# Outcomes Assessment Handbook

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# ASSESSMENT FUNDAMENTALS AT SWIC

## What is Assessment?

Assessment is a faculty-driven, continuous improvement process aimed at measuring and improving student learning.  Assessment involves the collection and analysis of data to make inferences about student learning, teaching, curriculum, programs, and more. Faculty members are responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating their own assessment plans. However, assessment data and results will not be used for faculty evaluation regarding retention, tenure, and promotion recommendations or decisions by supervisors or administrators. Assessment does involve making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. Assessment helps us create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education. Assessment plans foster communication among faculty by encouraging faculty to work together in determining common goals, planning and allocation of resources, and analyzing the results to improve student learning.

The college is committed to regular evaluation of our effectiveness and the assessment of student learning is an integral component of the educational experience at SWIC. To ensure that the needs of students and the community are met, the college conducts classroom-, program-, and college-wide studies of student attitudes, achievement, and satisfaction. In addition, the college regularly assesses its educational programming and services. Student learning experiences and support services play a crucial role in the effectiveness of student learning. To conduct useful institutional analysis, all students who are randomly selected for these assessments are expected to participate. Assessment-related data are kept confidential for individual students and are released only in aggregate form. Full participation helps SWIC meet our core values of educational excellence and student success.

The assessment process involves gathering information and utilizing it as feedback to modify and improve student outcomes, all with strict confidentiality measures in place. Thus, the assessment of student learning is an essential component of meeting our college mission.

*Southwestern Illinois College upholds the dignity and worth of all people and believes that learning is a lifelong process which enhances the quality of life. The college provides for individual growth through educational excellence and active partnerships with students and the community.*

# SWIC OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Outcomes Assessment at Southwestern Illinois College is to ensure student learning. The college is dedicated to empowering students with the knowledge, skills and traits necessary for successful transfer to a four-year institution, employment in a chosen career, and/or personal/professional growth and development. To this end, the faculty continually assess student learning to improve student success.

# OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING AT SWIC

Below is a brief overview of the process for the assessment of student learning at SWIC.

A. **Faculty plan and define student learning outcomes (SLOs) – what students will know, what students can do, and how students will conduct themselves after completion of a:**
   - Course – these are course objectives which are identified in the Master course syllabus
   - Discipline or Program – these are referred to as discipline or program student learning outcomes, and can be found with each discipline's or program's mission statements and within the Master course syllabus
     - Student learning outcomes are determined by the experts in the field – faculty (with input from transfer institutions, employers, advisory committees, etc.)

   In collaboration with full-time, adjunct, part-time, and dual credit faculty, Department Chairs and Program Coordinators annually review and amend as needed the Discipline/Program Mission statements and student learning outcomes. Changes or updates are submitted to the OA Coordinator for review/approval. Once approved, they will be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee Meeting for informational purposes.

B. **Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and Objectives**

   Assessment at SWIC consists of multiple levels of assessment. The assessment process begins with being explicit about outcomes and/or objectives for student learning at every level: classroom, course, discipline or program, and institution. Outcomes and/or objectives at each of those levels will identify what students should know and do as a result of the experience. Multiple measures and multiple means are recommended to determine if student learning outcomes and objectives are being achieved. No one measure or instrument is comprehensive enough to capture the wide range of goals within an academic program or discipline.

   Course objectives should link to the Discipline/Program student learning outcomes. Institutional assessments are conducted of the core competencies which are considered important, broad learning outcomes not only for general education courses, but courses across the entire curriculum. The core competencies are learning outcomes that are important life skills that students should have upon graduation. They are identified below.

   - **Classroom Level Assessment**:
     A faculty member typically assesses student learning on a regular basis to determine the level of student understanding and application of taught material. Classroom level assessment can include formative measures, in the form of Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs). Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) provide timely feedback to the faculty member allowing for immediate classroom adjustments to improve student success, but are often not reports for assessment results. The college offers training in CATs through faculty development training at the beginning of each semester.

   - **Course Level Assessment**:
     Course level assessment of student proficiency aligns with each of the course objectives, and can be more summative measures. Summative measures can include final course projects, performance-based assessments (ie: practical examinations, student portfolios, recitals), examinations, embedded test questions across multiple course offerings, or an

assessment activity given to all course sections regardless as to mode of delivery or faculty leading course. Results of these course level assessments are shared with corresponding faculty, program coordinator(s), or department chair(s) for collaborative efforts to occur to improve instruction and quality of student learning opportunities. Course level assessments may be included as part of the program/discipline review process.

