

# Student Learning Outcomes Annual Report Process 2013-14

## Instructions for Undergraduate 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 **Friday, November 7, 2014.**
- **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 undergraduate programs via email to [cheryl.gilchrist@louisville.edu](mailto:cheryl.gilchrist@louisville.edu)
- IE staff will enter your reports into Compliance Assist

### SACS Accreditation

As part of the SACS accreditation for undergraduate programs, UofL needs to document the relationship of our General Education program, Quality Enhancement Program [(QEP)Ideas to Action], and a culminating undergraduate experience (CUE) in our undergraduate programs. Through our SLO process the department chairs/heads have begun to provide that evidence.

### 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 undergraduate programs with the alignment needed for each required program goal and its relationship to the 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 undergraduate 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 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 **undergraduate programs** will continue to submit their 2013-14 reports as a Word document. The instructions below outline the omponents 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. They should answer questions like what is the primary function of the academic program; what are the key activities involved to successfully complete the academic program; and what are the competencies will students have acquired and be able to demonstrate upon graduation from the academic program. Each program goal will need to correspond with at least one specific student learning outcome. A program goal can have more than one student learning outcome. As the transition to Compliance Assist takes shape, it is important that reporting is standardized wherever possible. Toward that end, it is recommended that you identify your program goals as follows:

### For Undergraduate Programs (3-4 Program Goals)

The SLO process for undergraduate programs should include competencies first identified in general education courses and then thematically infused over the course of their academic program. Program goals emphasize the key student learning activities that contribute to the corresponding student competencies upon graduation. Specifically, this can be accomplished by emphasizing the **cumulative learning** from the General Education program, Ideas to Action (i2a), the major and a culminating undergraduate experience (CUE) through the application of learning from a variety of sources and settings over the duration of a student’s undergraduate experience.

- **Program Goal 1: Competency/Competencies specific to the academic major**
  - Goal describes the expected competency upon graduation.
- **Program Goal 2: Competency/Competencies Reinforcing the General Education Program**
  - Goal reinforces at least one of the competencies of the General Education program, <http://louisville.edu/provost/GER> (critical thinking, effective communication, or understanding of and appreciation for cultural diversity).
  - If you choose a goal reinforcing critical thinking as the competency of the General Education program, it also may serve as a program goal for i2a relating to critical thinking in the major.
- **Program Goal 3: Competency Relating to the Culminating Undergraduate Experience (CUE)**
  - Goal relates to the competency expected to be achieved from completion of a culminating undergraduate experience (CUE). The application of critical thinking may be included.
  - Identify the specific CUE course or courses
- **Program Goal 4: Critical Thinking related to Ideas to Action (i2a)**

- One additional goal related to critical thinking in the major should be included if you did NOT choose critical thinking as the general education competency or the CUE competency as described in the bullets above.

#### Optional

- **Program Goal 5: Competency specific to the program**
  - 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
- Reinforce at least one of the competencies related to General Education program
- Identify a culminating undergraduate experience (CUE) and associated competency/competencies. If appropriate the specific course or courses
- Address critical thinking as it relates to i2a (and/or general education)
- **Align to a specific student learning outcome**

### Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)** are specific, measurable statements that use action verbs to articulate the knowledge, skills, and perceptions students should gain or strengthen through engagement in the academic program during a specific time frame. Specifically, SLOs address key competencies upon graduation and identify the measurable student learning activities associated with these competencies. Each student learning outcome (SLOs) needs to align to a specific program goal. As the transition to Compliance Assist takes shape, it is important that reporting is standardized wherever possible. Toward that end, it is recommended that you identify your student learning outcomes as follows:

#### For Undergraduate Programs (3-4 SLOs)

The 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 the General Education program, the culminating undergraduate experience (CUE) and Ideas to Action (i2a).

- **SLO 1: Competency/Competencies specific to the academic major**
  - SLO describes the expected competencies upon graduation.
  - **Aligns with Program Goal 1**
  - More than one SLO for Program Goal 1 should be shown as SLO 1.1, SLO 1.2, etc.
- **SLO 2: Competency/Competencies Reinforcing the General Education Program**
  - SLO reinforces at least one of the competencies related to the General Education program <http://louisville.edu/provost/GER> (critical thinking, effective communication, or understanding of and appreciation for cultural diversity).

- If you choose an SLO reinforcing critical thinking as the competency of the General Education program it also can serve as a program goal for i2a relating to critical thinking in the major.
- **Aligns with Program Goal 2**
- More than one SLO for Program Goal 2 should be shown as SLO 2.1, SLO 2.2, etc.
- **SLO 3: Competency Relating to the Culminating Undergraduate Experience (CUE)**
  - SLO relates to the competency expected to be achieved from completion of the culminating undergraduate experience (CUE). The application of critical thinking may be included.
  - **Aligns with Program Goal 3**
  - More than one SLO for Program Goal 3 should be shown as SLO 3.1, SLO 3.2, etc.
- **SLO 4: Critical Thinking Relating to Ideas to Action (i2a)**
  - One additional SLO would relate to critical thinking in the major if you did NOT choose critical thinking as the general education competency or in the CUE.
  - **Aligns with Program Goal 4**
  - More than one SLO for Program Goal 4 should be shown as SLO 4.1, SLO 4.2, etc.

#### Optional

- **SLO 5: Competency specific to the program**
  - SLO emphasizes a key and specific skill, knowledge, or competency expected of students upon graduation not addressed in the above SLOs.
  - **Aligns with Program Goal 5**

#### Key components:

- Indicate the specific knowledge, skill or perception to be gained or improved
- 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
- Reinforce the competencies related to General Education program
- Identify a culminating undergraduate experience (CUE) and associated competency/competencies
- Address critical thinking as it relates to i2a in the major (and/or general education)
- **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 program GPAs 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 a 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:
  - Objective tests, essays, presentations, lab experiments, artistic performance, special projects, classroom assignments, portfolios
- 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 the criteria used and range of scores
- **Align each measure to a specific SLO**
  - One measure per SLO show as:
    - Measure 1.1.1 (for SLO 1.1 Program Goal 1),
    - Measure 2.1.1 (for SLO 2.1 Program Goal 2), etc.
  - More than one measure 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
- **Align each target to a specific measure**

**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
- **Align each finding to a specific target**

#### **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