

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Comprehensive List	The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly detailed, inappropriate, disorganized. It may include only discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to real-world problems).	The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored. Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs may be unclear.	The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs. graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered.	The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.
Assessable Outcomes	Outcome statements do not identify what students can do to demonstrate learning. Statements such as "Students understand scientific method" do not specify how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.	Most of the outcomes indicate how students can demonstrate their learning.	Each outcome describes how students can demonstrate learning, e.g., "Graduates can write reports in APA style" or "Graduates can make original contributions to biological knowledge."	Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria statements, such as rubrics, and have identified examples of student performance at varying levels for each outcome.
Alignment	There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the curriculum that students experience.	Students appear to be given reasonable opportunities to develop the outcomes in the required curriculum.	The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design may be summarized in a curriculum map.	Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services, and curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum map indicates increasing levels of proficiency.
Assessment Planning	There is no formal plan for assessing each outcome.	The program relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year.	The program has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. The plan may explicitly include analysis and implementation of improvements.	The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the overall outcomes of the program. Communication of outcomes to students, e.g. in syllabi or catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.	Students have some knowledge of program outcomes. Communication is occasional and informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of program outcomes. They may use them to guide their own learning. Outcomes are included in most syllabi and are readily available in the catalog, on the web page, and elsewhere.	Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcomes and levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents.