A. Undergraduate Assessment by Degree/Certificate Program

1. Student Learning Outcomes for BA, Major in Religion

- Students acquire basic knowledge and understanding of the history, scriptures, doctrines, rituals and other practices of the major world religious traditions.
- Students become acquainted with major themes in the study of religion.
- Students read and analyze primary source material, including scriptures, faith statements, etc.
- Students read and analyze scholarly articles and monographs in the field.
- Students begin the process of learning to write scholarly materials in genres appropriate to the field of Religious Studies, including research papers, exegetical essays, etc.

2. These are published on our website, at www.hawaii.edu/religion.

3. How SLOs map to the curriculum

- *Students acquire basic knowledge and understanding of the history, scriptures, doctrines, rituals and other practices of the major world religious traditions.*
  This material is covered in the 200-level survey courses dealing with the various religious traditions: REL 202 Understanding Indian Religions, REL 203 Understanding Chinese Religions, REL 204 Understanding Japanese Religions, REL 205 Understanding Hawaiian Religions, REL 207 Understanding Buddhism, REL 208 Understanding Judaism, and 210 Understanding Christianity. In addition, basic knowledge of world religious traditions is provided in REL 150 Introduction to the World’s Major Religions, which does not count toward the major, but serves as a Foundations class in the General Education curriculum and as a prerequisite for all upper division classes.

- *Students become acquainted with major themes in the study of religion.*
  Major themes are introduced in the 300-level thematic classes, especially REL 300 The Study of Religion. (Based on review of syllabi.)

- *Students read and analyze primary source material, including scriptures, faith statements, etc.*
  Textual criticism is introduced in the 200-level scripture classes (REL 200 Understanding the Old Testament and REL 201 Understanding the New Testament) as well as in the 200-level survey courses listed above. Textual
analysis continues in several of the upper division classes including: REL 303
Creation and Evolution, REL 308 Zen Buddhist Masters, REL 356 Women and
Religion, REL 390 Hawaiian Gods: Pele, Kamapua‘a, REL 409 Life and
Teachings of Jesus, etc. (Based on review of syllabi.)

- **Students read and analyze scholarly articles and monographs in the field.**
  A review of syllabi show that 100% of classes at the 400-level and 89% of
classes at the 300-level assign scholarly articles and/or monographs as
required reading.

- **Students begin the process of learning to write scholarly materials in genres
  appropriate to the field of Religious Studies, including research papers, exegetical
  essays, etc.**
  A review of syllabi indicate the following types of writing:
  Research papers are assigned in 100% of 400-level classes, 44% of 300-level
classes, and 17% of 200-level classes.
  Exegetical essays are assigned in 22% of 300-level classes, 50% of 200-level
classes.
  Other essay styles are assigned in 20 % of 400-level, 56% of 300-level, and 33%
of 200-level classes.

4. Three different instruments were used for assessment during 2004-2005:

- **Portfolio Evaluation:** Papers and exams written by senior level Religion
  majors were collected in the Fall semester and were evaluated by a faculty
  committee. We sampled the work of 8 senior majors, which represents 44% of
  the senior majors and approximately 30% of our total number of majors. Two
  faculty members evaluated papers and exams using an established rubric.
  (Performance indicators of skills and content.)

- **Student Exit Evaluations:** Graduating seniors were invited to comment, in
  writing or in person, on their experience as a Religion major. Copies of the
  Learning Objectives were included with the invitation. All senior level
  majors were contacted, with a response rate of 11%. (Perceptual/attitudinal
  indicators.)

- **Syllabus Evaluation:** Syllabi for all undergraduate courses that count toward
  the major were collected and discussed by the faculty at a Department
  meeting. Six out of the seven faculty members teaching that semester
  participated in the discussion.
  At this time, our assessment efforts focus exclusively on majors.

5. It is too early in the process of collecting and analyzing data for the
Department to have used the results for altering our curriculum. We have made
changes in our assessment instruments over the past two years, and will
continue to seek new and more effective techniques. For example, we will
experiment next year with embedding the Exit Evaluation into an upper division
course required for majors to raise the response rate.
At this time, the most productive parts of the assessment process came out of two discussions, the first of which was focused on crafting our SLOs and the second based on course syllabi. In these discussions, faculty began to consider possible changes to the undergraduate curriculum, including altering requirements for the major.
B. Graduate Assessment

1. Student Learning Outcomes for the MA, Plan A (Thesis track) and Plan B (Non-thesis Track)
   - Students demonstrate familiarity and developing mastery of the methodologies and theoretical frameworks employed in the field of Religious Studies.
   - Students demonstrate the ability to write and prepare presentations at a high level of proficiency.
   - Students are able to conduct research that leads to either a thesis or a significant portfolio of shorter works.
   - Students demonstrate the ability to read and analyze primary religious texts using text critical methods.
   - Students demonstrate language proficiency in at least one foreign language appropriate to their research with a minimum proficiency at the second year level.

Work with graduate students is a highly individual endeavor, since students come to the program with diverse professional goals. In addition to the general outcomes listed above, the following outcomes apply to different students based on aptitude and goals:
   - Student is prepared to enter a Ph.D. program in the field of Religion or a related field.
   - Student is prepared to teach Religious Studies at the lower division or junior college level.

