

Program Assessment Guide

Introduction

This guide is designed to describe the Program Assessment process and to *help complete the **Program Assessment Plan** and **Annual Program Assessment Report**.*

What is Program Assessment?

Program Assessment is intended to provide information on how well students are performing relative to the educational expectations known as Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO) established by faculty in the program/department. Assessment activities and results should be useful to faculty who make important decisions about courses, overall curriculum and the process of student learning.

Key components of the Program Assessment process include:

- Developing and implementing a Program Assessment Plan
- Compiling annual assessment data and supporting documents
- Submitting your Plan and an Annual Program Assessment Report for committee peer review via Taskstream AMS ([Plan rubric](#) and [Annual Report rubric](#))

Program Assessment Plan

The Program Assessment Plan is a roadmap that lays out what, how, where, and when assessment will take place. Developing a plan is a process that is reflected in the Program Assessment Plan document that is submitted to the Assessment Committee. The Program Assessment Plan template is located on the Shared drive (S://) in the Assessment folder.

After initial completion and review by the Assessment Committee, the Program Assessment Plan only requires modification when changes are made to the way assessment is conducted within the program. The Program Assessment plan includes:

- Program Mission
- Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO) (what)
- Assessment Planning Calendar (when)
- Assessment Measures (how)
- Curriculum Map (where/in what course)
- Data Collection and Analysis Calendar (when)
- Assessment Plan Description (who)
- Program Assessment Plan Review Cycle



Figure: Steps involved in developing and implementing a Program Assessment Plan. (Wash, rinse, repeat)

Program Mission

In recent years each program has developed a clearly stated mission. The Program Mission should articulate with the University Mission and identify student learning as central to its activities. **The Program Mission included in the Assessment Plan must be the same as the mission articulated in the University Catalog.** If there are differences between these two, contact the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs to update information in the catalog.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO)

Faculty members in each academic program at Washburn University define the PSLO for students majoring in their field. PSLO are overarching statements that describe learning obtained across multiple courses in the curriculum and program related co-curricular experiences. PSLO are broad descriptions that give students a clear understanding of what they will know, what they will be able to do, or what they will value after they finish the program. PSLO also help faculty assure that a curriculum provides the necessary content, is organized in a logical sequence that facilitates learning, and does not include unnecessary redundancy.

It is important to keep in mind that goals are not measurable and are different from outcomes (written from the perspective of the student). For example a program goal might look something like this:

This program will expose students to the philosophical and practical problems of political organization, action and governance.

A PSLO might look something like this:

Upon completion of this program students will be able to analyze political issues and phenomena using political science concepts, theories, and methods.

Well-crafted PSLO should be written from the perspective of the student and must be written in language that clearly implies an **observable** and **measurable** behavior.

Some verbs related to observable and measurable behaviors:

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Count	Associate	Apply	Order	Arrange	Appraise
Define	Compare	Calculate	Group	Combine	Assess
Draw	Compute	Classify	Translate	Construct	Critique
Identify	Contrast	Complete	Transform	Create	Determine
Indicate	Describe	Demonstrate	Analyze	Design	Evaluate
List	Differentiate	Employ	Detect	Develop	Grade
Name	Discuss	Examine	Explain	Formulate	Judge
Point	Distinguish	Illustrate	Infer	Generalize	Measure
Quote	Estimate	Practice	Separate	Integrate	Rank
Recognize	Extrapolate	Relate	Summarize	Organize	Rate
Recall	Interpret	Solve	Construct	Plan	Test
Recite	Translate	Use		Produce	Recommend

All Program assessment is based on an evaluation of student learning related to the stated PSLO.

