

How to Develop, Review, or Revise an Assessment Method for Student Learning Outcomes

There are many ways to assess SLOs. Examples include essays, case studies, portfolios, student projects, skills demonstrations, selected exam questions or surveys. Priority should be given to authentic assessment methods. The Director of Research and Planning and the SLO Coordinator(s) are resources for helping to develop effective authentic assessment methods (see Appendix E in the Learning Outcomes Handbook).

All sections of a course will use the same assessment method to allow for peer collaboration and meaningful discussion of teaching and learning.

In developing an assessment method faculty will need to answer questions such as the following:

- When in the semester will the assessment occur?
- Who will administer the assessment?
- Who exactly will complete the assessment? The obvious answer is usually "the students in the class", but what does this mean? All students who happen to be present on the day of the assessment, who turn in the relevant assignment? Or will instructors follow-up to get all students to complete the assessment? Will it include all students in the class, or only those who are passing? Will only a sample of students be measured? If so, how is the sample to be selected?
- What materials and resources will be available to students while completing the assessment?
- How much time will the students have to complete the assessment?
- Is the assessment to stand alone, or be embedded into a graded assignment or exam?
- What instructions or information will the students get about this assessment?
- During the assessment what type of questions may the instructor answer? Not answer?
- Should the assessment be a non-graded activity or something that does count toward the final grade?
- Should student participation in the assessment be optional or required?
- If there are ONLINE or ITV sections of the course, what logistics need to be worked out for those sections?
- What are other special considerations for this particular assessment?

Who develops the assessment method?

Faculty have the sole responsibility to develop the assessment method for each SLO statement. Preferably all faculty who teach a course will participate in the development of the assessment method. At a minimum, all faculty who teach the course will be invited to participate.

When is the assessment for a Course-Level Student Learning Outcome statement developed?

Often faculty develop the assessment method at the same time they develop the SLO statement. It is necessary to develop the assessment before completing the *Course-Level SLOs Form* which is submitted as part of the curriculum process for developing a new course.

Can the assessment method be revised?

Yes. If, during the dialogue that occurs during analysis of learning outcome results, faculty discover that the assessment method does not effectively measure the SLO, then the assessment method should be revised. The Director of Research and Planning and the SLO Coordinator(s) are resources for helping to develop effective assessment methods.

How is the assessment method revised?

Faculty who teach the course will jointly revise the assessment and complete a *Course-Level SLO Form* for the revised assessment. The faculty who revised the assessment submit the completed form to the SLO Committee via the SLO Coordinator. (Note: The *Course-Level SLOs Form* should list all of the SLOs for the course including the ones whose assessment method is not being revised.) The SLO Committee reviews the completed *Course-Level SLO Form* to determine whether (1) the SLO statements meet the four criteria for an SLO, (2) that the assessment is not based on the final course grade, (3) the assessment is authentic when possible, and (4) the SLO and its assessment is written clearly and with enough detail that faculty who are teaching the course will be able to understand the SLO and its assessment. After reviewing the *Course-Level SLOs Form*, the SLO Committee will provide suggestions if necessary to help faculty write well defined SLOs and assessments.

The assessment description need not include the actual assessment question. Here are two examples of assessments that do not include the statement of the actual assessment question:

HIST 17A

SLO Statement: Upon successful completion of this course the student should be able to interpret primary and secondary sources.

Assessment: Instructors will provide students reading material on primary and secondary sources and instruction on how to interpret them. Students will be assigned a standardized quiz that requires the interpretation of primary and secondary sources.

STU 50

SLO Statement: Upon successful completion of this course the student should be able to determine the location of at least eight offices/college services that can increase the probability of student success.

Assessment: A map without labels will be passed out early and late in the semester, with students required to label and identify places at which services are offered that are designed to increase success.

What is Authentic Assessment?

Authentic assessment simulates a real world experience by evaluating the student's ability to apply critical thinking and knowledge or to perform tasks that may approximate those found in the work place or other venues outside of the classroom setting. When developing the assessment method, faculty should give priority to authentic assessment methods. Information which may help to clarify authentic assessment is in Appendix E in the Learning Outcomes Handbook.

Some assessments are direct measures and some are indirect measures. Direct measures are more likely to be authentic assessments. Direct measures are usually assessed by faculty, whereas indirect measures are often assessed by the Office of Research and Planning. Below is a table that gives some examples of direct and indirect measures.

Direct Assessments	Indirect Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Essays○ Exam questions○ Term papers○ Field work performance, internship performance, or service learning projects○ Research projects○ Case study analysis○ Oral presentations○ Performances○ Portfolios of student work○ Pre-test and post-test○ Video production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Alumni Surveys○ Employer Surveys○ External Reviewers○ Licensure exam results○ Student Exit Interview/Surveys

Rubric for Evaluating Learning Outcome Methods of Assessment

Criteria	Meets	Does Not Meet
1 – Successful completion of the assessment is not based on the final course grade.	Successful completion of the learning outcome is based on the student's performance on the specified learning outcome	Successful completion of the learning outcome is based on the student's final course grade
2. The assessment clearly identifies how and when the assessment will be administered.	Means (how and when) for administering the learning outcome are clearly identified and leave no room for confusion and varying interpretations among faculty or staff	Means (how and when) for administering the learning outcome are vague and ambiguous leaving room for confusion and varying interpretations among faculty or staff
3. The assessment is clearly written and identifies the criteria for student success.	Means for evaluating successful completion of the outcome are clearly stated. A rubric (rating tool) identifying the criteria for student success has been developed (See Appendix F in the Learning Outcomes Handbook)	Means for evaluating successful completion of the outcome are vague and ambiguous, or missing. A rubric (rating tool) identifying criteria for student success has not been developed (See Appendix F in the Learning Outcomes Handbook)
4. The assessment is authentic.	Assessment tool requires students to <i>use</i> the acquired knowledge and skills for the specified learning outcome to a real world setting (See Appendix E in the Learning Outcomes Handbook)	Assessment tool only requires students to know the content for the specified learning outcome (See Appendix E in the Learning Outcomes Handbook)