

What is an assessment project?

An assessment project is a collection of direct and indirect measurements of student learning and development. This collection is purposefully designed and executed to capture a comprehensive picture of student performance and growth in relation to general education student learning outcomes and course competencies.

The assessment project seeks to answer the question, **what do we want to know about student learning?**

Assessment projects should be meaningful, manageable, and demonstrable.

Meaningful

Your project should be useful to you. It should enable you to improve student learning in your discipline by specifying one or more areas where such learning is not currently optimal.

The findings from your project should enable you to pinpoint whether to make curricular changes, pedagogical changes, or both to improve student learning. While there are circumstances in which an assessment project leads to the conclusion that no changes need to be made, or that the assessment project itself needs to be retooled, a project driven by a strong sense that learning is weak in an area (often supported by informal observations over time) will generally conclude with valuable ideas about how to modify teaching to improve learning. A no change condition is very rare.

Manageable

While it may add somewhat to your discipline workload, the project should not be too extensive to properly execute.

Demonstrable

You should be able to determine clearly whether students have learned the knowledge and/or practices described by your learning outcomes. There should be no ambiguity about the extent to which students learned what you intended, nor about what to do next to improve student learning.

Assessment Project Guiding Questions

In preparation for developing and submitting an assessment project plan, Discipline Assessment Teams should be prepared to address the following questions and considerations.

1. What does your discipline want to know about student learning in this assessment cycle?
 - Is there a growth area that has been observed over time?
 - Are there concepts, processes, or practices with which students tend to struggle?
2. Which course or courses are included in the assessment project?
 - Is there a logical sequence of courses in which a competency is developed?
3. Which GenEd SLO will be assessed? Which Indicators within the SLO?
4. Which course competencies will be assessed?
5. What direct and indirect measures will be used to assess whether students are gaining the desired knowledge and practices prescribed by the learning outcomes?
 - Does the discipline have (or will develop) a signature assignment, capstone experience, or other common assessment instrument?
 - Can a signature assignment be devised to measure similar competencies at varying levels across courses?
6. How have you planned to include multiple modalities, ie. online, hybrid?
7. How will you include and inform other faculty teaching these courses, including adjuncts and Dual Enrollment instructors, about the process and the results?
8. How will assessing the selected competencies help to answer the question, *what you want to know about student learning from this project?*