PLO Report Review: Instructions and Form

Background:
The goals of this PLO Assessment Report Review are to (1) provide feedback to programs on their assessment efforts, and (2) identify and report back to each School's faculty any assessment or student learning issues common to the School's programs. To support this work, we will also (3) rate each program's assessment efforts against the *Rubric for the Report on PLO Assessment*.

Instructions:
Primary Reviewers:
For each PLO Report you review, please complete the primary reviewer sections of the Review Form, then forward the completed forms to the secondary reviewer.

Secondary reviewers:
Please review the PLO Reports and the primary reviewer's responses to the Review Form. In the secondary reviewer sections of the form, please note any differences with the primary reviewer's conclusions, or any additional thoughts, you might have. Finally please submit completed Review Forms to …..

Reviewers and programs are listed below:

PLO Report Review Form

1) Name of Program:_____

2) Please assess the program's level of development with respect to each of the five criteria in the *Rubric for the Report on PLO Assessment* (Appendix B). Provide your conclusions, along with any supporting comments, in the table below as I (Initial), E (Emerging), D (Developed) or HD (Highly Developed). A program can be assessed to fall between two levels of development, for example, I/E or E/D.

Reviewer	Assessable PLO	Valid Evidence	Reliable Results	Results Summary	Conclusions & Recommendations
Primary					
Secondary					

3) Please provide the program with constructive feedback regarding its assessment practices. (These comments will be excerpted and shared with the program on behalf of this committee, so please craft these with your colleagues in mind.)

   a) In one sentence, describe a clear strength of the program's assessment efforts.

      Primary Reviewer:

      Secondary Reviewer:

   b) Based on the criterion (or criteria) identified in question 2 as needing the most development, and the corresponding supplemental questions provided in Appendix A, please identify two or three assessment practices to be strengthened.

      Primary Reviewer:

      Secondary Reviewer:

4) Please note what you might imagine to be emerging, shared themes related to the assessment process and/or student learning results.

Primary Reviewer:

Secondary Reviewer:

5) Any outstanding thoughts or questions?

Primary Reviewer:

Secondary Reviewer:

APPENDIX A: A set of questions is provided below to help guide the identification of assessment practices to be strengthened in response to Question 3 above. To support this process, the questions are organized by the criteria that appear on *Rubric for the Report on PLO Assessment*. *Please pay particular attention to italicized questions as they were specifically identified in the most recent WASC Commission Action Letter as important areas of development and so should have priority in feedback.*

Assessable PLOs:

- *As written, is the PLO measurable? Does it involve specific, active verbs that such as "demonstrate by" or "solve" as opposed to verbs of general cognition like "know" or "understand"?*
- Is the PLO likely to be understood by students? Of use to students?
- To help faculty (and students as relevant) develop a shared understanding of what student mastery of the PLO looks like in practice, has a rubric been developed that articulates criteria[1] and standards[2] of performance (for each criterion)?

Valid Evidence:

- Is a rationale for the assessment strategy provided? Does the program explain why a particular piece of work, or a particular course, is an appropriate focus for examining student achievement with respect to the PLO?
- Related to the bullet above, does the assessment work have a program/PLO focus rather than course-level focus?
- *Does the assessment method include at least one form of direct evidence (i.e. actual student work)?*
- Is the assessment measure going to produce results that bear on the PLO? (I.e. Is it aligned with the PLO?)
- Will the sample size and sampling strategy produce results that represent the student norm?
- Are multiple, complementary forms of evidence used to more precisely identify areas in need of attention and to strengthen confidence in the conclusions? (For example, direct and indirect evidence?)

Reliable Results:

- Did the program use a rubric with explicit standards and criteria to review student work and, thereby, promote agreement among reviewers about student proficiency?
- Did at least two faculty members review each piece of student work?
- Were faculty reviewers calibrated or normed with respect to explicit standards and criteria used to asses student work in order to promote agreement among reviewers about observed student proficiencies?
- Did the program determine how consistently faculty reached the same conclusion with respect to a piece of student work (i.e. determine inter-rater reliability)?

