

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements**  
**Department of Library and Information Science**  
**Graduate Program in Library and Information Science**  
**Academic Year 2015-2016**

**Introduction**

The purpose of the MSLIS program is to educate highly competent and ethical librarians and information professionals with the essential knowledge and practical skills necessary for successful careers in libraries and information environments. The program provides professional education and supports lifelong learning in the tradition of The Catholic University of America. The Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS) envisions that its graduates will become innovative leaders with professional values informed by the CUA core values of reason, faith and service; and DLIS values of collaboration, community, innovation and excellence.

To ensure quality and relevance to the LIS discipline, the faculty developed the program's curriculum around six core competencies derived from those demanded by the profession: professional identity, management, resources, services, information organization, and technology. These core competencies incorporate the foundational knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by professionals graduating from the program. The MSLIS curriculum reflects these core competencies which address the philosophy, principles, and ethics of the field of library and information science.

As an ongoing effort, the faculty collects and analyzes data from a comprehensive examination and an exit survey to assess student' learning in these core competencies. Both of these instruments provide an important source of information for faculty as they work to improve the program. This report summarizes DLIS's key assessment results for the comprehensive examinations for AY 2015-2016.

**Part I: Key Assessment**  
**The Comprehensive Examination Results**

One of central indicators of student learning in the program is the comprehensive examination required for completion of the MSLIS degree. The format of the comprehensive examination is a take-home research paper format. The purpose of writing a paper is to have students demonstrate knowledge of the philosophy, history, social roles, and major challenges of the

profession, including applications of technology, organization of resources, provision of services, and management of libraries and other information agencies. They must demonstrate knowledge of current practices and issues, the ability to monitor and deal with changes, and the ability to apply research findings. The comprehensive examination is offered three times a year.

The faculty analyze the results of the comprehensive examination each semester to evaluate the extent to which the students in the MSLIS program demonstrate mastery of knowledge. Data on the DLIS pass/fail rate from AY 2011-2012 to AY 2015-2016 are provided below in the table. The data show that the comprehensive examination pass rate has ranged between 84% and 93% with an overall average of 87.8%. The data also indicate that the pass rate during the recent past two years has been improved over 93%.

**OVERALL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS  
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE  
AY2011-2012 to AY2015-2016**

Overall Comprehensive Exams

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2011-2012	14	14.29%	84	85.71%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>98</b>
AY2012-2013	15	15.46%	82	84.54%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>97</b>
AY2013-2014	10	14.49%	59	85.51%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>69</b>
AY2014-2015	5	6.49%	72	93.51%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>77</b>
AY2015-2016	3	6.82%	41	93.18%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>44</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12.21%</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>87.79%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>385</b>

The faculty developed the rubric for scoring the comprehensive examination in 2012 to determine how well students could demonstrate their learning outcomes in the six areas as indicated in rubric in Appendix A, using a 3-point scale: 3 = exceeding expectations, 2 = meeting expectations, and 1 = failure to meet expectations. The rubric is intended for the program-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning; a separate decision is made by the faculty on whether a student passes or fails the examination.

The following table presents the results of the scoring on the rubric for the students who took the comprehensive examination during AY 2015-2016 (Summer, 2015; Fall, 2015; and Spring,

2016).

Criterion	Fails to Meet Expectations (1)		Meets Expectations (2)		Exceeds Expectations (3)		Mean	Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Demonstrated understanding of relevant information, principles and concepts	8	19%	21	50%	13	31%	2.12	42
Demonstrated ability to apply relevant theories, principles and concepts appropriately in response to the question	8	19%	22	52%	12	29%	2.10	42
Demonstrated ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant principles in response to the question	9	21%	23	55%	10	24%	2.02	42
Ability to locate and retrieve relevant, appropriate, and authoritative information	8	19%	22	52%	12	29%	2.10	42
Ability to analyze and synthesize the information found	6	14%	24	57%	12	29%	2.14	42
Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing, with use of graphical elements if appropriate	4	10%	25	60%	13	31%	2.21	42

Overall, students demonstrated the highest levels of competency in demonstrated understanding of relevant information, principles and concepts, and the ability to communicate in writing. The students were somewhat less competent in their ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant principles in response to the question. The faculty scored approximately 21% of the total scores as not meeting expectations. The criteria most affected were in the application of relevant theories, the analysis and synthesis of relevant principles, and the ability to locate and retrieve appropriate information.

## Part 2: Program Improvement and Assessment Plan

### Changes of the Comprehensive Examination time requirement

In spring 2015, a review of the comprehensive exam was conducted to see if the current format and time requirements in writing a research paper were received well among students. Based on survey results, the faculty modified the exam by adopting a protocol that would require students to attend the comprehensive exam workshop, meet with their advisor prior to taking

the exam and by increasing the time that students have to take the exam, from 2 days to 3. Since Fall 2015, the comprehensive examination takes place during 3 days.