- **Discipline/Program Level Assessment**:
  In collaboration with full-time, adjunct, part-time, and dual credit faculty, a department chair or program coordinator leads discipline/program level assessment. Discipline/program level assessment efforts are conducted to determine student knowledge, skills, and attitudes relative to a department's or program's student learning outcomes. Course level assessment should align with discipline/program level student learning outcomes. Discipline/Program level assessment results and recommendations aim to strengthen instruction. They are a necessary part of the Program Review process.

- **Annual Assessment Minimum Expectations**
  SWIC has a rich history of ongoing, reflective assessment practices through discipline/program/service reviews and core competency assessment. As recommended by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), regular and annual assessment at a discipline/program/service and institutional level should occur. Discipline/Program/Service annual assessment practices should reflect a well-rounded approach analyzing respective student learning outcomes in the depth and breadth necessary for the scope of the specific discipline/program/service. The Assessment Steering Committee recommends the minimum annual assessment expectation of at least one student learning outcome to be analyzed over a five-year trend, working towards closing the assessment loop through ongoing analysis. Disciplines/Programs/Services are encouraged to analyze as many student learning outcomes as they believe meets their needs for a well-rounded assessment process.

- **Institutional Level Assessment**:
  The core competencies are assessed at the institutional level. Utilizing the core competency portion of a program's/discipline's curriculum map provides a timeline for institutional level assessment. Faculty collect assessment data throughout their course or program following this timeline. A common rubric is utilized by a team of faculty who have received ongoing norming training to assure consistency in scoring of each core competency assessment submitted. The results of these assessments are analyzed by the Core Competency Committee and shared with all faculty. The Core Competency Committee discusses and reflects on the results, identifies trends, and recommends actions to strengthen instruction and enhance student learning. The Core Competency Committee is responsible for setting the schedule of these common learning outcomes.

In collaboration with full-time, adjunct, part-time, and dual credit faculty, department chairs and program coordinators annually review and amend as needed the corresponding curriculum map which includes program/discipline SLOs and core competencies. Changes or updates are submitted through the Outcomes Assessment site for review and approval and to Curriculum Committee.

C. **Appropriate Methods to Assess Student Learning are Chosen**
   Faculty determine the most appropriate assessment methods. Appropriately selected assessment tools and thresholds can provide meaningful information on the student's

successful achievement of the identified course objectives and progression towards the program/discipline SLOs. Assessment can use direct or indirect measures, as well as formative or summative assessments.

D. **A Plan for Assessment is Identified**
In conjunction with the curriculum map, an assessment timeline outlines when specific assessment results will be completed and submitted. In collaboration with full-time, adjunct, part-time, and dual credit faculty, department chairs/program coordinators submit the respective assessment plan. The assessment plan includes specific details of what work will be collected, the number of students included in the assessment, who is responsible for collecting data, and how the assessment results will be analyzed against a set threshold. To develop trend data, faculty should repeat assessments to ensure validity of the results and for successful student educational improvements.

E. **Assessment Results are Analyzed**
Following the assessment plan development, faculty specify important criteria and desired goal/target performance. Faculty compare actual student performance to the identified goal/target. Analysis of the results demonstrates where students are performing well and where improvements are needed.

F. **Faculty use the assessment results to guide changes to instruction. Faculty "close the loop."**
Assessment results are shared with faculty and modifications to educational opportunities are identified to address areas that need improvement, including, but not limited to, teaching strategy modifications, evaluating course content or sequencing, and allocating resources needed to impact student performance. Annual discipline/program reports are submitted to the OA site.

# CORE COMPETENCY DEFINITIONS

There are three core competencies with corresponding sub-tracks. Students will have multiple experiences in these competencies as they complete a degree or program. Discipline/Program student learning outcomes should relate to the core competencies. The three core competencies include:

| **Communication Skills** | **Reasoning Skills** | **Citizenship** |
|---|---|---|
| - Writing<br>- Oral Communication<br>- Computer Literacy | - Critical Thinking<br>- Quantitative Literacy | - Civic and Social Accountability<br>- Personal Accountability |

Detailed descriptions for each core competency, including the descriptions of the sub-tracks are noted below:

