



Assessment Guide

for Program Coordinators

April 2021

FRESNO STATE[®]

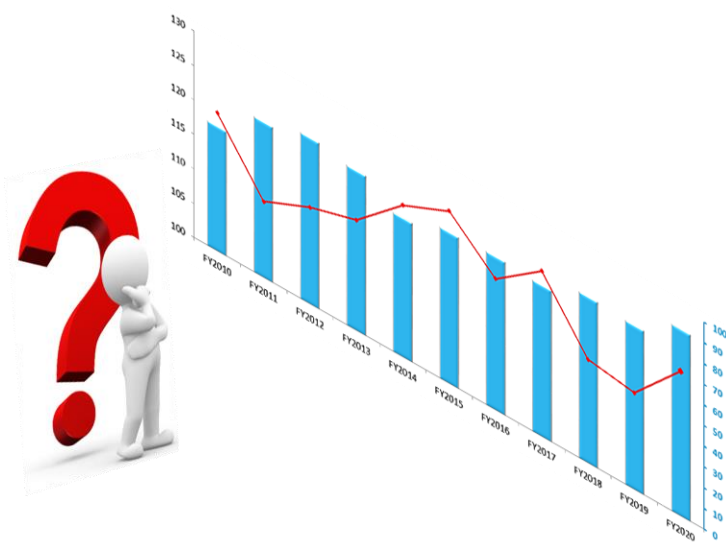
Discovery. Diversity. Distinction.

Greetings!

Welcome to Assessment. We are glad you agreed to serve as the Assessment Coordinator of your program, and we look forward to working with you. Our team includes coordinators for each college and department/program at Fresno State, along with other faculty colleagues who participate actively in organizing and managing assessment related matters at various levels of the University.

*If you are new to this process, assessment can seem like a mysterious process. The Assessment Coordinator position can seem like a job with many responsibilities. However, assessment is not all that different from other services one typically engages in as a professor in a course: **Are students learning the required skill and knowledge in a course, and how to measure and improve their learning performance.***

With this Guide, we hope to provide you with a sense of what Assessment means, an overview of Assessment at Fresno State, a brief glossary of common terms used in Assessment, and a general expectation of an Assessment Coordinator of a degree program at Fresno State. Specifically, there are three sections to this Guide:



Section I: An introduction to assessment, including a glossary of terms used in assessment

Section II: An Overview of assessment at Fresno State, including a to-do-list and several worksheets for you (Program Assessment Coordinator)

Section III: Worksheets and checklist provided for use

We hope that you will find this Guide useful in your endeavor.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or contact your College representative, listed in [Section II](#) of this Guide.

Thank you!

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION TO ASSESSMENT

A brief introduction to assessment is provided herein, including a glossary of terms commonly used assessment purposes

Program assessment refers to the systematic process of defining a program’s purpose or function, and a method for gathering, analyzing, & using information of the program to (I) improve student learning, (II) inform campus community of the program and its contributions, (III) guide campus decision-making, and (IV) support program’s external accreditation, if any.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and its Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) for institution accreditation defines assessment as “*an ongoing, iterative process consisting of four basic steps:*”

1. *Defining learning outcomes;*
2. *Choosing a method or approach and then using it to gather evidence of learning;*
3. *Analyzing and interpreting the evidence; and*
4. *Using this information to improve student learning”*

(WASC 2013 Handbook of Accreditation: <https://www.wscuc.org/resources/handbook-accreditation-2013>).

In summary, an effective assessment program should allow its constituents to answer these questions:

- What are you trying to do (i.e., define “learning outcomes”)?
- How well are you doing it (i.e., method of evaluation of “learning outcomes”)?
- What actions should you take, based on answers to the above questions (i.e., program improvement strategy 1, 2, and so on)
- What actions have you taken (i.e., strategy 2)?
- The effectiveness of these actions.

An effective assessment program should be a systematic, multi-year process.

Glossary of commonly used assessment terminologies:

Assessment: The collection, analysis and use of evidence to improve student learning in courses and disciplinary or general education programs

Assessment Plan: A specific plan, e.g., Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP), created by a department or program that clearly identifies goals or student learning outcomes (SLO), as well as specific direct or indirect measures that will be used to assess the department/program SLO’s.

