| • The Gerontology Department has made a number of recent changes to its MA curriculum, and after further review is proposing the following: A) The thesis option in the MA program has a reduced course load expectation (5 term courses), and the course load for the more circumscribed work of the popular capstone option (7 term courses) developed two years ago has been made commensurate with graduate expectations. Average completion times are trending toward shorter time frames based on these alterations to our programs. B) We are currently in the process of designating course credit to the internship component of the MA program. C) The capstone and thesis already have credits associated with them. Our rationale for the course load is as follows: Given that gerontology is a multi-disciplinary field, it is important that the graduate students take multiple gerontology courses in order to develop a comprehensive knowledge base of the theories and substantive issues. Currently, our MA program offers two concentration areas (Health and Aging; Built Environment and Aging) which are complementary to each other; therefore, we believe it is professionally advantageous for our MA students to gain knowledge in the secondary area. | Average completion time for MA students remains shorter in the last three years because of the development of a revised capstone project option in the previous 7-year period. Although the course load is higher (7) in this option compared to the thesis option (5), capstone projects take less time because of the expectations. The capstone project is carefully designed to serve as a good fit for the employment needs of our graduate students after graduation from the MA program.<br><br>We have now put in place policies regarding intermediate timelines (e.g., thesis proposal needs to be presented by the 4th semester into the program) for students completing the thesis option. Two PhD students have successfully completed their dissertations. We have recently designated a course number to the MA internship for more formal accountability and recognition for this requirement in the master's program. |
| • Secure additional continuing faculty members to support modest growth of the PhD program. Also, secure additional Graduate Fellowships as well as additional endowed scholarships to attract new PhD students to the program. | The two new faculty positions has increased our unit's capacity for supervising PhD students. We are actively promoting our PhD program and are accepting students on a more regular basis. However, we need the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office to allocate the Graduate Dean's Entrance Scholarship (GDES) to attract high caliber PhD students. |
| • Teaching and Research Assistantship positions, when available, are posted on the appropriate SFU websites. We are currently in the process of revamping the department website with a variety of additional useful information, such | The Gerontology Research Centre has hired a person as Communications Officer with the appropriate skills for website update and management. The department website has been substantially redeveloped with several new sections and more effective navigation |

| | |
|---|---|
| as research opportunities linked to many of our large national projects (e.g., CLSA, AGE-Well); descriptions of current graduate students' research interests and backgrounds; and highlights of alumni jobs and projects. The website will also go through an overall makeover for improved accessibility and aesthetic appeal from the student perspective. | features. The new sections include student blogs, alumni video profiles, research project updates, etc. In addition, the department activities are now regularly disseminated with the local and external communities through key social media platforms. |
| • In the coming months the Department will engage in identifying a process for assessment of the educational goals at the various program levels. The Department will work with FASS educational consultant and senior administration for support as necessary. | In the last couple of years, most of our faculty and staff have been intensely engaged in the search and hiring process of two new faculty members (CRC and CFL). Given our relatively small size of faculty, working on assessment of the educational goals was challenging. Also, the departure of the FASS educational consultant contributed to a gap in external support. We have now developed an assessment plan that is included as an addendum. |
| | |
| **2. Research** | |
| • Senior administration to approve a continuing faculty position to support current Departmental needs in undergraduate teaching, graduate supervision and various service responsibilities. | The CFL position was approved by the VP Academic and FASS Dean. This position has now been filled. |
| • Senior administration to make final approval of a CRC Tier 1 chair position to engage in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) Project, as well as take on teaching and graduate supervision load. | The CRC Tier I position was approved by the VP Research and FASS Dean. This position has now been filled. |
| • The Department Chair will initiate a discussion with the GRC Director and GRC Steering Committee to consider options for more effective and optimal reporting process for the GRC Director. | The GRC constitution has recently been revised by the current GRC Director Andrew Wister and ratified by the GRC Steering Committee. Among the different measures taken for more effective reporting and communication process is inclusion of Dept Chair as a GRC Steering Committee member. |
| • Faculty Dean and Department Chair to explore and identify support for this limited term position. | The limited term position is currently being supported by our unit and GRC's internal resources. |
| | |

