



**INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**

In alignment with SACSCOC expectations, LSU demonstrates a commitment to the principles of continuous improvement, based on a systematic and documented process of assessing institutional performance with respect to mission in all aspects of the institution. The continuous improvement cycle includes the development of a plan, identification of expected outcomes and associated measures, assessment of the extent to which the outcome has been achieved, and evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the findings.

The following SACSCOC principle is addressed via the student learning assessment process:

SACSCOC Principle	Expectation	Related LSU Process	Required Participants
8.2	The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves those outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the following areas: <i>a. Student learning outcomes from each of its educational programs</i>	Student Learning Assessment	All academic degree programs and stand-alone certificates

**CAMPUS-WIDE STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT**

LSU requires all academic programs (i.e., degree programs, stand-alone certificates) to identify student learning outcomes, establish related measures, analyze assessment findings, and provide evidence of using these findings to seek improvements. This process is critical in fulfilling the following expectations:

- sustaining a systematic, on-going assessment of student learning process for all academic programs;
- demonstrating the use of assessment findings to seek opportunities for improvement in enhancing academic programs; and
- documenting overall evidence of student learning assessment for SACSCOC compliance (SACSCOC 8.2.a).

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: OVERVIEW**

LSU’s student learning assessment cycle incorporates a comprehensive approach for each academic program, which includes the following steps:

- initial establishment of an assessment plan covering a specified multi-year period (updated every three years and as needed);
- enter standing requirements;
- annual reporting (Student Learning Assessment Report – SLAR) to document assessment of specified measures and use of findings to seek opportunities for improvements for a given academic year; and
- periodic reporting (Program Impact Report - PIR) to document the impact of assessment results and actions that have been implemented to improve teaching and learning, and any resulting changes to curriculum and/or pedagogy over a specified multi-year period.

LSU utilizes Taskstream as the university's system of record to document all facets of student learning assessment. A [Taskstream QuickStart Guide](#) is available to help navigate the process to complete the reporting requirements. The following sections are organized in a sequential manner consistent with the Taskstream reporting environment.

### Develop an Assessment Plan

An assessment plan must be developed for all academic programs. This process is initiated during the program development process (see Faculty Senate Courses and Curriculum Committee [Form D](#) – Undergraduate and Graduate, and [Form G](#) - Certificate). As shown in Appendix A, the assessment plan includes:

- program mission statement;
- documentation of at least three student learning outcomes;
- indication of when each outcome will be assessed. It is not necessary to assess student achievement of all expected learning outcomes every year. An assessment plan allows programs the flexibility to focus on a subset of learning outcomes each year. The plan identifies the specific year that each stated outcome will be assessed over a three-year period. Programs are expected to assess all stated student learning outcomes over a three-year cycle and at least one outcome is required per year. If a program's assessment plan is tied only to completers and if there are years where a program has no completers, then the assessment process needs to be revised. A program's assessment plan should be well developed – meaningful, manageable, and sustainable – but also developed in a way where programs can seek improvements tied to program student learning outcomes *each year.*; and
- the direct and indirect measures used to assess student achievement of each learning outcome. At least one direct measure per outcome is required.

### Enter Standing Requirements

After the assessment plan has been developed, provide the following required information within the "Standing Requirements" section of Taskstream for each academic program. Standing requirements are those core elements that remain relatively static over time; they are not expected to change from year to year.

- **Assessment Plan:** Upload the completed assessment plan (see previous section).
- **Program Mission:** Enter a concise program mission statement that defines the purpose of the program and includes general values and guiding principles. Each program is expected to formulate a mission statement. Student Learning outcomes derive from a program's mission.
- **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):** Enter the programs SLOs, as indicated in the assessment plan, into Taskstream. SLO's are statements that describe the measurable and/or observable knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of an academic program. At minimum, all degree programs and stand-alone certificates must articulate at least three student learning outcomes.
- **Curriculum Map:** A visual representation of the structure of the curriculum, with a listing of expected student learning outcomes on one axis and a program's courses on the other. Ideally, each course should have a set of learning objectives that align with the degree program level SLOs. Mapping provides clarity regarding where specific outcomes are addressed and developed across the curriculum. *[Optional]*

- **Program Impact Report (PIR):** required periodically to document the impact of assessment results and actions that have been implemented to improve teaching and learning, and any resulting changes to curriculum and/or pedagogy over a specified multi-year period. Refer to page 4.

