

Assessment Terms and Definitions

The definitions of SLOs and PLOs are given first as their acronyms are dispersed throughout the definitions of many of the other assessment terms in this document. The remaining terms are listed in alphabetical order.

Course level student learning outcomes (SLOs): Statements that indicate the skills and knowledge a student should have upon completing a required course in a degree program. These outcomes are actually intended results, or objectives. These are measurable.

Program level student learning outcomes (PLOs): Statements that indicate the skills and knowledge a student should have upon graduating from the degree program. These outcomes are actually intended results, or objectives. These are measurable.

Academic Programs (for Florida Institute of Technology): will be defined as any degree-granting program. These include PhD/PsyD/EdS/EdD/MS/MSA/MBA/MAT/Med/BS/BA/AS/AA programs. Although degree-programs may have several options, they will be treated mainly as one entity in the assessment process.

Achievement Targets: Result, target, benchmark, or value that will represent success at achieving a given outcome.

Action Plans – Actions taken to improve the program or assessment process based on the analysis of results.

Analysis of Findings – Examination of the data gathered during the assessment cycle, including reflective consideration about what actions, if any, should be taken.

Assessment (of student learning)*: the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning. There are two terms used to describe the method of assessment along the continuum of learning.

Formative assessment: assessment that seeks evidence of learning along the progression of students' studies

Summative assessment: assessment that seeks evidence of learning at the end of their studies.

*(*taken from Assessing for Learning by Peggy Maki)*

Assessment Mapping: matching your measurement statement for a PLO to a specific course in a degree program. This map tells you where and when you will be assessing a particular PLO. Usually a PLO will be assessed in a course where the PLO is emphasized or mastered. The Curriculum Map includes such courses hence the Assessment Map is a subset of the Curriculum Map.

Closing the Loop: Using assessment results to improve teaching and learning.

Course mapping: matching the SLOs of a required course to the PLOs of the degree program.

Curriculum (or program) mapping: matching the PLOs to the required courses in a degree program. Ideally this should represent a developing assessment model where courses are identified that *introduce* (I) the PLO criteria, that *reinforce* (R) it (meaning, the PLO had been introduced earlier in the curriculum and is now being reinforced), or that *emphasize* (E) it (meaning, the PLO is mastered; this is usually a senior-level or capstone course).

Division: an academic department or program within a college or school.

Findings – Results (data and/or information) gathered from assessment measures.

Goals – Broad statements that describe the overarching long-range intended outcomes of an administrative unit. These are usually not measurable and are primarily used for general planning.

Measurement (or Measure) statements: Statements that indicate the type of measure or tool used for assessing PLOs and the achievement targets for that measure. There are two types of measures.

Direct measures: measures used to analyze student behaviors or products in which they demonstrate how well they have mastered PLOs. The **products** can be exams (both published and locally-developed), embedded assignments, course activities, portfolios, etc.

Indirect measures: measures used to analyze reported perceptions about student mastery of PLOs. Examples can include surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Objectives – Brief, clear statements that describe the desired learning outcomes of instruction; i.e., the specific skills, values, and attitudes students should exhibit that reflect the broader goals. Objectives are intended results.