Student Learning Outcome (or Student Outcome): Student Learning Outcomes are statements that describe significant and essential objectives that learners have achieved and can reliably demonstrate at the end of a course or program. In other words, learning outcomes identify what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of a course or program. Students Learning Outcomes or SLO's must:

- reflect on essential knowledge, skills, or attitudes,
- focus on results of the learning experiences,
- reflect the desired end of the learning experience, not the means or the process, and
- represent the minimum performances that must be achieved to successfully complete a course or program.

The SLO's must be stated clearly and the description should use the appropriate verb depending on the level of the skill being demonstrated. Basic knowledge can be demonstrated by explaining or describing while an ability to make deductions can be demonstrated by analyzing a point or idea. Bloom's Taxonomy provides specific information on lower and higher order skills and the appropriate terms.

Indirect Measure of Student Learning: Usually found in opinion surveys and instruments that gather self-reports of student knowledge. Indirect measures of student learning are generated when students report on their own progress of learning, what experiences they attribute their learning to, how they feel about what they know, and what students value as a result of their educational experiences. Third-party reports of what students know and can do represent indirect measures of student learning when the reports are summarized across a cohort of students rather than student-specific.

Direct Measure of Student Learning: In contrast to opinion surveys and instruments that gather self-reports of student knowledge and/or ability, direct measures of student learning are generated when student work is evaluated in order to determine their performance on a specific learning outcome. Third-party reports of what students know and can do represent direct measures of student learning when the reports are based on direct observation or review of student work submitted to the third party and are student-specific rather than summarized across a cohort of students.

Curriculum Map: Presented in a matrix, a curriculum map relates program-level student learning outcomes (usually enumerated in individual rows) to the courses and/or experiences that students take in progress to graduation (usually captured in columns)

Rubric: An explicit scheme for classifying products or behaviors into categories that are steps along a continuum

Closing-the-loop: The last stage of the assessment cycle, which a program takes time to reflect on assessment results; document changes; and/or examine whether previously implemented changes have been successful or not.

Other relevant terms related to assessment can be found here:

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/resources.html>

SECTION II: ASSESSMENT AT FRESNO STATE

This section introduces Assessment at various levels of the University; a to-do-list and worksheets to facilitate University/Program Assessment; and University/Program Accreditation

II.1 University/Program Accreditation

II.2 University/Program Assessment Activities/Schedules

II.3 College Assessment Coordinators

Assessment of Learning

“The real goal of classroom assessment is to improve student performance, not merely audit it.” – Sousa and Tomlinson

“Assessment in this spirit [Assessment For Learning] does not concern the assignment of grades or evaluation of whether instruction was effective. It’s assessment designed squarely to feed into the learning process and make the learner stronger.” -- David N. Perkins

“All Assessment is a perpetual Work in Progress” – Linda Suskie

II.1 University/Program Accreditation

II.1.1 University Accreditation

Assessment is very important to Fresno State, with a focus on learning and improvement of students’ overall educational experience. That focus, or dedication to our students, leads to institution’s accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), or its Senior College and University Commission (**WSCUC** or the ‘Commission’ herein), since 1954.

WSCUC is the *institutional accrediting agency serving a diverse membership of public and private higher education institutions throughout California, Hawaii, and the Pacific as well as a limited number of institutions outside the United States.* [<https://www.wscuc.org/>]

The WSCUC (WASC Senior College and University Commission) Handbook of Accreditation makes frequent references to assessment when discussing its criteria for review. The quality assurance process requires an institution of higher education to document **Assessment of Student Learning** (WSCUC Handbook, Criteria for Review 4.1) to include, amongst others:

- Each degree program having a system for assessing, tracking, and improving the learning of its students (p. 34);
- Assessment of institution’s undergraduate achievement in the five core competencies of written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking (p. 36);
- Assessment of institution’s graduate achievement in “the generic intellectual competencies that are foundational in their field” (p. 36); and
- A General Education (GE) Assessment that complements the curriculum and is consistent with the institution objectives (i.e., APM 215 codifies Fresno State’s policy for GE Assessment).

