Student Learning Outcomes
Annual Report Process
2013-14

Instructions for Graduate and Professional Programs

As part of the SACS accreditation process, UofL needs to identify student learning outcomes in its educational programs, assess the extent to which outcomes are achieved, and provide evidence of developing improvement based on analysis of the results. The university has modified its process for assessing student learning outcomes at the academic program level. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) is charged with the review of Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Annual Reports submitted by the academic programs. Based on our 2012-13 review, the SLO process continues to evolve as additional refinements are needed in order for UofL to be in compliance with SACS requirements.

Important Information
- **DEADLINE:** IE will need to receive the 2013-14 SLO Reports by **<u>Friday, November 7, 2014.</u>**
- **100% submission of reports is required for compliance with SACS core requirements and comprehensive standards.** These reports are critical to the university's ability to demonstrate institutional effectiveness. Your dean will receive periodic status reports detailing outstanding reports until full compliance is achieved.
- Staff from IE is available to assist you and ensure timely submission of the reports.
- Please submit the Word document template for graduate programs via email to cheryl.gilchrist@louisville.edu
- IE staff will enter your reports into Compliance Assist

SACS Accreditation
SACS accreditation (CS 3.6.2) requires that "effective graduate instruction provides the foundational knowledge and skill development to support independent research and professional practice. Graduates have the ability to contribute to a profession or field of study." Starting in the 2012-13 reporting cycle we asked academic units to move towards ensuring that these elements are addressed and evidenced in a more systematic way:

- Content knowledge (*include knowledge of the literature of the discipline*)
- Research (*ensure ongoing student engagement in research*)

    and/or

- Professional practice (*support appropriate professional practice and training experiences*)

Revised Template
The SLO Report template was revised for the 2012-13 SLO reporting cycle. The form was revised to assist department chairs/heads of graduate programs to address the components listed above as a program goal and align it with a related SLO and measure. The format remains the

same for the 2013-14 reporting cycle. Please submit your report to IE using the Word document for 2013-14 SLO Report for the graduate program.

Compliance Assist
All the 2012-13 SLO Reports were entered into Compliance Assist, a comprehensive web-based assessment and reporting system to help facilitate and standardize our SLO efforts at UofL. The alignment noted above for each required program goal and its relationship to the SLO and measure has been incorporated as part of the formatting in Compliance Assist.

For the 2013-14 SLO cycle, IE considered training all department chairs/heads and their designated staff to submit their reports via Compliance Assist. However, it was decided that the departments should continue to submit their reports using the Word documents for graduate programs for the 2013-14 cycle. IE staff will enter the SLO Reports into Compliance Assist.

Using the 2012-13 Feedback Reports
All chairs/department heads received 2012-13 Feedback Report. These reports were generated utilizing Compliance Assist. The feedback report detailed suggestions for the next reporting cycle for the alignment needed for each of the required program goals and its relationship to the SLOs and measures. The recommended changes identified in the 2012-13 SLO Feedback Reports should be reflected in the 2013-14 SLO Reports.

Other Changes to the 2013-14 SLO Report
Online Academic Programs
Department chairs/head need to verify whether program goals, SLOs and measures for **online academic programs** are similar in scope and content to the traditionally delivered counterparts. If the same, the report should reflect that the program is offered both face-to- face and online and acknowledge the program goals, SLOs and measures are the same. If different, separate reports need to be submitted for the online program reflecting the unique program goals and related SLOs and measures.

Certificate Programs
For all **certificate programs**, department chairs/heads are asked to verify whether the certificate is embedded within a degree-granting academic program with established program goals and aligned SLOs. If not embedded, a separate report needs to be submitted for the certificate program identifying its specific program goals and SLOs.

INSTRUCTIONS

Department chairs/heads department chairs/heads for **graduate programs** will continue to submit their 2013-14 reports as a Word document. The instructions below outline the components needed to complete the report. IE staff is available to assist the academic department.

Program Mission

The **program mission** is a broad statement of the purpose of the academic unit/program which is linked to UofL's institutional mission. The mission statement outlines the purpose of the

academic unit/program within the context of who it serves and in what ways. Each academic unit/program should have its own mission statement that reflects its contribution to UofL's institutional mission: http://louisville.edu/about/.

Key components:
- Write a clear and concise statement of the program's purpose
- Identify stakeholders with specific language that relates to the students whom the program serves
- Include specific language aligning the program's mission to the university's mission
- Articulate specific and unique features of the program that distinguishes it from other programs

Program Goals

Program goals are broad statements that describe what your graduates will 'look like' after completing their academic program. To be in compliance with SACS CS 3.6.2 it is suggested that you identify your program goals as follows:

- **Program Goal 1: Competency relating to the content knowledge of the discipline**
  o Goal addresses how the literature of the discipline is incorporated into the curriculum

- **Program Goal 2: Competency to support student engagement in research**
  o Goal provides the foundational knowledge and skill development to support independent research

    and/or

- **Program Goal 3: Competency to support professional practice and training experiences**
  o Goal provides the foundational knowledge and skill development to support appropriate professional practice and training experiences

Optional
- **Program Goal 4: Competency specific to the program**
  o Goal emphasizes a key and specific skill, knowledge, or competency expected of students upon graduation from the program not addressed in the above program goals.

