

# **RESPECT GRADUATE SCHOOL**

*M.A. in Islamic Studies (MAIS)*

## **Three-Year Educational Effectiveness Assessment Plan**

**2025–2028**

*Revised: July 2026*

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## **I. Executive Summary**

During 2024-2025, the RGS faculty designed an organized, systematic methodology for program learning outcomes assessment using well-defined qualitative measures for each of the program learning outcomes assessed in designated course final papers. The first phase of this plan for the assessment of educational effectiveness was implemented in 2025-2026.

This three-year assessment plan establishes a cyclical approach to evaluating student achievement of the three MAIS Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Each academic year focuses on one PLO through course-embedded assessments, while the Final Research Paper (FRP) provides a comprehensive capstone assessment of all three PLOs. The course embedded assessments examine each student's achievement of the program learning outcomes occurs time as well as at the end of the program with the Final Research paper assessments (written and oral defense). The first complete assessment cycle will conclude in July 2028 after which a full program review by faculty and external evaluator(s) will occur.

The assessment system incorporates multiple direct and indirect measures including PLO-specific rubrics, a unified common essay rubric used to evaluate the quality of research and writing in final course papers and in the Final Research Paper, exit interviews in which graduates reflect on the extent to which they believe they met the MAIS PLOs, and continuous quality improvement processes that the faculty engage in.

## **II. Program Learning Outcomes**

The M.A. in Islamic Studies program has three Program Learning Outcomes:

1. **PLO 1 – Knowledge of the Islamic Tradition and its foundational sources:**  
Demonstrate a broad understanding of the Islamic tradition based on foundational sources.
2. **PLO 2 – Critical Thinking:** Demonstrate the ability to think critically on traditional and contemporary social and intellectual issues.
3. **PLO 3 – Scholarly Research and Academic Writing:** Demonstrate the ability to conduct scholarly research and to present the results in academic writing.

## **III. Assessment System Overview**

The RGS program learning outcomes assessment system has four elements:

### **Element 1: The Three-Year Course-Embedded PLO Assessment Cycle**

Each PLO is assessed in designated courses over a three-year cycle using a common essay rubric to evaluate the quality of the final course essay as well as the specific PLO being evaluated in that course. This method allows data on individual student learning outcomes achievement over time and allows for assessment of the extent to which program learning outcomes are being achieved overall.

### *The Three-Year Course-Embedded Assessment Cycle*

#### Year 1 (2025-2026): PLO 1 – Foundational Islamic Sources

Focus: Students are assessed for their ability to demonstrate a broad understanding of the Islamic tradition based on the foundational sources of Islam: the Qur'an, the Hadith, the classical scholarly works of exegesis, jurisprudence, and theology.

##### Designated Courses:

- Introduction to Quranic Studies
- Introduction to Hadith Studies
- Theology
- Survey of Islamic Thought

#### Year 2 (2026-2027): PLO 2 – Critical Thinking

Focus: Students are assessed for their ability to demonstrate graduate-level critical thinking on traditional and contemporary social and intellectual issues.

##### Designated Courses:

- Critical Thinking in Philosophy
- Women in the Quran
- Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion
- Islamic Philosophy

#### Year 3 (2027-2028): PLO 3 – Scholarly Research & Academic Writing

Focus: Students are assessed on their ability to conduct graduate-level scholarly research and express their argument and analysis in academic writing using standard documentation and citation styles.

##### Designated Courses:

- Islamic Spirituality
- The Prophetic Biography
- Islamic History

- Islamic Ethics
- Islamic Jurisprudence

### Element 2: Capstone Assessment

In their final semester, students write a Final Research Paper (FRP) under faculty supervision. The FRP is assessed by a faculty committee against a common rubric that evaluates all three PLOs, followed by an oral defense also evaluated against specific criteria. This capstone assessment provides a comprehensive evaluation of individual student achievement across all program outcomes and allows for evaluation of to what extent a particular graduating class as a whole achieved the desired program outcomes.

### Element 3: Graduates' Self-Assessment of Achievement of Program Learning Outcomes and overall Program Assessment

In a graduate exit interview conducted approximately six months after graduation, graduates assess their achievement of the program learning outcomes and extensive comments are recorded and analyzed. In addition, the graduates assess the program along several parameters of teaching effectiveness, student experience, strengths, and gaps. They are given the opportunity to express suggestions for improvements which are taken into consideration in the next academic year by the faculty. The analysis of these interview results is shared with the faculty, staff, and Board. It guides efforts at continuing strengths and working on gaps.