II.1.2 Program Accreditation

Accreditation is the recognition that an educational institution or program meeting and maintaining acceptable level of quality in the various areas, including curriculum design, facility, faculty and staff, assessment & continuous improvement, etc.

Fresno State houses a number of externally accredited degrees or programs. A sample of externally accredited programs and the accrediting agencies is given below:

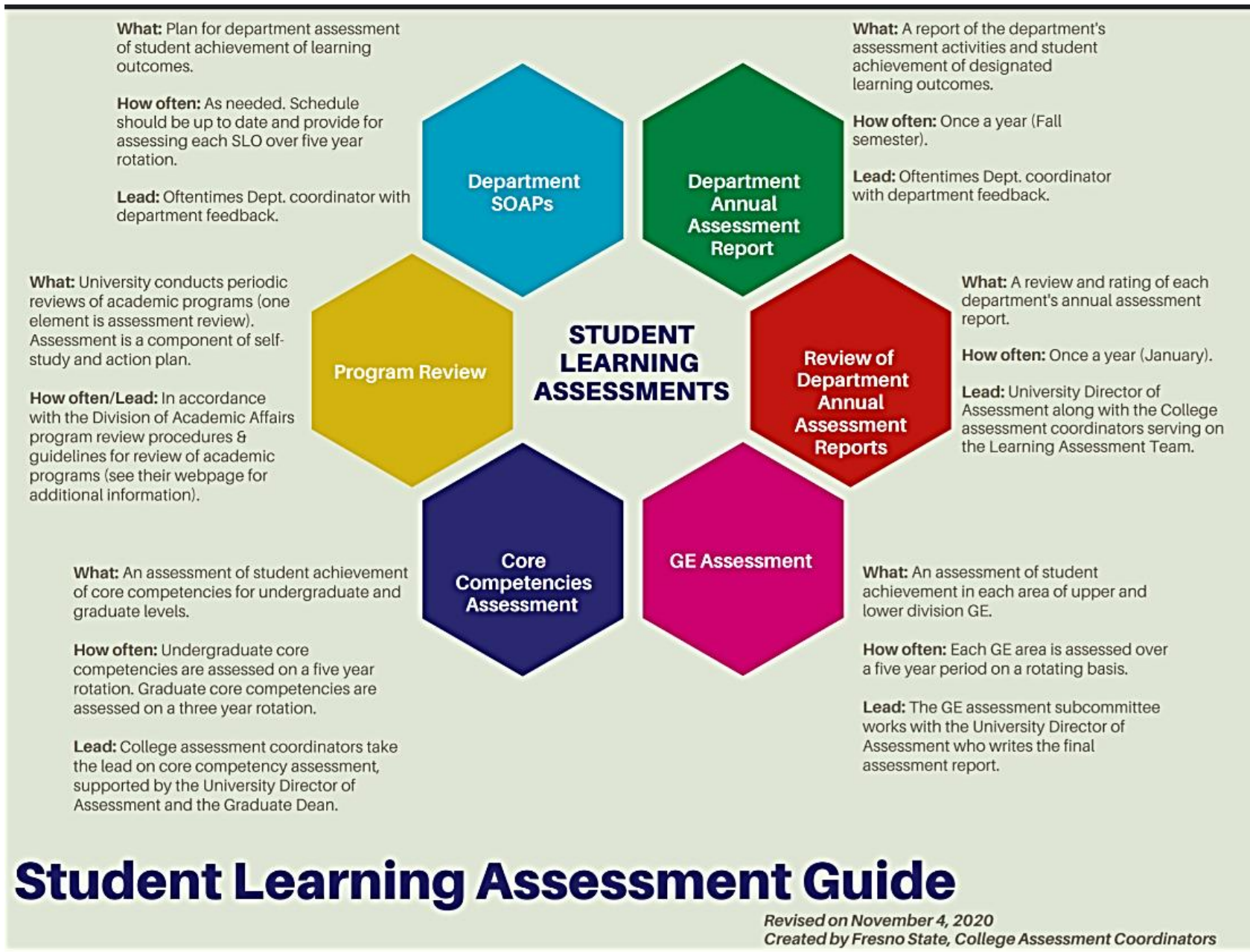
Degree	Accrediting Agency
Bachelor of Science in Chemistry (BS Chemistry)	American Chemical Society (https://www.acs.org/content/acs/en.html)
Bachelor of Science in Construction Management (BS Construction Management)	American Council for Construction Education (https://www.acce-hq.org/)
Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering (BS Civil Engineering)	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (https://www.abet.org/)
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BS Nursing)	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (https://www.aacnursing.org/CCNE)
Bachelor of Science in Recreation Administration (BS Recreation Administration)	Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation Tourism and Related Professions (https://www.nrpa.org/coaprt/)
Master of Public Health (M Public Health)	Council on Education for Public Health (https://ceph.org/)
Bachelor of Arts in Composition (BA Composition)	National Association of Schools of Music (https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/)