Key components:
- Identify key activities that contribute to competencies expected to be accomplished by students upon graduation from the program
- Address how the literature of the discipline is incorporated into the curriculum
- Identify how students are engaged in independent research and/or
- Identify how students are engaged in professional practice and training experiences
- Align each program goal to a specific student learning outcome

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) address key competencies upon graduation and utilize language that would allow for measurable assessment of student learning activities associated with these competencies. Additionally, SLOs reinforce the competencies related to utilizing the literature of the discipline, engaging in independent research and/or supporting professional practice and training experiences.

- **SLO 1*:* Competency relating to the content knowledge of the discipline**
  - o SLO addresses how the literature of the discipline is incorporated into the curriculum
  - o **Aligns with Program Goal 1**
  - o More than one SLO for Program Goal 1 should be shown as SLO 1.1, SLO 1.2, etc.

- **SLO 2: Competency to support student engagement in research**
  - o SLO identifies competency required of students to engage in independent research
  - o **Aligns with Program Goal 2**
  - o More than one SLO for Program Goal 3should be shown as SLO 2.1, SLO 2.2, etc.

and/or

- **SLO 3: : Competency required to support professional practice**
  - o SLO identifies competency required of students to engage in professional practice and training experiences
  - o **Aligns with Program Goal 3**
  - o More than one SLO for Program Goal 4 should be shown as SLO 3.1, SLO 3.2, etc.

Optional

- **SLO 4*:* Competency specific to the program**
  - o SLO describes the expected competencies upon graduation not addressed by the above SLOs.
  - o **Aligns with Program Goal 4**
  - o More than one SLO for Program Goal 1should be shown as SLO 4.1, SLO 4.2, etc.

Key Components
  - Indicate the specific knowledge, skill or perception to be gained or strengthened
  - Identify the measurable student learning activities associated with these competencies
  - Review *Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs* for action verbs commonly used in developing measurable SLOs
  - **Align each SLO to a specific program goal**

Measures, Targets and Findings

Each SLO must have a measure, target and finding.

Measures are methods of assessment that describe the process used to gather data to demonstrate performance on each stated student learning outcome. When selecting the appropriate assessment method, either direct (students show us) or indirect (students tell us) assessment provides evidence that the outcome has been achieved. At least one direct method of assessment must be used for each student learning outcome. The same measure can be used for more than one SLO.

Measures should include a description of how the students' work will be evaluated to determine their level of competency. **As a cautionary note, course grades or overall GPAs for the program are typically limited with regards to program assessment as they do not provide information on how well students have learned key competencies over an entire academic program.** Embedded methods of assessment within the culminating experiences may be strategy that you wish to consider. A rubric is a common method used. If you use assessment rubrics, provide details in terms of the set of criteria used and the associated scale. Please include copies of the rubrics with the submission of this SLO report.

Key components
- At least one direct measure (students 'show us') for each SLO:
    - Independent research projects, portfolios, case studies, theses, and dissertations
- In addition to the direct measure, indirect measures (students 'tell us') may be included for each SLO:
    - Quality Measurement System (QMS), exit surveys, student interviews, alumni surveys, faculty questionnaire, and employer satisfaction surveys
- Provide detail on how students' work will be evaluated
- Include copies of rubrics with criteria and the range of scores
- **Align each measure to a specific SLO**
    - One measure show as:
      Measure 1.1.1 (for SLO 1.1 Program Goal 1),
      Measure 2.1.1 (for SLO 2.1Program Goal 2), etc.
    - More than one measure to a for a specific SLO show as:
      Measure 1.1.1 and Measure 1.1.2 (for SLO 1.1 Program Goal 1),
      Measure 1.2.1 and Measure 1.2.2 (for SLO 1.2 Program Goal 1),
- **The same measure can be used for more than one SLO**

Targets are specific, quantifiable behavioral expectations of students' collective performance related to each measure of student learning outcome. It is recommended that targets be expressed as percentages rather than averages. Multiple performance targets for several performance levels may be indicated (90 % of the students earn at least a minimally adequate rating [based on a rubric scale] and of those at least 30% will earn an exemplary rating [based on a rubric scale])

Key components:
- Indicate expected scores that will demonstrate students have achieved the expected level of performance
- Indicate targets for the number students expected to achieve the designated level of performance
- Express targets in percentages if reporting on large enough number of students

Findings will provide the evidence whether the SLOs as indicated have been achieved. By identifying targets in the previous section, you then should indicate in your findings if the targets were met or exceeded. If the targets were met or exceeded, your action plan should state that you would continue to provide the same high level of instruction. If over a period of time you continue to meet or exceed your target, it may be appropriate to reconsider the established targets because they may be set too low for assessment and improvement purposes. If you did not meet your target, you may address the deficiency in your action plan and indicate changes you might consider for program improvement.

Key components
- Show the results of the direct (and indirect) assessments identified for each SLO
  - Express finding(s) as the percentage of students achieving the performance target related to each measure of the SLO
  - May indicate the results for multiple targets

Action Plan

Action plan provides evidence of 'closing the loop' by utilizing the assessment results to indicate strategies for continuous program improvement to enhance student learning and the student's academic experience.
Key components
- 'Close the loop' by addressing in your action plan any changes you might consider for program improvement based on your findings
- For each unmet performance target indicate an action to address the identified deficiency