

Master in Migration Studies Assessment – 2021

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Mission Statement

The Master in Migration Studies reflects the University's commitment to "distinguish itself as a diverse, socially responsible learning community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor." The Master in Migration Studies Program meets a critical need to educate students and future professionals in the theoretical and practical bases for understanding, evaluating, creating, and implementing strategies that transform the realities of migrants, not only in the Americas, but throughout the world. The curriculum provides students the opportunity to analyze one of the most important social issues of the 21st century from multiple disciplinary perspectives and from direct experience with scholars, service providers, and migrants. The program will be of benefit to individuals hoping to develop migration policies, provide support services to migrant communities, lead non-governmental organizations and international agencies, and head government agencies.

Program Learning Outcomes

At the end of the program, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the theories, concepts, and research findings in migration studies from an interdisciplinary perspective.
2. Evaluate the role of governments and civil society organizations in community representation, policy creation, and resource allocation in relation to migration and mobility.
3. Apply knowledge of the humane, legal, and political characteristics of migration as a social reality and create related social interventions.
 1. Plan, generate, and interpret a research study on an important issue in migration studies.
 2. Develop field studies among migrant communities to understand realities, dynamics and logics of migration.

PLO #2 was assessed in 2019.

PLO #3 was assessed in 2018.

PLO #1 was assessed in 2017.

This year's assessment is a year of reflection in which we are looking at the totality of our assessment practices.

Methods for Direct Feedback:

In looking at the program overall, a review of student final thesis and field projects was conducted to fully understand major takeaways from students. The Academic Director of the

program reviews all final projects prior to graduation. These projects demonstrate how students are engaging with the PLOs, as well as academic writing, and clear management of citations.

Another key area to follow progress through the program and key understandings, are assessing progress through the various research seminars. The research seminars are taken one each semester. The current Academic Director is teaching the seminars and was able to pull through key benchmark assignments each semester. In the first semester, students submit an annotated bibliography and faculty are able to assess key understandings and an engagement with the theories and concepts in migration scholarship.

One other key area has been an in-depth curriculum review conducted in collaboration with the previous Academic Director and two adjunct faculty members on the development of a foundational course to introduce theoretical framings. Through the development of the curriculum and review of the course, faculty were able to pull out student's engagement with theoretical approaches to critical refugee scholarship by reviewing their reading assignments and final case study research papers.

Another key marker for student progress and engagement with the curriculum and the learning objectives are the end of semester symposiums where students share their research proposal and progress. The advisory board members and faculty attend and offer feedback through a rubric previously developed. Last year's symposium was done via video conference and is a great tool to assess students progress and learning.

Impact of COVID-19 on the program and program learning objectives:

Due to Covid-19 and the switch to virtual learning platforms, there are a few areas that the program has been impacted, especially in regards to immersion trips. No students were able to study in Mexico City the 2020-2021 school year and no immersion trips took place. This was a huge impact and so in the 2021-2022 school year, a number of trips will be implemented and assessed. One trip took place this past September to the Immigration Station on Angel Island, and students shared indirect feedback on how proximity to the issues they are learning about is extremely important. Moving forward, we will work on developing direct assessment tools for this type of learning that takes place from immersion trips, not just indirect assessment, but more formalized processes to gauge students' engagement with the PLOs through immersion opportunities given the importance of proximity in an area of studies such as migration.

Off-campus Service Work and Presentations:

This year, we have built in a new internship program. Students will submit a contract with community partners and this will be an excellent way to assess how much time and to what extent students are engaging in community engaged learning. This formal assessment will also offer insights into how students engage with PLO #2 and #3.2.

Indirect Methods of Assessment:

Student Exit Survey

Student Exit Survey: The survey covered students' self-assessment on the process of producing their final project, their semester at Ibero Mexico City and the content of courses in relation to their learning experience. The survey further asked students to review their most impactful learning experiences, as well as offer suggestions for improvements. The exit survey was to be filled out as part of the required steps for graduation, together with the electronic submittal of their final project.

Student Interviews: The Academic Director meets a minimum of three times a semester with each student to receive an update on their research progress, as well as to keep their topics in line with learning outcomes. The Director assesses student work to date and works on creating timelines (along with the academic adviser).

Direct Data Results

In regards to last semester, it seems students surpassed their initial hurdles and, of the graduating class, only 2 students are still finalizing their final project. We recognize the impact of Covid-19 on barriers for students in completing their graduation requirements. The majority of students completed a thesis, and two students engaged in deep community engaged learning with their field projects.

Indirect Data Results

Indirect data results indicated that a large percentage of graduating students determined that one of their most impactful experiences were the immersion trips to Mexico City, and the Tijuana Border. These immersion trips offered students an opportunity to apply classroom knowledge in field work and connect their classroom work with first-hand experiences. Some attributed these experiences to defining their research projects and shifting their view of the field of migration. In this case, students emphasized the importance of experience on the ground and the need to further this aspect of the program. A number of students requested more diversity of offerings and flexibility with special topics requirements, since the focus of the program relied heavily on the region of US-Mexico-Central America. This is an area, as stated above, that the program hopes to assess more directly.

Interpretation of the Results

The indirect data results clearly showed that, while there were a lot of issues with some study abroad programs, particularly Mexico, it still was considered a key experience in the development of their research and on the ground experience. The evaluations demonstrated that students are seeking more opportunities for experience as they begin to envision job prospects after graduation and we are excited to assess the formalized internship program that will begin this Spring.

Actions Taken

As noted above, the formalized internship program is something that is implemented and now will need to be assessed moving forward.

Given the importance of Immersion Trips and the pause in those trips due to Covid-19, the program quickly implemented the Immigration Station on Angel Island trip, pushed our Fall border trip to the Spring of 2022, and reinstated the Rome Immersion trip to take place Intersession 2022. Moving forward, the program will develop more formalized assessment protocols on the impact of these immersion trips.

Curriculum Change

As the new foundations course was implemented last year, and will run again this Spring, the program will continue to assess learning through the course assignments, readings responses and case studies to understand the impact on this theory course.

Moving Forward:

This year, the program will implement a faculty survey to gauge more feedback from individual faculty members on the impact of their courses. This survey will be an opportunity for faculty to share overall feedback, as well as an in-depth reflection on specific student work.

The Director of the program is also working closely with the faculty teaching the Research Methods course to review previous thesis and build out the research methods course based on needs directly stemming from final thesis projects.