

Loyola Marymount University
Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan:
Discipline/Subject/Program

Kelly Wahl
Director of Assessment and Data Analysis
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Assessment at the Discipline, Subject, or Program Level consists of research projects designed to serve as a rationale for program improvement such as:

- Growth
- Modification of requirements or program redesign
- Sustenance of the current program given enrollment projections
- Linking the curriculum and co-curriculum more closely
- Development of alternative modes of instructional delivery
- Revising specific course content, the sequencing of courses, or the prerequisite structure
- Altering assessment measures that determine grading of students

Consequently, the first step in conducting such assessment focuses on determining its purpose.

After the program improvement issues have been identified:

- The projects can then be designed:
 - with sensitivity to the particulars of the discipline or program, and
 - with an administrative use of the research in mind, because that use motivates the projects' existence.
- This research is not simply a recognition of existing conditions. It is an effort to prove, to suggest, or to develop new directions for the program and/or the viability of such plans for change.

Scope of Discipline, Subject, or Program Level Assessment Plans:

- Direct measures that rely on an evaluation of student work products instead of responses to surveys.
- Quantitative and/or qualitative data, depending on the discipline or need.

Scope of Discipline, Subject, or Program Level Assessment Plans, continued:

- Most projects administered by chairs and faculty within the disciplines, with support from the Director of Assessment and Data Analysis. This support can include:
 - Design of the instruments for data collection (form, not content).
 - Processing of data and creation of data sets for analysis.
 - Analysis of data.
 - Report of findings.

Scope of Discipline, Subject, or Program Level Assessment Plans, continued:

- In the first year of the assessment plan, implementation of at least one annual assessment activity that focuses on student work products.
- By the end of the third year, implementation of at least two annual assessment activities that focus on student work products.

Process for Discipline, Subject, or Program Assessment:

Part One: Planning

- Select the issues of program improvement that prompt this research.
- Identify the learning goals and objectives.
- State the goals' relationship to the University's Mission and planning documents.
- Determine the methods of assessment.

Planning a Discipline, Subject, or Program Level Assessment Activity:

- Discuss and prioritize areas of program improvement.
- Articulate the relevant learning goals and objectives of the discipline, major, or program.
- Consider issues that potentially cross into co-curricular activities.
- Choose outcomes that focus on students' acquisition of knowledge, abilities, and mental activities, as well as discipline-related values and behaviors.
- Review the list of potential sources of student work (i.e., kinds of projects, assignments, examinations, etc.), as a starting point.

Planning a Discipline, Subject, or Program Level Assessment Activity, continued:

- Review a variety of methodologies, and choose the best fit:
 - Longitudinal tracking of skills acquisition
 - A focus on critical periods in a student's development and transitions in studies (e.g., the value of prerequisites)
 - An examination of work both before and after a skill is to be acquired, to verify skill and knowledge acquisition
 - Collection of work products both during and at the end of students' studies
 - Comparison of methods of delivery and their effect on student learning
 - Course-embedded work products being analyzed
 - Or many others...

Process for Discipline, Subject, or Program Assessment:

Part Two: Execution

- Schedule the assessment on the academic calendar.
- Define what form the reporting will take and where and when the findings will be discussed.
- Conduct the research and report the findings.

Process for Discipline, Subject, or Program Assessment:

Part Three: Administrative Value

- Apply the research toward decision-making that relates to the pre-determined program improvement issues. Document this application.
- Document the faculty's and the administration's involvement in the assessment and decision-making process.
- Reflect on the assessment methods used and whether they were successful or require revision or reinvention.
- Prepare for the next cycle of this assessment activity.