Communication Skills:

| Communications Skills: Writing | |
|---|---|
| **Quality of Thought**<br><br>• The main purpose of the writing is clear and worthwhile.<br><br>• The writer demonstrates thorough understanding of the subject.<br><br>• The work includes convincing evidence and/or examples to support all conclusions.<br><br>• The writer anticipates and addresses potential concerns of the audience.<br><br>**Purposeful Structure**<br><br>• The introduction orients readers to the main subject being discussed.<br><br>• The writing moves from one idea to the next effectively.<br><br>• All parts of the work relate to each other and to the main idea.<br><br>• The work concludes in an effective manner. | **Style/Expression**<br><br>• The style holds the reader's interest.<br><br>• The tone is appropriate to the audience and purpose.<br><br>• The writing is clear and avoids vague, empty, or ambiguous statements.<br><br>• The vocabulary and sentence structure are appropriate for the audience and purpose<br><br>**Appropriate Conventions**<br><br>• The work is edited for correct spelling.<br><br>• The work is edited for correct grammar and mechanics.<br><br>• The writer effectively integrates and cites source material where necessary.<br><br>• The writer addresses the particulars of the assignment and follows directions. |
| *Communications Skills: Oral Communication* | |
| • **Effectively communicates verbally**: volume, pause, rate, voice quality, articulation, pronunciation, absence of vocal distractions.<br><br>• **Effectively communicates non-verbally**: gestures, facial expressions, movement, eye contact, absence of physical distractions.<br><br>• **Presents material in an organized manner**: goal, preview of points, body of points, clear transitions, closing summary.<br><br>• **Maximizes content** in a variety of speaking and performance situations. | |
| *Communications Skills: Computer Literacy* | |
| • Use an **operating system and manage files** | • Use computer technology to **access, distribute, and** |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Use production software such as **a word processor program** or **presentation software** to create a document <br><br> • Use **application software** specific to discipline | **communicate information** in an online environment <br><br> • Demonstrate an understanding of the **ethical use of technological tools** |

Reasoning Skills:

| Reasoning Skills: Quantitative Literacy |
|---|
| • **Compute** fluently and make reasonable estimates. <br><br> • **Identify, extract, and use quantitative** information from tables, charts, graphs, and/or other relevant visual data. <br><br> • **Translate** a given problem situation into a mathematical statement and find its solution. |
| **Reasoning Skills: Critical Thinking** |
| • **Deduction** - The ability to derive ideas or consequences from a set of assumptions or a given scenario. <br> Course Question:  Does the course ask students to use a set of rules to derive concepts, solve problems, or analyze situations? <br><br> • **Conceptualization** - The ability to grasp a concept through spoken or written communication. <br> Course Question:  Does the course emphasize the comprehension of concepts, or does it emphasize the memorization of terms or procedures? <br><br> • **Application** - The ability to see a concept in experience, human behavior, or in the production of something. <br> Course Question:  Does the course emphasize the visualization of concepts in experience, etc., or does it emphasize the formal articulation of a theory or method? <br><br> • **Evaluation** - The ability to judge the worth or success of a concept, theory, or method. <br> Course Question:  Does the course ask students to question the worth of its concepts, theories, or methods? <br><br> • **Reflection** - The ability to see oneself in relation to a concept, theory, or practice, one may profess. <br> Course Question:  Does the course ask students to examine the relationship between themselves, or their discipline, and the concepts, theories, or methods they practice? |

Citizenship:

| Citizenship: Civic and Social Accountability |
|---|
| • **Define the individual's local, national, and global roles and responsibilities.** Articulate how to fulfill the individual's roles, adapt the individual's roles to various social, cultural, political, historical, and environmental contexts. <br><br>• **Express civic dispositions.** Respect diverse individual and societal perspectives, engage multiple perspectives for the good of the community. <br><br>• **Demonstrate these responsibilities and dispositions through choices and behaviors.** Use knowledge and disposition to positively impact the individual's communities. |
| Citizenship: Personal Accountability |
| • **Describe the professional expectations of colleagues, peers, and instructors.** Take personal responsibility to meet or exceed these expectations. <br><br>• **Express critical self-awareness.** Honestly self-assess how the individual meets expectations, take personal responsibility to improve when expectations are not met. <br><br>• **Adapt as needed.** Use knowledge and disposition to adapt the individual's behavior, attitude, and/or actions to be personally accountable in all situations. |

# COURSE OBJECTIVES AND COURSE SYLLABUS

Assessment begins with faculty deciding on their discipline/program student learning outcomes – what they want students to learn and why. Outcomes identify what a student will know, what a student will do, and how a student will conduct themselves upon completion of the course.

- To assure consistency in what is being taught in all courses at all locations, every faculty member must follow the departmentally approved course syllabus, which identifies the course objectives.
- Every course syllabus must include the course objectives, written in behavioral and measurable terms (as well as many other items).
- Course objectives must be consistent with the Master syllabus for the course. The Master syllabus for a course is formulated by relevant faculty, reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee, and submitted to the Illinois Community College Board for acceptance.
- Each discipline/program must have identified student learning outcomes for a particular degree or certificate. The ability of graduates to successfully meet these goals is directly related to the student's ability to achieve the course objectives. Every course is important in building successful graduates; courses should not be isolated experiences.