Example of strong PSLO:

	Upon completion of the programs students will be able to:
PSLO 1	Analyze political issues and phenomena using political science concepts, theories, and methods
PSLO 2	Critically evaluate political claims based on careful scrutiny of the underlying argument and evidence
PSLO 3	Demonstrate the complex interrelationships between political, economic, social, cultural and historical forces
PSLO 4	Describe the diversity of political systems found among nations and evaluate the significance of these differences
PSLO 5	Apply political knowledge to work in internships and community service learning projects

There is a difference between PSLO, University Student Learning Outcomes (USLO), and Course Student Learning Outcomes (aka objectives). USLO define the broadest outcomes that all students at Washburn should achieve. At Washburn our USLO are: Communication; Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning and Literacy; Information Literacy and Technology; Critical and Creative Thinking; and Global Citizenship, Ethics, and Diversity. PSLO are more specific and speak to **discipline specific knowledge, skills, and values** that graduating majors within a discipline should attain. Course-based objectives are even more specific and identify learning within a specific course.

Outcomes at the University, Program, or course level can be related or linked to outcomes at other levels. Thus, assessments designed to evaluate outcomes (objectives) for a specific course can also be used to evaluate PSLO and USLO.

Example:

Course-based Student Learning Outcome (Cultural Anthropology):

- Upon completion of this course students will be able to describe and evaluate the ways that globalization has impacted the lives of at least two specific cultural groups living in the Caribbean.

Program Student Learning Outcome (Anthropology):

- Upon completion of this program students will be able to evaluate the impacts of colonialism and globalization on world cultures.

University Student Learning Outcome:

- Global Citizenship, Ethics, and Diversity ...It places an emphasis on the economic, religious, political, geographic, linguistic, historic, environmental and social aspects that define cultures. It places an emphasis on ethics, equality and human rights, and appreciation for diversity, the interconnectedness of societies and cultures, and a commitment to finding solutions to problems that can affect the world.

Assessment Planning Calendar

Programs are **not** expected to assess student learning for each PSLO every year but should develop a reasonable and feasible schedule for assessment. The Assessment Calendar is a schedule that shows when a specific PSLO will be assessed over a six year period. Year 1 in the cycle is the 2013-2014 academic year.

The Assessment Committee will expect a program to report on each PSLO that has been designated during the appropriate academic year on the Assessment Calendar. It is important to plan ahead and assure that responsible faculty members are made aware of the PSLO being assessed each academic year.

Example of an Assessment Calendar:

Assessment Measures (Method)

	PSLO 1	PSLO 2	PSLO 3	PSLO 4	PSLO 5	PSLO 6
Year 1	X		X		X	
Year 2		X		X		X
Year 3	X		X		X	
Year 4		X		X		X
Year 5	X		X		X	
Year 6		X		X		X

Assessment of student learning can be conducted using a variety of available instruments and methods.

Use, choose, and develop assessment methods that are well integrated and coordinated with each PSLO. For example, if one of PSLO states that students are expected to “describe the diversity of political systems found among nations and evaluate the significance of these differences,” a course-embedded assessment of a paper or presentation would be more appropriate to measure a student’s ability to describe and evaluate as opposed to a course-embedded multiple-choice exam.

Assessment measures/methods for each of PSLO must be identified on the Assessment Plan. A definition of each of these types of assessment can be found in the glossary of this document.

Example of Assessment Measures/Methods Chart:

	PSLO 1	PSLO 2	PSLO 3	PSLO 4	PSLO 5	PSLO 6
DIRECT						
Portfolio	X	X	X	X	X	X
Performance Assessment (Art, Music, Theatre etc.)						
Performance Assessment (Off campus experience – Clinical, Internship, Practicum, etc.)			X		X	
Professional Credentialing Exam						
Major Field Test or National Exam			X		X	
Course Embedded Assignment	X	X	X	X	X	X

Project Evaluation (e.g. research)						
Course Grades						
Other						
INDIRECT						
Surveys						
Exit Interviews/Focus Groups	X	X	X	X	X	X
Other						

Curriculum Map

The Curriculum Map identifies courses that all majors are required to take and links them with specific PSLO. Filling out the Curriculum Map will help to envision when and where (in what classes) students are expected to learn the PSLO defined by the faculty. Many programs evaluate PSLO at several points in a program (introductory course, upper division course, capstone) to track the progression of learning as students move through the program. Assessment is commonly described as formative, occurring at various points in the program, or summative, occurring at the end of the program. Assessment data can be used to change or improve the curriculum if problems are apparent.