A full list of external accrediting agencies of programs at Fresno State can be found here:
<https://fresnostate.edu/academics/about/accreditation/index.html>

II.2 University/Program Assessment Activities/Schedules

Assessment is a constant cycle of data-gathering and improvement. Program assessment involves (1) defining and identifying the learning outcomes, (2) selecting appropriate assessment measures, (3) gathering and analyzing assessment results, and (4) adjusting or implementing improvement measures, following the results of the learning outcomes assessed.

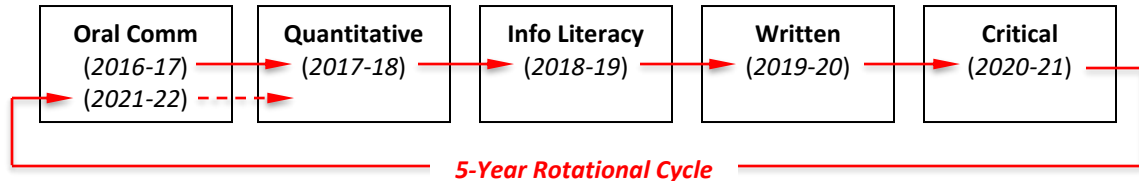
This section describes the various activities/schedules related to the assessment of student learnings for use at the University level, program level, and/or both.



Undergraduate's Core Competencies

Purpose: Required for WSCUC accreditation. Undergraduate students are assessed in five core competency areas: Written communication, oral communication, information literacy, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning.

Frequency: One core competency per year, on a 5-year rotational basis, e.g.,

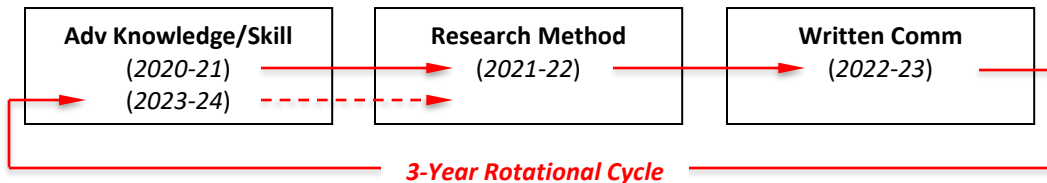


How-it-is-done: Assessed using specific instrument developed by a subcommittee of a core competency consisted of faculty members, which is chaired/co-chaired by College Assessment Coordinator(s).

Graduate's Core Competencies

Purpose: Required for WSCUC accreditation. Graduate students are assessed in three core competency areas: Written communication, advanced disciplinary knowledge or skill, and research/discipline-specific methodology.

Frequency: One core competency per year, on a 3-year rotational basis, e.g.,



How-it-is-done: Assessed using specific instrument developed by a subcommittee of a core competency consisted of faculty members, generally coordinators of graduate programs, and chaired/co-chaired by College Assessment Coordinator(s).

General Education (GE) Assessment

Purpose: Required for WSCUC accreditation. Undergraduate students are assessed of their attainment of GE learning outcomes in foundation (A1, A2, A3, and B4), Breadth (B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, D2, E and F), and Integration (IB, IC, and ID). [<http://www.fresnostate.edu/catalog/general-education/index.html#overview>] [<http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/gerequirements/index.html>]

Frequency: GE areas are assessed annually on a rotating basis.

