

University of Texas at Austin
Academic Unit Assessment Plans Format (*tentative version*)

I. School and Degree Program

*School Name and College: Department of Astronomy, College of Natural Sciences

*Degrees Awarded: M.A.

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II. Program Mission Statement

The M.A. in astronomy aims to prepare students for professional careers in the physical sciences in higher education, government, and the private economy, and for life-long participation in the great intellectual adventures and explorations of astronomy.

III. Program Educational Objectives

1. Students will be effective researchers
2. Students will be effective problem solvers.
3. Students will be effective communicators.

IV. Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students will contribute to original research projects.
2. Students will communicate information effectively in writing, orally, and graphically.
3. Students will apply computer skills including programming.
4. Students will evaluate research literature critically
5. Students will apply physical and mathematical principles to solve complex astrophysical problems.

V. Strategies, Methods, and Level of Competence

1. Outcome #1: second year project, thesis, additional projects
2. Outcomes #2, 4: second year report, thesis, authorship of articles, seminars, class presentations
3. Outcome #3: research projects, course work, mathematical methods course
4. Outcome #5: courses, research projects
5. Competence goal: 80% of students perform at a level competitive for doctoral study in astronomy or for employment in higher education or other occupations involving the physical sciences.

VI. Implementation Plan

1. Faculty members collect metrics from selected assignments and examinations reflecting specific outcomes and evaluate work of research students.
2. Graduate Studies Executive Committee receives feedback from students and faculty.
3. Committee works with instructors and students to design improvements.
4. Department faculty considers and approves changes to curriculum and course design.

VII. Assessment of Results

VIII. Evaluation of Results

IX. Recommendations

X. Actions