| 3. Administration | |
|---|---|
| • Senior administration to approve a half-time position to support the departmental goal to build community relationships and formalizing agreements with key community organizations/institutions to further support internship placements for MA students. The Dept. is taking proactive steps and is submitting a proposal to the SFU Community Engagement Initiative to expand and enhance our connections with diverse organizations that can provide our students with practicum and internship opportunities. Approval of a 0.5 FTE position would help put in place a sustainable mechanism for maintaining optimal communications with these organizations. We further anticipate that this position will also serve as a recruitment mechanism to the graduate program. | The Dept. is in communication with the Dean's Office, SFU Urban Studies and SFU Public policy about the potential of creating a shared position to address these particular needs. We have had fruitful and encouraging discussions with Bonnie Leung in the Dean's office and Directors of the two related academic units. We are optimistic that this shared position will be approved by the Dean's office for the benefit of three units including Gerontology. |

# Department of Gerontology Educational Goals Mid-Cycle Assessment

## Context

This report outlines the Department of Gerontology's progress in the assessment of educational goals that were developed for our programs in 2015. Following our most recent external review, we initially met with a FASS educational consultant to seek assistance with our assessment plan; however, the consultant left her position and has yet to be replaced. Over the past two years, our department administration and staff have also been occupied with the time-intensive hiring processes for a Canada Research Chair and a continuing faculty position. We have now developed a more focused educational goals assessment plan to be implemented in the coming months and years.

## Program Educational Goals Assessment Plan

After recent consultation with an SFU educational consultant, the Department decided to condense our educational goals (EG) and replace the separate goals for the Minor, PBD, MA and PhD programs with two overarching programs goals plus four educational goals specific to the undergraduate level and three educational goals specific to the graduate level (see Appendix 1 for a listing of the updated educational goals). For the assessment of educational goals we have selected six undergraduate and six graduate courses that provide a sampling of core required courses and electives, representing the two core areas of concentrations in the department (health and aging; built environment and aging). Collection of data from these courses will allow for direct assessments of educational goals via exams, assignments, papers, etc.

The table on the next page outlines the selected courses and their alignment with each of the program educational goals. As would be expected, the courses vary in the extent to which they align with each educational goal; for example, methods courses usually address only a circumscribed set of educational goals. We do not plan to assess every educational goal in every selected course. For the educational goals assessment, we will focus on the courses that emphasize the goals (or specific components of the goals) either at an *Introductory* (I) or *Advanced* (A) level, and provide the most relevant built-in assessment options. For these courses, we have indicated specific course-embedded assessment activities that can be used to assess the educational goal (e.g., exams, applied learning assignments, papers). For smaller class sizes, the whole class will be sampled, while for larger classes, a representative sample will be selected. A few undergraduate courses are offered both as in-person and distance education courses. For these courses, we will sample both an in-person and distance version of the course. Courses in which the goal is addressed, but it is not a primary focus in the course, or major source of assessment will be designated with *Partial* (P) notation.

## Undergraduate Level Courses

|  | Gero 300: Introduction to Gerontology | Gero 301: Research Methods in Gerontology | Gero 302: Health Promotion and Aging | Gero 401: Environment and Aging | Gero 420: Sociology of Aging | Gero 450: Evaluation of Health Programs for Older Adults |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GERO EG 1** | I: Final paper | I: Critique assignments; Final exams | I: Critique; Term paper | P | A: Final paper | A: Take-home exam |
| **GERO EG 2** | I: Final paper, Assignment | P | I: Term paper | A: Team project | A: Final paper | A: Planning and evaluation assignments |
| **UGRAD EG 1** | I: Final paper | P | I: Term Paper | P | A: Final paper | P |
| **UGRAD EG 2** | I: Final exam | I: Final exam | A: Final exam | A: Final exam | A: Final exam | A: Take-home exam |
| **UGRAD EG 3** | I: Final exam |  | A: Final exam | A: Final exam | A: Final exam |  |
| **UGRAD EG 4** | I: Assignment | P | P | A: Team project | P | A: Planning and evaluation assignments |