[1] "The qualities we look for in student evidence." (Driscoll and Wood, 2007) The specific skills or abilities to be measured.

[2] Standards describe the levels of performance for a given criterion (ex. proficient to exemplary).

Summarizing Results:

- To gain a sense of the distribution of student performance relative to performance standards or levels of proficiency, does the program describe the percentage of students meeting specific levels of performance, for example, as described in a rubric?
- Does the program identify a goal for the percentage of students meeting minimum or higher levels of proficiency? Are the assessment results evaluated in relation to this goal?

Conclusions and Recommendations:

- Are the program's conclusions supported by the results?
- Are issues related to the validity and reliability of the results considered in drawing conclusions and identifying actions to be taken on the basis of those conclusions?
- As warranted, does the program propose some actions to be taken in response to their conclusions? Are the actions well-aligned with the conclusions?
- In order to promote improvements in student learning have the results, conclusions and proposed actions been shared with the faculty and approved by the faculty?

Appendix B: Rubric for Report on PLO Assessment (see next page)

RUBRIC FOR REPORT ON PLO ASSESSMENT

Center for Research on Teaching Excellence

	Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
ASSESSMENT METHODS	**Assessable Program Learning Outcome (PLO)**	PLO does not identify what students can do to demonstrate learning (vague, immeasurable verb statements like "students understand major theories"). No rubric developed.	PLO indicates how students can demonstrate learning. Action verb may be general and the PLO may not be observable or measurable. Assessment criteria[3] have not been identified or are incomplete. Rubric in early stages of development.	PLO describes how students can demonstrate learning, identifying observable and measurable results. Criteria are articulated in the form of a rubric, criteria and standards[1] may need further development to be more meaningful and consistently applied.	PLO specifically describes how students can demonstrate learning. Rubric clearly articulates explicit criteria and standards[1] for assessing the PLO, identifies the most important aspects of student learning, and includes descriptions of student performance at varying levels.
	Valid Evidence	It is not clear that potentially valid evidence is collected for the PLO and/or individual faculty use personalized rather than programmatic criteria and standards[1] to assess student work or performance.	Faculty have reached general agreement on the types of evidence to be collected for the PLO but may not include both direct and indirect forms. Evidence needs to be further focused or aligned with PLO or emerging criteria to produce truly meaningful and useful results.	Faculty collect relevant & sufficient evidence for each outcome, including both indirect and direct evidence. Assessment instruments (ex. rubric) assess the level of student attainment. Evidence is aligned with the PLO and assessment criteria to enable meaningful results and conclusions.	Assessment criteria have been pilot-tested and refined over time, usually shared with students. Direct and indirect evidence are designed to mutually inform conclusions. Feedback has led to refinements in the assessment process.
	Reliable Results	Reviewers of student work are not calibrated to apply assessment criteria in a uniform way; there are no checks for inter-rater reliability	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in a uniform way or faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in a uniform way and faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated, and faculty routinely find assessment data to have high inter-rater reliability.
RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS	**Results Summary**	Results (data table or other means) are not included in report.	Results (data table or other means) are included but unclear or missing key data.	Results clearly delineated for each line of evidence in tabular or other summary formats. May reference benchmarks or other expectations.	Results clearly delineate each line of evidence, indicating various levels of achievement. Includes benchmarks.
	Conclusions & Recommendations	Report identifies implications but no recommendations for improvement in student learning or assessment practices and no explanation of how these claims are derived. No reasoning offered in support of claims.	Report identifies some conclusions, implications, and recommendations for improvements regarding student learning or assessment, but the claims are vague or questionably related to results. Support for claims is occasionally insufficient. Questions of validity or reliability are not discussed. Results may be discussed by limited number of faculty, recommendations may be difficult to implement due to lack of convincing results and/or limited faculty involvement or support.	Report clearly articulates conclusions, implications and recommendations for improvement regarding both student learning and assessment and which could be drawn from results. Includes some consideration of the reliability and validity of results. May offer vague support for some claims. Results have been discussed by many faculty and recommendations likely to be implemented due to faculty involvement and support and quality of assessment work.	Report articulates a well-reasoned critique of conclusions, implications, and recommendations that could be drawn from the results for both student learning and assessment. Includes a well-reasoned discussion of validity and reliability of results. Faculty discuss results, plan needed changes, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. Efforts to collaborate with others, such as librarians or student affairs professionals, to improve results.

