Arkansas State University-Jonesboro

Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes

Updated 11-22-2011

Learning Outcomes Assessment Council (LOAC)

The ASU Learning Outcomes Assessment Council serves in an advisory capacity for the oversight of programmatic student learning outcomes. The Learning Outcomes Assessment Council and Office of Student Learning Outcomes will work to facilitate program outcomes assessment by providing guidelines, information, and feedback associated with effective assessment, and coordination of academic assessment at the institutional level.

The council will be composed of a representative from each academic college, the Director of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Services. Other individuals may be invited to participate, on an as needed basis, to provide information or assistance.

Assessment Mission:

Arkansas State University strives to systematically collect, review and use information about academic programs to improve student learning and to demonstrate that students are achieving the desired learning outcomes consistent with the objectives of the academic program or unit.

1. Assessment focuses on evaluating student achievement of expected learning outcomes based on achieving the strategic goals and objective as identified by the university, individual colleges, departments or other specified units.
2. Assessment seeks to assist faculty in understanding and improving student learning.
3. Assessment assists the university with sustaining and enhancing academic quality and the student educational experience.
4. Assessment is systematic and ongoing.
5. Assessment is not a review of faculty performance, but rather ongoing measurement of student learning outcomes. Systematic assessment of student learning outcomes enables faculty to address pedagogical and practical issues consistent with individual faculty members’ unique approaches.
College Assessment Plan

Each college and or/department is required to have a summary assessment plan on file with the Office of Student Learning Outcomes. The plan should outline the assessment processes associated with academic programs. Updates and changes should be submitted as needed.

College and Department Assessment Committees

Each college should determine the most appropriate structure for coordinating program and course assessment within a given college and/or department. Regardless of the structure, faculty should have an active role in the assessment process and use of assessment data for program and course improvement.

Programmatic Learning Outcomes (includes General Education)

Each academic program (certificate and degree; undergraduate and graduate) is required to have stated learning outcomes, as identified by the faculty, which support the objectives that are consistent with the program. In general, the learning outcomes should address the following question:

What should graduates of this program know, value, or be able to do?

Course Learning Outcomes (includes General Education)

Each course in support of a given academic program is required to have stated learning outcomes, as identified by the faculty, which support the programmatic learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are to be stated in the syllabus to communicate to students about learning expectations and assessment practices. For courses with multiple sections taught by multiple faculty, a set of common learning outcomes in support of the academic program must be developed. On an individual basis, faculty may develop additional learning outcomes which may be specific to their sections. At the course level, the learning outcomes should address the following question:

What should students who complete this course know, value, or be able to do as it applies to their overall academic program and its strategic objectives?

General Education Program Assessment

The general education program develops a foundation and motivation for the lifelong pursuit of learning in undergraduate students at Arkansas State University by introducing them to a broad range of essential areas of knowledge that will enable them to think critically, and participate ethically in a democratic nation and a global society
General Education Goals for Students

1. **Communicating effectively.** Students should be able to communicate effectively and correctly, in writing and in speech, for a variety of purposes, using appropriate forms of discourse, organizational strategies, and vocabulary.

2. **Using mathematics.** Students should be able to use, understand and apply basic mathematical skills in practical applications.

3. **Developing a life-long appreciation of the arts and humanities.** Students should develop an appreciation for the arts and humanities. They should be aware of the role of art and literature in human civilization and contemporary culture.

4. **Developing a strong foundation in the social sciences.** Students should be aware of the diverse systems developed by humans to manage and structure our relationships with one another. Students should prepare for the full range of public and private roles they are expected to fulfill as citizens, decision-makers and human beings in a democratic America and in a global society.

5. **Using science to accomplish common goals.** Students should understand how science is conducted and the criteria for scientific evidence so that they will be able to make informed decisions about the health and well-being of their communities and the natural environment. They should be aware of the ethical and political issues raised by science.

The LOAC addresses with ASU stakeholders, the following university-level goals:

1. **Thinking critically.** Students should develop the skills necessary to digest, assimilate, and evaluate critically what they read, see and hear. They should employ rational argument and deduction routinely in their own work.

2. **Understanding global issues.** Students should be aware of the social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of a diverse national and world community. They should have the intellectual and interpersonal skills needed to participate and succeed in a dynamic global society.

3. **Information Literacy.** Students should be able to use appropriate technologies to locate, process and evaluate information in an effective and ethical manner.