### Element 4: MAIS Program Review

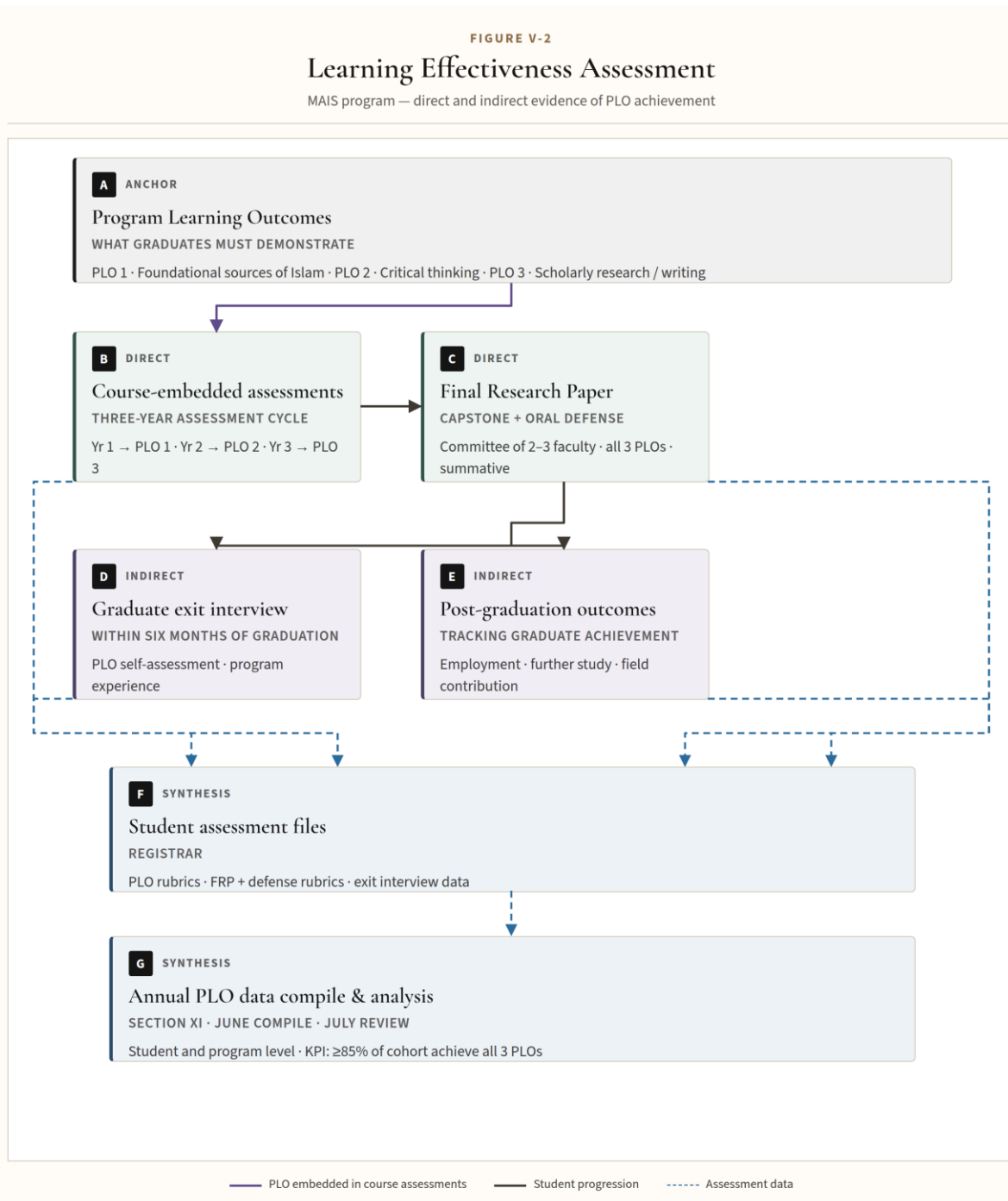
At the end of the three-year course-embedded assessment cycle and with three years of data of Final Research Paper assessments, a full program review is done by the faculty, led by the Dean of Academics or his designee. External evaluator(s) are solicited and their review with that of our faculty results in a report and analysis of the data leading to efforts to address shortcomings and build on strengths. The next full program review will be in Fall 2028. (V.5.4 Program Review Template)

Annual reviews are conducted of the assessment work completed each year by the Academic Affairs Committee, the President's Cabinet, and the Educational Effectiveness Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Educational Effectiveness Committee affirmed the Educational Effectiveness Assessment plan in June 2026 and on their recommendation, the Board of Trustees also affirmed it. (V.5.4 BoT minutes 6/28/26.)

Figure V-2 below illustrates the elements and interrelationships of the elements of the RGS Educational Effectiveness Assessment System. This illustration is also on our Student Achievements webpage to demonstrate the process of how student learning outcomes are assessed in the MAIS program.

Essential to student outcomes is teaching effectiveness. Figure V-3 illustrates the elements and process of assessing teaching effectiveness.

Figure V-4 shows how we conceive of the relationship between teaching and learning effectiveness as well as the relationship between the academic assessment system and board oversight.