## Graduate Level Courses

|  | Gero 802: Development and Evaluation of Health Promotion Programs for the Elderly | Gero 803: Analytical Techniques for Gerontological Research | Gero 804: Advanced Qualitative Methods in Gerontology | Gero 806: Interdisciplinary Theories in Gerontology | Gero 810: Community-based Housing, Health and Support Services for Older Adults | Gero 822: Families, Communities and Health |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GERI EG 1** | A: Evaluation Critiques; Final Exam | A: Final assignment | A: Final take home exam | A: Final paper; Final exam | A: Final paper | A: Seminar critiques; Final paper |
| **GERO EG 2** | A: Evaluation critiques | A: Final assignment | A: Term Research Project | A: Major paper | A: Final paper | A: Final paper |
| **GRAD EG 7** | A: Evaluation critiques; Final Exam | A: SPSS Computer Assignments | A: Term Research Project | A: Major paper | P | P |
| **GRAD EG 8** |  |  |  |  | A: Final paper | A: Final research paper |
| **GRAD EG 9** | A: Student-led seminar | A: Final assignment, Seminar presentation | A: Term research project | A: Class presentations | A: Final Paper, Student-led seminar | A: Student-led seminar, Final paper |

Notes: I = Introduces, A = Advanced, P = Partial

In addition to directly assessing outcomes through the sampling of courses, there are additional direct and indirect assessments we plan to conduct to demonstrate how other components of the programs contribute to the educational goals and the overall impacts of the programs:

- Surveys of students and alumni (sample topics: job preparedness, skills and competencies gained, value of program, internship experience, etc.)
- Collection of data on student presentations/publications, MA capstone project/thesis and PhD dissertations
- Reviewing student practicum and internship assessments

The table below lists the sources that will be used to assess the progress in meeting each goal.

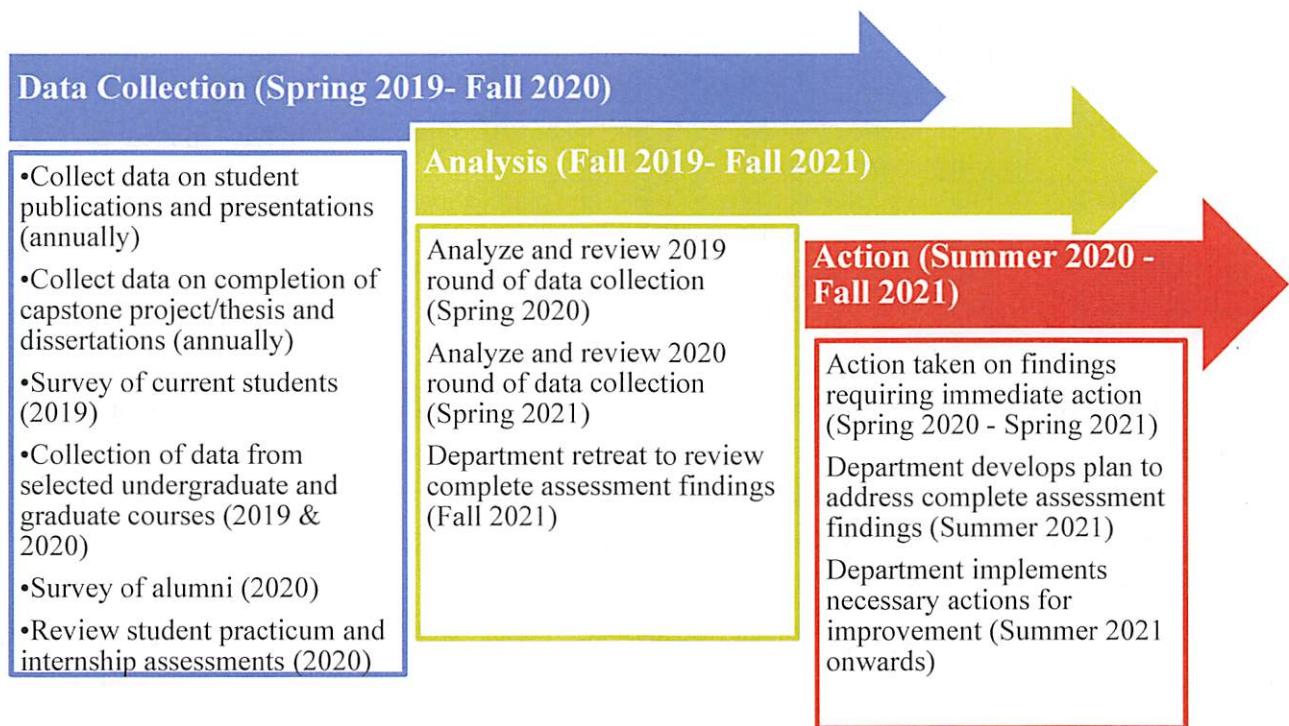| Goal | Assessment Sources |
|---|---|
| **GERO EG 1** | Final papers/exams/critique assignments in Gero 300, 301, 302, 420, 450, 802, 803, 804, 806, 810, 822 |
| **GERO EG 2** | Final paper/assignments in Gero 300, 302, 401, 420, 450, 802, 803, 804, 806, 810, 822; Completion of capstone/thesis or dissertation |
| **UGRAD EG 1** | Final papers in Gero 300, 302, 420 |
| **UGRAD EG 2** | Final exams in Gero 300, 301, 302, 401, 420, 450 |
| **UGRAD EG 3** | Final exams in Gero 300, 302, 401 and 420 |
| **UGRAD EG 4** | PBD practicum assessments, Survey of PBD students and alumni; Applied learning assignments in Gero 300, 401, 450 |
| **GRAD EG 1** | Student conference presentations and publications; Completion of capstone/thesis or dissertation; Assignments/papers in Gero 802, 803, 804, 806 |
| **GRAD EG 2** | Completion of capstone/thesis or dissertation; Final papers in Gero 810 and 822 |
| **GRAD EG 3** | MA internship assessments; Surveys of graduate student and alumni; Completion of capstone/thesis or dissertation; Applied learning assignments/student-led seminars in Gero 802, 803, 804, 806, 810, 822 |

