

How to Read and Interpret the Learning Outcomes Assessment Snapshot Report

Committee on Learning Assessment and Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Introduction

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), in collaboration with the Senate Committee on Learning Assessment (COLA), developed a way to summarize your unit's progress on implementing your learning outcomes and assessment plans through the Assessment Snapshots. These snapshots, developed from a review of your assessment reports, provide a quick view of how well your unit is progressing on assessment and demonstrating best practices. The snapshots also help AU gauge how well we are meeting the expectations of our accreditor, Middle States. We will update these reports yearly and share them internally to key stakeholders. We will also use these reports as evidence of meeting accreditation standards. The following is a summary of how you should understand and interpret your Assessment Snapshot.

Description of Sections in Assessment Snapshots

2018-2019 Assessment Report Submitted

The first indicator included in the Assessment Snapshot is whether each program submitted their 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report due on October 1st, 2019. There are four status in the submission of reports: "YES" for the programs that submitted their report; "NO" for the programs that did not submit their report; "DELAYED" for the programs that provided an update and are in the process of submitting their report; and "NOT EXPECTED" for the programs that will not submit their report due to their small size or for extenuating circumstances previously established by COLA and/or OIRA.

Last Annual Report Submitted

This indicator is located after the different sections of the Snapshot, it looks at the last year each unit submitted an Annual Assessment Report. If the unit submitted the 2018-2019 report, then it would say 2019.

Additional Comments

The last indicator provides space for additional comments, which usually consist in notes that clarify how other indicators were completed or an update from the unit.

Learning Outcomes

We used each unit's Assessment Plan to collect information for this section.

Number of Active Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes (LOs) are the description of what students should know and be able to do upon finishing their program. We recommend that each program has between four and seven active LOs.

Number of LOs that refer to higher order learning

Ideally, all LOs should be higher order learning, meaning that they aim that students build upon their learning in earlier courses so that they can apply, analyze, evaluate and create knowledge by the time they graduate.

Last time the LOs were shared/reviewed/revised by faculty

It is very important that all units reaffirm/revise their LOs so that they are in line with the current knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students develop. All units have been asked to review and reaffirm or revise their LOs during the 2019-2020 Academic Year. The status of this goal will be reported in Fall 2020.

Evidence that program LOs are shared with students

Students should have access to the program LOs, through their program's website, course syllabi, or other places. The status of this goal will be collected in 2020-2021.

Assessment Methods

We used each unit's Assessment Plan to collect information for this section.

Number of LOs with assessment measures

All LOs should include at least one assessment measure.

Number of LOs with direct measures

Direct measures are tangible evidence of student learning using student work. Examples include assignments, papers, projects, quizzes, exams, presentations, performance, portfolios, journals or reflections and other creative work. Ideally, all LOs should include at least one direct measure.

Number of LOs with indirect measures

Indirect measures are signs of student learning, often asking students to self-report. Examples include alumni feedback, surveys, focus groups, and job or graduate school placement rates. Even though indirect measures are not essential, they are helpful to provide additional information on how a LO is being achieved, as long as they are not the only measure used.

Because LOs can have more than one assessment measure, many include both types of measures.

Assessment measures are specific to LOs

We expect that assessment methods provide meaningful information about the LOs they measure. Hence, each assessment method should describe how it specifically measures each LO. Examples of specific measures might be a comprehensive exam question instead of passing an exam, a rubric that gathers information on the LO, or a faculty review of students work that is specific to the outcome. Grades are not specific to a LO.

This indicator was labeled in three degrees: "YES" if all assessment measures are specific to their LOs; "SOME" if only a few assessment measures are specific; and "NO" if none of the assessment measures are specific.

Assessments have targets?

Targets are the definition of whether the assessment results are a "success" and the way to tell whether a LO is met. They can be either qualitative or quantitative, but they must clearly and meaningfully

describe how you measure whether the LO has been achieved. This indicator was also labeled in three degrees: "YES", "SOME" or "NO".

Last time the assessment methods were shared/reviewed/revised by faculty

As with LOs, it is very important that assessment methods are reviewed/revised so that they are in line with current educational experiences, including assignments given to students. This indicator was not completed because we have not collected this information yet.

Assessment Results

We used each unit's Four Column Report in TracDat to collect information for this section.

Number of LOs assessed in the last 4 years

In this and the next four indicators under this section we considered not only active LOs, but also archived ones, since many LOs that were active in the last four years may not be active anymore. That way we are acknowledging the work that units have made in assessment in the last years, and not only what they have recently done.

Number of LOs assessed directly in the last 4 years

This indicator includes the number of active and archived LOs that were assessed directly in the last four years. Ultimately, we expect all LOs to be assessed using at least one direct measure.

Number of LOs assessed indirectly in the last 4 years

Although it is not essential that each of the active/archived LOs be assessed indirectly in the last four years, it is still useful and better than no measure at all.

Results are tied back to specific LOs

We expect that the description of the assessment results provides meaningful information about the LOs they measure, analyzing the strengths and challenges observed, and not just a general summary or score. This indicator was labeled in three degrees: "YES", "SOME" or "NO".

Number of LOs met in the last 4 years

We counted all the active/archived LOs that were marked as "Target met or exceeded" in any of their assessment measures, direct or indirect, in the last four years.

Number of LOs with evidence that findings were used

In this and the next indicator, we looked at all the results reported by each unit, without limiting the analysis to the last four years like in the previous five indicators, because we wanted to examine the extent to which units have been using assessment for improvement in instruction and learning through curricular and/or pedagogical changes. Hence, this indicator looked at the number of LOs with evidence that findings were used under the "Use of Results" section in the Four Column Report in TracDat.

Evidence that findings were shared with faculty

We expect that assessment results are shared with faculty to make informed decisions regarding curriculum and/or pedagogical changes in order to improve instruction and, as a result, foster student learning.

Plan

We used each unit's Assessment Plan and Four Column Report to collect information for this section.

Assessment plan designed to do full cycle of assessment in 3-5 years

This indicator examines if it is feasible to measure all the unit's LOs between three and five years. We labeled this indicator as either "YES" for the plans that can assess all LOs in the given period and "NO" for the plans that cannot.

Assessments are on track to assess all LOs in 3-5 years

This indicator examines if the unit is following its assessment plan. It was also labeled as either "YES" or "NO", which was observed in the assessment results reported in each unit's Four Column Report.

Assessment of LOs is rotated every year

In order to have a manageable workload, we recommend units to rotate the assessment of their LOs each year but assess all at least once every three to five years. Again, this indicator was also labeled as either "YES" or "NO".

Mapping

We used each unit's Curriculum Mapping Report to collect information for this section.

Program has completed curriculum mapping

Curriculum mapping consists of connecting individual courses in the curriculum to specific program LOs. We consider this fundamental in order to ensure that students are developing the expected LOs. Therefore, we observed if each unit completed this process, by labeling either "YES" or "NO". This has not been a requirement of assessment reports in the past but will be expected for the 2019-2020 Annual Assessment Report.

Last year curriculum map was confirmed to be current

It is very important that each unit's curriculum mapping is updated so that the LOs and courses where they are taught and assessed are in line. Going forward, we will ask units to indicate if they have completed their curriculum mapping under the "Annual Updates" section in TracDat to confirm that it is current.