How-it-is-done: Required of all freshmen/transfer students admitted to Fresno State Fall 2018 and later. A student is to submit an assignment to the respective areas of GE in a folder (on CANVAS) created for the GE ePortfolio Program. A GE subcommittee is responsible for the evaluation and reporting of students' GE performance. Instructors teaching a GE course facilitate the process by designating and informing the students of an assignment for GE assessment in the syllabus.

Program Review (Internal)

Purpose: As a quality assurance measure, all programs at Fresno State undergo periodic program review. Periodic program reviews provide a mechanism for faculty to evaluate the effectiveness, progress, and status of their academic programs on a cyclical basis. It is an opportunity for the department to evaluate its programs' strengths and weaknesses within the context of the mission of the university and of current and emerging directions in the discipline.

Frequency: Refer to Academic Program Review Schedule
<http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/curriculum/prog-review/index.html>

How-it-is-done: At a predetermined date (see schedule in above link), a program (led by Department Chair/Program Coordinator/Assessment Coordinator) requests and submits a self-study report to the College/Dean for the review. The self-study report examines the status of the academic program, including its strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction, and student performance & learning outcomes, which is detailed in a Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP). The self-study is to include an action plan that is consistent and in alignment with University's mission and objectives.

Guideline and procedure for a traditional program review can be found here:
<http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/documents/reviewpoliciesandprocedures.pdf>

Programs that participate in an external accreditation process via an official accrediting agency are permitted to conduct an abbreviated version of the program review by providing (1) evidence of national accreditation, (2) an updated SOAP, and (3) an analysis and action plan addressing enrollment, graduation, and efforts to combat achievement gaps.

Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP)

Purpose: A *Student Outcomes Assessment Plan* (SOAP) communicates explicitly a Program's objectives and learning outcomes, curriculum, and assessment & improvement of learning outcomes. This document is required for external accreditation (e.g., WSCUC) and for internal program reviews (i.e., both periodic and annual assessment).

Frequency: Periodically, or on need basis

How-it-is-done: A program, led by Department Chair/Program Coordinator/Assessment Coordinator and its faculty members, is responsible for formulating the assessment plan. To ensure uniformity across all CSU campus, the Chancellor Office provides a template for SOAP:
<http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/soap/index.html>

Annual Assessment (Program) Report

Purpose: To ensure assessment is conducted on an on-going and continued basis, each program at Fresno State is required to submit an Annual Assessment Report. The report is to detail the assessment of at least one student learning outcome in a particular academic year, with all outcomes assessed over a period of five-to-seven years, or as determined appropriately by the program.

Frequency: Annually; due on September 30 of each year.

How-it-is-done: The program's Assessment Coordinator, with assistance and consultation from the Department Chair/Program Coordinator and faculty, is responsible for completing and submitting the report.

A program is required to use a template for the annual assessment report detailing its assessment activities and results:

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/reporttemplates.html>

Evaluation of Annual Assessment (Program) Report

Purpose: To strengthen outcomes assessment across the campus, each program's annual assessment report is evaluated.

Frequency: Annually; December/January (i.e., during winter break) of each year.

How-it-is-done: Annual assessment reports submitted by programs are evaluated by the Learning Assessment Team (LAT) of the University. LAT is comprised of the Director of Assessment and College Assessment Coordinators (see below), at Fresno State.

II.3 College Assessment Coordinators

College Assessment Coordinators, Fresno State (AY2020-21)



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SECTION III: Worksheets, Checklists, and Rubrics

Worksheet 1: Reviewing/Updating Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP)

Program: _____

Assessment Coordinator: _____

Date of Evaluation: _____

If you are starting as a new Assessment Coordinator and you are not sure about your department SOAP, it is advisable to familiarize yourself with that document:

- Get a copy of your program's SOAP**
[You may find a copy on the OIE website, or you may ask for a copy from the previous Coordinator]

Foundational components of a SOAP (*does your SOAP have them?*):

- Mission statement** that is in alignment with the mission of our institution?
- Program learning outcomes (or educational goals/objectives)** that are related to the Department and are specific to the discipline?
- Student learning outcomes (or student outcomes)** that define the specific knowledge or skills, including those that are related to WSCUC core competencies, that can be evaluated **directly** and/or **indirectly**?
- Curriculum map** that relates student learning outcomes to the curriculum.

