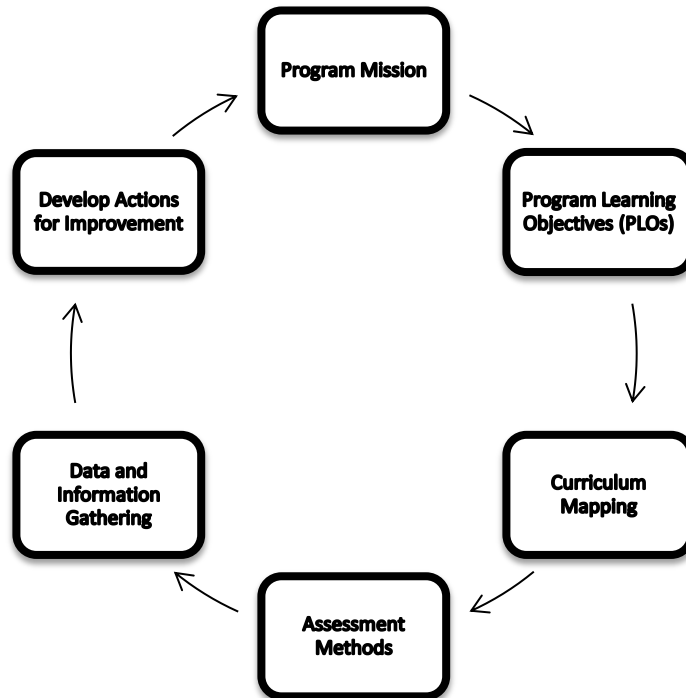




## Program-Level Assessment Overview and Brief Guide



### What is program-level assessment?

- *“Assessment is the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about student learning.”<sup>1</sup>*
- *An understanding of student learning in relation to the program goals and mission (in alignment with the institution’s mission)*
- *A process that occurs in three steps: 1) Goals; 2) Information; and 3) Action*

### What are **effective** means of assessment of student learning?

- *Standardized tests*
- *Internally produced tests that assess student learning*
- *Portfolios*
- *Final projects*
- *Capstone experiences*

<sup>1</sup> Walvoord, Barbara E. *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010.

### What are **ineffective** means of program-level assessment?

- *Grades (exclusively)*
- *Indirect assessments (exclusively)*
- *Things that cannot be tracked*
- *Assessment methods that lack a clear linkage to goals*

### What happens as a **result of effective program-level assessment**?

- *Revising curriculum, courses, and assignments*
- *Setting faculty priorities*
- *Securing resources for professional development*
- *Improving student support services and technologies*
- *Informing program reviews/departmental self-studies*
- *Improving program outcomes*
- *Improving reputation and sharing outcomes to campus stakeholders*

### What is the difference between program-level assessment and academic program review (APR)?

- *Program level assessment (at LEC, Program Level Assessment Plans [PLAPs]) is guided by program learning outcomes that focus on gathering evidence about student achievement;*
- *Academic Program Review (APR) includes a self-study and is a broader, more in-depth self-evaluation of the program as a whole (e.g., faculty needs, areas of strengths and weaknesses, external input, enrollment trends, benchmark data, opportunities for improvement, and market trends); PLAPs are reviewed as part of the APR process*

### Five Things to Remember regarding program-level assessment

- *Good assessment begins with goals<sup>2</sup>: “Students will be able to...”*
  - *Cognitive Goals: “What do you want your students to know?”*
  - *Affective Goals: “What do you want your students to think or care about?”*
  - *Behavioral Goals: “What do you want your students to be able to do?”*
- *Data must be gathered*
- *Rubrics are your friend*
- *Link program goals to specific courses or activities (mapping)*
- *Assessment is meaningless without action*

### Questions to ask when reviewing or creating Program-Level Assessments Plans

- Are the outcomes (PLOs) focused on student learning and can they be measured and observed?*
- How have I communicated the PLOs to the students?*
- Have I assembled a curriculum map and identified where PLOs are introduced, reinforced, and assessed?*
- Are assessment methods suitable to measure student achievement?*

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<sup>2</sup> Fort Lewis College, Fort Lewis (n.d.,). *Guide for Creating a Program Assessment Plan*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fortlewis.edu/Portals/251/FLC%20Assessment%20Plan%20Resource%20Guide%20-wkshp3.docx>.

- Are multiple measures used?*
- Do I use activities already in place to maximize my time?*
- How am I collecting and analyzing the data and what is my timeline for reflecting on what I have learned?*
- Is there a formal mechanism for reporting and summarizing results to ensure the information supports program improvement?*
- Is my plan feasible and realistic?*

Sources:

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[http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CrossCase\\_FINAL1%2010-20.pdf](http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CrossCase_FINAL1%2010-20.pdf)

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