The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Office of Academic & Institutional Excellence

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: DEFINITIONS

UTRGV Expectations:

UTRGV assesses student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs in compliance with Standard 8.2.a. As stipulated in the 2018 SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation Resource Manual, an eduational program is a credential as defined by the institution. At UTRGV educational programs include all bachelor's, graduate, professional, and doctoral degrees listed in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) program inventory. For the purposes of assessment, educational programs also include undergraduate stand-alone minors and stand-alone certificates at any level approved by the THECB.

At UTRGV, student learning outcome assessment plans must be developed for:

1. Bachelors degree programs listed in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) program inventory.
2. Graduate degree programs listed in the THECB program inventory.
3. Doctoral degree programs listed in the THECB program inventory.
4. Professional programs approved and reported to the THECB program inventory.
5. Graduate ***stand-alone*** certificates approved and reported to the THECB. Stand-alone certificates consist of a group of courses with no supporting major and no apparent affiliation to a "parent" degree or educational program. Stand-alone certificates are not embedded in "parent" programs and are not earned concurrently with a degree. Affiliation with a degree is based upon similarities in the following areas:
    a. Curriculum
    b. Student learning outcomes
    c. Purpose or mission
6. Undergraduate ***stand-alone*** minors approved by UTRGV. Stand-alone minors consist of a group of courses with no supporting major and no apparent affiliation to a "parent" degree or educational program. Affilation with a degree is based upon similarities in the the following areas:
    a. Curriculum
    b. Student learning outcomes
    c. Purpose or mission
7. Undergraduate ***stand-alone*** certificates approved by the THECB. Stand-alone certificates consist of a group of courses with no supporting major and no apparent affilitation to a "parent" degree. Stand-alone certificates are not embedded in "parent" programs and are not earned concurrently with a degree. Affilation with a degree is based upon similarities in the the following areas:
    a. Curriculum
    b. Student learning outcomes
    c. Purpose or mission

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Special Considerations

Programs at Multiple Sites and with Multiple Delivery Modes:

1. Programs offered face-to-face at multiple sites must include assessment results for students at all sites.
2. Programs offered fully online (i.e., distance education) must submit submit separate assessment plans and reports for the online delivery mode.
3. Programs offered accelerated online (i.e., 7 week terms) must submit submit separate assessment plans and reports for the accelerated delivery mode.

Programs with Multiple Emphasis Areas:

4. The Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAIE), *in colloboration with the college Deans and Assessment Liaisons*, will determine whether programs with multiple emphasis areas (a.k.a., concentrations, tracks, specializations) should assess at the program or the emphasis level. Assessment at the emphasis level is likely to occur if plans of study vary greatly.
5. As an alternative to submitting assessment plans for each emphasis area, programs with multiple emphasis areas may submit a single assessment plan with several common student learning outcomes for the programone separate. Programs are encouraged to develop student learning outcome for each emphasis area where appropriate.

Interdisciplinary Programs and Programs with Many Course Options:

6. Interdisciplinary programs and programs that provide significant student choice may find it challenging to identify and track students for the purspose of assessment; however, such programs are not exempt from participating in the SLO assessment process.
7. Interdisciplinary programs and programs with high student choice are encouraged to identify courses to be used as the basis for program assessment that all students must take (e.g., introduction courses and capstone courses) or clusters of courses that students select. These common courses or clusters of courses may be well-suited to course-embedded program assessment.
8. Assessment of interdisciplinary programs may require collaboration among multiple colleges, schools, and programs. The OAIE*, in collaboration with the college Deans and Assessment Liaisons*, will determine where the ownership of the program SLO should reside.
9. The OAIE, *in collaboration with the college Deans and Assessment Liaisons*, will determine whether interdisciplinary programs with mulitple emphasis areas should assess at the program or emphasis level.

Initial Teacher Licensure Programs:

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10. Majors with teacher certification as an option (e.g., biology, chemistry, English, mathematics) are encouraged to disaggregate and analyze SLO results for its teacher certification candidates or include at least one separate SLO for teacher candidates where appropriate.
11. The set of courses designed to prepare initial teacher candidates for EC-6 and EC-12 licensure are considered an educational program and must submit separate SLO assessment plans. At UTRGV, these programs are:
    a. EC-6 Elementary initial teacher certification course sequence
    b. EC-12 Middle School and Secondary initial teacher certification course sequence
    c. UTeach Secondary initial teacher certification course sequence

New Programs and Low Enrollment:

12. New majors, minors and certificates with emerging enrollment must develop student learning outcome statements in their first year and must be prepared to develop a comprehensieve assessment plan as enrollment increases.
13. If low enrollment persists in new or existing programs, the OAIE and the college dean will determine the length of exemption from participation in the assessment process.

Procedures for Maintaining the UTRGV Program Assessment List:

1. On no less than an annual basis, the OAIE will request an update from the Dean of the Graduate College and the Associate Vice President of OAIE regarding degree program changes at UTRGV including new, revised and deleted programs.
2. On no less than an annual basis, the OAIE will request updates from the College-level Assessment Liaisons regarding program assessment activities, assessment coordinator changes, and any other updates. Through this update, the colleges will be reviewed for the appropriateness of program- versus emphasis-level assessment and exemptions will be considered. All exemptions must be documented through this process and must be mutually agreed upon by the college and the OAIE.

Sources for the UTRGV Program List Include:

1. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board maintains the official inventory of UTRGV academic programs and can be found at http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/programinventory/ByAdminPDF.cfm?Inst_ID=70&CFID=62148288&CFTOKEN=33328837
2. The UTRGV undergraduate catalog lists all bachelors' plans of study and can be found at http://www.utrgv.edu/_files/documents/academics/catalogs/2015-2017-undergraduate-catalog.pdf.
3. UTRGV Graduate Catalog lists all master and doctoral programs' plans of study and can be found at http://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/_files/documents/utrgv_graduate_catalog.pdf

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4. The UTRGV undergraduate programs website provides the listing of bachelor program majors as well as downloadable plans of study and can be found at : http://www.utrgv.edu/en-us/academics/undergraduate/index.htm
5. The UTRGV graudate programs website provides the listing of graduate program areas as well as downloadable degree plans and can be found at: http://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-future-students/graduate-programs/index.htm
6. The UTRGV Undergraduate Minors and Certificates catalog lists all undergraduate certificates and plans of study and can be found at http://www.utrgv.edu/_files/documents/admissions/undergraduate/degree-plans/2017/2017-minors-and-certificates.pdf