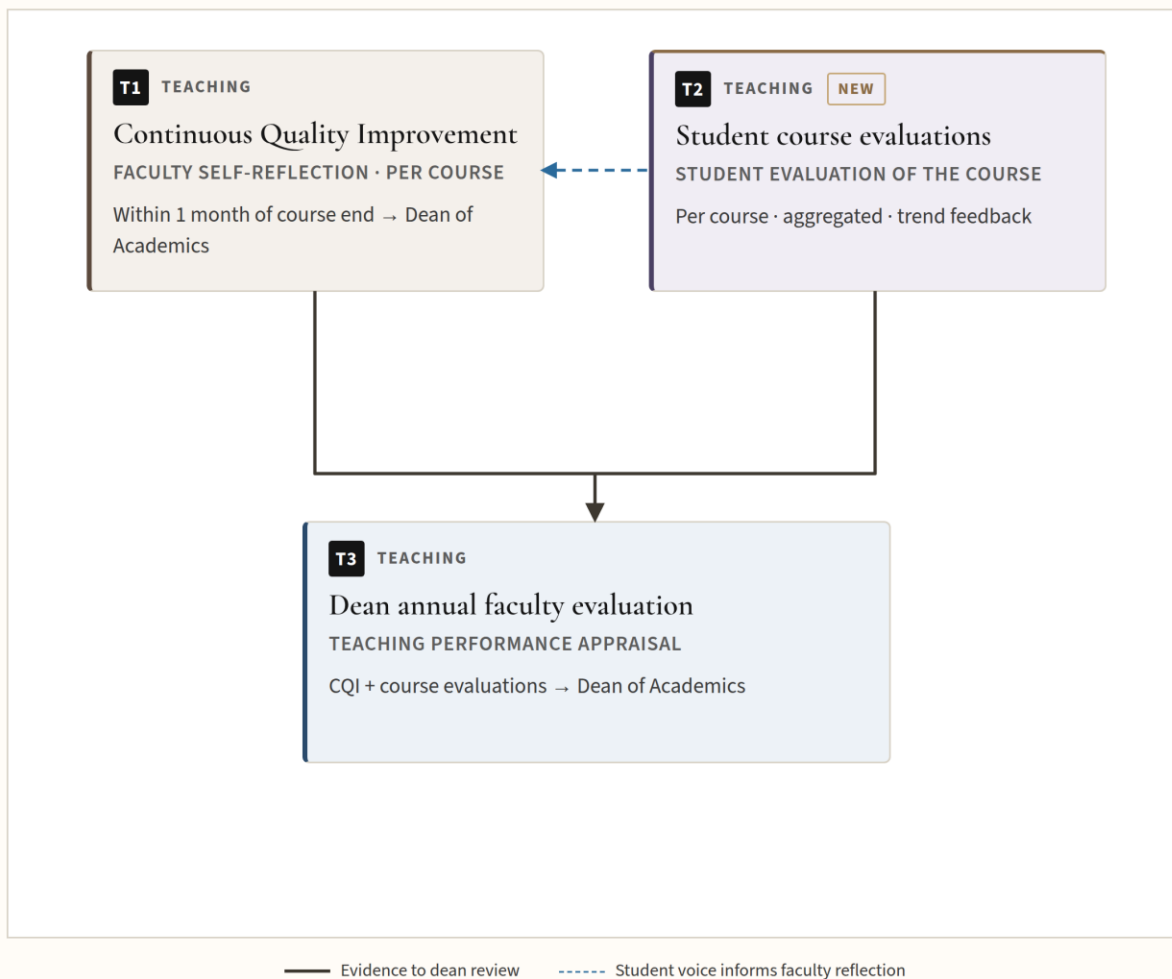
See Table V-2 for full node definitions and plan references.

- Course grades are stored in Populi; rubric artifacts and assessment files are maintained by the Registrar in SharePoint.
- Three-year CEA rollout: PLO 1 cycle began 2026; PLO 2 in 2027; PLO 3 in 2028. First cohort with all three focal-PLO tracks completes with the 2028 graduating class.