A syllabus template is provided to all faculty in Infoshare. It contains all the required items and many suggested items.

# WRITING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs), COURSE OBJECTIVES

Learning outcomes specify both an *observable behavior* and the *object of that behavior*. For example: Students will be able to *write a research paper*.

In addition, a specific *criterion* may also be identified: Students will be able to write a research paper *in the appropriate scientific style*.

Also, the condition under which the behavior occurs may be specified: *At the end of their field research*, students will be able to write a research paper in the appropriate scientific style.

Note that the verb that is chosen will help focus what is assessed. For example: Students will be able to do research. The verb do is vague. Does it mean *identify an appropriate research question, review the literature, establish hypotheses, use research technology, collect data, analyze data, interpret results, draw conclusions, or recommend further research*, or what? Each of the verbs in those previous statements is appropriately specific.

Each program/discipline student learning outcome and course objective should be written in measurable terms following the SMART acronym: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound.

**Specific**: The outcome/objective states what students should specifically be able to do upon completion of the course, program, degree, or certificate.

**Measurable**: The outcome/objective is written using measurable verbs (see below) and is assessable using standard assessment tools.

**Attainable**: The outcome/objective is written at the appropriate level to the award earned by the student who completes the course, program, degree, or certificate.

**Relevant**: The outcome/objective is the most relevant skills or attributes that students must have upon completion of the course, program, degree, or certificate.

**Timely**: Achievement of the outcome/objective will ensure that students have the current skills or attributes necessary for work or further education.

**SLO SMART Rubric**

| Program, Discipline, or Course Code | |
| --- | --- |
| Student Learning Outcomes: | |

| | Criteria | Score | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Specific | The SLO states what students should specifically be able to do upon completion of the program | | |
| Measurable | SLO is written using measurable verbs and is assessable using standard assessment tools | | |
| Attainable | Students who complete the degree or certificate must be able to attain this SLO at a level appropriate to the award | | |
| Relevant | The SLO is the *most relevant* skills or attributes that students must have upon completion of the degree or certificate | | |
| Timely | Achievement of the SLO will ensure that students have the current skills or attributes necessary for work or further education | | |

**Reviewer Recommendation**

**Reviewer/Date**

In conclusion:

Assessable student learning outcomes should have the following five features:
1. They use actionable verbs, following Bloom's taxonomy, that indicate how the student work can be observed
2. They focus on what the student should do, not what the instructor teaches.
3. They reflect what students should be able to do after a course ends, not simply what they do during the course.
4. They usually can be assessed in more than one way.
5. They can be understood by someone outside the discipline.

**Example of Bloom's Taxonomy:**

| Cognitive Domain (knowledge and intellectual learning) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Knowledge** – recall and recognition of facts and information. | **Comprehension** – process of fully understanding the information. | **Application** – using the information in new and concrete situations. | **Analysis** – breaking down information into components/parts. | **Synthesis** – combining parts of information to form a new whole. | **Evaluation** – judging the value of information based on specified criteria. |
| List<br>Name<br>Identify<br>Show<br>Define<br>Recognize<br>Recall<br>State<br>Visualize | Summarize<br>Explain<br>Interpret<br>Describe<br>Compare<br>Paraphrase<br>Differentiate<br>Demonstrate<br>Classify | Solve<br>Illustrate<br>Calculate<br>Use<br>Interpret<br>Relate<br>Manipulate<br>Apply<br>Modify | Analyze<br>Organize<br>Deduce<br>Contrast<br>Compare<br>Distinguish<br>Discuss<br>Plan<br>Devise | Design<br>Hypothesize<br>Support<br>Schematize<br>Write<br>Report<br>Justify | Evaluate<br>Choose<br>Estimate<br>Judge<br>Defend<br>Criticize |

Bloom, B. S. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives, Vol.1: The cognitive domain. New York: McKay.

| Affective Domain (attitudes, values, feelings, and emotions) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Receiving** – willing to accept or attend to information. | **Responding** – actively participate and react to information. | **Valuing** – perceive the information to be worthwhile, try to get involved. | **Organization** – assess the information and become an advocate. | **Characterization** – incorporate the values and beliefs of the information into your behavior. |
| Listen<br>Attend<br>Accept<br>Receive<br>Be aware<br>Favor<br>Perceive | List<br>Complete<br>Obey<br>Volunteer<br>Record<br>Select<br>Write | Recognize<br>Participate<br>Increase<br>Attain<br>Influence<br>Assume<br>Indicate | Organize<br>Associate<br>Relate<br>Find<br>Determine<br>Formulate<br>Correlate | Display<br>Judge<br>Demonstrate<br>Identify<br>Practice<br>Maintain<br>Develop |

