Fostering a New Culture of Academic Assessment

Institutional / Essential Learning Outcomes (ELO’s)
Program Learning Outcomes (PLO’s)

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD ASSESSMENT TEAM
MASSACHUSETTS STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE 2023
Padlet Activity

Instructions

1. Pull up your camera up on your phone and point your camera at the QR code. A website link should appear as you hover over the QR Code Image.

2. Click “Add Comment” underneath a post question to post an anonymous comment.

3. Click Post after typing your comment.

4. If you want to edit or delete your comment, you can click on the three dots next to your comment.
About the University of Hartford

• Charted in 1957 after several individual colleges merged to one university.
• Not-for-profit private school based in the Hartford Area of Connecticut.
• UHart has 7 schools and colleges.
• Student enrollment:
  • 3,977 undergraduates
  • 1,763 graduates
• Count of Degrees:
  • 97 majors
  • 64 Graduate degrees
Overview

In this presentation, we will share how we:

1. reorganized resources to strengthen faculty support;

2. measure our institutional learning outcomes (ELOs) and program learning outcomes on a cyclical basis (PLOs);

3. centralize assessment data through a Watermark product, Planning & Self Study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs)</th>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What every undergraduate should know.</td>
<td>Acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes intended in the major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four-Year rotation:
- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Critical thinking
- Teamwork/Collaboration

Completed annually

Based on AAC&U

Developed by the departments
Reorganize Resources to Strengthen Faculty Support
Why now?
Our Steps

1. Identify an Assessment Team

• Assessment Team:
  - Assistant Provost for Graduate Studies and Research
  - Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies
  - University Coordinator for Essential Learning Outcomes Assessment (faculty)
  - Executive Director for the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation
  - Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness
  - Assistant Director of Assessment

• Process:
  - Meets bi-weekly
  - Oversees policies & procedures
  - Involved in program review
2. Identify a Point Person for Institutional Assessment

- This point person determines which program is going to assess which Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs).

- Also provides norming and training on how to use and apply the AAC&U rubrics.
Our Steps
3. Identify a Point Person for Program-Level Assessment

 This point person helps programs measure their program learning outcomes.

 This individual also oversees assessment software like Planning & Self Study, as well as Student Learning & Licensure.
Our Steps

4. Identify a Point Person to be an Assessment Coordinator for each College and School

- This point person works with the assessment team and the departments to help measure program learning outcomes.
Measurement of institutional learning outcomes (ELOs) and program learning outcomes on a cyclical basis (PLOs).
Institutional-Level Assessment: Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs)

• The declaration of campus-wide achievements that **ALL** students will demonstrate by completing any Baccalaureate undergraduate academic program.

• Liberal Learning Outcomes relevant to all majors and useful in all careers.

• Originated from employers from all disciplines with basic skills for success.

• Written Communication
• Critical Thinking
• Oral Communication
• Teamwork/Collaboration
• Intercultural Knowledge and Competence*
• Quantitative Literacy*
• Integrative Learning*

*In development
Institutional-Level Assessment:
Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs)

• The VALUE rubrics are available for download—at no cost—on the AAC&U website (https://www.aacu.org/value)

• Importance of assignment alignment
Institutional-Level Assessment: Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs)

• Assess 25% of senior class

• Two-year cycle over a four-year cohort

• Year 1:
  – Written Communication
  – Critical Thinking

• Year 3:
  – Oral Communication
  – Teamwork/Collaboration

• Two faculty per ELO assessed

• Annual Fall training sessions on using the rubric and for score calibration.

• Modest stipend for completing training and submitting data by annual Spring deadline.
Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Program Learning Outcomes are the “compass” for what faculty will teach students in their academic program.
2021-22 Program Assessment Plan
Baking

Academic Year Assessment 2021-22
Baking Learning Outcomes

Teamwork and Oral Communication
Students will effectively communicate with team members to successfully bake a product, as intended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No measures have been added.</td>
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</table>

Food Safety NET
Students will be able to apply food safety techniques when preparing food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURES</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety Demonstration during Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baking 101: Baking 101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target</td>
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<tr>
<td>The target will be for 70% of the students taking the class to score “Proficient” and/or higher</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Proficiency</th>
<th>Exceeded</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Approached</th>
<th>Not Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Results: 72% Not Met Total: 28%

Revise Measurement / Assessment

Though for the most part, students did well on the assignment, there is room to better learn what concepts students may need to spend more time learning; for instance, it may be worth spending time on more difficult concepts than information that students already know.

For this reason, it might be helpful for the instructor to learn what students already know entering the course.

It may be helpful to see what information students already know when they enter the course; for that reason, the instructor will likely implement a pre-test to test students’ knowledge when entering the course, and a post-test to see how much students learned.

Recommended Due Date: 09/25/2023

Conclusion
After sharing the data with some faculty at a departmental meeting, there has been a decision to make an adjustment to Weeks 1, 2, and 3 of the course. Although the assessment technically met the target, there is still room to improve for students to reach a higher target in future Baking 101 classes. If students have poor knowledge about hand washing already, it may be worth focusing on that concept for only one class only.

