

## The Assessment Cycle Step-by-Step

### 1. Identify Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for course.

- Outcomes reflect those skills deemed important for your discipline within the context of the three domains: Communication, Critical Thinking, and Integrity/Values.
- Each General Education course includes one to three learning outcomes.

Distribution Area	Assigned Domain
Communication	Communication
Humanities	Critical Thinking and Integrity/Values
Social Sciences	Critical Thinking and Integrity/Values
Mathematics	Critical Thinking
Natural Sciences	Critical Thinking

- Non-Composition College-Level Communication courses must select one of the Communication SLOs for their contribution to the assessment of writing.
- A statement identifying courses as General Education and indicating the required SLO(s) must be included in the course syllabus:

[Course Name] is designated as a General Education course. The General Education curriculum at the University of West Florida is designed to provide a cohesive program of study that promotes the development of a broadly educated person and provides the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in university studies. This course has been approved as meeting the requirement in the [Distribution area]. The major General Education learning outcomes for this course are [Learning Outcome 1] and [Learning Outcome 2]\*. Students will learn and practice [Learning Outcome 1] through a [quiz, exam, etc.] and [Learning Outcome 2]\* through a [quiz, exam, etc.], which will be used to assess the General Education curriculum.

If you are interested in a major in [your academic program], you should contact the [your academic department] at [department main phone number]. If you are undecided about your major, you should contact your academic advisor or Career Services at 850-474-2254.

\*Natural Science courses report on only one Critical Thinking learning outcome.

- All sections of the same course must utilize the same SLOs and assessment method, regardless of presentation format (face-to-face, online, or study abroad).

### 2. Select type and method(s) of assessment. There are two types of assessment:

- Direct assessment (required): Method usually involves either pre- or post-test or a single assessment
- Indirect assessment (suggested): Surveys (class, graduates, students completing a program, etc.)

### 3. Set achievement targets for each SLO.

- The targets are usually expressed in terms of “does not meet,” “meets,” or (optionally) “exceeds.” For example, in a 10-point Integrity Quiz the levels might be set as follows:
  - Does not meet <5
  - Meets 5-7
  - Exceeds 8-10

4. Set a course benchmark level (expressed as a percentage of meeting and exceeding) that reflects what % outcome your department considers acceptable for each SLO. The General Education Committee has set a target benchmark of 70% meets and exceeds for all courses. Departments choosing an outcome level of less than 70% must submit a justification to the General Education Committee. For example, in the achievement targets set in #3, the department might set a benchmark of 80% meets and exceeds for that SLO.

- When reporting on assessment, you will be required to list the number of students assessed and the number of students who met/exceeded the benchmark. This can be aggregated across all sections of the course.

5. Perform your assessment.

- Remember that separate assessments must be completed for each section and each modality (face-to-face, online, and/or study abroad), measuring the same learning outcomes with the same targets and benchmark.

6. Assessment results must be reviewed annually in a departmental meeting with a focus on continual improvement of student learning.

- Overall are students performing at an acceptable level: (Did the group hit the set benchmark)?
- Is there a difference in student performance between online and face-to-face courses?
- Was the SLO a valid measure?
- Were the achievement targets appropriate? How about the benchmark?
  - Are there ways to change the course content, method of instruction, or assessment instrument to improve students' performance?
- Should we continue to measure these same SLOs?
- Choose outcome(s) for next academic year.

7. Submit results in the annual Summary Report on General Education Assessment.

- Reports will require a brief summary (1-2 paragraphs) of the findings and planned improvements to implement based on the departmental meeting.

8. Initiate appropriate course changes based on assessment results and departmental discussions. This step is the most critical, and the reason that the cycle was developed. Continuous improvement of student learning is the ultimate goal and the reason for assessment.