

Welcome (index.html)

Assessment (assessmentstarttofinish.html)

Methods (assessmentmethods.html)

Samples (samples.html)

Reporting (reportresults.html)

FAQs (faq.html)

Discussion (generatingdiscussion.html)

Documents (resources.html)

Meetings (meetings.html)

# Methods

---

## Assessment Methods to Consider

### **Assessment Methods**

There are many techniques for assessing SLOs. A partial list and brief description of the most commonly used assessment techniques is below. The subject matter expert (the faculty member) decides which method is best.

Direct Assessment Techniques:

- Student Portfolios and Projects
- Pre and Post Tests
- Exit Exams
- Embedded Techniques

Indirect Assessment Techniques:

- Surveys of students, alumni, employers, and/or transfer institutions
- Evaluation and Self-Evaluation Reports
- Interviews
- Focus Groups

The three most common assessment techniques for instructional SLOs are the embedded assessments, portfolios and pre-post exams.

### **Embedded Assessment**

Embedded assessment techniques use the results of assignments that are already in place and used for determining grades. Any assignment or portion of an assignment can be used to measure the SLOs as appropriate.

When using embedded assignments to measure SLOs, two sets of records are usually kept. One set of records is kept to determine the student's grade, while the other is kept in order to keep track of the percent of students who satisfactorily "meet" the SLO.

### **Portfolios**

Portfolios contain a selection of student work and are useful both at the course level and program level for assessing SLOs.

For a course or sequence of courses, the portfolio contains a collection of the student's work over the semester or a series of semesters. The work is used to assess the process of learning by showing advancements and improvements over time, or via demonstration of concepts attained. These are especially useful when the purpose of the course or sequence of courses is to improve student skills as in writing, critical analysis, or the arts.

To assess the SLO, portfolios are evaluated based on a set of previously defined standards designed to measure evidence of learning, development, progress and/or improvement. A scoring rubric is essential for evaluating "progress" consistently across all sections and should be developed jointly by instructors of the same course. If rubrics are the same, it may not be necessary for assignments to be the same in different sections as long as they are equivalent. Some faculty (and students) find it useful to have students also score themselves with either the same rubric or one developed specifically for students use.

### **Pre-tests and Post-tests**

Pre-test are assessments administered to students prior to the interaction with instructors, usually for the purpose of identifying existing skills, knowledge, and/or perceptions. The results of the pre-test are then compared with the results from a post-test of the same or similar content. The post-tests are assessments administered after the student interact with instructors, usually for the purpose of documenting attainment of or changes in skills, knowledge, and/or perceptions. Pre/post tests measure the actual learning that took place during the semester, and may be useful in courses where it is expected that students enter the course with previous knowledge and/or skills related to the subject.

To assess the SLO, determine what percent of students showed a previously determined acceptable level of improvement from the pre-test to the post-test scores.

Portfolios and pre/post tests are similar in that they are both designed to show improvement over the semester. Portfolios can be designed to measure incremental or intermediate steps in improvement throughout the semester, whereas pre/post tests compare just two points.

When deciding on assessment techniques, consider the following:

1. Validity –Does the assessment technique measure what you want and will it measure your stated SLO?
2. Reliability and Consistency –Are assessments and scoring consistent across sections and semesters?
3. Fairness –Are the assessment techniques unbiased, value-neutral and reflective of student progress?
4. Usefulness –Will assessment results provide enough information for analysis and evidence to support recommendations?