The next few classes should focus on safety in the kitchen and food preparation safety, specifically on actions that could lead to bacterial growth.

In other words, certain concepts, like safety in the kitchen and food preparation, could be discussed earlier in the course. The faculty in the department have provided some material to help the instructor make the change and offer new activities for Week 2 and 3.
Assessment Checklist: Circle or highlight the appropriate level

This checklist is intended to provide guidance in creating the assessment report and to support meaningful assessment practices at the University of Hartford. It aims to help faculty 1) to identify areas of strength in current assessment practices and 2) to identify opportunities for refinement that may help generate more useful data. The 'Goals and Objectives' listed underneath the criteria for each category explain why a particular rating was selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>On the Right Track</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Underdeveloped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Program learning outcome(s)</td>
<td>A program that is a model for useful and comprehensive program assessment</td>
<td>A program that has a useful assessment process with some room for improvement</td>
<td>A program that made some progress toward implementing a comprehensive assessment process</td>
<td>A new program that just started and/or needs attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals and Objectives:</td>
<td>When looking at assessment plans, please focus on the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Did the assessment report identify program learning outcomes (SLO’s)?</td>
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<td>- Are the program learning outcomes measurable, achievable, and relevant?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- If helpful, language for program learning outcomes can be found in Bloom’s Taxonomy or the Digital Taxonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>B1. The program implemented measures to assess more than one program learning outcome (at least 2-3).</td>
<td>B1. The program implemented a measure to assess one program learning outcome.</td>
<td>B1. The program implemented an incomplete measure of a program learning outcome.</td>
<td>B1. There is only a plan for assessment activity &amp; a future timeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Measures: How is the program measuring achievement?</td>
<td>B2. There are targets for performance for each program learning outcome assessed that year (an example of a target could be 70% of students will score &quot;Proficient&quot;).</td>
<td>B2. There are targets for performance for most program learning outcomes assessed that year (an example of a target could be 70% of students will score &quot;Proficient&quot;).</td>
<td>B2. There are targets for performance for some program learning outcomes or there need to be more added (an example of a target could be 70% of students will score &quot;Proficient&quot;).</td>
<td>B2. There are no targets for performance for program learning outcomes or there need to be more added (an example of a target could be 70% of students will score &quot;Proficient&quot;).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B3. The measures thoroughly specify what instrument (e.g., checklist, scoring guide, blueprinting exams, etc.) and assignment was used in the assessment.</td>
<td>B3. The measures identify what instrument (e.g., checklist, scoring guide, blueprinting exams, etc.) and/or assignment was used in the assessment.</td>
<td>B3. The measures hint at what instrument (e.g., checklist, scoring guide, blueprinting exams, etc.) or assignment was used for assessment.</td>
<td>B3. The measures do not include an instrument (e.g., checklist, scoring guide, blueprinting exams, etc.) to specify how program learning outcomes were measured. Assignment assessed may or may not have been identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td>On the Right Track</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Underdeveloped</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goals and Objectives:</strong></td>
<td>When looking at assessment plans, please focus on the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Each program learning outcome has a set performance standard (for example, 80% of students will score a 4 or 5 on the checklist for all criteria on the checklist).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ For each measure, it is clear what instrument was used for assessment (i.e. specific assignment used, survey used, focus group questions, faculty reflection prompt, etc.)</td>
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<td>□ For each measure, the data collected should be relevant to whether the program learning outcome was met or not met</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ If not using checklists or scoring guides, how was student work assessed?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C. Results and Actions</strong></td>
<td>□ C1. The report interprets all of the results in the context of students meeting or not meeting the program learning outcome.</td>
<td>□ C1. The report interprets what some of the results mean in the context of students meeting or not meeting the program learning outcome.</td>
<td>□ C1. The report begins to interpret what the results mean in the context of the program learning outcome.</td>
<td>□ C1. The report does not interpret what the results mean in the context of students meeting or not meeting the program learning outcome.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ C2. Based on assessment results, the program documented potential future improvements to more than one of the following: Pedagogy, course, curriculum, measure, program learning outcome, or some other factor important for student success in meeting target or criteria.</td>
<td>□ C2. Based on assessment results, the program began to document potential future improvements to in one of the following: Pedagogy, course, curriculum, measure, program learning outcome, or some other factor important for student success in meeting target or criteria.</td>
<td>□ C2. The program suggests the possibility of making improvements to the academic program, but action steps are vague.</td>
<td>□ C2. The program is not using assessment data to make improvements either to the academic program or to the assessment plan and process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals and Objectives:</strong></td>
<td>When looking at assessment plans, please focus on the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Did the assessment report clearly state if the data from the measure show that the goal was met for each Program Learning Outcome (PLO)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Did the assessment report explain the results clearly?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Most Important: Did the academic program describe how they used assessment to improve their program? Did they use assessment data to make a change (like curriculum adjustments)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Did the assessment report identify areas that the program needs to continue to monitor?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comments</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Suggestions, Resources, and Considerations**! Below, is a compiled list of actions the program can take if it is struggling with meeting a criterion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bullet Points</th>
<th>Actions and Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Program Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>If the program needs help with program learning outcomes being measurable, feel free to watch a 7-minute <a href="https://www.youtube.com">YouTube Video</a> about how to write or edit a program learning outcome, by clicking this link. A faculty can also contact the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation or the Assistant Director of Assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Measures</strong></td>
<td>If the program needs help with assessing more than one outcome, feel free to watch a 10-minute <a href="https://www.youtube.com">YouTube Video</a> about how to write or edit a program learning outcome, by clicking this link. A faculty can also contact the Assistant Director of Assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Results and Actions</strong></td>
<td>If the program needs help with determining whether students met their target, feel free to watch a 3-minute <a href="https://www.youtube.com">YouTube Video</a> about how to write or edit a program learning outcome, by clicking this link. A faculty can also contact the Assistant Director of Assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feedback on the 2021-22 Academic Assessment Report