Krathwohl, D. R., et. al. (1964). Taxonomy of educational objectives, book 2: Affective domain. New York: McKay.

| Psychomotor Domain (physical skills) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Action** – elementary movements of the legs and arms. | **Coordination** – synchronized movements using the eyes, hands, and feet. | **Formation** – nonverbal expressive movements e.g., facial expressions, and gestures. | **Production** – combine verbal and nonverbal movements. |
| Lift<br>Load<br>Reach<br>Carry<br>Swing<br>Sweep<br>Close | Adjust<br>Type<br>Operate<br>Align<br>Connect<br>Assemble<br>Construct | Gesture<br>Posture<br>Express<br>Perform<br>Show<br>Convey<br>Conduct | Speak<br>Present<br>Direct<br>Produce<br>Coach<br>Form<br>Balance |

Kilber, R. J., et. al. (1981). Objectives for Instruction and Evaluation. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

# USING RUBRICS IN ASSESSMENT

From the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University (https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/index.html) :

## What are Rubrics?

A rubric is a scoring tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for an assignment or piece of work. A rubric divides the assigned work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each component, at varying levels of mastery. Rubrics can be used for a wide array of assignments: papers, projects, oral presentations, artistic performances, group projects, etc. Rubrics can be used as scoring or grading guides, to provide formative or summative feedback to support and guide ongoing learning efforts, or both.

## Advantages of Using Rubrics

Using a rubric provides several advantages to both instructors and students. Grading according to an explicit and descriptive set of criteria helps ensure that the instructor's grading standards are consistent. Grading consistency is difficult to maintain over time because of fatigue, shifting standards based on prior experience, or intrusion of other criteria. Grading rubrics are invaluable in large courses that have multiple graders (other instructors, teaching assistants, etc.) because they can help ensure consistency across graders and reduce the systematic bias that can be introduced between graders. Rubrics can help instructors get a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of their class.

Grading rubrics are also valuable to students. A rubric provides transparency to students regarding the specific requirements and acceptable performance standards of an assignment. When rubrics are given to students with the assignment description, they can help students monitor and assess their progress as they work toward clearly indicated goals. When assignments are scored and returned with the rubric, students can more easily recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their work and direct their efforts accordingly.

## College-Wide Rubrics at SWIC

Faculty at SWIC have developed rubrics to assess four tracks from the core competencies:
Communication Skills – Writing Rubric
Communication Skills – Oral Communication Rubric
Communication Skills – Oral Communication Group Presentation Rubric
Communication Skills – Computer Literacy Rubric
Citizenship – Personal Accountability Rubric

These rubrics are available on the Outcomes Assessment web site in Infoshare.

# DISCIPLINE AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT:
# OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT WEBPAGE

The Outcomes Assessment web page for each discipline or program plays an important part of program review. The web page serves as a repository for much, if not all, of the assessment data for a discipline or program. Every discipline and program at SWIC have a specific Outcomes Assessment web page. The public version of the web page, available through www.swic.edu, contains at least the following items:

- Curriculum Map which includes Discipline/Program Mission, Student Learning Outcomes, Core Competency assessment, and Outcomes Assessment Timeline

There is also a version of each discipline's or program's Outcomes Assessment web page that is only accessible to faculty and administrators through Infoshare. The version of the web page contains the following addition items:

- Curriculum Map which includes Discipline/Program Mission, Student Learning Outcomes, Core Competency assessment, and Outcomes Assessment Timeline
- Annual Discipline/Program Review report
- 5-year Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Discipline/Program report

Brief descriptions of these items on a disciplines or programs OA web page are:

**Mission and Goals**: A mission statement is a clear and concise statement describing the overarching plan of student achievement for the program, discipline, or certificate. Goals are the general aims or purposes of a program and its curriculum. Effective goals are broadly stated, meaningful, achievable, and assessable. Goals provide a framework for determining the more specific educational objectives of a program, and should they should be consistent with and supportive of a program's or discipline's mission.

**Curriculum Map**:  A document, often in chart form, that identifies the courses in a curriculum where each discipline or program goal is introduced (I), emphasized (E), or reinforced (R), for all courses in a discipline or program. Additionally, the curriculum map demonstrates if and where core competency outcomes are assessed in a program or degree.

**OA Timeline**:  The OA Timeline is embedded within the program/discipline's curriculum map based upon the timeline for when specific courses are taught. Program/discipline specific assessments occur based upon the faculty-decided timeline. Additionally, core competency assessments occur along the same timeline allowing for assessments to occur ongoing throughout the academic year.