To complete the Curriculum Map list the course required for majors in the program in the left column. Use the key below to fill in the cells where appropriate in order to indicate if a PSLO is: (T) Taught only; (X) Taught and assessed; (A) Assessed only. Blank cells indicate that a particular PSLO is not covered in the content of a course or assessed in that specific class.

T = Taught only

X=Taught and Assessed A=Assessed only

Example of a Curriculum Map (Anthropology):

Required Courses	PSLO 1	PSLO 2	PSLO 3	PSLO 4	PSLO 5	PSLO 6
AN112	X	X	T	T	T	T
AN114	T	X	X	T	T	T
AN116		X	X	T		T
AN317/319/320/325	X	X	X	X	X	X
AN324	X	X	T	T	X	X
AN362					A	A

Data Collection & Analysis Calendar

This section of the Assessment Plan is designed to help schedule both data collection and analysis. (Y=every year, S=every semester, 2=every other year, 3=every 3 years, etc., O=Other)

Example of Data Collection & Analysis Chart:

Program Student Learning Outcomes	<u>Frequency of Data Collection</u>	<u>Frequency of Data Analysis</u>	Threshold of Measure (ex: 75% of students will receive B or better)
PSLO 1	2	4	>80% students score Target or Advanced on Course-embedded assessments >80% pass licensure exam
PSLO 2	2	4	>80% students score Target or Advanced on Course-embedded assessments >80% pass licensure exam
PSLO 3	2	4	>80% students score Target or Advanced on Course-embedded assessments >80% pass licensure exam

Field Experience Assessment Description

If field experiences are a significant part of the program, describe how student learning is assessed and how validity and reliability of the evaluation instrument is ensured.

Assessment Plan Description

Describe how faculty are involved in the development, implementation, and periodic review of the assessment plan.

Program Assessment Plan Review Cycle

Mark with an X the year(s) in which this Program Assessment Plan will be reviewed. When applicable, update the third column when changes were made and addressed in the Annual Program Assessment Report.

Program Assessment Plan Submission To Assessment Committee

Upon initial completion of the Program Assessment Plan (and future modifications), submit it to the Assessment Committee via Taskstream AMS. To do so, login with your WU single sign-on username and password to Taskstream AMS, which you can access

at <https://w.taskstream.com/cas/login?partnerId=u0h1hwhohu> OR in D2L – all semester – Watermark Support – Taskstream AMS. The D2L site also provides detailed instructions on creating and submitting your Plan. The Plan will be

reviewed by the Assessment Committee upon submission and an evaluation/rating will be sent to the program.

Annual Program Assessment Report

The Annual Program Assessment Report provides an opportunity to **summarize** the program's activities related to assessment over the previous year. It is designed to be "rolled" each year so each program ultimately has a report that covers a six-year cycle. This report should identify program assessment accomplishments; summarize findings per measure used to assess student learning related to the PSLOs; address overall data-based recommendations regarding curricula/course changes; include overall reflection on plans for continuous improvement in contributing to the Program Mission; explain faculty collaboration on creating assessment measures and interpreting/using findings; and describe availability of information to and collaborations with students, external stakeholders, and the Assessment Committee. The Annual Assessment Report consists of three elements:

- Annual Program Assessment Report Form
- Summary Data
- Rubrics (and other supporting documents)

Pre-Taskstream paper-based Assessment Plans and Annual Assessment Reports are located on the Shared drive (S://) within the Assessment folder. (If you do not know how to access the shared drive please contact User Services at 670-3000.)