Performance on each educational goal will be classified based on a four-point scale. Scoring methods for assessing performance will vary depending on the assessment source; the table below shows examples of how different types of assessment might be translated to this four-point scale. The desired benchmark for educational goals is to have 75% of students (as per norm) fully meet or exceed expectations on each goal.

| | **Does not meet expectations** | **Somewhat meets expectations** | **Fully meets expectations** | **Exceeds expectations** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Course-embedded assessments** | D or below grades | C grade | B grade | A grade |
| **Survey responses** | Disagree/strongly disagree, fair/poor | Neutral, good, etc. | Agree, very good, etc. | Strongly agree, excellent, etc. |
| **Presentations and publications** | Less than 20% of graduate students have presented or published during their degree program | 20%-39% of graduate students have presented or published during their degree program | 40%-59% of graduate students have presented or published during their degree program | 60% or more of graduate students have presented or published during their degree program |

Resources Required and Timelines for Assessment Plan

An EG assessment committee consisting of faculty (committee chair, undergraduate program chair and graduate program chair) and department staff (graduate program assistant and administrative manager) will be responsible for overseeing the collection and analysis of the data and implementation of any necessary actions in response to the findings. A Research Assistant will be hired to support the data collection and analysis.

The timing of the data collection will be staggered over a two-year period due to the fact not all courses are offered annually, and also to reduce the burden on the modest resources of the Department. One round of data collection will occur over 2019 and a second round in 2020. After each round of data collection, a summary report will be produced. While the Department plans to hold a retreat at a time leading up to the next External Review (2021-22) to review the complete findings and develop an action plan, some findings may benefit from prompt action. The preliminary findings will be reviewed after each round of data collection. The diagram below shows the anticipated timeline for the assessment.

**Data Collection (Spring 2019- Fall 2020)**

- Collect data on student publications and presentations (annually)
- Collect data on completion of capstone project/thesis and dissertations (annually)
- Survey of current students (2019)
- Collection of data from selected undergraduate and graduate courses (2019 & 2020)
- Survey of alumni (2020)
- Review student practicum and internship assessments (2020)

**Analysis (Fall 2019- Fall 2021)**

Analyze and review 2019 round of data collection (Spring 2020)

Analyze and review 2020 round of data collection (Spring 2021)

Department retreat to review complete assessment findings (Fall 2021)

**Action (Summer 2020 - Fall 2021)**

Action taken on findings requiring immediate action (Spring 2020 - Spring 2021)

Department develops plan to address complete assessment findings (Summer 2021)

Department implements necessary actions for improvement (Summer 2021 onwards)

