Advice on Assessment for New Chairs

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Topics

Why do assessment?

Expectations for program-level assessment

Managing the assessment process
  • Annual reporting of assessment work
  • Using assessment evidence to improve programs and student learning
  • 7-year assessment plans

Assessing General Education SLOs
Two recent perspectives on assessment


Assessment as a drain on time and resources that detracts from the real faculty work of research and teaching.


Assessment helps academic programs achieve their best potential. Assessment helps faculty understand student learning. Assessment findings can inform decisions about how faculty design curricula, courses, and learning activities to help students learn.
Why do assessment?

If you don’t measure what you value, it won’t improve.

*Alan Merten, President, George Mason University*

A pig won’t get heavier just because you weighed it
Why do assessment?
We want academic programs to be as strong as we can make them.
Assessment is a systematic examination of curriculum, teaching practices, and their impact on student learning
• Pose empirical questions about student learning
• Base decisions on direct measures of student learning instead of anecdotes and opinions
• We can use the self-correcting qualities of empirical research to answer questions about student learning
  • Identify strategies that work and we want to preserve
  • Identify areas where things might be done better
  • Evaluate new strategies that might work better
Assessment reports help us document the quality of our work to external audiences
Assessment is a continuous process of evaluation and improvement

Make decisions informed by evidence.
Implement changes to improve student learning.

Identify what you value:
Program-level SLOs (ALCs, ALPs, General Education, Certificates)

Measure what you value:
Assess Program-Level SLOs

Analyze and reflect on the evidence collected.
What does this mean?

Design Curriculum, Courses, and Learning Activities

Articulate Learning Outcomes

Design Curriculum, Courses, and Learning Activities

Create and Collect Assessments of Student Learning

Reflect on Assessment Findings and Identify Actions for Improvement
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I implement changes to improve student learning.

Analyze and reflect on the evidence collected.

What does this mean?

Did it work?

Assess the impact of the changes you made.
Don’t forget to feed the pig!

Even small changes, implemented over time, can produce significant improvements in student learning and program quality.
Characteristics of a solid assessment plan

Program-level SLOs are measurable
• Documented on ALC, ALP, for certificates
• SLOs describe the expertise expected for the degree awarded

Curriculum is a coherent program
• Documented in a curriculum map

Systematic approach to assessing all SLOs
• Documented in a 7-year assessment plan
• Annual report of assessment work
• Participation in Peer Review of Assessment

3/21/2018
Use curriculum maps to identify strengths and gaps in the curriculum structure: Is this curriculum coherent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Introductory Course</th>
<th>Research Methods</th>
<th>Intermediary Course</th>
<th>Laboratory / Practicum Course</th>
<th>Advanced Content A</th>
<th>Advanced Content B</th>
<th>Advanced Content C</th>
<th>Advanced Content D</th>
<th>Capstone Course</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLO 1: Disciplinary knowledge base (models and theories)</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
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<td>Reinforced</td>
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<td>Mastery / Assessed</td>
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<td>SLO 2: Disciplinary methods</td>
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<td>Reinforced</td>
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<td>SLO 3: Disciplinary applications</td>
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<td>Reinforced</td>
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<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>Reinforced</td>
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<td>SLO 4: Analysis and use of evidence</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Reinforced</td>
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<td>SLO 6: Written communication skills</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
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<td>SLO 7: Oral communication skills</td>
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<td>SLO 8: Interpersonal and team skills</td>
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<td>Mastery / Assessed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Values</td>
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<td>Mastery / Assessed</td>
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<td>SLO 9: Disciplinary ethical standards</td>
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<td>SLO 10: Academic Integrity</td>
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Areas outlined in red identify weaknesses in the curriculum.
Seven-year assessment plans describe how department will examine all SLOs across time

Plan to examine every SLO with assessment evidence at least once during a 7-year period. A minimal examination will include:

1. Gather initial data (direct measure) and reflect on findings
2. Identify and implement actions (as supported by findings)
3. Gather follow-up data (direct measure) to assess impact
Expectations for assessment:
Complete a full cycle of assessment annually

For each academic program:

- Collect assessment evidence on at least one SLO, using a **direct measure**
- Engage faculty in a **reflection** on the meaning of the findings
- **Compare** learning in different locations or modalities *when relevant*
- **Make decisions** about changes and **implement** (as needed); changes are *informed by evidence*
- **Document** your activities
Assessment reports should “tell your story”: Explain what you did, what you learned, and what you plan to do next as a result of your analysis

Write to your audience
• Remember that your readers may not know your discipline (and may be external to UWF)

Write a brief but compelling narrative
• Summarize the steps of your assessment work with enough detail to explain the work in a credible way but short enough to quote verbatim in a larger report

Supporting documents provide evidence for assertions in your summary
• Examples of rubrics, exam questions, assignments
• Analysis and interpretation of findings
• Detailed narratives that supply substance to the executive summary
New General Education SLOs will be implemented in Fall 2018

General Education Learning Outcomes
Approved by the General Education Committee (14 April 2017); Approved by Faculty Senate (13 October 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Integrity / Values</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Comp I and some Non-Composition Gordon Rule Writing</em>&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><em>Mathematics</em>&lt;br&gt;Apply mathematical principles to determine a strategy for solving a problem.&lt;br&gt;Execute appropriate mathematical techniques for solving a problem and interpret results of a solution.</td>
<td><em>Humanities</em>&lt;br&gt;Identify the intrinsic value of culture and cultural artifacts.</td>
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<td>&lt;br&gt;Compose and revise a researched academic paper that adheres to discipline-specific conventions.&lt;br&gt;(Rubric Elements: Gather information from credible sources, use appropriate editorial style for an audience, formulate a coherent argument, and maintain academic integrity.)</td>
<td>&lt;br&gt;<em>Humanities</em>&lt;br&gt;Interpret and analyze tools and techniques of communication within cultural forms or cultural contexts.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Explanatory note:</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Forms</em> refers to media used for communication (art, music, theatre, dance, language, etc.).&lt;br&gt;<em>Contexts</em> refers to time, place, or people involved in the cultural communication.</td>
<td>&lt;br&gt;<em>Social Sciences</em>&lt;br&gt;Reason ethically in an appropriate disciplinary context.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Comp II and some Non-Composition Gordon Rule Writing</em>&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;br&gt;<em>Social Sciences</em>&lt;br&gt;Solve problems using social science methods.</td>
<td>&lt;br&gt;<em>Natural Sciences</em>&lt;br&gt;Evaluate scientific information using appropriate tools and strategies of the discipline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce (through revision) effective written communications that support author intent and address a specific audience.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Notes:&lt;br&gt;Audience includes readers in a specific discipline as well as a specific community.&lt;br&gt;Author intent might be to write about writing.&lt;br&gt;Analyzing information critically is part of the revision process.</td>
<td>&lt;br&gt;</td>
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* Non-Composition Gordon Rule Writing courses must select one of the communication SLOs for their contribution to the assessment of writing.

Implementation: Fall, 2018
General Education assessment is based on assignments embedded in courses

Courses in each distribution area will:

• Identify GE SLOs for distribution area on the syllabus
• Syllabus describes required, graded, student work that functions as an embedded assessment for the SLO(s)
• Course instructor provides a summary of findings for the SLO to ASPIRE

Department representative(s) participate in discussions of the assessment findings within the distribution area
Support for implementing the new GE assessment plan

Dee Fink workshops on backward design (October, 2017)
Consultations with GE Committee (October, 2017)

General Education Assignment Design Project
• Applications for Faculty Awards due March 23
• Workshop on backward design (May 22)
• Assignment Charrettes (end of May)
• Implement assignments and report assessment evidence (Fall 2018)
• “Making sense” meetings (Spring 2019)
• Share findings with campus (Spring 2019)
Additional opportunities to develop skill with assessment

Guidelines for Curriculum Assessment
April 13, 2018 (Friday) 1:00 – 3:00 PM
CUTLA Workshop Room
Detailed advice on writing SLOs, mapping curriculum, creating assessment plans, reporting assessment work

Request a consultation from CUTLA
One-on-one consultations, sessions for faculty meetings, or consultations with curriculum committee

Book club beginning soon
Brown bag sessions to discuss Linda Suskie’s new book on assessment
thank you!

http://uwf.edu/offices/ctlta/