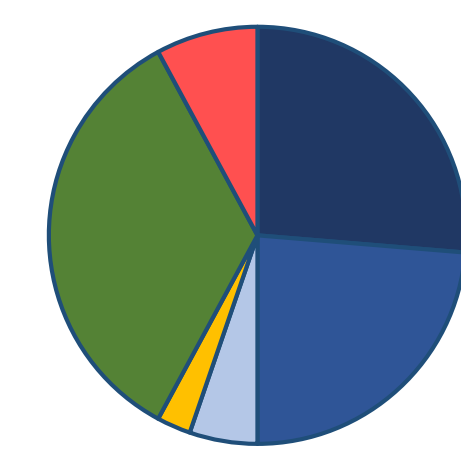


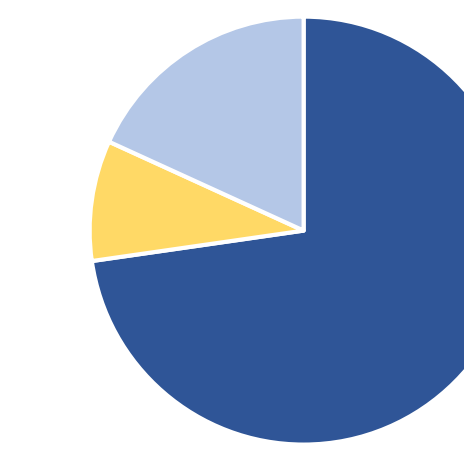
Revising the oral comprehensive exam in the UHM

Marine Biology Graduate Program.

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45 Regular & Cooperating Faculty



20 Affiliate Faculty

Overview of our Challenge:

The Marine Biology Graduate Program (MBGP) is a new hybrid program of great diversity, spanning the College of Natural Sciences, SOEST and an expansive affiliate graduate faculty. Students, however, say they are confused in how to prepare for an oral exam, in part, because exams in home units vary across the program.

Oral Exam History in MBGP

Interdisciplinary Hybrid Program

- 2 Colleges / Schools
- 8 Departments & institutes

- Participating programs have different formats for oral exams.
- Committee submits evaluation of student performance.
- **This project!**

Goals & Strategies:

- Standardize expectations & format for the oral exam, using existing SLO as foundation.
- Develop rubric for committee report including SLOs.
- Improve student preparation for the exam, via a rubric, right.
- Inclusion of content, background knowledge and comprehension of experimental design.
- Use student declared, committee approved areas of specialization.
- Small group interviews & large group discussions.
- Consult with graduate students for feedback.
- Consult with AO staff.

Elements for an Oral Exam Rubric:

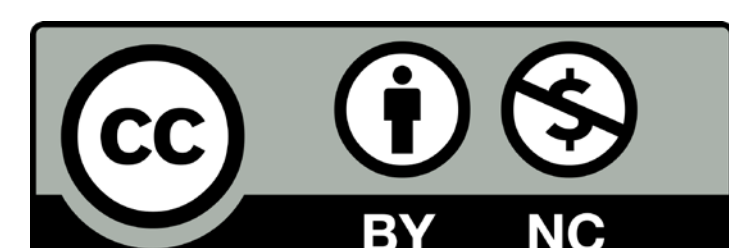
1. Level of comprehension of foundational knowledge in areas of specialization, related to marine biological systems and processes in offshore and near shore environments.
2. Level of comprehension of research principles and practices relevant to the dissertation proposal.
3. Level of competency in experimental design and quantitative and qualitative methods for field and/or laboratory research.
4. Level of competency in communicating science concepts, research findings, and practical applications of research.

Timeline for Process

Assessment comm mtg to revise SLO language (using active verbs).	Early Sept
All faculty mtg to propose project concepts.	Sept, Mar
Collect examples of existing exam formats from Nat Sci / SOEST units.	Spr 2019
Faculty mtg to generate list of performance categories for rubric.	
Assessment committee drafts content for rubric.	
All faculty mtg to review and revise draft rubric and ID next steps.	

Our approach: We established an ad-hoc committee to review existing protocols for our comprehensive exam, and are collating the most effective elements and best practices from each of academic units across the program. This committee will make recommendations to the MBGP faculty at large for discussion, consideration, and ultimately implementation.

Acknowledgements: We enjoyed the workshop training and professional development that the Assessment Office staff provided, and look forward to sharing our progress.



Smith, C., & Lemus, J. (2019, April). Using assessment tools to enhance the effectiveness of the PhD oral comprehensive exam in Marine Biology. Poster session presented at the Assessment for Curricular Improvement Poster Exhibit at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Honolulu, HI.