FIGURE V-3

## Teaching Effectiveness Assessment

MAIS program — faculty reflection, student voice, and dean oversight



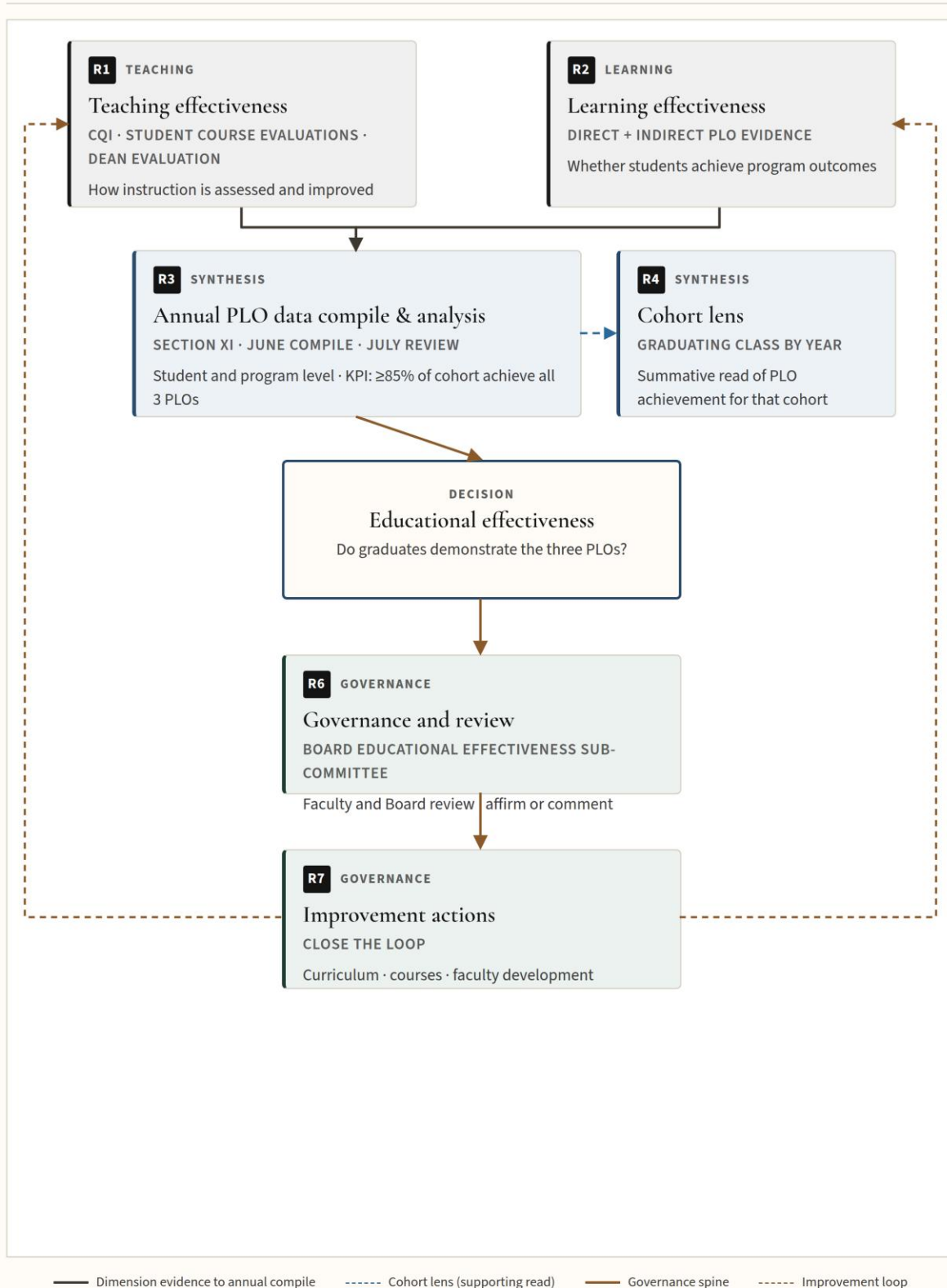
See Table V-3 for full node definitions and plan references.

- CQI forms are completed within one month of each course end and forwarded to the Dean of Academics.
- Student course evaluation aggregation and trend review supports the June SCE decision cycle (Section X).

FIGURE V-4

## Educational Effectiveness Bridge

MAIS program — synthesis, governance, and improvement loop



See Table V-4 for full node definitions and plan references.

- Teaching and learning dimension charts feed the annual compile separately; cross-check language is not shown as a separate node.
- Improvement actions close the loop back to both teaching and learning assessment systems.



## IV. Assessment Cycle Timeline

| Academic Year | Primary PLO Focus                                | Data Collection | Review & Reporting |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 2025-2026     | PLO 1: Knowledge of Islamic Foundational Sources | Fall & Spring   | July 2026          |
| 2026-2027     | PLO 2: Critical Thinking                         | Fall & Spring   | July 2027          |
| 2027-2028     | PLO 3: Scholarly Research & Writing              | Fall & Spring   | July 2028          |

## V. Assessment Instruments

The following instruments are used to collect student learning outcomes assessment data:

|                                               | Purpose                                                                   | Timing                       |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>PLO-Specific Assessment Rubrics</b>        | Detailed assessment of focal PLO in designated courses                    | End of each course           |
| <b>Common Essay Rubric</b>                    | Unified assessment of writing quality across all courses                  | Final Course research papers |
| <b>Final Research Paper Assessment Rubric</b> | Capstone assessment of all three PLOs                                     | Final semester               |
| <b>Graduate Exit Interview</b>                | Student self-assessment of PLO achievement and overall program experience | 6-10 months after graduation |
| <b>Program Review</b>                         | Faculty & External reviewer Program Evaluation                            | Every 4 years                |

## VI. PLO Assessment Rubrics (in truncated form; full forms in Appendix XV)

Each PLO has a specific assessment rubric using a 5-point scale: 1 (Not Evident), 2 (Emerging), 3 (Developing), 4 (Proficient), 5 (Exemplary). N/A = Not Applicable.

### PLO 1: Foundational Sources Assessment

| Foundational Source Category | Assessment Scale |
|------------------------------|------------------|
|------------------------------|------------------|

|                                                                          |                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Qur'an and Hadith                                                     | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 2. Classical Islamic Sources (8th–16th cent.)                            | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 3. Modern Period (17th–19th cent.)                                       | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 4. Contemporary Period                                                   | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 5. How well foundational sources are used to support a coherent argument | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |

## PLO 2: Critical Thinking Assessment

| Critical Thinking Criterion                                                                      | Assessment Scale  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Demonstrates sufficient knowledge about the topic                                             | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 2. Consistent argument                                                                           | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 3. Compelling argument: Replies to possible objections or produces counterarguments and responds | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 4. Challenges conventional ideas and concepts                                                    | 1   2   3   4   5 |

## PLO 3: Scholarly Research & Academic Writing Assessment

| Scholarly Research Criterion                                                       | Assessment Scale        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Used sufficient sources (minimum: 3 books and 5 peer-reviewed journal articles) | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 2. Consistent argument                                                             | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 3. Elements of originality                                                         | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 4. Academic language                                                               | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 5. Organization                                                                    | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |

## VII. Common Essay Rubric

This common rubric used by faculty to evaluate final papers enhances academic rigor and ensures consistency in assessment across courses. Faculty may adapt or emphasize specific

categories as appropriate to course goals and assignment types. See the full form in Appendix XV.