Faculty review discipline/program mission and student learning outcomes along with the corresponding curriculum maps annually. Changes are reviewed and approved by the College's Curriculum Committee.

**Annual Discipline/Program Reports:** Each year, every program and discipline document outcomes assessment through the annual report which aligns with ICCB's 5-year report. The annual report allows faculty, program coordinators, and department chairs to collect data from respective courses and assess student achievement through the linkage of course objectives to program/discipline student learning outcomes. This information provides an avenue for collaborative efforts of

educational improvement, planning and budgeting of resources, and discipline/programmatic changes. The continuous collection of assessment demonstrates trends occurring within the program/discipline between the ICCB 5-year reporting cycles. Annual discipline/program reports are submitted to the Program Review Committee to allow the committee to provide peer feedback prior to the final approval from the OA Department.

**ICCB 5-year Discipline/Program Report**: Based upon the state determined cycle, each discipline or program is required to submit a five-year report to ICCB demonstrating pertinent information about the discipline or program. ICCB 5-year reports are submitted to the Program Review Committee to allow the committee to provide peer feedback prior to the final approval from the OA Department. Final reports are due to the OA Department by the end of the semester in which they are being completed. Those reports are then submitted by June 1st of that academic year to the Chief Academic Officer, who then submits the report to the state of Illinois.

# OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES AT SWIC

Every instructor at SWIC has the opportunity to participate in OA at the classroom level and is encouraged to attend any assessment workshop offered throughout the academic year. Additionally, if an instructor is interested in serving on a committee at the institutional level, contact the OA Coordinator or Instructional Dean. Administrators serve on many of the OA Committees to keep abreast of the committee's needs and goals along with supporting activities faculty wish to pursue related to student learning outcomes. Based on results from data collected, administration provides the financial resources to support the OA Coordinator and faculty in their OA endeavors. The administration can also allocate financial support for faculty development related to enhancing and documenting student learning activities.

Committee terms for full-time faculty vary in length, but do not exceed three years. Committee members will be determined by popular vote in each of the divisions. Committee terms for adjunct faculty will be three year(s), and members will be recommended by the appropriate Instructional Deans.

## Assessment Steering Committee

The Assessment Steering Committee (ASC) is committed to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning. The ASC is co-chaired by the OA Coordinator (full-time faculty member) and an appointed Dean from the Instructional Services Leadership team. This committee will guide the college-wide assessment efforts by establishing policies, procedures, and various Outcomes Assessment (OA) documents. Since the ASC oversees the Core Competency, Program Review, and Co-Curricular Committees which consists of members from all areas of the College, assessment at SWIC is seen as the shared responsibility of all areas. Assessment of student learning, however, is a faculty-driven process. Faculty, as content experts, create measures for their own areas within basic parameters set by the Instructional Services leadership and the ASC.

## Core Competency Committee

The Core Competency Committee provides leadership for the assessment of the College's institution-level core competency student learning outcomes. The Core Competency Committee fosters activities related to improving student learning aligned to the Core Competency SLOs, including communication, reasoning skills, and citizenship. The committee analyzes collected institutional assessment data, recommends improvements, develops and leads College-wide curricular initiatives concerning core competency SLOs, conducts regular reviews of SLO alignment to institutional expectations for benchmarking purposes, conducts faculty rubric norming sessions, and facilitates professional development opportunities related to core competency assessment. Additionally, the committee is responsible for creation and consistent implementation of the Institutional Assessment for Core Competency outcomes timeline. In collaborative effort, the Core Competency Committee is comprised of faculty and administration. The Core Competency committee collaborates and reports assessment outcomes to the ASC regularly.

## Program Review Committee

The Program Review Committee reviews and provides recommendations to faculty, program coordinators, and department chairs on all annual program reviews and five-year ICCB program review reports. The Program Review Committee engages in the peer review process in which the committee provides synchronous feedback to the respective faculty, program coordinator, and/or department chair. The committee analyzes collected information through the program review process to provide recommendations for professional development opportunities, prospective allocation of resources, and improvements to student learning for programs/disciplines. The committee performs norming sessions for rubric and template development of the annual report to ensure consistency with SWIC's accreditation requirements (HLC) and state recognition (ICCB) requirements, while also facilitating meaningful and ongoing internal review processes. The committee is comprised of faculty and administration to promote college-wide communication to inform SWIC's strategic planning process. The Program Review Committee collaborates and reports program review outcomes to the ASC regularly.

