

Overview of Program-Level Student Learning Assessment
Educational Assessment
September 2022

Why do we do it?

- To track student learning for key program outcomes—provides a picture of student learning beyond the course-level, beyond grades. We are able to look across courses or course sections.
- To identify where adjustments may be beneficial: course sequencing, curricular adjustments, assignment design, pedagogy, supplementary experiences, advising, additional resources
- Allows us to be responsive to changing circumstances (e.g., student preparation, what we know about student learning)
- Assessment can support an environment of curiosity, collaboration, and understanding among faculty at the program level.
- It feeds into your program review process (what conclusions do you draw about student learning from 6 years of assessing the key outcomes of your program). Program review provides that more comprehensive moment to take stock of what a program has been doing and where it wants to go.

What does assessment of student learning entail? We aim for “meaningful and manageable”.

- First: Develop consensus around the basic elements: Dept. Mission, Student Learning Outcomes, Curriculum Alignment Matrix, Multi-year Assessment Plan. These can guide a program for years.
- Second: Establish process by which department can conduct an annual assessment project on one or more of the student learning outcomes (committees are invaluable)
 - We emphasize “direct assessment” (examinations of actual student work using a rubric, or test that is aligned with the student learning outcome). Two raters using rubrics or a set of exam questions vetted by a group.
 - This can be supplemented with student exit surveys or other “indirect” methods, including other inquiries that allow a department to learn more about its students and the conditions of their learning through Climate studies or Student self-assessment of achievement of program outcomes
- Third: Talk about the results collectively and identify what if any actions the department may want to take in response to the results. Also talk about how to improve the assessment process.

- Summarize your assessments in a brief report. You'll draw upon these for your program review where you review where you've been and set your goals for the next six years. [Sample assessment report](#) (thanks to Anthropology Department)

How can Educational Assessment help?

- Launching working group to support ongoing work of dept assessments
- One-on-one consultations
- Identifying useful resources
- Rubric development; facilitating norming sessions
- Timely feedback
- Assistance with survey development (including department climate surveys, senior exit surveys). focus groups; analysis
- Finding partners to collaborate with on common outcomes
- We keep an archive of all of your past reports and program reviews—ask us!

Five top recommendations

1. Draw upon the Assessment Plan: it should lay out which student learning outcome (SLO) for the program should be assessed, this plan or the CAM will help identify which courses to draw upon for assessment of that learning outcome, and ideally, which types of assignments are to be used.
2. Identify 2-3 people to work on an assessment project (the assessment plan may also do that).
3. Start the assessment work in Fall quarter:
 - a. Frame the assessment: Does your interest in how students will perform on this learning outcome relate to anything else you want to factor in? (Are there potential differences among students according to some factor (e.g., timing of a prerequisite)? Do you want to compare their assessments across time because the dept made a change?).
 - b. Confirm: Which courses/which assignments/which students (usually, a random draw of students). The student work can be collected in just one quarter or across quarters as needed.
 - c. Develop the process to collect ungraded work; create a scoring rubric
4. Score the work in Spring, so that results can be summarized for the June report (even if they can't be discussed until Fall retreat)
5. Reach out to Educational Assessment for help at any step along the way