Indirect approaches:
Review students’ perceived learning and progress

- Graduate student self-reflection
- Fundamentals of student self-assessment
- Recommended resources re: self-assessment
- Examples: exit questionnaires for graduate students
  - (Physics and Chemistry)
Graduate Student Self-Reflection

What questions might they ask of themselves? What might you encourage them to ask? What do you want to know?

• Goals:
  o What goals did I set for myself this year? In this program?
  o How well did my accomplishments measure up to my goals?
  o What are my plans/goals for next year?
  o Are there issues that I need to bring up re: my expected progress and plans?

• Progress in Program:
  o Am I making good progress in the program?
  o What circumstances have impeded my progress?

• Support
  o Am I getting the advising that I need?
  o What are my sources of financial support for next year?

Document their Accomplishments and Activities

• Courses taken and grades received:
• Independent study completed: with whom, credits; nature of project:
• TA assignment this year:
• Financial support this year:
• Milestones achieved (e.g., Quals, dissertation proposal):
• Papers submitted, published:
• Professional activities (e.g., conference participation, talks, etc.):
• Service activities (e.g., committee service, grad student officer, dept outreach):
• Internship positions, relationship to research goals:

Fundamentals of Student Self-Assessment

*Self assessment is the ability of a student to observe, analyze, and judge one’s performance on the basis of criteria and determine how one can improve it.*

Based on explicit, shared criteria

“The student gradually understands better and better what is entailed in assessment of one’s work—the role of knowledge, values, and perceptions; understanding of the abilities being assessed; the legitimacy of a variety of perspectives; the nature of evidence; the necessity and limitations of criteria.”

It is important for students to make explicit their understanding of the criteria and to engage in a dialogue with instructors and peers about those criteria.

Developmental

Initially, students depend on instructors to assess their performance and on peers to reflect on their performance. Over time, they begin to recognize their own, existing standards and to understand and internalize the standards of the discipline. “Students persistently say that self assessment based on criteria and evidence of meeting criteria confirms their abilities for them and thus encourages them to continue learning.” It is important to incorporate different prompts or approaches to self assessment so as to accommodate the various learning styles of students.

Enhanced by practice and reinforcement

Students need to “engage in self assessments intentionally, regularly, and with consistent reinforcement from the program” in order to develop those skills. “The more that self assessment becomes habitual and criteria become internalized, the more self monitoring becomes a possibility and a part of the ongoing process of improving performance.” “Effectively developed self assessment skills, based on criteria, assist students to increase the accuracy of their self-perception and therefore help convince them of the authenticity of their judgment.”

Integral to learning

“The student gradually understands better and better what is entailed in assessment of one’s work—the role of knowledge, values, and perceptions; understanding of the abilities being assessed; the legitimacy of a variety of perspectives; the nature of evidence; the necessity and limitations of criteria.”

“Through self assessment a student can increasingly deepen one’s understanding of a given ability and what an effective performance of it might look like. Eventually the student’s ability to make informed judgments includes the ability to articulate one’s own criteria for a given performance as well as for ongoing improvement.”

* Alverno College Faculty, 1994
Graduate Student Self-Assessment
Some Recommended Resources

An excellent guide for graduate students built around the multitude of questions that they should be asking themselves throughout their graduate school career.
http://tinyurl.com/yu7bv3

Analysis of the steps (and ups and downs) in graduate students’ careers
A Model for Graduate Student Development. MIT Graduate Student Orientation, 2007
http://tinyurl.com/ywhvgz

Example of a portfolio-based self-assessment process.
Penn State College of Education
http://tinyurl.com/2hx7cd

Guide for TAs to evaluate their own teaching
Evaluation of Teaching: Self Evaluation Techniques
Teaching Assessment: Practices for Graduate Student Instructors, University of Texas
http://tinyurl.com/25xgaz
Department of Physics

**Questionnaire for Graduating Ph.D. Degree Students**

Name: ______________________________________________________

Month/Year Graduating: _____________________________________

Name of Undergraduate Institution(s): _________________________

Number of years in Graduate school at University of Virginia: _____________

Job(s) Applied For: ________________________________________________________________________

Job(s) offered? Approximate starting salary levels are always of interest if you want to give that information too.

What job did you accept?

What type of work will you be doing?

Are you going to do something other than take a job that you will comment about?

Will you please give a postal/e-mail address through which we can contact you after your graduation?

Comments and evaluation (Please continue on back of sheet):
Department of Chemistry

EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE (GRADUATE)

A. Career Plans

Accepted post-doctoral appointment

(Give location)

Application for post-doctoral appointment is pending

(Give plans)

Accepted employment

(Give location)

Application for employment is pending

(Give plans)

Other career plans

(Give plans)
B. Experience and Impression

1. List the three most satisfactory aspects of your graduate program (e.g., a course, laboratory examination, research discovery, experience with technique).

2. List the three least satisfactory Aspects of your graduate program (e.g. a course, examination, access to equipment, experience with techniques).

3. Rate your overall level of satisfaction.

   5 – extremely satisfied
   4 – more satisfied
   3 – satisfied
   2 – more dissatisfied
   1 – extremely dissatisfied