## Co-Curricular Committee

The Co-Curricular Committee provides leadership for assessment of co-curricular activities. Co-Curricular activities are those educational experiences that occur outside of a course to assist students achieve meaningful learning outcomes in conjunction with academic study. These experiences may take the form of participation in a student club or the utilization of learning support services such as the library or the Student Success Center. The Co-Curricular Committee is responsible for establishing guidelines for identifying which activities are co-curricular and to facilitate the assessment processes for those activities. The Co-Curricular Committee consists of faculty and staff, which provide input and feedback on student activities and co-curricular plans submitted by clubs or departments annually. This committee includes faculty, staff, and administration to provide feedback college-wide. The Co-Curricular Committee collaborates and reports assessment outcomes, initiatives, and professional development opportunities to the ASC regularly.

# EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEES AT SWIC, RELATED TO OA

## Online Learning Committee

The Online Learning Committee provides oversight of quality pertaining to online learning. The committee provides leadership in the areas of reviewing online course templates, online student survey data, and learning management system related matters. The Online Learning Committee is comprised of faculty, staff, and administration working collaboratively to ensure quality educational opportunities occur the same online as they do in the classroom. The committee informs the ASC in matters related to online learning but does not actively participate in assessment processes underneath the ASC.

## Assessment Training Team (A-Team)

The Assessment Training Team provides leadership opportunities in professional development of faculty, staff, and administration related to assessment and accreditation topics. These topics can coincide with college, state, and external accreditor expectations; but also include classroom and programmatic/discipline assessment techniques. This team receives feedback from all aspects of the college to determine areas of need and opportunity for professional growth in relation to outcomes assessment. Participants on this team collaborate with any outcomes assessment committee and/or educational committee at SWIC for collaborative communication, professional development training, and feedback from training. This committee informs the ASC in matters related to assessment training but does not actively participate in assessment processes underneath the ASC.

# CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHANGES

Any outcomes assessment related changes to disciplines, programs, or courses should be approved through the Outcomes Assessment Coordinator prior to appearing on the Curriculum Committee agenda. Outcomes assessment related changes could include, but are not limited to, changes to the mission, discipline/program student learning outcomes, curriculum map, and course objective. Once the OA Coordinator has provided feedback and approval occurs, then the faculty member may present the changes to Curriculum Committee.

# GLOSSARY OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

**Action Plan:** a communication of intended steps for improvement based on student learning outcomes/objectives data

**Annual Report:** a report submitted by faculty leaders demonstrating progress with the assessment process within their program/discipline

**Artifact:** the actual tool used for the assessment; test, paper, presentation, survey, demonstration, portfolio

**Assessment:** "Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development." (Palomba and Banta, 1999)

**Assessment Framework:** all of the components that serve as a guide for the assessment process

**Assessment Instruments/Measures:** specific tools used to assess student learning outcomes, course objectives either directly or indirectly; tests, rubrics, papers, surveys

**Assessment Task:** something done by the learner to demonstrate performance against an outcome or objective, either formatively or summatively.

**Baseline Data:** data collected to provide a baseline for establishing performance targets

**Benchmark:** internal or external results which we measure ourselves against.

**Capstone:** a significant, culminating task, usually towards the end of a program/degree, that serves as the final summative assessment against an objective/outcome.

**Classroom Portfolio:** a collection of student work at different stages of development during a course or over a series or courses. Classroom portfolios included work from one course or discipline. They draw together samples from a variety of genres within the discipline.

**Closing the loop:** seeing an implementation assessment cycle through from beginning to end to start again, continuous cycle for improvement

**Co-Curricular Assessment:** assessment of learning experiences that occur outside of the classroom or events in certain student organizations.

**Completer:** a student that meets all the requirements for awarding a degree or certificate within an established time period.

**Continuous Improvement:** an ongoing cycle of using data to make improvements.

**Core Competency:** a skill expected of all SWIC graduates.

**Course objectives**: are measurable learning objectives, which address the specific content of the course. These must be assessed using some method that will evaluate whether or not student learning has taken place. Each course objective should have a link to one or more discipline/program goal.

**Criteria:** clearly stated characteristics of performance/level of achievement of students. These characteristics provide the basis for judging if performance is acceptable.

**Curriculum Map:** an identification where in each course each goal is introduced, emphasized, or reinforced for all courses in a discipline or program. Curriculum map also includes where within a discipline or program core competency outcomes will be assessed.

**Direct Measure of Learning Outcome:** the evaluation of a submitted artifact by an assessor using a valid assessment measure aligned to applicable outcomes or objectives.

**Discipline/Program Student Learning Outcomes:** broad statements addressing what the instructional faculty want the students to understand when they finish their course(s)/program.

