

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

All Chairs' Workshop

This worksheet focuses on three main questions:

1. *What do we want our students to learn in our program?*
2. *How well do they learn it?*
3. *How do we know?*

1. Mission Alignment

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

1. Are your program mission, goals and learning outcomes (PLOs) aligned with the college's mission? Describe how.
2. Did you discover any needed improvements in the alignment of your program mission, PLOs, or program goals with the college's missions? If so, describe changes you will make.
3. Are your goals and learning outcomes (PLOs) aligned with the program's mission? Describe how.
4. Did you discover any needed improvements in the alignment of your PLOs or program goals with the program's missions? If so, describe changes you will make.

Guiding Questions to help you analyze your program alignment:

- Do you notice any gaps when you compare the mission statement of the college with your program's mission and goals—aspects that have not been covered in your program?
- Do you notice any misalignment?
- If a number of your program goals seem not to strongly relate to the mission of the college, why do you think this is? Does this suggest a unique aspect of your program that could be highlighted? Or does this suggest a need for re-focusing program goals for better alignment?

- Resources:**
- [CCA Mission Statement](#)
 - Program Mission Statement

2. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

List your Program Learning Outcomes, and then answer the questions below.

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

1. Do your PLOs represent the scope and depth of student learning appropriate to the degree program offered? Please describe how this is so.
2. Did you discover any need to revise your set of PLOs to bring in greater scope or depth? Please describe your reasoning.
3. What changes do you propose?

Guiding Questions to help you analyze the quality of your PLOs:

- Are your PLOs focused clearly on the types of learning (knowledge, attitudes, skills, values, personal growth) students will acquire or develop while working toward a degree in this discipline and at this level (undergraduate, master's)?
- Do your PLOs describe learning outcomes in terms of assessable student knowledge, attitudes, skills, values and/or personal growth?
- How does achievement of the PLOs prepare students for ongoing creative achievement, graduate school, societal service, and/or employment opportunities articulated by the program?

Resources:

- Standards/Benchmarks of your Profession

3. Availability and Use of Learning Outcomes

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

1. Are Learning Outcomes known to all faculty, staff, and students involved in your program?
2. Is achievement of Learning Outcomes the clear and consistent focus in all program activities?

Guiding Questions to help you analyze the availability and use of LOs:

- How are the LOs made available to students, staff and faculty (including non-ranked faculty)? Could they be made more widely available?
- How well are the LOs cited and used by faculty, advisors, and students?
- What are some of the ways your Learning Outcomes might be more in the forefront of your all program activities, for example in publicity material, reflected in syllabi, part of advising, and used in recruitment?

Resources:

- CCA Website (Academic Affairs web page)

4. Academic Curriculum

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

1. How does each element in the curriculum contribute to achieving your Learning Outcomes?
2. Did you discover any needed improvements in your curriculum content, structure, or scheduling to better achieve the LOs?
3. What changes do you propose, and why?

Guiding Questions to help you analyze the quality of the curriculum:

- Is the program's curriculum broad enough and deep enough to produce student learning that matches:
 - a. expectations articulated in the LOs?
 - b. relevant disciplinary and professional knowledge, skills, competencies, etc. (at relevant beginning, intermediate and advanced levels)?
 - c. the type and level of degree conferred?
- How do all of the parts of the curriculum work together? Examine for these:
 - a. coherence and integration among all the parts
 - b. close alignment between courses and LOs
 - c. scaffolding (all the parts build on each other in a progressive, intentional way)
 - d. scheduling of courses so that students can follow the best sequence (e.g. examine your flow chart)

Resources:

- [Curriculum Alignment Matrix](#)
- Your Program's Course Schedules & Flow Charts

5. Assessment Procedures for LOs

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

1. What methods did you use to assess LOs?
2. Are your methods/procedures for assessing the LOs giving you the amount and kind of information you need for determining how much and how well your students are learning?
3. Based on this analysis what improvements are needed in your assessment methods/procedures?