# Appendix 1. Program Educational Goals

## Gerontology Program Overarching Educational Goals

| GERO EGs: At the end of these programs students will... | Components: Students will be able to... | Potential Assessment Sources |
|---|---|---|
| **GERO EG 1.** ... be able to critically analyze research, concepts, and theories in the field of gerontology | -Critically evaluate assumptions, claims, evidence, arguments and theories<br>-Critically appraise and integrate information which supports or does not support a position<br>-Examine scientific research to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research | -Essays and other written assignments<br>-Online/in-class discussions<br>-Presentations<br>-Exams |
| **GERO EG 2.** ... be able to synthesize and integrate interdisciplinary knowledge in order to understand and address contemporary issues in gerontology. | -Reflect on and challenge their own assumptions, beliefs and values about aging and older adults<br>-Discuss contemporary issues within the field of gerontology<br>-Synthesize and integrate evidence from multiple sources<br>-Recognize the complex and interdisciplinary nature of issues within the field of gerontology<br>-Critically analyze problems and identify potential solutions | -Essays<br>-Online/in-class discussions<br>-Presentations<br>-Exams<br>-Capstone project/thesis or dissertation |

## Undergraduate Program Educational Goals

| UGRAD EGs: At the end of this program students will... | Components: Students will be able to... | Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| **UGRAD EG 1.** ...demonstrate a basic mastery of academic writing | -Properly format and organize an academic paper<br>-Synthesize information from multiple sources<br>-Formulate an argument and critically appraise evidence which supports or does not support their argument<br>-Properly cite and reference information | -Essays and other writing assignments |
| **UGRAD EG 2.** ...demonstrate an understanding of key theories, concepts, and topics in the field of gerontology | -Describe major gerontological theories and discuss their critiques<br>-Describe the biological, psychological and social impacts of aging<br>-Define key concepts and terms relevant to the field of gerontology<br>-Demonstrate a basic understanding of research methods and the research process<br>-Demonstrate a basic understanding of topics relevant to the field of gerontology (e.g., health, built environment, demographic trends, social policy, etc.) | -Exams<br>-Online/in-class discussions<br>-Essays<br>-Assignments |

| UGRAD EG 3. ...be able to discuss the implications and challenges of population aging in Canada | -Describe current demographic trends in Canada<br>-Explain the social policy implications of population aging in Canada<br>-Critique assumptions and myths about population aging<br>-Discuss current issues and debates within the field of gerontology<br>-Describe potential policy solutions for the challenges presented by population aging | -Exams<br>-Online/in-class discussions<br>-Essays<br>-Assignments |
|---|---|---|
| UGRAD EG 4. ...be prepared to apply their knowledge of gerontology in their chosen career. | -Recognize the interdisciplinary nature of gerontology and its relevance for a wide variety of disciplines<br>-Apply their knowledge of gerontological concepts, trends and theories to address the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging population | -Student practicum assessments<br>-Surveys of alumni<br>-Applied learning assignments |

**Graduate Program Educational Goals**

| GRAD EGs: At the end of this program students will... | Components: Students will be able to... | Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| GRAD EG 1....be able to design, conduct and critically evaluate research in accordance with the principles and practices of sound scientific inquiry. | -Critically evaluate and apply theory in gerontology<br>-Critically evaluate gerontological research<br>-Utilize basic quantitative and qualitative research methods<br>-Apply the principles and practices of sound scientific inquiry in their research<br>-Design and conduct a major research project | -Capstone project/thesis or dissertation<br>-Comprehensive exams<br>-Exams and assignments in relevant methods and theory courses<br>-Publications and knowledge translation activities |
| GRAD EG 2.......have developed an area of specialization within gerontology related to either the environment and aging or health and aging. | -Develop advanced knowledge in the environment and aging or health and aging concentration<br>-Become an expert in a specialized area in gerontology | -Coursework in required courses within the health or environment concentration<br>-Capstone project/thesis or dissertation<br>-Comprehensive exams |
| GRAD EG 3.......have acquired the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to prepare them to be leaders in the field of gerontology. | -Apply their knowledge of gerontological concepts, trends and theories to address the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging population<br>-Effectively communicate and disseminate their knowledge of the discipline<br>-Act as leaders in the field of gerontology and work to advance the quality of life and wellbeing of older adults | -Student internship assessments<br>-Surveys of students and alumni<br>-Capstone project/thesis or dissertation<br>-Publications and knowledge translation activities<br>-Student-led seminars<br>-Applied learning assignments |