

Assessment Planning: Getting Started and Context



Assessment Planning: An Introduction

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HFOWd2C7OCS4056wMu9QdgVc4NjDTIh4/edit>

Assessment process



Part 1: Mission/Outcomes

Considerations for a mission statement

Why does your department, program exist?

Who are your stakeholders?

Can stakeholders like students/faculty get a glimpse of the program experience from the mission statement?

What makes you unique within the university?

What makes your program unique in the region?

Why do you do what you do?

- What impact do you have and on whom?
- What story do you want to tell?

How do you contribute to the University Mission and Core Values?

Fitchburg State University Mission Statement

Mission

Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.

Structure

The mission of (**program name**) is to (**your primary purpose**) by providing (**your primary functions or activities**) to (**your stakeholders**).

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- The order of the pieces may vary from the structure.

Questions?

Discussion on Mission

1. See if you can pick out the components from your current Mission
2. Are there definite changes you would like to incorporate now

Mission Creation:

Begin the brainstorming process on the creation of a Mission for your program.

Program learning outcomes (objectives)

- Best practice is 3-5 for each program
- Should have additional 1-3 for a concentration

Represent intent

Program Learning Outcomes

Program Outcomes are mapped to the institutional priorities and show how students achieve institutional outcomes in that academic program.

Nested Learning Outcomes:



Writing Program Outcomes

1. Ask faculty to make a list of what they believe a graduate from your program should know.
2. Consult professional organizations about their learning outcomes for your program.
3. Consult learning outcomes for other colleges/universities and determine what makes you unique.
4. Agree on a first draft of the outcomes with the understanding they will be revised.
5. Get student feedback on outcomes. Survey or conduct focus groups on how well the students perceive the outcomes were met within required courses.

Program/Department Learning Outcomes

Do the Learning Outcomes specify what *all* students who graduate from the degree program should be able to accomplish?

Is each Learning Outcome stated from the perspective of the learner? Although we often use the terms goals, objectives, and outcomes interchangeably, Learning Outcomes reflect a **student's** knowledge, skills, and abilities whereas program goals shape the program's design.

Are the Learning Outcomes comprehensive, representative of both the depth and breadth of the program? One of the challenges when constructing these statements is to capture the right level of specificity. Consider the Learning Outcome,

“By the end of the program, a student should be able to write a persuasive essay”.

Program/Department Learning Outcomes

Function

Is each Learning Outcome measurable? By designing specific, measurable statements, Learning Outcomes serve as criteria against which to measure the program. Consider the example,

“By the end of the program, a student should be able to integrate evidence-based practice to design and implement a research project.”

Do the Learning Outcomes sufficiently distinguish between programs offered within the department? Many departments at Fitchburg have multiple concentrations offered at the undergraduate level with key differences. If two students receive a different degree, the distinctiveness of the degree should be reflected in the Learning Outcomes.

Program/Department Learning Outcomes

Discipline

Do the Learning Outcomes integrate the language and frameworks of the discipline?

Do the Learning Outcomes include elements that demonstrate the uniqueness of the program and distinguish it from similar programs at other institutions? For some programs, this might not be a priority, but it is worth reflecting on whether it is important to the department.

Structure of learning outcomes



Some authors suggest using a template:

- [action verb] (observable, assessable, performative verbs)
- “[Students] should/will be able to (focus is on student)
- [object or learning statement].” (specific areas of learning)

Avoid double barrel learning objectives

Outcome Examples

LIST WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE
ABLE TO DO.

LEARNING OUTCOME
STATEMENT

Communicate Effectively

Students will be able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing on x topic to researchers, practitioners, and the public.

Think Critically

Students will be able to critically analyze the elements of x topic in an impartial fashion.

Engage in pedagogical practice

Students will be able to teach students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

How do I know if my Outcome is written well?

- Is it written to show what the students will do in terms of knowledge?
- Is it written in terms of what verb per statement?

Watch out for the following phrases:

- Know, understand: Difficult to describe if the student actually knows or understands.
- Students will be introduced to: Written in terms of what the instructor will do rather than than the student.
- Appreciate a “topic”: how do you know if student appreciate a topic?

It is Specific

It is Measurable

It is Attainable

It is Relevant

It is Time-Bound

Outcome Examples

Poorly Written Outcome

Familiarize the student with Blooms Taxonomy.

Plan, describe and present a business plan.

Appreciate major British writers.

Measurable Outcome

The student will be able to identify the elements of Blooms Taxonomy.

The student will be able to create a business plan.

The student will be able to compare the major contributions of British writers to literature.

Why do outcomes matter.

Clear outcomes improve student learning

What a student should be able to do in your course/program should not be a mystery.

Make writing homework, quizzes, and exams easier.

Easier to see if student learning is improving through assessment.

Transparency.

Questions?

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Review of your Program outcomes

Thank you