Guiding Questions to help you analyze your assessment procedures:

- How do you evaluate success in achieving the LOs? What methods are you using to evaluate each Learning Outcome?
- How do your assessment methods cover learning taught throughout the program's curriculum (not limited to a single course) and cover a variety of types of learning (knowledge, skills, values, etc.) necessary for the degree? Are you getting the kind of information needed to effectively measure student learning (related to the LOs)?
- How do these methods assess all kinds of student performance (not just measured by course grades and licensure rates but in capacity for ongoing creative practice, employability or promotion opportunities, certification or professional membership opportunities, etc.)? Are you looking into achievement not only at the end of the program but at other points, such as the beginning, the middle, and after graduation?
- Are you getting helpful, valid, and reliable information? Should you be doing anything else? Would it be useful to use more than one method of assessment?
- Do you make clearly articulated criteria and standards for assessing achievement of LOs widely available? How? Should you be doing more?

Resources:

- [PLO Assessment Matrix](#)

6. Student Learning Effectiveness

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

1. To what extent are students achieving the expected knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills stated in The College-wide Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)?
2. How do you know (what evidence do you use to draw your conclusions)?

Guiding Questions to determine student learning effectiveness:

- What does your evidence tell you about how well (at what levels—i.e. unsatisfactory, novice, competent, exemplary?) your students are achieving Learning Outcomes?
- Are students learning more effectively in one or more of the areas than in others? What do you think accounts for this? What improvements could you make that might result in better and more consistent learning outcomes in all of the areas examined?
- How does your program's advising process contribute to successful learning outcomes?
- How do other student support services contribute to your students' success in achieving the LOs (e.g., Library, Student Services, etc.)?
- What are the program practices/procedures for ongoing *use* of the evidence of student learning to assess and improve program effectiveness?
- Does the faculty take collective responsibility for reviewing attainment of the program learning outcomes and implementing improvements as needed? How is this done? How often?
- What changes do you propose for improving student achievement of LOs, and why?

7. Student Satisfaction with Achievement of Learning Outcomes

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

1. How satisfied are students with the learning they have achieved in your program and with the program overall?
2. How is evidence of student satisfaction with learning collected and assessed?
3. Are your evidence and assessment methods producing the information you need for understanding how to improve the program? If not, what do you plan to do differently?
4. What improvements does your evidence suggest, and how will you address these?
5. What is the program doing well that you plan to continue or to strengthen?

Guiding Questions to help you analyze student satisfaction with achievement of Learning Outcomes:

- What evidence are you using and what elements are you examining to determine student satisfaction with both the learning in particular courses and in the program overall?
- How satisfied are your program's students with all of these:
 - a. Overall quality of their education?
 - b. Ability to participate in program development?
 - c. Access to information related to Learning Outcomes?
 - d. Congruence of LOs with students' own goals?
 - e. Academic and professional advising?
 - f. Scheduling and availability of the courses?
 - g. Ability to finish program in a reasonable amount of time?
 - h. Quality of classroom instruction?
 - i. Diversity of student body and faculty?
 - j. Attention to diversity/multicultural issues in the curriculum?
 - k. Degree and quality of academic support services?

Resources:

- Student Evaluation Analyses

8. Graduates' Success

CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

1. How do your graduates demonstrate your program's success?
2. What evidence do you use, how is it collected, and is it sufficient to draw your conclusions?
3. Do you include evidence from employers, the media, graduate schools, licensure exams, other external sources to assess graduates' degree of success?
4. What is your program doing particularly well in helping graduates to be successful, and could this be done even better?
5. How do you plan to use the evidence to improve student learning in the program and success after graduation?

Guiding Questions to help you analyze graduates' success:

- How much do graduates of the program believe that the program has helped them to achieve their personal and professional goals?
- To what extent are graduates engaged in relevant creative work, appropriate jobs and/or graduate programs?
- What other kinds of achievements do you track or could you track to effectively measure graduates' success?
- How long do you track graduates?
- Could you add additional methods of determining graduate success to enrich your understanding? What additional resources would make this possible?

Resources:

- Alumni Office Surveys