Annual Program Assessment Report Submission

By June 30 each year, submit your Annual Program Assessment Reports to Taskstream AMS. To do so, login with your WU single sign-on username and password to Taskstream AMS, which you can access at <https://w.taskstream.com/cas/login?partnerId=u0h1hwhohu> OR in D2L – all semester – Watermark Support – Taskstream AMS. The D2L site also provides detailed instructions on submitting your Report. The Report will be reviewed by the Assessment Committee upon submission and an evaluation/rating will be sent to the program.

Glossary

Assessment Measures

Assessment measures/methods are the instruments used to evaluate student learning. Assessment measures may include (but are not limited to): Portfolios, Performance Assessment (Art, Music, Theatre etc.), Performance Assessment (clinical, internship, practicum, off-campus experience), Professional Credentialing Exam, Major Field Test or National Exam, Course Embedded Assignment, Project Evaluation, Surveys, Exit Interviews/Focus Groups.

Performance Assessment

Near the completion of some programs students are asked to complete an intensive, active learning project requiring significant effort in planning and implementation as well as production of a substantial final work (written, performance, piece). Evaluation of the process and/or product often assesses student learning in a significant portion (or all) of the PSLO.

Course-embedded Assessment

Course-embedded assessment includes assignments, papers, exams, exercises or other direct evaluations of student learning that take place within the context of a class. Course-embedded assessments tend to evaluate one (or a few) of the PSLO. Course-embedded assessments also are used to evaluate the development of student learning (formative assessment) as they move through a program.

Direct Assessment

Direct assessment is when measures of learning are based on student performance or demonstrates learning. (for related concept see indirect assessment)

Field Test (Major Field Test)

Major Field examinations are administered in a variety of disciplines (Business, Biology, Political Science etc.). They often are given to students upon or near completion of their major field of study. These tests assess the ability of students to analyze and solve problems, understand relationships, and interpret material.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment refers to the gathering of information or data about student learning during a course or program that is used to guide improvements in teaching and learning.

Indirect Assessment

Indirect assessments use perceptions, reflections or secondary evidence to make inferences about student learning. For example, surveys that ask students what they think they have learned, surveys of employers, students' self-assessments, and admissions to graduate schools are all indirect evidence of learning.

Internal Surveys

Surveys conducted in required courses (particularly capstone courses) can help to determine what students think about their learning and the quality of our programs. Because surveys measure student perceptions rather than their actual learning, these types of assessment are considered *indirect assessments*. Good assessment plans usually include some indirect assessment measures.

Portfolio Assessment

Portfolios used for assessment purposes are most commonly characterized by collections of student work that exhibit the student's progress and achievement in given areas. Included in the portfolio may be research papers and other process reports, multiple choice or essay examinations, self-evaluations, personal essays, journals, computational exercises and problems, case studies, audiotapes, and short answer quizzes. This information may be gathered from in-class or out-of-class assignments.

Professional Exams

The performance of our students on standardized tests (Bar Exam, NCLEX etc.) and licensure exams is one way to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs and the quality of student learning. These types of exams are *summative assessments* because they summarize the quality of student learning as they complete a program.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO)

Statements that describe what students will know, be able to do, or value as a result of their educational experience. PSLO describe specific student behaviors that evidence the acquisition of desired knowledge, skills, abilities, capacities, attitudes or dispositions. PSLO can be usefully thought of as behavioral criteria for determining whether students are achieving the educational objectives of a program, and, ultimately whether overall program goals are being successfully met. PSLO should be written in language that clearly implies a measurable behavior or quality of student work.

Rubric

Specific sets of criteria that clearly define for both student and teacher what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performance looks like. Criteria define descriptors of ability at each level of performance and assigns values to each level. Levels referred to are proficiency levels which describe a continuum from Advanced through Beginning.

Summative Assessment

The gathering of information at the conclusion of a course, program, or undergraduate career to improve learning or to meet accountability demands. When used for improvement, impacts the next cohort of students taking the course or program.

Threshold Measure

The measure established to determine whether the outcome has been achieved at an acceptable level (e.g. more than 80% of students score Target or Advanced on Courseembedded assessments).