**Develop Annual Student Learning Assessment Report (SLAR) --- Due Date: September 30**

Each academic program must submit a Student Learning Assessment Report (SLAR) annually in alignment with the program’s assessment plan. If a degree program or stand-alone certificate offers both a face-to-face and a fully online equivalent; it is a requirement that the stated SLOs be identical, in addition to comparing the findings across modalities within the SLAR (i.e., findings and analysis, use of findings).

Programs complete the SLAR by identifying the student learning outcomes to be assessed for the given assessment cycle and completing the following sections with Taskstream:

- **Assessment Methodology:** This requirement includes entering (or copying) the measure(s) used to assess student achievement of learning outcomes. Multiple measures per outcome are desirable, and the university requires, at a minimum, at least one direct measure per outcome. Examples of direct and indirect assessment methods are included Appendix B.

Taskstream provides the option to “Copy Existing Plan as a Starting Point” or “Create a New Plan.” Selecting the “Copy Existing Plan” option copies over the outcomes and measures implemented during the previous cycle. You can then make changes to the template as appropriate. Selecting the “Create New Plan” option allows you to select a subset of the outcomes to be assessed during the given cycle and to input the corresponding measures. In each case, carefully describe the measures for each outcome to be assessed along with performance targets. Each measure under the Assessment Methodology tab includes the following required fields: **Measure Title, Measure Type, Details/Description, Acceptable Target, Ideal Target**. Taskstream provides the option to attach supporting documentation after measure information has been submitted.

- **Findings & Analysis:** Enter the assessment findings (e.g., the data generated from implementation of assessment measures) and the narrative interpretation of the data with respect to what the findings suggest about the degree of student learning. Assessment findings should be analyzed and compared to performance targets. The following questions should inform the narrative interpretation of the data: Have targets been achieved? How do the findings compare over time? Was the measure chosen appropriate? What strengths are revealed? Are there opportunities for improvement? This last question is by far the most important as the primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.

Keep in mind that assessment findings are reported per measure. Accordingly, each measure, within the Findings & Analysis section, includes the following required fields: **Summary of Findings, Results of Target Achievement, and Analysis of Findings (Interpretation)**. Taskstream provides the option to attach supporting documentation after findings for the applicable measure have been submitted. Lastly, the Findings & Analysis component of the template provides space to enter Overall Recommendations (for all measures assessed). If a degree program or stand-alone certificate is offered both face-to-face and fully online, compare the findings.

- Action Plan (Use of Findings for Improvement):** The Action Plan links the assessment findings with improvement actions. Based on the assessment findings (the data generated from implementation of assessment measures), you will always identify at least one area for improvement (not just when you fall short of your deficiencies). There are several areas for improvement that assessment findings may suggest. For example, if results suggest necessary revisions of course content, document this action by describing what specifically will be revised in the course and indicate the expected improvement that will result from this change in course content.

Taskstream provides the option to “Create a New Plan” or “Copy Existing Plan as a Starting Point”. Please make sure you select the “Create a New Plan” option, this allows you to select a subset of the outcomes to be assessed during the given cycle. Next add new action, select the findings by measure that the improvement action will be linked with. Each action under the Action Plan tab includes the following required fields: **Action Item Title, Action Details, Timeline, and Key/Responsible Personnel**. Taskstream provides the option to attach supporting documentation after action information has been submitted.

- Follow-Up Report (Optional):** This section provides periodic status updates on the ongoing improvement actions described in the Action Plan. Note that the Follow-Up Report is organized by Actions copied over from the Action Plan. For example, if assessment results lead to revisions of course content, the Follow-Up Report provides a summary of the progress related to this improvement action. This information can be as basic as a statement that these action steps were implemented at a certain point in time and as significant as a statement of what the data show upon a re-implementation of the assessment method after a reasonable period of time. To allow time for implementation of planned changes (described in the Action Plan), the Follow-Up Report could be completed a year after the submission of the SLAR. For example, Follow-Up Reports for the 2017-2018 cycle could be entered September 30, 2019. In cases where planned changes are implemented over a period of multiple years, the Follow-Up Report documents the current status of an ongoing action, particularly with respect to whether or not the action seems to have led to an improvement in student learning. Elements, for each action, of the Follow-Up Report include Current Status, Next Steps, and supporting attachments. Lastly, the Follow-Up Report component of the template provides space to enter a Summary Status and a Summary of Next Steps (for all actions).

