

CHAPTER 2: Annual Assessment

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT refers to the yearly performance by all departments/programs at Whittier College of conducting and reporting upon some activity that measures and/or augments the department/program's success in ensuring the meaning, quality and integrity of Whittier's academic programs. In the model for continuous assessment, annual assessment projects will follow a five-year assessment plan developed during the closing the loop process of the previous Program Review Cycle. This plan is based on feedback on previous assessment plans, the External Reviewer's report, and discussions between the department/program and the Dean of the Faculty. However, a department/program may depart from this plan as new priorities arise. In most cases, annual assessment projects are designed to measure the degree to which students are exceeding, meeting or failing to meet common benchmarks in the discipline. These benchmarks should be reflected in the Student Learning Outcomes adopted by the department/program.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES should reflect the core competencies that students are expected to develop while completing coursework in the discipline. The number of Student Learning Outcomes adopted by an individual department may vary depending upon the needs of a department, however it is recommended that the list of outcomes not exceed six in order to ensure that each may be assessed on a regular, periodic basis. They are typically enumerated in a set of phrases that could each follow logically a phrase such as "Students will be able to . . ."

Departments should strive to integrate **DIRECT ASSESSMENT** of student learning outcomes into their regular work schedules in order to ensure that all departmental outcomes are assessed at least once during the program review cycle, be it 3, 5 or 7 years. However, the overall goal of assessment is to ensure the meaning, quality and integrity of Whittier's academic programs. The Assessment Committee therefore welcomes annual reports that discuss indirect assessment (surveys, etc.) or departmental planning activities when done in balance with direct assessment.

An **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT** is typically 3-7 pages in length, incorporating the assessment tool used (e.g., a quiz, an assignment prompt, a survey, etc.) and a summary and analysis of the data produced. The Annual Assessment Report should be submitted to the Online Assessment Portal by June 30th, and each report produced in a Program Review Cycle should be subsequently incorporated into and intended to inform the department's or program's upcoming Self-Study.

The format of the annual assessment report may vary depending upon the needs of the department/program, but faculty are welcome to follow one of the simple templates for assessment reports provided in Appendix A.

Though work may be distributed within departments/programs, it is the responsibility of the department chair or program director to submit the plans and reports. The faculty Assessment Committee, the Director of Assessment, and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment should be viewed as resources for facilitating this process.

The matrix presented below offers a variety of assessment possibilities, indicating which comprise direct and which indirect forms of assessment.. While direct assessment focused on Student Learning Outcomes (Blue) is often most valuable, followed by direct assessment focused on other measures of success or engagement (Green), this list is not

meant to be comprehensive, prescriptive or limiting but rather to inspire the development of whatever assessment tools best aid the department.

	Focus on Student Learning Outcomes	Focus on Other Measures of Success or Engagement
Direct Assessment: involves looking at actual samples of student work produced in our programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Rubric scores for writing, oral presentations, research projects, portfolios, exhibits, performances, Capstone projects, or senior theses. · Analysis of pass rates or scores on licensure, certification, or subject area tests · Results of identical quizzes taken at the beginning and end of a unit or class. · Performance on tests of writing, critical thinking or subject area knowledge · Portfolio evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Student self-reflections on learning (e.g., asking students to name the three most important things they have learned in the program) · Student publications or conference presentations · Employer and internship supervisor ratings of students' performance/skills · Observations of field work, internship performance, service learning, clinical experiences
Indirect Assessment: gathering information through means other than looking at actual samples of student work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Analysis of course evaluation findings related to SLOs · Results of focus group related to SLOs · Data measuring percent of class time spent in active learning related to SLOs · Records of student attendance at intellectual or cultural activities related to SLOs · Employer or alumni survey results concerning skills related to SLOs · Locally developed, commercial, or national surveys of student perceptions or self-report of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Grades that are not based on explicit criteria related to learning goals · Results of focus group related to student interests, learning environment, etc. · Student perception surveys · Comparison of program requirements with counterpart program at peer institutions · Alumni survey · Locally developed, commercial, or national surveys of student perceptions or self-report activities · Transcript studies examining patterns and trends of course selection and/or grading · Reflection on course enrollment information · Percent of students who study abroad, use CAAS or SDS · Graduate school placement rates · Job placement

The Assessment Committee responds to each department/program's report each fall using the **RUBRIC FOR FEEDBACK ON ANNUAL ASSESSMENT** below to commend the department/program on its work and/or to recommend more effective assessment activities.

Annual Assessment Rubric

1. Y N The Assessment Committee has received a report on your departmental assessment for the 20xx-20xx academic year.
2. Y N The report describes a project designed to assess the department's success in fulfilling one or more specific departmental learning outcomes (i.e., direct assessment).

and/or

Y N The report describes an assessment project unrelated to departmental learning outcomes but directed toward the goal of continuous program improvement (indirect assessment).

3. Y N The report includes a brief analysis of, and plan to act upon, the assessment project's findings.
4. Y NA Where pertinent, the report indicates any changes made to departmental learning outcomes.

The Assessment Committee recommends that . . .

- a. the department continues its commendable assessment practices.
- b. the department continues its ongoing assessment practices related to program improvement but directs its efforts toward assessment of departmental learning outcomes in its next annual report.
- c. the department updates its report to elaborate further on the significance of the data gathered in order to render it more useful for a future program review.
- d. the department schedules a meeting with a member of the Assessment Committee in order to discuss omissions, revisions and/or future assessment plans.

Resources designed to guide departments/programs in their annual assessment appear on pp. xx-xx of the Assessment Committee Handbook. The committee is also happy to provide for interested colleagues recent examples of simple but productive direct and indirect assessment at Whittier.

Departments should strive to integrate direct assessment of student learning outcomes into their regular work schedules in order to ensure that all departmental outcomes are assessed at least once during the program review cycle, be it 3, 5 or 7 years. However, the overall goal of assessment is ensuring the meaning, quality and integrity of Whittier's academic programs. The Assessment Committee therefore welcomes annual reports that discuss indirect assessment (surveys, etc.) or departmental planning activities when done in balance with direct assessment.