

# ASSESSMENT PLAN TEMPLATE: UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

This assessment plan template outlines a systematic approach to reviewing the Degrees of Excellence institutional learning outcomes and the student learning experience for your academic degree program. It is a document outlining:

- Department or program learning outcomes, and how those outcomes align to the Degrees of Excellence institutional learning outcomes (undergraduate programs);
- The assessment methods used to demonstrate achievement in each outcome;
- The timeframe for collecting and reviewing the data;
- The performance target indicating the necessary assessment score to achieve competency in an outcome; and
- The individual(s) responsible for the collection and review of the data.

Assessment planning facilitates the documentation of outcome assessment activities while breaking the assessment cycle into smaller and more manageable tasks. Additionally, the plan will help to identify where support may be needed.

A simple, straightforward assessment plan includes:

1. **What** students are expected to learn. The Degrees of Excellence institutional learning outcomes represent the competencies associated with earning a baccalaureate degree at NSU. Each program determines student competencies and learning expectations through program learning outcomes.
2. **Where** in the curriculum students learn and apply the knowledge and skills specified in the Degrees of Excellence and the program learning outcomes. Student learning activities and measures can be embedded into existing activities, or added as an additional assessment. Embedding the assessment into existing work may be advantageous in that it is a customary component of the student learning experience, no significant additional work for faculty, staff, or students, no additional cost, and the

assessment process is invisible to the student. Additional assessments, such as a national standardized exam, may however, add the opportunity compare to NSU students to others. When using either an embedded or an added measure, it is important to ensure the assessment method aligns effectively to the outcome.

Separate or additional assessment methods are not mandatory when assessing the Degrees of Excellence institutional learning outcomes. As the program outcomes are aligned to the institutional outcomes, it is anticipated that the activity or assessment method that measures student learning in the program outcomes can also be used to measure student learning in the institutional outcome. *An assessment mapping worksheet is provided on the last page of this template.*

3. **When** each outcome is assessed.
4. **How** program faculty/staff know that students are meeting the performance target. This section includes the types of evidence/samples of student work that will be collected. There are multiple methods of assessment, including direct and indirect evidence. Direct evidence of student learning examines actual work produced by the student, or scores from exams measuring actual knowledge in the associated outcome. Direct evidence is “tangible, visible, self-explanatory, and compelling evidence of exactly what students have and have not learned.” (Suskie, 2009). Indirect evidence of student learning gathers student information regarding their thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions in relation to the program or degree. It is circumstantial evidence of student learning (such as retention rates or grades). Programs have discretion to incorporate a variety of assessment methods into their plan provided at least one (1) direct measure is used per student learning outcome. Additionally, the plan should include a description of the standard used for reviewing the work and determining whether program targets are met. Ideally, the assessment will be scored using a rubric, or set of criteria, that align directly to the program or institutional learning outcome.
5. **Who** will be responsible for collecting student work, analyzing the data, and reporting the results?

After reviewing the assessment activity findings (evidence), determine if students are meeting the expectations. Validate that expectations are being met or consider ways to improve. This is often referred to as “closing the loop” and is an essential component of the annual program assessment report due on September 1 of each year.

More information about developing learning goals and sample assessment plan are available at the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website.

## **Assessment Plan Template – Undergraduate Degree/Major Program**

Whether programs decide to paste information into this template, or to utilize a pre-existing document, all bolded items **must** be included and clearly labeled.

### **1. Identifying Information**

College:

Undergraduate Degree/Major Program Name:

Program Chair or Contact/Title:

Contact Information:

Who is responsible for assessment? (identify an individual or team who will annually coordinate assessment plan implementation):

### **2. Program Mission Statement**

### **3. Name of your professional association or accrediting agency that defines your program (major) objectives, if any.**

### **4. Assessment Map**

An assessment map aligns your program outcomes to the institutional outcomes and identifies where/when they are assessed. Please complete the *Degrees of Excellence* assessment map. You will need to:

- i) Individually list program outcomes
- ii) Specify the institutional outcome(s) which align to each individual program outcome
- iii) Specify the prefix, course number, and course title in which the outcome is assessed
- iv) Specify whether the course level for the aligned D.O.E. Outcome: Introductory, Reinforced, or Mastered
- v) Specify the assessment method
- vi) Specify whether the method is a direct/indirect measure
- vii) Specify the performance target

## 6. What is the plan to close the loop?

(typically during an annual meeting of the program faculty and staff; note that at this meeting the program may want to review enrollment information, course progression, degree completion, and other structural features of the student experience in addition to the evidence about student learning).