**Unified Criteria of the Common Essay Rubric:**

1. Thesis, Argumentation, and Critical Thinking
2. Research, Evidence, and Use of Sources
3. Communication Skills, Clarity, Format and Academic Style
4. Organization, Length, and Grammar
5. Social Responsibility and Ethical Awareness
6. Problem-Solving and Application of Islamic Principles
7. Overall Excellence

**VIII. Final Research Paper Evaluation Rubric**

The Final Research Paper (FRP) is evaluated for quality of research and writing using the common essay rubric. The rubric for evaluation of the extent to which the FRP demonstrates the three PLOs serves as the capstone assessment. A faculty committee assesses the FRP using the following criteria:

| Program Outcome                                                                                                | Assessment Scale        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Demonstrates a broad understanding of the Islamic traditions based on foundational sources                  | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 2. Demonstrates the ability to think critically on traditional and contemporary social and intellectual issues | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |
| 3. Demonstrates the ability to conduct scholarly research and to present the results in academic writings      | N/A   1   2   3   4   5 |

**IX. Indirect Assessment Measures****Graduate Exit Interview**

Graduating students complete a comprehensive exit interview that includes:

- **PLO Self-Assessment:** Students rate their achievement of each PLO on a 1-5 scale
- **Program Evaluation:** Assessment of program strengths, weaknesses, and alignment with institutional mission
- **Faculty and Staff Assessment:** Evaluation of instruction quality, advising, and support services

- **Career Preparation:** Assessment of professional development and doctoral studies preparation
- **Alumni Engagement:** Interest in continued connection with RGS

### **Post-Graduation Outcomes**

Graduate achievements such as enrollment in doctoral or terminal professional degree programs, professional employment utilizing MAIS knowledge, and contributions to one's community are ultimately the best evidence of the educational effectiveness of the Master of Arts in Islamic Studies program. Annual reports are updated on graduate achievements and posted in institutional reports and on the RGS website.

The Student Achievement page on the RGS website provides data on student success and institutional growth.

## **X. Teaching Effectiveness**

Three elements comprise the way that teaching effectiveness is assessed.

**Class observation and report:** The Dean of Academics observes a class session so that each faculty member is observed annually. The Dean shares his observation report with the faculty member.

**Student Course Evaluations:** Students anonymously share their evaluation of the course. Faculty can see the course evaluations after grades have been submitted and posted. The Dean of Academic reviews the student course evaluations.

**Faculty Self-Assessment—Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)**

### ***Policy***

At the conclusion of every semester, faculty members complete the Course Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Form, self-reflecting on all elements of the course.

### ***Procedure***

Within one month following the conclusion of the course, faculty members complete the CQI Form. Faculty members use CQI data when making modifications to course content for future semesters. The completed form is forwarded to the Dean of Academics. It is considered in the annual faculty evaluation by the Dean

### **CQI Form Components**

- **Part A:** Course Preparation and Delivery (objectives, materials, assessment methods)
- **Part B:** Course Management and Communication (structure, feedback, response time)
- **Part C:** Overall Course Experience (satisfaction, challenges, successes)
- **Part D:** Suggestions for Improvement (content additions/removals, sequence changes, PLO alignment)

- **Part E:** Additional Comments

### **Annual Faculty Performance Appraisal**

Two basic elements are considered in the annual faculty performance appraisal.

A. Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness: The three elements ( the Dean’s Class Observation Report, the faculty member’s course self-assessment (CQI), and student course evaluations) are taken into consideration of the Dean’s appraisal of teaching effectiveness.

B. Evaluation of Faculty Contributions to Scholarship and to RGS: The Dean assesses the faculty member’s contributions to the Strategic Plan and to scholarship; service on RGS committees and initiatives; and contributions to the wider academic community.

Overall performance appraisal. The evaluations of teaching effectiveness and contributions to scholarship and RGS result in an overall evaluation of faculty performance and effectiveness.

## **XI. Assessment Data Management**

### **Student Assessment Files**

**An assessment file containing documented evidence of achievement on all three program outcomes is maintained by the Registrar and include:**

- All PLO assessment rubrics completed throughout the student's program
- Final Research Paper (FRP) committee assessments
- Oral defense of FRP evaluation
- Final draft approved by FRP advisor

### **Document Retention**

Final research papers are retained both electronically by the Registrar and in hard copy in the RGS Library.

### **Annual Student Data Collection**

- Course-level PLO assessment data from designated courses
- Final Research Paper assessment analysis
- Exit interview feedback from graduating students

## **XII. Governance and Review**

The faculty and Board Educational Effectiveness Sub-Committee review assessment results against graduate achievements annually in September.

