



Measures for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes in Academic Programs/Majors¹

Learning Outcomes: What students know and can do at the end of their academic programs/majors

<i>Direct Measures of Learning: Required in assessment plans & reports</i>	<i>Indirect Measures of Learning: Can be used to supplement direct measures of learning</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written or oral comprehensive examinations • Licensure examinations • Standardized tests • Final exam performance in courses mapped to a program-level outcome • Research paper evaluations • Capstone course project evaluations • Internship performance evaluations • Problem sets • Research project performance • Pre- and post-tests • Clinical skills/competency assessments • Portfolio evaluations • Oral presentation evaluations • Artistic performance and exhibit ratings by experts • Thesis/dissertation proposal and defense evaluations • Grading with scoring rubrics assessing dimensions of the learning outcome • Faculty committee annual reviews of graduate students' professional development: milestones reached, publications, conference presentations, grants, competitive fellowships received, etc. • Analysis of Graduate Teaching Fellows' instructional evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student self-assessments of learning gains related to outcomes • Student assessments of the educational benefits of diversity received through experiences in the program or school. • Exit interviews/surveys • Alumni surveys • Employer surveys • Reflective essays • Student satisfaction surveys • Job placement of graduates • Focus group discussions • Graduate/professional school acceptance rates (for undergraduate programs) • Alumni honors, awards, and achievements • Analysis of course-taking patterns and success in the major

Measures to Generally Avoid in Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

- **Teaching evaluations** – Student evaluations usually focus on the quality of teaching and instructional activities.
 - Alternatives: (1) Course evaluation items that ask students to rate their achievement of learning outcomes could be used as indirect measures of a program-level outcome; (2) open-ended comments illustrate student reflections on their learning.
- **Course letter grades** – Course letter grades are considered problematic by accreditors. While they may include assessments of knowledge and skills mapped to a given learning outcome, the overall course grade might represent performance on other course content or activities.
 - Alternative: Use scores or grades on course assignments or exams items that are aligned with the program-level learning outcome.
- **Reviews of course syllabi** -- A course syllabus identifies what the instructor intends to teach and how but is not a measure of actual learning.
 - Alternative: Review syllabi to identify assignments that are aligned with specific course outcomes that in turn are mapped to program-level learning outcomes. Grades on these assignments could be used as a direct measure of the program-level outcome.

¹ Based on Osters, S., Tiu, F.S. "Writing Measurable Learning Outcomes," Presented at the 3rd Annual Texas A&M Assessment Conference. <https://www.gavilan.edu/research/spd/Writing-Measurable-Learning-Outcomes.pdf>

Measures for Assessing Program Goals

Program Goals -- Metrics used to evaluate other aspects of academic program quality besides student learning. Should be aligned with the Carolina Next Strategic Plan, the college/school's strategic goals, professional accreditation standards, or departmental plans.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retention• Graduation rates• Time to degree• Faculty/student ratios• Number/percentage of students who participate in high impact practices• Enrollments• Course evaluations of teaching and instruction• Student satisfaction surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversity of students enrolled• Diversity of faculty/staff• Quality of advising or other student services• Grade point averages• Faculty qualifications• Syllabus review• Course demand• Process improvements to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the program |
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