

# The University of Iowa PFF: Assessing Student Learning

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# PFF @ Iowa:

## Career Trajectories Towards Professoriate

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- Sciences:

2 years coursework & exams + 3-4 years research → 5-6 years to PhD  
+ 2-3 yr postdoc = 10-12 years

RA, fellowship vs TA support ; FY appointments

- Non-sciences:

3-4 years courses + exams + 4 years research → 8 years to PhD  
+ various non-tenure track positions = 10-12 years

TA vs RA, fellowship support; AY appointments

# Discipline specificity for PFF / professional development?

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Sciences : research, grants

Non-sciences: teaching skills, research

Common: personal growth issues

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Pre-2000: PFF followed a decentralized vs centralized model

Post-2000: Evolution of thinking:

- too much emphasis on specificity; not enough commonality
- Graduate College (other administrative offices) taking greater role
- Centralized vs decentralized model

# Example: RCR → Scholarly Integrity

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## RCR:

- 1 semester course
- many topics
- inability to meet all expectations (Federal guidelines)

## Scholarly Integrity:

- 4 semester sequence; faculty involvement
- 1 x 4 hr orientation, monthly topical seminars
- individual programs embellish discussions
- creates Community of Scholars, meets Federal guidelines

## Others:

- Graduate Teaching Certificate (GC – College of Ed)
- Scholarly Inquiry Certificate (GC – POROI)

# Graduate College: “the Network”

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Research        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• External funding opportunities</li><li>• Human subjects research</li><li>• Animal subject research</li><li>• Grant writing basics</li><li>• Writing productivity</li></ul>                     |
| Dissertation    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prospectus writing</li><li>• Dissertation writing</li><li>• ETD basics</li></ul>   |
| Teaching        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Science teaching</li></ul>   |
| Personal Growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time management</li><li>• Conflict management</li><li>• Difficult conversations</li><li>• Understanding job market</li><li>• Understanding job interview</li><li>• Work-life balance</li></ul> |

# Assessing Student Learning

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teach ↔ learn ↔ know/understand

↘ Best way to learn a subject is to teach it ↙

- how to teach?
- how do students learn?
- assessment of learning?
- mechanisms to demonstrate what you know
  - ✓ exams – what kind?
  - ✓ projects – labs, papers, portfolios

# Assessing Student Learning

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How will a student be different because of a learning experience?

Undergrad → Grad

exams → exams (different type)

projects → projects

applications of what you know

Skills to acquire:

learn disciplinary content

critical thinking

intellectual reasoning



# Assessing Student Learning

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Learn → courses to become current in the field



Comprehend → develop hypothesis and how to design a research project



Apply → gather, analyze, synthesize, interpret



communicate through thesis/  
dissertation, creative work