### **Review Schedule:**

- **July 2026:** First annual review by the Academic Affairs Committee – PLO 1 (Foundational Sources) data analysis; 2026 FRP results. Faculty recommendations for improvements, changes, initiatives for the following year. The Dean’s annual departmental report incorporates the AAC review. Following this, the President’s Cabinet reviews the outcomes assessments results, the departmental report and recommendations in August and forwards same to the Board of Trustees’ Educational Effectiveness Sub-Committee.
- **July 2027:** Second annual review – PLO 2 (Critical Thinking) by the Academic Affairs Committee; data analysis; 2027 FRP results. Faculty recommendations for improvements, changes, initiatives for the following year. The Dean’s annual departmental report incorporates the AAC review. Following this, the President’s Cabinet reviews the outcomes assessments results, the departmental report and recommendations in August and forwards same to the Board of Trustees’ Educational Effectiveness Sub-Committee.
- **July 2028:** Third annual review--PLO 3 (Research and Academic Writing) by the Academic Affairs Committee; data analysis; 2027 FRP results. Faculty recommendations for improvements, changes, initiatives for the following year. The Dean’s annual departmental report incorporates the AAC review. Following this, the President’s Cabinet reviews the outcomes assessments results, the departmental report and recommendations in August and forwards same to the Board of Trustees’ Educational Effectiveness’ Sub-Committee.
- **August 2028:** A review of 3 years of outcomes assessment data – Comprehensive analysis of all PLOs assessments (course embedded and FRP)
- **Fall 2028:** Review of the MAIS Program by faculty, dean and external evaluator(s) in Islamic Studies. Recommendations for improvements to MAIS and for review of the educational effectiveness assessment plan that began in 2025-2026 to be implemented in 2029. Review and approval by Academic Affairs Committee, President’s Cabinet, and EEC of BoT by March 2029.
- **Fall of 2029**—Implementation of approved recommendations

### **XIII. Assessment Calendar**

| <b>Timeline</b>      | <b>Activity</b>                 | <b>Responsible Party</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| End of each semester | Complete PLO assessment rubrics | Course Instructors       |

|                           |                                                         |                                                    |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Final semester            | Complete FRP assessment and oral defense evaluation     | FRP Committee                                      |
| 6 months after graduation | Conduct exit interviews                                 | Dean of Students or designee                       |
| June (annually)           | Compile and analyze assessment data                     | Registrar / Dean of Academics                      |
| July (annually)           | Faculty review; publish Student Achievements on website | Academic Affairs Committee and President's Cabinet |
| September (annually)      | Educational Effectiveness Committee of the BOT review   | Chair of EEC                                       |

## XIV. Approval

This Educational Effectiveness Assessment Plan has been reviewed and approved by the following:

Dean of Academic Affairs

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Educational Effectiveness Sub-Committee Chair

Date

President

Date

## XV. Appendix — Assessment Forms

### Final Course Essay Assessment Form

#### Final Course Essay — Program Outcome 1 Assessment

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Term and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

*RGS-MAIS Program Outcome 1: Demonstrate a broad understanding of the Islamic traditions based on foundational sources.*

| Foundational Sources / Assessment ↓                                       | N/A | 1 Not Evident | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Proficient | 5 Exemplary |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Qur'an and Hadith                                                      |     |               |            |              |              |             |
| 2. Classical Islamic Sources (roughly 8th–16th cent.)                     |     |               |            |              |              |             |
| 3. Modern Period (17th–19th cent.)                                        |     |               |            |              |              |             |
| 4. Contemporary Period                                                    |     |               |            |              |              |             |
| 5. How well foundational sources are used to support a coherent argument? |     |               |            |              |              |             |

**Additional Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Final Course Essay — Program Outcome 2 Assessment

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Term and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

*RGS-MAIS Program Outcome 2: Demonstrate the ability to think critically on traditional and contemporary social and intellectual issues.*

| Critical Thinking / Assessment ↓                      | 1 Not Evident | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Proficient | 5 Exemplary |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Demonstrates sufficient knowledge about the topic. |               |            |              |              |             |
| 2. Consistent argument                                |               |            |              |              |             |



|                                                                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 3. Compelling Argument: Replies to possible objections or produces counterarguments. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. Challenges to conventional ideas and concepts.                                    |  |  |  |  |  |

**Additional Comments:**

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### Final Course Essay — Program Outcome 3 Assessment

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Term and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

*RGS-MAIS Program Outcome 3: Demonstrate the ability to conduct scholarly research and to present the results in academic writings.*

| Scholarly Research / Assessment ↓                                                      | N/A | 1 Not Evident | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Proficient | 5 Exemplary |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Used Sufficient Sources (3 books and 5 peer-reviewed articles in academic journals) |     |               |            |              |              |             |
| 2. Consistent Argument                                                                 |     |               |            |              |              |             |
| 3. Elements of Originality                                                             |     |               |            |              |              |             |
| 4. Academic Language                                                                   |     |               |            |              |              |             |
| 5. Organization                                                                        |     |               |            |              |              |             |

**Additional Comments:**

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## Common Essay Rubric for Final Course Essay

### Purpose of Rubric

This unified rubric is designed to enhance academic rigor, ensure consistency in assessment, and support the intellectual and personal development of students across graduate courses in philosophy, Islamic studies, and religious studies. It serves as a constructive tool for learning—students can use it to identify strengths and areas for improvement, while faculty can apply it flexibly depending on course goals and assignment types. Not all criteria need to be used for every assignment; instructors may adapt or emphasize specific categories as appropriate.

