

Year Three Deliverables:

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment | Course Success– Highlights & Improvements | Labor Market Alignment | SMART Goals Year Two | SMART Goals Year Three

With any Program Review, alignment is integral to the process. The process examines the connections (and/or misconceptions) within a program's progression of student knowledge/skill/application of subject matter, identifies general education competency pathways, and incorporates institutional goals/mission (NILOA, 2018).

The Goal: *To ensure that program [and discipline] curriculum provides appropriate conditions for student achievement of intended program [and discipline] learning outcomes (Palomba & Banta, 1999).*

Institution Mission:

Bristol Community College provides an accessible, innovative, and inclusive education that prepares students to navigate and succeed in our ever-changing world.

Vision:

Advancing a vibrant, diverse community through education, learner by learner

Mission:

The Office of Academic Affairs provides oversight and leadership for all credit-bearing academic programs, instruction, and support services at all College locations, including online.

Activities and areas of responsibility include oversight of curriculum, planning, budget administration, staffing, professional development for faculty and professional staff, development of degree and certificate programs, and various professional accreditations.

The fundamental goal of the Office of Academic Affairs is to promote student learning by fostering excellence in teaching and an environment that promotes individual students to develop into critical thinkers and autonomous learners.

Equity Commitment:

Bristol Community College's academic programs strive to provide equitable educational opportunities to all students and create a sense of belonging. We engage students in rigorous learning, striving to transform attitudes and beliefs to position our students to become agents of change and serve as leaders in our communities.

Introduction | Program Student Learning Outcomes Assessment & Design

The Program Statement and goals provide the framework for determining the more specific Program educational learning outcomes. Educational outcomes are at the course and program level. In the case of Program outcomes, these statements define what students will know or be able to do as a result of curriculum learning experiences specific to degree programs/certificates/career pathways. ([Learning Assessment Research Consortium-LARC](#))

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) directly assist in telling a story to determine program/department educational effectiveness. Assessment uses PLOs to determine if students are learning what the program intends to accomplish. The focus is on student learning and not the teaching activity. If the program provides learning outcomes, investigation into effectiveness is essential. This work informs practice and directs learning acknowledgment and improvement.

Before you get started. Make sure you have the following:

- Completed Curriculum Map (Refer to Year Zero & Year One)
- Measurable Program Level Learning Outcomes (Refer to Year One)

Mapping the curriculum to Program Outcomes occurred in Year Zero and Year One. If the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) accurately and comprehensively represent the faculty's expectations for student learning, then the curriculum will align with those outcomes. This alignment involves enhancing learning through critical information, providing opportunities for skill practice, and ultimately enabling students to demonstrate mastery.

After faculty have defined their Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and aligned them with the curriculum, they should create an assessment plan. This plan involves identifying the types of student work (such as exams, projects, papers, etc.) that provide direct evidence of student learning aligned with faculty intentions. The plan specifies when and where data will be collected, how it will be evaluated, and how findings will be used to highlight achievements and identify areas for improvement.

Creating a multi-year plan to evaluate half of the curriculum PLOs in year three and the rest in year four will break assessment into small manageable pieces and help ensure that it is regularized as part of departmental practices.

Course Grades, GPA, Graduation Rates

Many who assess PLOs and program effectiveness often wonder why Course grades, GPA, and Graduation rates are not sufficient (alone) in telling the story of learning & effectiveness. Course grades do not provide specific information needed for program improvement, which is the goal of assessment. Overall results may point you in the direction of further curiosity or needed inquiry to determine what is occurring within the learning process. Instead, course grades reflect a culmination of many factors- some that may have nothing to do with knowledge/skill. Even if a course is designed to address a specific PLO, grades often include other factors such as student in-class participation, attendance, timely submission of homework assignments, extra credit activities, etc.

Course grades consider more than just specific skills; they reflect gradual skill development throughout the course. However, relying solely on grades or GPA doesn't reveal (and to what extent) how well students demonstrated each Program Learning Outcome (PLO).

Graduation rates grants and fellowships awarded to students, rates of transfer and job placements provide valuable information about the overall quality of the program and are part of the program review process. These data can also identify areas of further inquiry, or peak curiosity in terms of the "what and why" analysis. In general, these data do not provide detailed information about student attainment of specific program learning outcomes (especially if they are not directly aligned with PLOs).

It is possible to combine assessment and grading in embedded course assignments. Faculty can use a rubric they develop for collecting assessment evidence in grading these assignments. But a rubric can also have a limited focus (on one PLO) and does not have to cover all aspects of the assignment relevant to grading.

Evidence

Continuous improvement practices of Program Learning Outcomes involve collecting and evaluating evidence of whether students are learning what the faculty intends, and at what level for specific outcomes. The design of this effort involves intentional alignment between the PLO and course assignment. There are two main types of evidence that are used:

- Direct Evidence: This type evaluates students' actual work using faculty specified criteria.
- Indirect Evidence: This type of evaluation looks at a student's self-reported or perceived learning (obtained skills, competencies).

Deliverable

Design A Program Level Learning Outcome Assessment Plan

For Year 3, it is reasonable to select outcomes that faculty are most interested in or concerned about based on the already available evidence (e.g., student surveys, faculty experience, previous year deliverable findings and SMART Goals) or based on recent changes in the curriculum or pedagogy. It might be a PLO that faculty feel most certain that their students are demonstrating.

Another consideration is whether faculty need to design specific assignments to collect relevant evidence for the selected PLO(s). This can be done by first completing an alignment exercise where 1) faculty review existing assignments or samples of projects and 2) decide whether adjustments need to be made to existing assignments or the need for new assignment design. You may use the following template to map out your PLOs to assignments [here](#). You may use the following [Assignment Design Template](#) to help develop an assignment.

Determine which PLOs will be measured in Year three (50% or more)

- Approach: determine which approach will be used to develop the PLO assessment plan. Reference the PLO Assessment Option document found [here](#).

- Identify the course/courses that will be integrated into the assessment plan (reference the curriculum map-[Year one upload folder](#). Student work used to evaluate a PLO should come from courses/sections taught by more than one instructor whenever possible. Review Course SLOs! Use the guide found in the folder.
- Determine sources of direct & indirect evidence: Each assessment method should be carefully aligned with a PLO, including the type of assignment, assignment prompt/instructions and criteria (a rubric) used to evaluate student work. Reference the Sources of Direct & Indirect Evidence document found [here](#).
- Assignment Design: Use the [Assignment design template](#) to assist in reviewing or creating an assignment or assignments to measure PLOs.
- Collect, analyze, and interpret evidence: Determine methods to measure artifacts. It is recommended that two or more instructors should be involved in evaluating student work IF work is collected and scored together.
- Develop recommendations: Once findings are established, highlight areas of importance, interest, and require continuous improvement efforts.
- Use evidence to make changes: Develop an intervention plan using the PO Action Plan template found [here](#). SMART goals should reflect the narrative.