**Domains:** refers to a taxonomy developed by a group of educational psychologists, headed by Benjamin Bloom in 1956. This is a classification of levels of thinking behaviors thought to be important in the processes of learning. The three domains include: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective.

**Emphasize (for discipline specific goals/objectives):** students apply concept(s) in varying/multiple situations of greater complexity than when initially introduced.

**Evaluation**: the use of qualitative and quantitative descriptions to judge individual, course, program/discipline, and institutional effectiveness. Depending on the level, evaluative information is used for making decisions about individual performance review, student grades and course, program/discipline, and institutional changes for improvement

**Evidence:** something collected and stored for the purposes of assessment and documenting assessment.

**Expected Level of Achievement:** the performance target anticipated for a student learning outcome, course objective.

**Faculty Evaluation:** a process of administrative review and consultation with faculty concerning performance in the faculty role. The feedback and insights developed through outcomes assessment are not an appropriate foundation for faculty evaluation.

**Formative Assessment:** is continual assessment of student learning aimed at improving student learning and thus increase the chances for the student to succeed. Assessment used during the course of instruction to provide feedback to the instructor regarding learner progress toward desired educational outcomes. Provides an opportunity to make adjustments to instruction before a summative assessment occurs.

**Goal/Target:** the desired level of achievement expected.

**Grading:** a process of faculty review and evaluation of student learning that is used as a basis for rating performance.

**Implementation Cycle:** part of the assessment process. A series of recurring steps in which information is gathered and actions are taken for the purposes of continuous improvement

**Indirect Measure of Learning Outcome:** students or others report their perception of how well a given learning outcome has been achieved.

**Introduce:** student is first exposed to concept/idea and is requested to apply concept in limited scope. These skills are assessed by the faculty member.

**Mission Statement:** is a clear and concise statement describing the faculty's commitment to the assessment of discipline specific student learning outcomes in conjunction with the mission of the college.

**Multiple Measures:** the different methods of assessment that are used to evaluate similar goals and objectives.

**OA Timeline:** a timeline linked to the program/discipline review and the core competency outcomes informing the targeted audience when assessment data will be collected and analyzed.

**Observer Effect:** the degree in which the presence of an observer influences the outcome.

**Open-response Items:** items requiring short written answers.

**Outcome:** the result or expected outcome following the completion of an action or intended action. Outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART). Outcomes can be at multiple levels including general educational level, program level, and non-instructional level.

**Performance-based Assessments:** items or tasks that require students to apply knowledge in real world situations.

**Performance Indicator:** levels of performance that must be met for an outcome to be considered as having been achieved.

**Persistence:** continued enrollment (or degree completion) at any higher education institution – including one different from the institution of initial enrollment – in consecutive terms

**Portfolio:** a representative collection of a student's work, including some evidence that the student has evaluated the quality of his or her own work.

**Preparation and Planning Phase:** part of the assessment process. A series of steps to prepare for the Implementation cycle, including development of learning outcomes, curricular maps, and assessment measures.

**Qualitative Data:** non-numerical data

**Quantitative Data:** numerical data

**Reinforce:** a previously introduced skill that a student may be expected to understand the concept and is expected to use without further explanation.

**Retention:** continued enrollment (or degree completion) within the same higher education institution in consecutive fall terms

**Rubric:** an assessment instrument that defines criteria, levels of performance, and performance descriptors. Useful for assessing for higher-order learning above content knowledge.

**Standard:** established level of accomplishment that all students are expected to meet or exceed.

**Summative Assessment:** is assessment at the end of a term aimed to issue a final grade, degree, certificate or letter of recognition.

**Threshold:** minimum level of achievement expected.

# KEY ASSESSMENT WEBSITES

**Outcomes Assessment at SWIC**:  The college website for Outcomes Assessment provides faculty with access to OA forms and templates for reporting, college-wide rubrics, OA web pages for each discipline and program and other resources. Go to:
https://infoshare.swic.edu/sites/dept/OutcomesAssessment/SitePages/Home.aspx

**National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment**   Established in 2008, the mission of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) is to discover and disseminate ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen undergraduate education, and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders.  https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/

**Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE)**   The Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) is an organization of assessment practitioners committed to documenting and improving student learning in higher education.
https://www.aalhe.org/

**Assessment Institute** is a preeminent national conference on assessment in higher education that includes presentations from national assessment leaders. Concurrent sessions provide a more in-depth perspective on specific topics.  The structure of the conference allows time for networking and consulting with colleagues throughout the world.  https://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/

**The Higher Learning Commission (HLC)** is an independent corporation and one of two commission members of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which is one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. The Higher Learning Commission accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region.
https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/federal-compliance-program.html