

Components of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan:

Goal- broad statements of intended learning and are usually general assertions regarding what will happen to students during a particular course or curriculum

Student Learning Outcome- Specific action statements focusing on what students will be able to do or accomplish after a particular course, block of learning, or curriculum.

Method of Assessment- Specified methods of evaluation (i.e., exam responses, portfolio section), and the tool (i.e. rubric) used to evaluate progress toward meeting the student learning outcome

Performance Targets- What is your criteria for success when using the tool (i.e. 90% of students will score 5 or better on the departmental rubric)

Assessment Results- Results of the method of assessment you used (i.e. 10 students scored a 5 on the departmental rubric)

Use of Assessment Results- How your results can lead to change/improve the program; highlight areas of strength/weakness

Sections of the Assessment Plan:

Student Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are specific statements focusing on what students will be able to do or accomplish *after* a particular course, block of learning, or curriculum. Each learning outcome has to have a method for assessing it.

Learning Outcome (Good Practice Example 1): *Upon completion of the core undergraduate courses, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of and perform comprehensive data analysis to compose a comprehensive data analysis including interpretation of a data set.*

Learning Outcome (Good Practice Example 2): *Majors in this program will be able to conduct original research in this discipline using appropriate methods. They should demonstrate the ability to 1) formulate a meaningful hypothesis or research question; 2) clearly describe and justify the methods used; 3) present clear findings in written form.*

Methods of Assessment

How you are assessing the learning outcomes. The method needs to be appropriate and clearly stated so that its relationship to a learning outcome is understood.

Types of Commonly Used Methods:

1). Course Embedded Assessment:

a) Capstone Project

b) Student work samples

c) Portfolios

d) Research Papers/Theses/Dissertations

If you are using any of these methods, the following elements need to be included:

- *Multiple readers/scorers* (A minimum of two faculty members), e.g. two reviewers will score the portfolios; if the two reviewers are x scores apart, a third reviewer will act as mediator. The closest two scores will be used.
- Clear and concise *rubrics*, or a document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor. For more information regarding rubrics
- A statement regarding a method for measuring *inter-rater reliability* for consistency of measurement; e.g. the percentage of agreement among reviewers will be calculated (in cases of categorical scales) OR a correlation between reviewer scores will be calculated (in cases of continuous scales. State that reviewers will be given some kind of training so that scoring schemes will become more consistent in the future. This training is referred to as *calibration* of the rubric.

2). Test Items:

a). Embedded Test Questions-Usually involves some bank of embedded items in tests which are either used consistently or rotated at random

If you are using test items, such items should have the following characteristics:

- Some effort to judge *reliability* (statistical methods to measure consistency are simplest)
- Some effort to judge *validity* (relationship with other performance criteria)
- OR selection of items from a test bank with already proven reliability and validity, e.g. text book banks that report *psychometrics* or “off-the-shelf” solutions
- Item analysis so that appropriate item discrimination may be ascertained

b). Licensure/Certification Testing or Nationally or State-Normed Exams

Problems are reduced here because most of these instruments have been normed for target populations

- Included in descriptions should be:
 - Correct name of instrument
 - Some *brief* statement about *reliability and validity* of the instrument
 - Sampling procedures for student testing including number of students, estimated percentage of entire population represented by the sample, and time of testing, e.g. rising juniors, graduating seniors, etc.

- Local standardization should be used initially to check for applicability to the student population at the institution using the instrument.

***Certificate Programs**- A common way to assess these programs is to develop a “culminating experience” that all students must complete before they receive the certificate

***DO NOT USE** *grades or indirect measures (i.e., focus groups, surveys) as the sole measures of a given learning outcome.*

Performance Targets

What is your criteria for success when using the tool (i.e. 90% of students will score 5 or better on the departmental rubric)

Assessment Results Raw data from the assessment you conducted (i.e., scores on a rubric used to assess a writing assignment)

Use of Assessment Results

Expand on the results. Even reports with clearly stated learning outcomes and measures may not connect all the dots in what accrediting bodies call *closing the loop*. An incomplete data feedback loop occurs when a measure and/or finding in the *measures and findings* section is not stated with sufficient specificity for the reviewer to infer the means by which program improvement can occur from the measure and finding.