

# **Student Learning Outcomes**

## **Assessment: Definitions and Methods**

### **Assessment Definitions**

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)** - the knowledge, skills, abilities or attitudes that students have attained by the end of any set of college experiences – classes, programs, degrees and certificates or encounters with college services. Articulates the major goals of each experience, requires higher-level thinking skills and usually results in a product that can be evaluated.

**SLO Assessment** - The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. (Source: Assessment Essentials, Palomba & Banta)

**Assessment Report** – a reporting document containing an assessment of SLOs and recommendations for improving teaching and learning submitted to the Instructional Deans (as part of each department's Program Review) and/or the College Assessment Committee.

**Institutional SLOs/Core Competencies** – these college-wide skills describe what College of San Mateo students are able to do at the end of their experience with the college. These also describe the competencies that students completing the General Education program and/or receiving an AA or AS degree from the college have mastered. CSM's core competencies are: 1) Communication, 2) Critical Thinking and Information Competency, 3) Global Awareness and 4) Personal Responsibility and Professional Development. Please visit the CSM College SLOs homepage for more details.

**Course-embedded Assessment** – a process that evaluates artifacts from courses (major assignments, tests, portfolios, performances, demonstrations, papers etc.) to assess student

mastery of SLOs for CSM's core competencies, courses and sometimes, if selected as an appropriate measure by the department, occupational programs.

**Course Objectives** – statements that tell students what supporting skills, knowledge, and attitudes they will learn during a course. They are usually discrete skills that require lower level thinking skills and form the building blocks to course SLOs.

**General Education Outcomes (or Core Competencies)** - are broad core abilities, intellectual and other skills, ideas, and values that shape a student's capacity to address problems across varied academic fields, including the arts and literature, history, the social and natural sciences, and mathematics. Other terms: liberal learning, general competencies, co-curricular experiences.

**Program** – a degree program or occupational certificate program. College of San Mateo considers its General Education program all one program whose SLOs are described by the college Institutional SLOS/core competencies.

**Program Mission** – – a written declaration of the focus and specific purpose of a program by which the success of the program can be measured.

**Program Goals** – are broad inclusive statements of desired effects of the program.

**Program Outcomes** – is a set of direct and indirect measurable and more specific expression of program goals, allowing for assessment of the program at various levels: external validation and learning outcomes.

## Assessment Methods

**Direct Assessment Measures**  
Portfolio assessments

Locally developed tests (pre- & -post tests)  
Juried reviews  
Internship evaluations  
Evaluations of capstone projects  
Standardized national examinations  
Licensure certifications/professional exams

### **Indirect Assessment Measures**

Graduation rates  
Job placement data  
Graduate follow-up studies  
Retention and transfer studies  
Information gathered from alumni, employers and students

### **Assessment Data Collection Methods**

Paper and pencil testing  
Essays and writing samples  
Logs and journals  
Portfolio collections of student work  
Exit interviews  
Surveys  
Focus group interviews  
External evaluators  
Behavioral observations

Source: Cabrillo SLO, Truckee Meadow CC, RP Group, AAHE, ACCJC-WASC