LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES
Updated June 26, 2014

1. References

USG Board of Regents Policy Manual, Policy 2.9, Institutional Effectiveness: Planning and Assessment

SACS Commission on Colleges, Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, 2012 Edition, Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1.1 and 3.5.1

2. General

The following guidelines are based on documents prepared by the University Council Curriculum Committee, the Program Review and Assessment Committee, the Program Committee of the Graduate Council, and the Office of Academic Planning (OAP). These include UGA policies and procedures regarding general education and program review.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to clarify the processes and responsibilities for learning outcomes assessment of educational programs at the University of Georgia.

4. Definitions

Learning outcomes assessment helps create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education. It is an ongoing process aimed at measuring and improving student learning. This process includes (1) setting explicit, public expectations (i.e., outcomes) for student learning; (2) systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well student performance matches those expectations; and (3) using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

Educational programs include all undergraduate and graduate majors, undergraduate and graduate certificate programs, and the undergraduate general education curriculum.

5. Practice
The faculty responsible for each educational program at the University of Georgia:

1. Define clear learning outcomes for students in the program;
2. Identify and implement measures that assess whether their students attain those outcomes;
3. Analyze the data gathered through the assessment measures for information relevant to the program; and
4. Use the resulting information as the basis for improvements in the program.

Criteria for Evaluating Good Practice

While allowing for significant differences in assessment practices among disciplines, in order to be relevant and useful to departments and programs, assessment procedures should meet the following criteria:

1. Programs should have clearly defined and measurable student learning outcomes that focus on knowledge, skills, and competencies.

2. Assessment measures should clearly address the degree to which students attain the defined learning outcomes.

3. Assessment measures should be independent from course grades and teaching evaluations.

4. Multiple methods of assessing outcomes should be used.

5. Data and information should be collected and analyzed longitudinally over time.

6. The analysis of data should result in findings relevant to the program.

7. Improvements in the program should be planned and enacted in response to the findings.

8. The faculty who teach in the program should be involved in defining the learning outcomes, selecting the related assessment measures, analyzing the results, and determining appropriate improvements in the program.

New and revised assessment plans submitted for approval are evaluated in light of these criteria, as are 3rd-year Full Assessment Reports.
6. **Responsibilities for Learning Outcomes Assessment**

**Overview of Responsibilities**

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<tr>
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<th>Undergraduate Majors and Certificate Programs</th>
<th>Graduate Majors and Certificate Programs</th>
<th>Undergraduate General Education Curriculum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td>Program Faculty</td>
<td>Program Faculty</td>
<td>General Education Faculty and OAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Oversight</strong></td>
<td>Program Review and Assessment Committee</td>
<td>Program Committee of the Graduate Council</td>
<td>Faculty Representatives of the University Curriculum Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reporting</strong></td>
<td>Annual brief report, 3rd year comprehensive report</td>
<td>3rd year comprehensive report</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Program Review and Assessment Committee/Program Review Teams</td>
<td>Program Review and Assessment Committee/ Program Committee of the Graduate Council/ Program Review Teams</td>
<td>Curriculum Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Undergraduate Major and Certificate Program Assessment**

Matters related to learning outcomes, assessment measures, implementation of assessment measures, curriculum and program changes based on evaluation of assessment data, and reporting on assessment are the responsibility of the faculty who deliver the undergraduate major program.

The Office of Academic Planning is responsible for supporting good assessment practice, coordinating faculty oversight, and documenting assessment processes for institutional and external reporting needs.

Assessment practice, based on the evidence documented in the following reporting cycle, is evaluated by faculty reviewers in the context of the Program Review of the unit offering the program.
Reporting on undergraduate learning outcomes assessment occurs on a 3-year cycle that is integrated with the 7-year Program Review Cycle as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assessment and Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gather undergraduate major assessment data that reflects the extent to which outcomes are being met, focusing on approximately one third of the outcomes. Send a brief, one to two page report on the data collected and major findings to the OAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gather a second year of assessment data, using methods that focus on an additional third of the outcomes. Send a brief, one to two page report on the data collected and major findings to the OAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gather a third year of data. By this time, data on all outcomes should have been collected. Analyze all the data, take action, and summarize in a report to the OAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5, 6</td>
<td>Repeat the three year cycle of years 1, 2, and 3, presumably with the same assessment methods, so that longitudinal analysis can be performed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Program Review, including reports from the two three-year assessment cycles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graduate Major and Certificate Program Assessment**

Matters related to learning outcomes, assessment measures, implementation of assessment measures, curriculum and program changes based on evaluation of assessment data, and reporting on assessment are the responsibility of the faculty who deliver the graduate program.

The Office of Academic Planning is responsible for supporting good assessment practice, coordinating faculty oversight, and documenting assessment processes for institutional and external reporting needs.

Assessment practice, based on the evidence documented in the following reporting cycle, is evaluated by the faculty Program Committee of the Graduate Council and by faculty reviewers in the context of the Program Review of the unit offering the program.

Reporting on graduate learning outcomes assessment occurs on a 3-year cycle that is integrated with the 7-year Program Review Cycle as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assessment and Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Gather assessment data over three years, complete a comprehensive assessment report, and send report to the OAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Gather assessment data over three years, complete a comprehensive assessment report, and send report to the OAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Program Review, including reports from the two three-year assessment cycles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**General Education Assessment**

Matters related to objectives, goals, requirements, and general education are the responsibility of the University Council Curriculum Committee. Council consideration of these matters should follow consideration and recommendation by the Committee. (from Academic Affairs Policy Statement 14)

The Office of Academic Planning, in consultation with the University Council Curriculum Committee, plans and implements institution-level general education assessment projects. In addition, the OAP gathers general education assessment data from program-level assessment reports and other sources.

Results of assessment of general education learning outcomes are reported to the Curriculum Committee and posted publicly on an ongoing basis.