Each general education goal has stated learning outcomes as identified by the General Education Committee (GEC). Courses within the general education program must be associated with at least one primary goal and may have secondary goals, as appropriate. Assessment of the goal-specific learning outcomes is conducted systematically as determined by the GEC. Learning outcomes are assessed at both the institutional level and course level. On a discipline basis, departments may develop additional learning outcomes that are content specific. General education courses must address the individual learning outcomes associated with the course specific goal(s) through additional assessment measures beyond the institutional assessment of the general education program.
Assessment Methodology

Assessment of learning outcomes should include a variety of measures (direct and indirect) that are suited to evaluate the unique learning objectives of a given program. The measures may change from year to year and should be evaluated periodically for relevance. As academic units are best suited for determining appropriate assessment measures for student learning outcomes, the Learning Outcomes Assessment Council serves in an advisory capacity concerning selection of assessment methodology. The use of both direct and indirect measures is recommended. Some common examples of each follow:

**Direct Measures:**

- Capstone experience, portfolio, senior thesis or project, standardized exams, certification and licensure exams, juried performances or projects, external review of student performance in internships, rubric scored exams or artifacts, institutionally developed exams, theses and dissertations

**Indirect Measures:**

- Student surveys, exit interviews, alumni surveys, employer surveys, retention rates, length of time to degree, graduation rates, job placement, placement rates in professional and graduate programs

Assessment Reporting

ASU-J has selected TracDat® as its assessment data management tool. Programmatic student learning outcomes, associated assessment evidence, and curricular changes based on assessment data will be logged in TracDat® for each academic program. Other supporting evidence such as course assessments and supporting documents should be logged.

Course Assessment:

Course assessment shall be conducted on a rotating basis consistent with each college’s assessment plan. Reports should focus on what specific actions have been taken to change teaching practices in response to that assessment. This operates on the premise that good teachers are always assessing their courses, but such assessment may be informal.

Role of the Office of Student Learning Outcomes

The Office of Student Learning Outcomes (OSLO) works with faculty and students to ensure that assessment purposes are clearly understood and that assessment practices accomplish what they were intended to accomplish. In addition, OSLO serves in an advisory capacity for interpretation of data and application. This may be accomplished through face to face consultation, training, workshops, and other appropriate venues.
## Assessment Time Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Responsible Unit</th>
<th>Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 15, 2010</td>
<td>General Education Assessment Plan Draft</td>
<td>General Education Committee</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes Assessment Council</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Assessment Plan Draft Due</td>
<td></td>
<td>Colleges and Departments, Office of Student Learning Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 10, 2011</td>
<td>Syllabi with SLOs in Banner</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes Assessment Council and Faculty</td>
<td>Implement Assessment in all Courses (new and continuing assessment)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning Outcomes Stated for all Academic Programs</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes Assessment Council and Faculty</td>
<td>Implement General Education Program Assessment for Specified Goals (Writing and Critical Thinking)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15, 2011</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes Completed for All Courses as Related to Program Outcomes</td>
<td>Faculty, Deans and Chairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>May –July 2011</td>
<td>Analyze course-level assessment data from spring 2011 semester</td>
<td>Deans and Chairs, Faculty</td>
<td>Use data for course/program improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2011</td>
<td>Implement Assessment in all programs (new and continuing assessment)</td>
<td>Academic Units, Faculty, Office of Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Use institutional data for campus-wide improvement of critical thinking and writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15, 2011</td>
<td>2011 Spring Semester College Assessment Data Due to OLSO</td>
<td>All Academic Units, General Education Committee and Office of Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Individual course assessment narrative due for 2011 Spring courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2012 - January 2013</td>
<td>Analyze assessment data from fall 2011 semester</td>
<td>Deans and Chairs, Faculty</td>
<td>Use data for course/program improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2012</td>
<td>Continue Program Level Assessment</td>
<td>Academic Units, Faculty, Office of Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Implement General Education Program Assessment for Specified Goals (Writing, Critical Thinking, Additional Goal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15, 2012</td>
<td>2012 Spring Semester College Assessment Data Due in to Office of Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>All Academic Units, General Education Committee and Office of Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Discuss program findings at fall faculty meetings</td>
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<td>December 2012 - January 2013</td>
<td>Use Data for program improvement</td>
<td>Deans and Chairs, Faculty</td>
<td>Implement recommendations from GEC regarding improvement of critical thinking and writing</td>
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<td>May 15, 2013</td>
<td>Fall 2012 Assessment Data Reports Due to OLSO</td>
<td>Deans and Chairs, Faculty</td>
<td>Begin assessing new Gen Ed Goal</td>
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<td>May –July 2013</td>
<td>Analyze course-level assessment data from spring 2013 semester</td>
<td>Deans and Chairs, Faculty</td>
<td>Use data for course/program improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2013 - January 2014</td>
<td>Analyze assessment data from fall 2013 semester</td>
<td>Deans and Chairs, Faculty</td>
<td>Use data for course/program improvement</td>
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<td>January 2014</td>
<td>Continue Program Level Assessment</td>
<td>Deans and Chairs, Faculty</td>
<td>Disseminate findings from GEC recommended changes</td>
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**Continue Assessment Cycle**