2. The SLOs are not currently published.

3. How SLOs map to the curriculum:
   - Students demonstrate familiarity and developing mastery of the methodologies and theoretical frameworks employed in the field of Religious Studies.
   - Students are introduced to the various methodologies and theoretical frameworks employed within the field of Religious Studies in REL 600 History and Theory of the Study of Religion, a seminar required of all first year graduate students. Students are offered opportunities for more advanced application of particular methodologies and theoretical frameworks in REL 630 Practicum in Field Research in Religion and REL 695 Topics in Religious Studies.
   - Students demonstrate developing mastery of the same in the production of a final thesis (Plan A) or portfolio of research papers (Plan B) and the public defense of the thesis or portfolio.
   - Students demonstrate the ability to write and prepare presentations at a high level of proficiency.
Students demonstrate the ability to write and prepare presentations at a high level of proficiency in the research papers and presentations required in all area seminars.

- **Students are able to conduct research that leads to either a thesis or a significant portfolio of shorter works.**
  Students demonstrate their ability to conduct research in the production of a final thesis (Plan A) or portfolio of research papers (Plan B) and the public defense of the thesis or portfolio.

- **Students demonstrate the ability to read and analyze primary religious texts using text critical methods.**
  Students demonstrate the ability to read and analyze primary religious texts using text critical methods in the research papers and presentations required in REL 600 and in most area seminars.

- **Students demonstrate language proficiency in at least one foreign language appropriate to their research with a minimum proficiency at the second year level.**
  Students demonstrate language proficiency in at least one foreign language appropriate to their research with a minimum proficiency at the second year level by earning a B- or higher in the fourth semester of language class, or by passing an examination conducted by the appropriate language department.

- **Student is prepared to enter a Ph.D. program in the field.**
  Students are prepared to enter a Ph.D. program through course work and the through mentoring provided by faculty advisors.

- **Student is prepared to teach Religious Studies at the lower division or junior college level.**
  Students are prepared to teach Religious Studies at the lower division or junior college level through REL 680 Pedagogy in Religion, a series of courses culminating in a practicum requiring the student to teach a section of REL 150 at a community college or as part of the Freshman Seminar program at UHM.

4. All graduate students are covered in the assessment.

5. SLOs are assessed using different culminating projects, depending on the MA track.

   Plan A Thesis-based track: Student’s learning is evaluated primarily through the thesis project. The project includes submission of a written thesis, oral defense of the thesis at a public forum and resubmission of the final product.

   Plan B Non-thesis track: Student’s learning is evaluated through a review of the portfolio of research papers and an oral defense of the portfolio.

In addition, the Department maintains a list of our graduate alumni, tracking their placement into doctoral programs and teaching positions. See #7 below.
6. Religion Department graduate students participate actively in UH sponsored conferences for graduate students, such as the annual SHAPS student conference, as do the faculty as respondents. We encourage students to submit their work for presentation at professional conferences, although acceptance of papers by masters’ level students is not common. In the past four years we have had some limited success in having two or three of our students present papers at the regional sessions of the American Academy of Religion and the Association of Asian Studies. One student paper has been accepted for the national session of the AAR in November 2005.

We encourage our students to publish, although this is likewise limited for masters’ level work. A small percentage of our students have been successful in publishing portions of their theses in scholarly journals; in a few cases, theses have been published by scholarly presses as monographs.

7. The Department chair maintains a list of our graduate alumni, tracking their placement into doctoral programs, teaching positions, etc. A recent departmental report based on the data show the following:
   - Initial placement is known for 96% of the students who graduated in the past ten years.
   - Graduates are almost evenly divided between A Plan (52%) and B Plan (48%) options.
   - 39% of graduates whose placement is known entered Ph.D. programs.
   - Of those entering Ph.D. programs in the past 10 years, 71% completed Plan A and 29% completed Plan B.
   - Of those entering Ph.D. programs in the past 5 years, 41% completed Plan A and 57% completed Plan B.
   - Of those whose placement is known, 25% are now or have taught at the university level*, 11% are teaching at the secondary level, 7% hold other university positions, and 14% entered the private sector.
   * This includes only individuals who secured teaching jobs based on the MA received at UH in Religion, and not those who taught/are teaching as part of doctoral programs.

8. The Religion Department made a significant revision of the graduate curriculum in 1999, based on our assessment of graduates’ success in placement. In light of a tighter job market at the community college level and the success of B plan students in gaining acceptance to doctoral programs, we shifted our B Plan from a teaching plan to a non-thesis plan. The shift involved reworking several courses and changing required courses, as well as altering the advising that incoming students received. In 2003, we further
adjusted our advising and counseling system to better accommodate the needs of students in the non-thesis plan.

The most recent report on student placement, completed in Spring 2005 (referred to above in #7) has not yet been presented in full to the faculty. The report will be presented and discussed in September 2005; the September meeting is generally reserved for a discussion of assessment and curriculum evaluation. For this reason, no action has yet been taken.