**Develop Periodic Summary Report**

A Program Impact Report (PIR) is required periodically to document the impact of assessment results and actions that have been implemented to improve teaching and learning, and any resulting changes to curriculum and/or pedagogy over a specified multi-year period. Please note that it may be appropriate to include prior assessment cycles, in addition to those required, to adequately document long-term actions.

Upcoming PIR Due Dates:

November 15, 2021

November 15, 2024

Assessment Cycles Included:

2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21

2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24

The PIR is uploaded as an attachment under the “Standing Requirements” section of Taskstream. A sample PIR is included in Appendix C.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Resources to support the assessment of student learning are available on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website ([www.lsu.edu/oie](http://www.lsu.edu/oie)), including the Taskstream QuickStart Guide, timelines, templates, etc. Workshop participation is available via registration at [training.lsu.edu](http://training.lsu.edu). Departmental or individualized sessions are available upon request.

### **QUESTIONS?**

Tara Rose  
Director of Assessment  
[trose@lsu.edu](mailto:trose@lsu.edu)  
225-578-4915

Coral Bender  
Associate Director of Assessment  
[cbende9@lsu.edu](mailto:cbende9@lsu.edu)  
225-578-0328

## APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

### Assessment Plan Three-Year Cycle

**College:**

**Program:**

**Contact Person for the Assessment Plan:**

**Date:**

**Mission Statement:**

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):** [Note: At least 3 SLO's should be developed for each program]

SLO 1:

SLO 2:

SLO 3:

SLO 4:

SLO 5:

Student Learning Outcomes	18-19	19-20	20-21	Assessment Measures (At least one direct measure is required, indirect measures are optional but encouraged.)
SLO 1				
SLO 2				
SLO 3				
SLO 4				
SLO 5				

## APPENDIX B: DIRECT AND INDIRECT MEASURES

Measures	Description	Examples
<b>DIRECT</b>	<p>Prompt students to represent or demonstrate their learning or produce work</p> <p><i>NOTE: Direct measures assess student performance and provide the most accurate assessment of student learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardized instruments</li> <li>• Student portfolios</li> <li>• Capstone projects</li> <li>• Performances, products, creations</li> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Course-embedded assessments</li> <li>• Performance assessments</li> <li>• Orals</li> <li>• Internship/Clinicals/Lab Observations</li> </ul>
<b>INDIRECT</b>	<p>Capture students' perceptions of their learning attitudes, perceptions, and experiences. May also include informal observation of student behavior, evaluation of retention rates, and analysis of program procedures that are linked to student learning.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Indirect methods alone do not provide adequate information about student learning outcomes. They must be supplemented with direct measures.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Student surveys and exit interviews</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Alumni surveys</li> <li>• National surveys (e.g., NSSE)</li> <li>• Self-Reports</li> <li>• Curriculum and syllabi analysis</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C: PROGRAM IMPACT REPORT TEMPLATE

### Student Learning Outcomes Program Impact Report (PIR)

Over the past three years, your academic program has identified student learning outcomes, assessed those outcomes, and used assessment evidence to improve teaching and learning. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness would like for you to consider the impact of assessment results and actions that have been implemented to improve teaching and learning, and any resulting changes to curriculum and/or pedagogy.

**College:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Degree Program/Stand Alone Certificate:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please list the Student Learning Outcomes assessed over the past three years.
2. Identify the direct methods used to assess the stated student learning outcomes (mark all that apply).

Artistic Performance

Essay

Lab Report

Multiple Choice

Presentation

Reflection Paper

Short Answer

Other

3. Are the direct measures and assignment(s)/activities appropriate? Do they need to be revised, tweaked, changed?
4. Are the assessment findings being used to make a positive impact in the program/unit? How can you tell? What's different now compared to before? What were program faculty especially proud?
5. Describe any changes or planned changes to the curriculum?
6. What types of pedagogies, teaching strategies, or techniques were implemented?
7. Please provide additional information that demonstrates and/or supports the program's assessment efforts. For example: indirect measures such as employer feedback, advisory boards, focus groups, graduate student and/or alumni satisfaction, teacher effectiveness, etc.