

Frequently Asked Questions about Assessment of University Outcomes

1. **What are the University Outcomes?**

University Outcomes are the general, overarching learning outcomes that we expect our undergraduates to achieve in the course of their study at our University. This term differentiates these broad outcomes from the ones we expect from study in a major/program or in a particular course. This term emphasizes the origins of these outcomes, that is, the broad University curriculum, “Framework for Learning,” ([http:// www.csp.edu/academiccatalog/](http://www.csp.edu/academiccatalog/)) and the fact that they are not confined to a few General Education courses. University Outcomes include the 11 skills/values, e.g., writing, oral communication, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, value-aesthetic, etc. We use the term, University Outcomes to emphasize the learning expected of all University bachelor’s degree graduates, traditional, online, and cohort alike.

2. **Why assess student achievement of University Outcomes?**

- Improvement in the quality of learning of our University Outcomes based on consistent data.
- Accountability: we owe it to our students, their families, and our various publics to demonstrate that students do learn what we say they will learn when they engage in our curriculum and other campus experiences.
- Greater consistency in how our students experience the University Outcomes and are evaluated for them.
- Accreditation: Our accreditors expect that we are reflective practitioners, which means that we determine on a regular, ongoing basis whether or not students are really learning what we think/say they are, and make improvements toward that end.

3. **How do I know which two University Outcomes are assigned to my General Education course?**

Each department teaching a General Education course has agreed to emphasize and assess the same two University Outcomes. Please see “Integration of University Outcomes into General Education Course Requirements,” located on the University Outcomes page of the Assessment website to see which University Outcomes each department is responsible for assessing.

4. **Can I change which two University Outcomes I assess?**

Only with approval from your department and the General Education Committee.

Annual Assessment Reports of University Outcomes in General Education courses

5. **Will anyone really look at this report? What happens to it?**

The General Education Committee, Assessment Council, College Dean, and the VPAA review these reports to look for achievement trends in relation to the University Outcomes at the University level. In addition, the General Education Committee agrees that departments should reflect upon student learning in relation to the University Outcomes allowing for possible instructional revisions, curricular changes, and/or professional development. These reports will also be available for accreditation purposes.

6. **Who is supposed to complete the annual report – there are multiple sections and instructors for this class?**

Each instructor of a General Education course will use an in-course assignment/activity to assess each Outcome. They will then enter their evaluation of each student’s achievement of that Outcome into the eLumen database using the rubric for that Outcome. At the end of the academic year, each department will review the aggregated data for each University Outcome addressed in their courses

for fall and spring semester. This data analysis is part of the Annual Assessment Report completed by each department.

7. What if there are multiple sections and instructors for this class?

The department needs to determine common learning experiences as much as possible to increase the accuracy of assessing the University Outcomes.

8. Does the department need to emphasize and assess all of the specific SLOs (student learning outcomes) listed under each University Outcome?

No. The department needs to determine which of the SLOs are appropriate to their General Education course and assess those.

Assessment and eLumen (data management system) Terms Explained

University Outcomes: A set of 11 very broad learning outcomes derived from Concordia University's Framework for Learning, which was approved by the full faculty in 1996. These broad outcomes are what we as a faculty expect our undergraduates to achieve during their course of study for the baccalaureate degree. See the "List of University Outcomes and Descriptions" on the University Outcomes page of the Assessment website for SLOs and descriptors.

eLumen: eLumen is the data management system that Concordia University uses to collect individual faculty evaluations of their students' achievements of various learning outcomes. This system also allows for the aggregation and sorting of these data points so that they can be used to see bigger picture trends across courses, sections, students, and terms. Data such as this helps decision makers in departments, curriculum committees, and colleges determine where there are needs for improvements in student learning. eLumen does not "equal" assessment. eLumen is a *tool* that supports the University's efforts to organize and aggregate assessment data.

Assessments: These are things that instructors use, typically within a course, to measure the degree to which students have achieved the learning outcomes being address in that course. Some of the most common assessment activities include whole or portions of papers, discussion boards, presentations, exams, portfolios, etc.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO): This is both a well-known assessment term and a term used in the eLumen system. It means "what it is you want/expect the student to achieve/learn/be able to do."