Introduction to Program-Level Assessment

Program-level assessment is a structured process for evaluating how well students achieve the learning outcomes defined by their academic program. It plays a critical role in supporting continuous improvement and meeting accreditation standards by ensuring that programs are intentional, effective, and responsive to student needs.

At Arkansas State University, departments are expected to define clear, measurable learning outcomes for each academic program and to assess those outcomes regularly. This process helps faculty identify strengths and areas for improvement, align curriculum with desired competencies, and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders including students, accreditors, and the institution.

Why Program-Level Assessment Matters

- **Supports accreditation** by documenting student achievement and program effectiveness.
- **Improves curriculum** through evidence-based decisions.
- **Engages faculty** in meaningful reflection on teaching and learning.
- **Aligns with institutional goals** for student success and continuous improvement.

Assessment as a Cycle for Improvement

Assessment is most effective when it leads to **data-informed decisions**. Departments are encouraged to use results to plan **actions for continuous improvement**, documenting both short-term adjustments and long-term strategies. This cyclical process ensures that assessment is not just a reporting requirement, but a meaningful driver of change.

Glossary of Assessment Terms

Understanding key terminology is essential for effective communication and collaboration in assessment planning. The glossary below defines commonly used terms in program-level assessment at A-State.

▶ *See:* ***Glossary of Assessment Terms***

This resource includes definitions for:

- **Assessment**
- **Action Plan**
- **Closing the Loop**
- **Curriculum Map**
- **Direct Assessment**
- **Indirect Assessment**
- **And more**...

Departments are encouraged to refer to this glossary when developing outcomes, designing assessments, and preparing reports to ensure consistency and clarity across programs.

What This Chapter Covers

This chapter guides departments through the key steps of program-level assessment:

- Writing student learning outcomes
- Mapping outcomes to curriculum
- Designing assessment methods
- Using results to inform decisions
- Planning for short- and long-term improvement

Each section includes practical tools, templates, and examples to help departments build a sustainable and meaningful assessment process.

Revision #4
Created 2025-08-18 20:44:11 UTC by William Murry
Updated 2026-05-19 20:28:53 UTC by William Murry