

**Oakland University Assessment Committee**  
**Assessment Plan Format**

**Program Name:** M.A. in Communication

**1. Citation of appropriate goals from OU's Role and Mission:**

- a. "The university offers master's programs that meet demonstrable needs of Michigan residents and that maintain excellence."
- b. "Oakland University assumes an obligation to advance knowledge through the research and scholarship of its faculty and students."

**2. Program Goals:**

- a. In pursuit of the first goal cited above, M.A. courses in the Communication and Journalism will provide students with a solid foundation in the field for those seeking to pursue a doctoral degree in Communication or a related discipline, those desiring to teach at the community college level, or those seeking a terminal degree for professional development.
- b. In pursuit of the second goal cited above, Communication and Journalism will have opportunity, through its graduate degree offering, to provide students with advanced training in the field of communication and to conduct methodologically and theoretically informed research in their selected track of study.

**3. Student Learning Outcomes**

- a. M.A. students will demonstrate the ability to understand and interpret the impact of communication dynamics on social processes, conduct methodologically and theoretically informed research in communication, further their abilities in research and writing and acquire the analytical skills needed for their educational and/or professional pursuits.
- b. M.A. candidates will demonstrate these abilities by writing formal, extended analytical research papers concerning key problematics in communication, typically using either qualitative or quantitative modes of analyses or a combination of both. This process culminates in one of three ways: 1) in the writing of the M.A. Thesis, an extended piece of research involving identification of a key problematic, a critical engagement of the relevant theoretical literature, and the implementation of an appropriately selected methodology; 2) in the writing of examination essays in response to specific questions regarding methodology, theory, and the significant literature in their selected track, or 3) in the completion of a creatively driven Project that proposes new ideas and advances theoretical understanding of an issue.

**4. Assessment Measures**

Assessment measures will consist of:

a. Direct assessment using student portfolio reviews. Portfolio reviews will be conducted for all graduating M.A. students, and will consist of an evaluation of the M.A. Thesis, Creative Project, or comprehensive examination essays written by the student. Five major assessment criteria have been identified and each will be assigned a numerical score on a scale from 0 (lowest) to 4 (highest) (see Appendix C1).

b. Indirect assessment through exit evaluations The exit evaluations will be distributed to M.A. students at the time of their oral examination or Creative Project/Thesis defense (see Appendix C2).

**5. Individuals Responsible for Assessment Activities**

The assessment committee of Communication and Journalism, which will consist of no fewer than two department members, is responsible for all departmental assessment activities and for presenting assessment findings to the department.

**6. Procedures for Using Assessment Results to Improve Program**

a. The departmental assessment committee will discuss assessment results with faculty in at least one department meeting each year.

b. Remedies to any identified problems or weaknesses will be determined.

b. Any reforms to be implemented will be undertaken in accordance with departmental, college, and university regulations.



## Appendix C.1. Student Portfolio Review

### Communication and Journalism Department

Graduate (M.A.) Program Assessment

#### Portfolio Review Scoring Sheet

Three members of the departmental assessment committee will evaluate portfolio papers (either the Creative Project, M.A. Thesis, or examination essays), assigning each assessment criterion a score on the basis of a 0-4 scale (in cases of disagreement, the average of the three committee members' scores will be used):

0 = unacceptable; 1 = very poor; 2 = marginally acceptable;  
3 = solid/competent; 4 = excellent.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Creative Project/Thesis Title: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Member 1</u>	<u>Member 2</u>	<u>Member 3</u>	<u>Assessment Criterion</u>
_____	_____	_____	Construction of clear thesis/hypothesis.
_____	_____	_____	Successful research design and appropriate methodology.
_____	_____	_____	Mastery of secondary literature/interpretations.
_____	_____	_____	Utilization of research subject(s).
_____	_____	_____	Successful support/argumentation of thesis or hypothesis .
_____	_____	_____	Writing quality and proper format.

Overall Portfolio Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Member 1 Comments:

Member 2 Comments:

Member 3 Comments:

**Appendix C.2 Exit Evaluation Questionnaire**  
Graduate (M.A.) Program Assessment  
Anonymous Exit Evaluation

Please answer the following questions in the space provided. We welcome your honest opinions; the responses are entirely anonymous.

1. After graduation, what are your most immediate career plans?

\_\_\_\_\_ Continue education (e.g. Ph.D program)

\_\_\_\_\_ Seek employment If so, please describe your desired profession:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Seek promotion/advancement in current position If so, please list your current employment:

\_\_\_\_\_

For the following questions, please encircle your response on the scale provided.

**Not at all**

**Extremely**

2. How likely are you to continue your studies in the near future?

1            2            3            4            5

3. How likely are you to continue your education at a later date?

1            2            3            4            5

4. How prepared do you feel for starting your career in your chosen field?

1            2            3            4            5

5. Thinking about your specific knowledge area (e.g., Media Studies or Interpersonal), how well did the instruction provided by the Communication faculty prepare you for your future success?

1            2            3            4            5

6. Thinking about general knowledge about our field, how well did the instruction provided by the Communication faculty prepare you for your future success?

1            2            3            4            5

7. How well did the department prepare you for conducting research?

1            2            3            4            5

8. How well did the department prepare you for entering the college classroom as instructors?

1            2            3            4            5

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of instruction you received in the department?

1            2            3            4            5

10. What suggestions would you have to improve the experience of graduate students in the department?

11. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experience in the department?

Goal Cited in OU Mission	Relevant Goal of Unit	Student Learning Outcomes	Methods of Assessment	Individual(s) Responsible for Assessment Activities	Procedures for Using Assessment Results to Improve Program
<p>Program to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet needs of Michigan residents</li> <li>• maintain excellence</li> </ul> <p>advance knowledge through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research</li> <li>• scholarship</li> </ul>	<p>Program to provide solid foundation for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• doctorate in Communication or related discipline,</li> <li>• teaching at a community college</li> <li>• terminal degree</li> </ul> <p>opportunity to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide advanced training in communication</li> <li>• conduct research in concentration area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate understanding of communication effects on social processes,</li> <li>• conduct research</li> <li>• develop research and writing abilities</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate advanced writing and research competency through extended research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct assessment of student portfolio reviews, i.e. Thesis, Creative Project, or Comprehensive Exam (see Appendix C1)</li> <li>• indirect assessment through exit evaluations (see Appendix C2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minimum of two department faculty members</li> </ul>	<p>Assessment committee to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss results with departmental faculty</li> <li>• determine remedies to identified problems or weaknesses</li> <li>• discuss findings formally in at least one department meeting each year</li> <li>• implement any reforms in accordance with departmental, college, and university regulations</li> </ul>