Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reporting
QUICK GUIDE

Purpose and Basic Process

NC State Academic Assessment is intended to provide systematic data for the continual enhancement of programs. As such, the process is designed so that faculty determine what is important (curricular outcomes), how it is taught, how it is measured (using direct evidence), how the data are interpreted (identifying strengths and areas for improvement), and what actions, if needed based on findings, should be taken to enhance the curriculum.

The reporting process is intended to be a snapshot of the assessment within each degree program to provide information regarding how outcome data are being utilized for decisions by the academic leadership in the department, college, and university.

For more assessment resources, including example reports and APA instructions, **click here.**

Basic Requirements

Each degree program and transcripted certificate:

1. Will have a set of comprehensive student learning outcomes (often 4 to 7) which are measurable and can all be assessed within a 3 to 5 year cycle;

2. Will use direct measures of learning that are specifically aligned with the outcomes;

3. Will analyze the data at a level that allows for the identification of strengths and areas for improvement within the curricular outcome (e.g., no holistic rubric scores, no test or course grades, BUT scores for elements within the rubric or sets of test questions mapped to an element of the outcome are suited for analysis);

4. Will make clear decisions based on the data collected (e.g., change to the curriculum, change to a course, change to an assignment, or the determination that no change is currently necessary).

Key Terms

Direct Evidence - collecting information that requires the students to display their knowledge and skills (Direct Evidence) rather than the student or others indicating that they believe the student learned something (Indirect Evidence).

Embedded Assessment - gathering information about student learning that is built into the teaching/learning process. This may include test questions, projects, presentations, etc. that are already part of the course/curriculum.

Value-Added Assessment - using pre/post data to determine how much learning has occurred over a specified period of time.

Objectives - broad, general statements of (1) what the program wants students to be able to do/know or (2) what the program will do to ensure what students will be able to do/know (as defined by CUPR faculty at NC State).
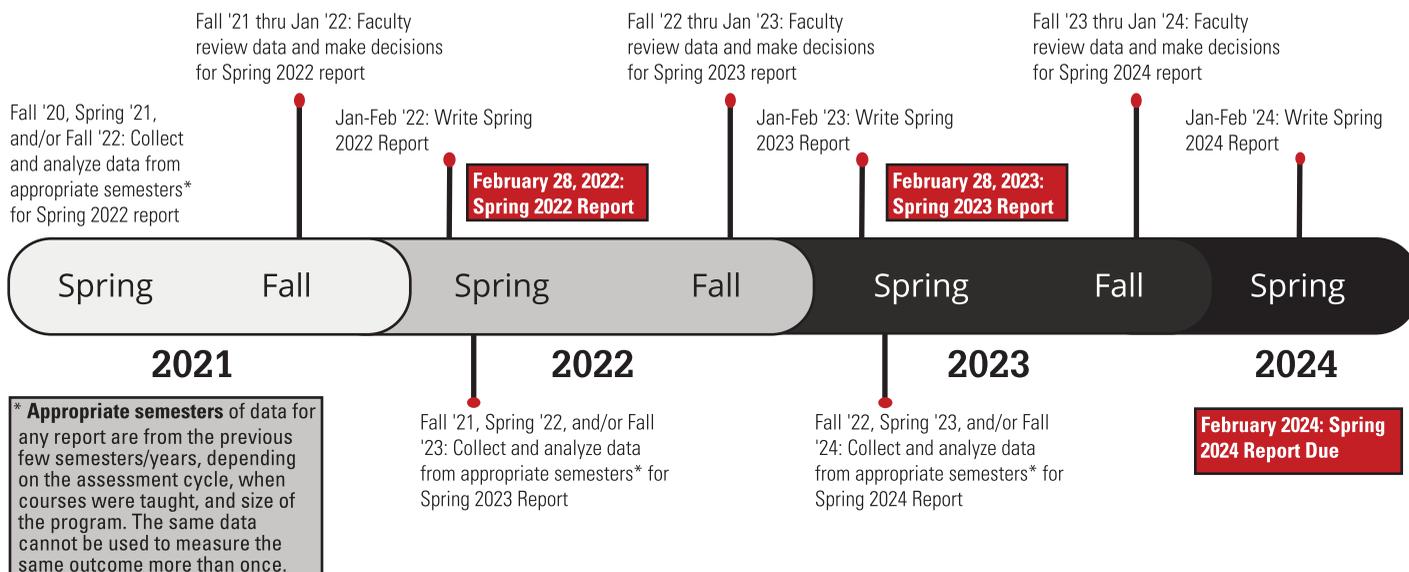
Outcomes - more detailed and specific statements derived from the objectives/goals; they are detailed and meaningful enough to guide decisions in program planning and improvement as well as pedagogy and practice. Curricular outcomes are less specific than course outcomes and will need to be defined in such a way that the content elements within the outcome can be measured to provide information for strengths and areas for improvement.