In Fall 2022, the Assessment Team reviewed program learning outcome assessment reports in an academic assessment software called Planning & Self Study to share strengths and considerations for the reports. The intention of this process is to create a common institution wide framework and help program leaders utilize best practices in assessment, to make the assessment process meaningful and useful.

Feedback:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Outcomes:</strong> The wording of the program learning outcomes is good though there is room for them to be strengthened so they are more measurable and easier to assess in the future.</td>
<td><strong>Measures:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measures:</strong></td>
<td>o Thanks for your work in assessing your outcome! In future reports, we suggest assessing two to three program learning outcomes per year, so that we can reflect on the program often and make edits to continuously improve the program. Fortunately, you only need to do 1 measure per 1 outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o There are targets for performance for each program learning outcome assessed that year (an example of a target could be 70% of students will score “Proficient”).</td>
<td>o The data that you’ve collected and reported shows that your students are doing well. That’s great news! In moments like these, you could reflect with your faculty: are there other areas within the program you’d like to assess? Or, would it make sense within the program to raise the target? The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation are available to help brainstorm ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The measures identify what instrument (e.g., checklist, scoring guide, etc.) and assignment were used in the assessment.</td>
<td><strong>Actions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The attachments are really helpful for historical documentation and future assessors.</td>
<td>o Continue asking yourself: How would you use the data to make improvements either to the academic program or to the assessment plan and process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Suggestion:</strong> If the program needs help with determining whether students met their target, feel free to watch a 3-minute <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ">YouTube Video</a>, by clicking this link. A faculty member can also contact the Assistant Director of Assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The report thoroughly interprets results in the context of students meeting or not meeting the program learning outcome.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
When writing your report in Planning & Self Study, review your outcomes from last year OR create new outcomes. Consider having 3-5 outcomes for your major or degree. Make sure they are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. Consider using measurable verbs from Bloom's Taxonomy or the Digital Bloom's Taxonomy.
2. CHOOSING MEASURES
Choose a project to directly measure student learning for 2-3 program learning outcomes. Make sure the projects are related to the outcomes. Create a target for how you would like students to meet each outcome (an example of a target could be: 60% of students will score a 3 or 4). Make sure to write about these projects in Planning & Self Study.

3. CONDUCT ASSESSMENT
Choose a selection of student work to review. Choose a way to measure how students are learning (this could be through using a rubric, scoring guide, looking at how students are scoring on specific exam questions, etc.).
Collect data. Include how information on student learning was collected in addition to the data in Planning & Self Study.

4. RESULTS
Ask yourself: Using the target you set for yourself, did students meet or not meet what we wanted them to learn this year? Make sure to include whether the outcome was met or not met in Planning & Self Study.

Next, write a brief analysis (1-3 sentences) interpreting the results from the specific project.
Make sure to analyze what the results mean for every project.
5 ACTIONS

After analyzing how each student did on each project, analyze how the students met each outcome in 1-3 sentences. Also note in Planning & Self Study if there are any areas that the program needs to monitor to ensure student learning.

Finally, and most importantly, create an "Action" to document ideas for how to improve the curriculum or program (e.g., modify an assignment, modify policies, additional training, modify the outcome, etc.). From there, you can implement any changes suggested as a result of assessment.
Centralize assessment data
Watermark product, Planning & Self Study
Planning & Self Study Demo
Other Resources

- There is more information about how to complete the academic assessment cycle at the University of Hartford, though this link:

  - [https://www.hartford.edu/about/campus-leadership/office-provost/assessment.aspx](https://www.hartford.edu/about/campus-leadership/office-provost/assessment.aspx)
Areas for Opportunity

• 12 Months in

• Prevention of mixed messages

• Efficiency

• Faculty responsiveness
Padlet Activity

SCAN ME
Key Takeaway

• You can’t succeed in building an Academic Assessment Culture alone.
Questions/Comments?
QUESTIONS? FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US!

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