



# Exemplary Practices in Academic Program Assessment Plans

The institution has made a significant effort in terms of time and resources to better demonstrate student learning outcomes within academic programs. The University Assessment Advisory Committee has developed the first annual Exemplary Practices document to highlight programs that are doing unique work to demonstrate student learning outcomes. Programs who achieved a “4” from the most recent ASL review were considered and chosen. Please review and consider ways in which the examples may be modified for use within your respective program(s). For more information about the examples please contact the respective assessment coordinator (contact information provided below). To nominate a program for an exemplary practice for the future please email:

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## Power of Portfolios

**Department of Art:** The BFA programs in Graphic + Interactive Design and Studio Arts uses a portfolio review to evaluate the student learning outcomes at the sophomore level. The purpose of this review is to ensure the quality of the student work produced in their sophomore year is above or within the standards of the BFA program in order to continue in their chosen program. Students are required to submit a body of work that is evaluated on quality, aesthetics, and techniques. Students are also evaluated on their oral presentation in which they discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and direction in their work. Students who do not meet the standards are required to participate in a mentoring program.

The department uses peer mentors to help underachieving students reach the required level. Specifically students are matched with another student in the program who has been successful in the respective outcome and they provide guidance and support related to the learning outcome. Students continue in this program until their skills in deficient areas meet the standards.

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**Department of Music Education:** The BM in Music Education uses portfolios to assess several program outcomes. The

portfolio has allowed the program to integrate assessment across many of its courses. This type of measure has proven beneficial in helping the program become more integrated with assessment. [jburt03@wcupa.edu](mailto:jburt03@wcupa.edu)

## Using role-play and real-world scenarios to assess student learning

**Department of Marketing:** The BA in Marketing presents students with an ethical dilemma (i.e. Global Strategies and Tactics). Students are then asked within a course in which ethics has been previously taught in other courses as well as the current course to respond in writing appropriately to the dilemma. [cwang@wcupa.edu](mailto:cwang@wcupa.edu)

**Department of Accounting:** The BS in Accounting uses real world examples to evaluate information literacy. In ACC403 Federal Taxation I, students are provided with a taxpayer scenario and asked to prepare the required tax returns. It requires them to navigate the IRS website and research the issues needed to complete the returns. Tax returns are graded for accuracy and strict adherence to the Code (federal income tax law) as would be the case in actual practice. Students experience a different kind of satisfaction in actual return preparation and our expectations for this particular assessment are generally met. [Rbarndt@wcupa.edu](mailto:Rbarndt@wcupa.edu)

## Triangulating Feedback to Improve Student Learning

**Department of Geology:** Uses the SciTIPR, a rubric used by secondary science programs. The rubric is independently completed by student teacher, co-operating teacher, and university supervisor as it pertains to the learning outcomes. This triangulation approach between the three parties has enabled the program to better understand student learning by



obtaining feedback which has led to increased discussion and improvement in the teaching, learning, and assessment processes within the unit. [sgood@wcupa.edu](mailto:sgood@wcupa.edu); [chall@wcupa.edu](mailto:chall@wcupa.edu)

**Department of Criminal Justice:** An exit questionnaire is used for both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Although we do not interview the students in person, the students in the Master's Program provide valuable feedback about what they have learned as a graduate student, which allows us

to evaluate the program for future semesters. With regard to the Bachelor's Program, the exit questionnaire is administered to "first-year" students and "seniors." The 120-question document is designed to assess the students on their knowledge of the core (required) courses at the beginning and the end of the Program. We now gather the data on an individual as well as program-level. [creyes@wcupa.edu](mailto:creyes@wcupa.edu)

## Maximizing Resources for Student Learning Assessment

**Department of English:** The BA program has been using D2L and SharePoint to enhance program level assessment. Specifically, the department uses a D2L site to:

- administer a disciplinary literacy instrument and exit survey
- collect the program portfolios
- communicate with majors about assessment procedures

D2L's reports and statistics features streamline the collection and analysis of data. Throughout the academic year, the department holds various faculty focus groups and workshops to discuss assessment results and their implications for core and intermediate courses and to devise appropriate action plans. All faculty are required to play some role in program assessment during the year: 1) attend a focus or workshop meeting, 2) read portfolios, or 3) score gen ed I, W, or J artifacts using approved rubrics. The department uses SharePoint not only to circulate all yearly assessment reports but also to communicate with faculty about ongoing assessment work. Eleanor Shevlin points out "While the technology has made assessment far more manageable, these practices have also been instrumental in raising awareness of assessment, its purpose, and its benefits in the department." [eshevlin@wcupa.edu](mailto:eshevlin@wcupa.edu)

## Using Peer Review to Improve Student Learning

**Department of Music Performance:** The BA in Music has students conduct performances throughout each year in the program. In addition to faculty evaluating the performance the faculty also requires students to write up critiques of their peers' performance. The program then uses the critiques to evaluate written communication and critical thinking. [kreighley@wcupa.edu](mailto:kreighley@wcupa.edu)



**Department of Social Work:** The BS in Social Work uses field evaluation instruments as a significant program level measure in their program. Following a year in which results were variable and unreliable, the program established field instructor training to enhance inter-rater reliability. This consisted of specific group work and policy practice workshops incorporated into the field orientation. Additionally the program hired a consultant to help normalize raters to better improve the scoring process. This consultation helped the program move the rubric from a 5 point scale to a 7 point scale as well as adding more items to measure. Following the consult the evaluation tool was sent to the programs advisory board as well as field instructors to assess the usability of it in the real word. [tingersoll@wcupa.edu](mailto:tingersoll@wcupa.edu)