Assessment methods (*how do you measure the SLOs?*):

- Direct method #1:** _____
- Direct method #2:** _____
- (Other) **Direct method:** _____
- Indirect method #1:** _____
- Indirect method #2:** _____
- (Other) **indirect method:** _____

Outcome-and-Method matrix and frequency of assessment:

- Outcomes assessment plan** of learning outcomes established?
- Performance target** of learning outcomes defined?
- Assessment schedule** that is current and shows on-going & continuous assessment?

Closing-the-loop (i.e., use of assessment results to better the program):

- Use of collected and analyzed **Data** for improvements, which can take the form of
 - Changes to SOAP
 - Revision/refinement of student outcomes
 - Revision/refinement of assessment measures
 - Changes to Curriculum
 - Change in course content
 - Change (addition/deletion) to course offering
 - Change in course sequence
 - Changes to Academic Processes
 - Change or improvement to academic advising
 - Change to schedule
 - Change or improvement to pedagogy (faculty training/development)
 - Use of technology

Miscellaneous:

- Dissemination of SOAP** (i.e., posted on college/program site, including OIE)
- SOAP** is prepared in recommended format?

Worksheet 2: Annual Assessment Report

NOTE: This is not the actual template. An actual template for Annual Assessment Report can be found here: [\[http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/reporttemplates.html\]](http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/reporttemplates.html)

Department/Program: _____

Degree Type: _____

Assessment Coordinator: _____

Date: _____

Questions 1 – 4 pertain to **current AY**

1. What learning outcome(s) did you assess in AY _____?
2. What method(s)/benchmark did you use for the learning outcomes (for Question 1)?
3. What did you learn from the data/results for the learning outcomes (for Question 1)?
(Include statistics of the collected data)
4. What action do you plan to take, if any?

Question 5 pertains to **previous AY**

5. What progress have you made, if action/changes were implemented to Question 4 in prior year's annual assessment report?

Question 6 pertains to **next AY**



6. What learning outcome(s) do plan to assess in the next AY?

Question 7 pertains to the last (Internal) Program Review

7. Identify and discuss any major issues identified during your last Program Review and in what ways these issues have or have not been addressed.

Checklist for Program Assessment Coordinator

This checklist serves as a guide and reminder of the tasks expected of a program assessment coordinator. Links and dates, if any, are provided to allow quick access and easy navigation of information presented in this list.

	TASKS	
	<p>Program SOAP is up-to-date?</p> <p>[Template and guideline for preparation of SOAP: http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/soap/index.html]</p>	
	<p>Data for planned assessment activities in previous AY collected and analyzed? <i>(This assumes that data will be collected throughout the entire AY as planned, and analyzed at the end of each AY in May)</i></p>	
	<p>Annual Assessment Report, due September 30 each AY <i>(This report details assessment activities done this the current AY, discusses plan for the next AY, and reflects action taken, if any, since the last Program Review)</i></p> <p>[Preparation of annual assessment report: http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/reporttemplates.html]</p>	
	<p>Plan to refine/change of assessment methods</p> <p>[Rubrics for assessment: http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/rubric.html]</p> <p>[Advanced assessment methods: http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/advanced/index.html]</p>	
	<p>GE ePortfolio Program</p> <p>[Instructions for students and faculty on GE ePortfolio Program: http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/geportfolio.html]</p>	
	<p>Program Review <i>(This is NOT a yearly activity; but, it reflects multi-year effort on assessment for both internal review and external accreditation. Please refer to the link below for information and schedule)</i></p> <p>[Information/schedule of Program Review: http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/curriculum/prog-review/]</p>	