Consider Your Audience

It is important to take into account your audience when reporting on your outcomes, evidence collected, and analysis strategies. Think about how they will respond to each part of the process and if your procedures meet both the spirit of the process (continuous improvement) and its requirements. What will each audience require to support the interpretation of your findings and any decisions made based on the data? Do they agree with the curricular outcomes? What type of data will they expect? What projects and from what courses?

Potential Audiences:
- Program Faculty: Program, Department, or College
- Department Head
- Dean/Associate Dean
- Office of Assessment
- Accreditors: SACSCOC, Program Accreditors

Fall '20, Spring '21, and/or Fall '22: Collect and analyze data from appropriate semesters* for Spring 2022 report

Fall '21 thru Jan '22: Faculty review data and make decisions for Spring 2022 report

Jan-Feb '22: Write Spring 2022 Report

February 28, 2022: Spring 2022 Report

Fall '22 thru Jan '23: Faculty review data and make decisions for Spring 2023 report

Jan-Feb '23: Write Spring 2023 Report

February 28, 2023: Spring 2023 Report

Fall '23 thru Jan '24: Faculty review data and make decisions for Spring 2024 report

Jan-Feb '24: Write Spring 2024 Report

Spring — Fall — Spring — Fall — Spring — Fall — Spring

2021 — **2022** — **2023** — **2024**

* **Appropriate semesters** of data for any report are from the previous few semesters/years, depending on the assessment cycle, when courses were taught, and size of the program. The same data cannot be used to measure the same outcome more than once.

Fall '21, Spring '22, and/or Fall '23: Collect and analyze data from appropriate semesters* for Spring 2023 Report

Fall '22, Spring '23, and/or Fall '24: Collect and analyze data from appropriate semesters* for Spring 2024 Report

February 2024: Spring 2024 Report Due

Collecting Evidence: Program Level

Collecting evidence for assessment can be as simple as using data from test questions, projects, etc. from one or more upper-level course. The intention is not to assess the course(s) or faculty member(s), but to assess the *curriculum*. By the time a student reaches upper-level courses or capstone classes, they are usually displaying knowledge gained throughout the curriculum.

Here are some examples of collecting evidence of student learning for curricular assessment:

(1) Comprehensive Discipline Exam: Can be created in-house or by using a national instrument. Be mindful of how you retrieve the data and that you are not relying on holistic scores in order to determine strengths and areas for improvement.

(2) Test Questions: Can map a set of test questions to an outcome or specific elements within an outcome. This provides appropriate evidence to determine strengths and areas for improvement.

(3) Rubrics: Can be used to assess curricula by identifying criteria to systematically decide if outcomes are achieved. Faculty often use rubrics to assess curricular outcomes by applying them to activities in an upper-level course, such as presentations, capstone projects, portfolios, research papers, or case studies.

- There are multiple types of rubrics that have varying levels of detail. The common types are: Checklist, Rating Scale, Descriptive, Holistic, and Structured Observation Guide.

Analysis

- Data must be reported at a level such that strengths and areas for improvement for the outcome can be identified. Overall means or other holistic scores, such as grades, do not allow for the identification of either.
- When using a rubric, data should be presented at the item/element level (i.e., each aspect of the rubric).
- When reporting means, frequencies/percentages should also be provided, as this too can help uncover patterns or trends useful in highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Decisions

- For each area of improvement, the report must include new actions that the program has already begun to implement to improve students' achievement of the specific outcome, such as "We developed...," "We revised...," "We implemented our plan to..."
  - *Note: Always use past tense; please do not use language in the future tense or language that is indecisive in tone such as "We are considering...," "We may..."
- Not all changes are big! Smaller changes can still make a difference (e.g., additional class time, materials, assignments or practice in an existing course)

Reporting

- The report is just a snapshot of the process. It does not need to be long to demonstrate that the faculty are engaged. Clear alignment of the outcomes and decisions is very important. Be sure that it is apparent how the method used measures that particular outcome, how the data identify strengths and areas of improvement, and how these were addressed with a specific decision.