### II. Unified Criteria

| Criterion                                                         | A Outstanding                                                                                                                                                    | B Good                                                                                                                       | C Adequate                                                                                                            | D Poor                                                                                                         | F Failing                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Thesis, Argumentation &amp; Critical Thinking</b>           | Clear, original, insightful thesis; compelling, internally consistent argument that anticipates objections; independent reasoning; nuanced comparative analysis. | Clear thesis competently defended; strong arguments with some limits in depth; solid analysis with thoughtful insights.      | Thesis present but insufficiently clear; basic analysis; arguments supported but with gaps or superficial reasoning.  | Weak or unclear thesis; limited independent ideas; cursory or poorly reasoned argumentation; shallow analysis. | No clear thesis; incoherent or absent argumentation; little to no understanding of core concepts.               |
| <b>2. Research, Evidence &amp; Use of Islamic Studies Sources</b> | Extensive high-quality refereed sources including Qur'an, Hadith, and scholarly literature; evidence seamlessly integrated; correct citations; deep engagement.  | Relevant sources with effective integration; citations mostly correct; solid understanding of Qur'anic and Hadith materials. | Basic sources not fully integrated; some citation errors; adequate but limited engagement with primary Islamic texts. | Few or irrelevant sources; superficial engagement with Qur'an or Hadith; incomplete or inaccurate citations.   | No credible sources or plagiarism; no engagement with Islamic studies resources; irrelevant or absent evidence. |
| <b>3. Communication, Clarity &amp; Academic Style</b>             | Exceptionally clear, polished, academically rigorous writing; logical flow with excellent transitions; minimal grammatical errors.                               | Mostly clear with good structure; minor errors do not impede understanding.                                                  | Understandable but awkward or uneven; frequent grammatical errors and structural inconsistencies.                     | Unclear, disorganized, difficult to follow; numerous distracting errors.                                       | Incoherent and unreadable due to pervasive language and organizational problems.                                |
| <b>4. Organization, Length &amp; Grammar</b>                      | Exceptionally well-structured; strong introduction, body, and conclusion; meets or exceeds length and formatting requirements with minimal errors.               | Well-organized overall; meets length with few errors; minor lapses in transitions or flow.                                   | Organization present but inconsistent; some disconnected sections; near required length with several errors.          | Poor structure; unclear progression of ideas; below required length; many errors.                              | No coherent organization; argument impossible to follow; far below length requirement; excessive errors.        |
| <b>5. Social Responsibility &amp; Ethical Awareness</b>           | Masterfully articulates ethical and social                                                                                                                       | Identifies social issues and provides                                                                                        | Shows basic understanding of                                                                                          | Limited awareness of social                                                                                    | Does not address social relevance                                                                               |

|                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                  |                                                           |                                                           |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                   | implications, offering well-reasoned, feasible solutions grounded in Islamic and philosophical principles.                                                         | reasonable discussion or solutions.                              | social relevance but lacks depth.                         | implications; solutions poorly reasoned.                  | or ethical dimensions.                                            |
| <b>6. Problem-Solving &amp; Application of Islamic Principles</b> | Excellent application of Islamic teachings to contemporary dilemmas; innovative, coherent, and methodologically sound solutions.                                   | Competent application of Islamic principles to practical issues. | Basic application; lacks nuance or depth.                 | Weak or incorrect application of Islamic principles.      | No attempt to apply Islamic principles; solutions are irrelevant. |
| <b>7. Overall Excellence</b>                                      | Demonstrates mastery of graduate-level research, critical thinking, and writing; integrates multiple rubric dimensions into a cohesive, intellectually rich essay. | Shows strong understanding and solid research.                   | Shows developing understanding; meets basic expectations. | Shows insufficient research and inadequate understanding. | Does not meet graduate-level standards in any category.           |

### III. Guidance for Faculty: Flexibility and Customization

- Not every assignment requires evaluation in all categories.
- Faculty should select the relevant criteria for each project and inform students in advance.
- Periodic review of rubric use is recommended to ensure alignment with program outcomes.
- The rubric may be adapted, expanded, or combined with discipline-specific criteria.
- Faculty should give clear feedback grounded in the rubric to support student growth.

## Final Research Paper Evaluation and Defense

### Part A: Final Research Paper — Written Evaluation

Evaluator Name:

Student Name:

Semester / Year:

| Criteria                              | Excellent 5                                                                              | Good 4                                                           | Satisfactory 3                                                    | Needs Improvement 2                                                 | Unsatisfactory 1                                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Thesis and Argument</b>            | Clear, original, and insightful thesis; compelling argument supported by strong evidence | Clear thesis; solid argument with adequate support               | Thesis is apparent but not clear; argument lacks depth            | Thesis is unclear or weak; argument is poorly supported             | No clear thesis; argument is incoherent or unsupported        |
| <b>Research and Evidence</b>          | Extensive use of high-quality, relevant sources; excellent integration of evidence       | Good use of relevant sources; evidence generally well integrated | Adequate use of sources; some evidence may not be well integrated | Limited use of sources; evidence is weakly integrated or irrelevant | Little to no use of sources; evidence is absent or irrelevant |
| <b>Analysis and Critical Thinking</b> | Deep, nuanced analysis; demonstrates critical engagement with sources and ideas          | Good analysis; shows critical thinking and engagement            | Basic analysis; some critical engagement with sources and ideas   | Limited analysis; minimal critical thinking or engagement           | Lacks analysis; no critical engagement with sources or ideas  |
| <b>Organization and Structure</b>     | Exceptionally well-organized; clear, logical flow with excellent transitions             | Well-organized; clear structure with good transitions            | Basic organization; some sections may lack clarity or flow        | Poorly organized; sections are unclear or lack logical flow         | No clear organization; essay is difficult to follow           |
| <b>Clarity and Style</b>              | Exceptional clarity and academic style; few or no grammatical errors                     | Clear and concise; minor grammatical errors                      | Generally clear; some grammatical errors or awkward phrasing      | Lacks clarity; numerous grammatical errors                          | Very unclear; pervasive grammatical errors                    |
| <b>Originality and Creativity</b>     | Highly original and creative approach; introduces new ideas or perspectives              | Some original ideas or creative approaches                       | Limited originality; mostly rephrases existing ideas              | Little originality; lacks creative thought                          | No originality; entirely derivative or plagiarized            |
| <b>Citations and References</b>       | Consistently and correctly formatted citations; wide range of sources                    | Correctly formatted citations; adequate range of sources         | Basic citation format; some errors or limited range of sources    | Inconsistent or incorrect citations; few sources                    | Little to no citations; many errors or lack of sources        |

### RGS-MAIS Program Outcome Assessment

| Program Outcomes ↓                                                                                             | 1 Does Not Meet | 2 Partially Meets | 3 Meets | 4 Exceeds / Exemplary |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of the Islamic tradition based on foundational sources.                   |                 |                   |         |                       |
| 2. Demonstrate the ability to think critically on traditional and contemporary social and intellectual issues. |                 |                   |         |                       |
| 3. Demonstrate the ability to conduct scholarly research and to present the results in academic writings.      |                 |                   |         |                       |

Additional Comments:

### Part B: Final Research Paper — Oral Defense Evaluation

Defense Date:

Time:

Location:

Student Name:

Supervisor Name:

### Presentation Rubric

| Criteria                          | Excellent 5                                                                                                       | Good 4                                                                             | Satisfactory 3                                                                             | Needs Improvement 2                                                                    | Unsatisfactory 1                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Content and Knowledge</b>      | Demonstrates a deep and comprehensive understanding of the topic; all information is accurate and highly relevant | Shows a good understanding of the topic; most information is accurate and relevant | Demonstrates a basic understanding of the topic; some information is accurate and relevant | Shows limited understanding of the topic; much information is inaccurate or irrelevant | Lacks understanding of the topic; information is mostly inaccurate or irrelevant |
| <b>Organization and Structure</b> | Presentation is exceptionally well-organized with a clear, logical flow and strong transitions                    | Well-organized presentation with clear structure and good transitions              | Adequately organized presentation; some sections may lack clarity or flow                  | Poorly organized presentation; sections are unclear or lack logical flow               | No clear organization; presentation is difficult to follow                       |
| <b>Delivery and Communication</b> | Clear, confident, and engaging delivery; excellent eye contact and body language                                  | Clear and confident delivery; good eye contact and body language                   | Generally clear delivery; occasional issues with eye contact or body language              | Unclear or hesitant delivery; poor eye contact or body language                        | Very unclear delivery; no eye contact or distracting body language               |
| <b>Visual Aids and Materials</b>  | Visual aids are highly effective, professional, and                                                               | Visual aids are effective and support the presentation                             | Visual aids are adequate but may not enhance the presentation                              | Visual aids are poorly designed or distracting                                         | No visual aids or materials, or they detract from the presentation               |

|                                        |                                                                                           |                                                                                  |                                                                                   |                                                                                            |                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                        | enhance the presentation                                                                  |                                                                                  |                                                                                   |                                                                                            |                                                                                     |
| <b>Audience Engagement</b>             | Actively engages the audience throughout; excellent handling of questions and interaction | Engages the audience; handles questions and interaction well                     | Some audience engagement; handles questions and interaction adequately            | Limited audience engagement; struggles with questions and interaction                      | No audience engagement; cannot handle questions or interaction                      |
| <b>Timing and Pacing</b>               | Excellent timing; presentation fits within the allotted time with a well-paced delivery   | Good timing; presentation fits within the allotted time with minor pacing issues | Adequate timing; presentation fits within the allotted time but has pacing issues | Poor timing; presentation does not fit within the allotted time or has major pacing issues | Presentation is either significantly too short or too long; pacing is inappropriate |
| <b>Preparation and Professionalism</b> | Highly prepared and polished; professional demeanor throughout                            | Well-prepared and professional; minor lapses in polish                           | Adequately prepared; some lapses in professionalism or polish                     | Poorly prepared; lacks professionalism                                                     | Unprepared; unprofessional demeanor                                                 |
| <b>Originality and Creativity</b>      | Highly original and creative approach; introduces new ideas or perspectives               | Some original ideas or creative approaches                                       | Limited originality; mostly rephrases existing ideas                              | Little originality; lacks creative thought                                                 | No originality; entirely derivative or plagiarized                                  |

**Additional Comments:**

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