University of La Verne

General Education
Learning Outcomes Assessment

Guidelines

9/10/2010

I. Purpose

The primary purpose of the assessment of the General Education learning outcomes is to determine how well student learning outcomes are being met in each of the areas, and to use the findings for program improvement, planning and budgeting. This guide is intended to facilitate the process of conducting the assessment and preparing the report.

II. Implementation Steps

Step 1: Identify leadership

The General Education Committee designates a lead faculty member from the committee to spearhead the program review of a GE area. The responsibilities of the lead faculty include (a) Forming an assessment team of 3-4 individuals by inviting faculty at large to join; the Associate VP for University Assessment is an ex-officio resource member of the team, (b) Calling regular meetings of the team, (c) Overseeing the data gathering, analysis and report-drafting tasks, (d) Leading the team and the GE Committee to identify action recommendations, and (f) finalizing the report.

Step 2: Identify team task

The team comprises 3-4 faculty members, including an adjunct faculty member whenever possible, especially if the area has many courses taught by adjunct faculty. The responsibilities of the team involve sharing the tasks of planning, data collection, and analysis, development of rubrics, evaluating student work, and drafting different pieces of the report.

The team members determine the distribution of tasks to gather, analyze and report data. Members of the team may select a particular goal or learning outcome to address. Or they may take on a particular task, such as collecting student work, preparing survey questions, evaluating student work, developing rubrics, analyzing the data, and/or drafting portions of the report.

Step 3: Set up timelines

The team sets up deadlines for completing different tasks and establish regular meetings for reporting on progress. Completion of the review process may take six to nine months.

Step 4: Write the assessment report

The assessment report is written following the general outline provided below. Allow for variations in the outline to reflect unique aspects of the GE area. One person may draft

the whole report, or compile the pieces written by different individuals. The final report should have an executive summary on the front end and action recommendations at the back end. The executive summary includes the learning outcomes, description of the assessment process and action recommendations. The team members arrive at the action recommendations, arranged in priority order, collectively after reviewing and discussing the complete draft. The deliberation may include the entire GE committee.

Step 5: Present the report to the General Education Committee and the Dean of the College of Arts and Science (CAS)

Present a summary of the report, including the process and findings, to the GE committee, and provide a complete copy to the dean for review and feedback. The action recommendations include resource needs as well as program improvements independent of resource needs. Modifications are made to the report as needed.

Step 6: Invite external review of the program

External reviewer(s) with familiarity and expertise in the field is invited to read and respond in writing to the report, after a campus visit (Honorarium is provided). This should be done soon after the completion of the full draft of the report. The external review report should be attached to the final report as an appendix. The recommendations of the reviewer(s) are incorporated into the action recommendations. (See the external reviewer guide at: http://laverne.edu/institutional-research/assessment_academic/assets/WASC-external%20reviewer-guide-10-12-2009.pdf).

Step 7: Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC) evaluates the report and provides feedback

The EEC is composed of faculty representatives from the three colleges: CAS, CBPM, and CEOL. The EEC evaluates the report using rubrics, and provides feedback in writing to the GE Committee and the Dean of CAS through Office of Institutional Research and Assessment regarding the quality of the overall report as well as the action recommendation.

Step 8: Submit the report to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment receives a final copy of the report. The report is evaluated for quality (may be returned for revision), and is posted on the Institutional Research and Assessment web site as part of the university's assessment portfolio.

Step 9: GE committee acts on the action recommendations

The GE Committee considers the action recommendations and acts on them as appropriate, with support form the Dean of CAS.

III. Assessment Report Outline

Purpose

The purpose of the assessment report outline is to facilitate the process of conducting the assessment and writing the report. Below is an outline of the assessment report. Each of the elements of the outline is elaborated on the following the general outline.

General Outline Elements

Executive Summary

I. GE Learning Outcomes

II. Program Capacity
- Number of courses designated to meet the GE requirement
- Number of part-time faculty involved
- Number of sections offered, as appropriate
- Description of the advising process
- Facilities as appropriate (Labs, space, equipment, etc.)

III. Assessment Procedures and indicators of learning outcomes (List and describe only; no findings reported in this section)
- Indicators tied to the outcomes
- Direct measures such as student papers, performance videos, final exams, etc.
- Indirect measures such as local surveys, national surveys (e.g. NSSE), focus groups, etc.
- Faculty feedback
- Others as appropriate

IV. Findings (Organize by learning outcomes)
- Tables and graphs
- Narrative

V. Action Recommendations
- Prioritized
- Resource based
- Program /curricular improvements

VI. Appendices
- Must be referred to in the text

IV. Elaboration of Outline Elements

Executive Summary

The executive summary is a 1-2 page statement that states the learning outcomes of the department, addresses the highlight of capacity, lists the assessment procedures used, mentions salient findings, and identifies briefly all the action recommendations including resource needs, and improvement efforts independent of resources.

I. GE Learning Outcomes

GE learning outcomes identify skills and competencies students are expected to master through the designated GE courses. List each of the learning outcomes; breaking down the outcomes into smaller elements may be advisable sometimes to facilitate assessment. It may also be helpful to restate the learning outcomes in measurable terms.

II. Program Capacity and Description

This section describes the capacity to meet the stated learning outcomes. It describes the advising process in terms of who and how, facilities and resources such as labs, space, etc., number of designated course approved to meet the requirement, sections offered (as appropriate), and extent of involvement of part-time faculty.

III. Assessment Procedures and Outcome Indicators
(DO NOT REPORT FINDINGS UNDER THIS SECTION – JUST LIST AND DESCRIBE)

Assessment procedures are data collection strategies designed to measure the attainment of learning outcomes. There should be two types of procedures or measures: direct (performance), and indirect (self-report through surveys, etc.

(1) **Direct** (performance) measures or indicators of learning outcomes beyond grades using articulated criteria or rubrics. Examples are: Exit exams, simulations, projects, stage performances, oral presentations, internship supervisor ratings, or experiences that are faculty evaluated.

(2) **Indirect** (self-report) measures such as surveys where students indicate the degree to which they have acquired learning outcomes, focus groups with students, and written faculty feedback.

Assessment procedures and outcome indicators may include:
- Rubric based analyses of student writing samples, papers, etc.
- Exams and essays
- Pre-post tests

- Focus groups
- Interviews with faculty
- Portfolios
- Performances, presentations assessed with rubrics
- Reflective essays
- Examinations prepared locally or available nationally
- Student projects (e.g., junior or senior projects)
- Ratings by fieldwork or internship supervisors

IV. Findings

This sections reports the results of the assessment efforts. It is organized by learning outcomes. It mentions each learning outcome and pulls data from different assessment procedures that address that particular outcome. Charts and tables are used to summarize the results, or refer to appendices where they may be found if the tables and charts address multiple goals and are too elaborate. A summarizing sentence or two at the end of each learning outcome captures the strengths and the areas that need attention.

VI. Action Recommendations

This section lists the action recommendations that emerge from the assessment of learning outcomes and the analysis of capacity. The list is presented in priority order. It should include (a) resource needs, and (b) program improvements independent of resource needs. Before recommendations are made the assessment team, the GE committee, and the dean discuss the findings and arrive at the recommendations collectively with consensus. Recommendations by external reviewers are incorporated in the final list.

VII. Action Updates

The GE Committee, with support from the Dean of CAS, acts upon the recommendations during the ensuing 5 years with yearly updates submitted to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment for posting.