Oral Communication Rubric

Students will be able to convey ideas, emotions, and information through **speech**. **Oral communication** is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Criterion (What is being assessed)	SCORE (1-5-point scale; 5 being the best)				
	Accomplished (5)	Advanced (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
DELIVERY	The speaker's voice is fluent, understanding, and engaging. The speaker maintains consistent eye contact with limited reference to notes. The speaker enhances his or her delivery with effective gestures. The presentation is polished and confident.	The speaker's voice is fluent and understandable. His or her tone is generally varied. The speaker may occasionally refer to notes, but (s)he generally makes eye contact.	The speaker's voice is understandable and reasonably fluent. (S)he attempts extemporaneous delivery rather than reading from a manuscript.	The speaker's voice is understandable, but the speaker is tentative or reads the presentation from notes or a manuscript. At times, the delivery contains verbal tics and fillers that detract from the presentation.	The speaker's voice is difficult to understand, or the speaker is so uncomfortable when presenting that the vocal or nonverbal delivery detracts from the presentation.
CONTENT	The content is excellent for the speaker's field and the presentation context. (S)he regularly cites credible research sources to support claims. Supporting materials significantly add to the understandability or persuasiveness of the presentation.	The content is good for the speaker's field and the presentation context. (S)he cites a number of credible research sources. Supporting materials often add to the understandability or persuasiveness of the presentation.	The content is appropriate for the speaker's field and the presentation context. The speaker makes references to a reasonable number of research sources to support claims. Appropriate supporting materials are included.	Some content relates to the speaker's field or presentation context, but other content is inaccurate or inappropriate. Some research is cited, but assertions are made without evidence. There are insufficient supporting materials.	The content contains significant errors or is inappropriate for the presentation context. The speaker does not cite research sources. Supporting materials do not relate well to main ideas.
ORGANIZATION	The introduction includes an effective attention and clearly indicates the thesis or topic statement. The body of the speech contains main points that are easily identified and consistently supported with ideas. The speaker consistently uses transitions, previews, summaries, or signposts so that listeners can easily follow the topic development. The conclusion effectively summarizes the main ideas and wraps up the presentation.	The introduction includes an attention-getter and indicates the thesis or topic statement. The body of speech contains main points that are easily identified, and they are generally supported with relevant ideas. The speaker generally uses transitions, previews, summaries, or signposts so that listeners can follow the topic development. The conclusion clearly summarizes the main ideas and wraps up the presentation.	The speech has an identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion . The introduction expresses the speaker's thesis or topic statement . The body of the speech is divided into main points , supported with relevant content . The conclusion wraps up the presentation.	The speaker appears to have an introduction, body, and conclusion, along with main points. The introduction does not make speaker's thesis or topic statement explicitly. At times during the presentation, it is difficult to identify the speaker's organization structure and topic development is unclear. The conclusion does not summarize the main ideas or wrap up the presentation.	The speech does not have a clear division into the introduction, body, and conclusion. The speaker precise topic is uncertain. Main ideas are difficult to identify and it is unclear how the subject is being developed. The conclusion of the speech is abrupt.

Written Communication Rubric

Students will be able to communicate effectively in writing to a wide variety of audiences. **Written communication** is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Criterion	What is being assessed	Exemplary (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (3)	Beginning (1)
Context of and Purpose for Writing	Level of understanding of context, audience, and purpose relevant to the writing task(s).	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose, to the assigned task and focuses all elements of the work .	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task.	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task.	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task.
Content Development	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop ideas, situate ideas in a disciplinary context, and shape the work.	Uses compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject through the whole work .	Uses appropriate content to explore ideas through the whole work .	Uses relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work .	Uses simple content to develop ideas in some parts of the work .
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Clear and consistent organizational pattern and structuring elements; follows formal and informal rules of genre or disciplinary expectations.	Develops clear organization pattern that flows and is cohesive; detailed attention to and successful execution of conventions to the assigned task.	Develops adequate organization pattern that structures the whole work; consistent use of conventions to the assigned task.	Develops recognizable organization pattern ; basic use of conventions to the assigned task.	Lack of organization pattern ; no or little use of conventions .
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Quality of language use to communicate meaning and control over syntax and mechanics of writing.	Showcases skillful use of writing for communication with clarity and fluency .	Showcases competent use of writing for communication with minor errors .	Showcases basic writing skill and command of syntax with some errors .	Syntax and mechanics errors that impedes meaning .

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