To require an advising session before taking the comps examination, the faculty decided to implement department consent for comps registration on the Cardinal Enrollment System from Spring 2017. This process will ensure that students meet with their advisor to discuss how to prepare for the comps. This advising session will help them understand the purpose of the comps examination and how to prepare for it. For the advising process, the department created a checklist <http://lis.cua.edu/res/docs/checklist-for-comps.pdf>.

The department has been offering a comps workshop each semester to walk students through in preparing for a comps examination. In addition, the department maintains an updated guideline for the comprehensive examination on its website. With these resources and the new advising session requirement, the department is confident that students will receive sufficient support to be successful with the comps examination.

### **Reviewing the Curriculum**

The faculty continually review the entirety of the LIS curriculum, identify needed improvements, and develop measures to address the needed improvements. The curriculum review plan was revised as a 4 year cycle in spring 2015.

During the last year (AY 2015-2016), the faculty conducted a thorough review of 9 technology-related courses. The review resulted in the revision of Technology competency statement and the course title change of LSC752 from Design and production of Multimedia for P-K12 to Design and Production of Multimedia. In addition, the faculty regularized LSC850 Digital Humanities from a special topic course status and changed course titles for two courses (LSC638 Government Data and Information and LSC638 E-Science and Technology Information). The faculty also reviewed and updated descriptions of 10 courses of study available on the department's website.

### **Planning outcomes assessment**

The faculty would collect outcomes assessment from four required courses during Fall 2016. By gathering outcomes assessment data from required courses and the comprehensive examination, the program would be able to understand student learning and growth and

measure program outcomes holistically. The faculty will review these data every year during a faculty retreat to reflect on the curriculum improvement.

**Appendix A**  
**Rubric for Grading Comprehensive Examination**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Fails to Meet Expectations (1)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (2)</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations (3)</b>
Demonstrated understanding of relevant information, principles and concepts	Response demonstrates unsatisfactory knowledge and understanding of required courses and issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question. There are major inconsistencies and/or inaccuracies; overall knowledge is unsatisfactory. Fails to provide or provides impractical solution, opinion, or analysis to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of required courses in regard to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question. There may be minor inconsistencies and/or inaccuracies; however, overall knowledge is satisfactory. Provides basic but practical solution, opinion, and/or analysis to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question	Response demonstrates superior knowledge and understanding of required courses in regard to issue(s)/problem(s) raised in the question – and in the broader LIS context. Provides thoughtful and detailed solution, opinion, and/or analysis
Demonstrated ability to apply relevant theories, principles and concepts appropriately in response to the question	Response demonstrates inappropriate application of theoretical and/or professional principles and concepts to the question. Response fails to apply any theoretical and/or professional principles to the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory application of the appropriate theoretical and/or professional principles and concepts to the question. Some connections may be unclear or in appropriate – but overall application is satisfactory	Response demonstrates superior application of the appropriate theoretical and/or professional principle(s) and concepts to the question
Demonstrated ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant principles in response to the question	Response does not provide sufficient synthesis or analysis of ideas. Conclusion does not adequately support ideas raised in the question	Response demonstrates satisfactory ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate critical and relevant information. Response may or may not demonstrate an understanding of theoretical and/or professional principles in a broader LIS context	Response demonstrates superior ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate critical, relevant, and consistent connections from theoretical principles to practice

<p>Ability to locate and retrieve relevant, appropriate, and authoritative information</p>	<p>Response demonstrates inadequate integration of information literacy skills, inadequate use of primary and secondary sources and citations. Response fails to utilize the literature to support/strengthen discussion. References are incomplete and there are significant errors using APA</p>	<p>Response demonstrates adequate evidence of broad information literacy skills including a variety of primary and secondary sources. In most cases student integrates relevant research, demonstrates understanding and uses it appropriately (quantitative evidence, quotations etc.) Cites to a sufficient number of sources correctly throughout most of the essay. Complete and correctly cited references using APA – There may be instances of minor inaccuracies in citation and in application of the sources</p>	<p>Response successfully integrates information literacy skills, demonstrates superior understanding and uses it appropriately (quantitative evidence, quotations etc. Uses a variety of appropriate primary and secondary sources showing different perspectives. Complete and correctly cited references using APA</p>
<p>Ability to analyze and synthesize the information found</p>	<p>Response does not provide sufficient synthesis or analysis of ideas of information located. Conclusion does not adequately support ideas</p>	<p>Response demonstrates adequate conclusions that show an analysis and synthesis of ideas and information. Some of the conclusions are not supported in the literature review or other information sources</p>	<p>Response demonstrates succinct and precise conclusions that show a superior analysis and synthesis of ideas based on the information located from the and other sources</p>
<p>Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing, with use of graphical elements if appropriate</p>	<p>Response is poorly organized and lacks focus/clarity. Discussion is difficult to follow. Fails to demonstrate the satisfactory written communication skills</p>	<p>Response is satisfactorily organized &amp; intelligible, although there may be minor issues with flow and/or organization. Demonstrates satisfactory to good written communication skills</p>	<p>Response is well organized and flows logically. The answer is clearly written, easy to understand, and demonstrates superior written communication skills</p>