[3] Criteria are the specific skills or abilities to be measured. Standards describe the levels of performance for a given criterion (ex. proficient to exemplary).

Based on C. Jenefsky & JFKU Program Review Council (2008) and WASC rubrics (2007)

RUBRIC FOR REPORT ON PLO ASSESSMENT

Center for Research on Teaching Excellence

This rubric has five major criteria:

(1) **Assessable Program Learning Outcomes**: Program learning outcome should be reasonable and appropriate for the degree level. If national disciplinary standards are available, the PLO may reflect those priorities. To be assessable, it should involve specific, active verbs with supporting details describing how students will demonstrate their learning. For instance, avoid verbs of general cognition such as "know" or "understand" and instead use verbs like "demonstrate by" or "solve" that show how learning is applied. Through discussion of examples of student work and perhaps course-specific rubrics used by faculty, faculty groups have agreed on explicit criteria[4] and elaborated a program-level rubric. For more information, see <http://crte.ucmerced.edu/program-learning-outcomes-resources>.

(2) **Valid Evidence**: To be valid, evidence must be discussed among faculty and aligned with both the expectation(s) described by the PLO and the criteria[2] faculty use to evaluate student learning. Valid evidence is also linked to sample size or sampling approach, so as to be representative of a norm. For more information, see the appended selection on sample sizing from Linda Suskie's *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide* (2004).

(3) **Reliable Results**: Reliable results stem from agreement among faculty about the standards[2] used to evaluate student work, usually as articulated in a faculty-developed, program-wide rubric. Agreement about how to apply these standards in the evaluation of student work (i.e. calibration) is rooted in discussion and practice. Some questions to consider are: How do faculty promote calibration? How do faculty check for calibration? I.e. when faculty apply a rubric to student work, how consistently do they reach the same conclusions (i.e. exhibit inter-rater reliability)? If results are inconsistent, how can inter-rater reliability be improved?

(4) **Summarizing Results**: When drafting a results chart (data table or other means), it is important to consider multiple audiences. How would faculty within your department understand the results? If viewed by outside stake-holders like students, faculty from other programs, administrators, parents, etc., would they reach similar conclusions? Comparing the results to previous results in your program, expectations your program has set for student learning, or to results of similar programs within or outside of the UC (i.e. benchmarking) can provide context for interpreting the results.

(5) Conclusions and Recommendations: An effective conclusion closes the loop by analyzing results and implementing change. The narrative should address some probable conclusions based on the results. For example, if students were not given a clear incentive to participate in a particular assessment, the results may not be completely reliable as students may not have been motivated to perform at their best. Specific actions and a timeline for implementation should also be provided since the goal is to gather data to improve both student learning and the ability to engage in effective assessment. Changes might include improving the assessment process or curriculum, examining curriculum content in support of skill development, changing pedagogical practices, stimulating faculty discussion, simply re-examining program learning outcomes, or identifying ways student support services (tutoring, advising, the library) might contribute to increased student success.

---

[4] Criteria are the specific skills or abilities to be measured. Standards describe the levels of performance for a given criterion (ex. proficient to exemplary) and in doing so enable their measurement.

Based on C. Jenefsky & JFKU Program Review Council (2008) and WASC rubrics (2007)