

Assessment Terminology

- **Assessment** – the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions that affect student learning¹
- **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)** – also known as “goals” or “objectives;”¹ the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students take with them from a learning experience;² describe 1) who is expected to learn, 2) what learning is expected, 3) when/where is learning expected, and 4) why is learning expected³
 - Example: Undergraduate students will be able to identify courses for their schedule to meet program requirements after meeting with an academic advisor at least once.³
- **Program Objective** – a SLO focused on student achievement such as enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensing, and certification⁴
- **Measure** – the instrument used to determine if students are achieving the outcome/goal; includes explanation of how the method is used to evaluate student learning¹
- **Direct Measure** – directly evaluate student work; includes portfolios, exams, papers, project, presentations, performances, standardized tests, licensure exams, comprehensives, and internship evaluations; preferable to indirect measures⁴
- **Indirect Measure** – indirectly evaluate student learning by having students reflect on their learning rather than demonstrate it; includes surveys and interviews⁴
- **Target** – the criteria for success⁴
- **Assessment Plan** – the Program Description, Student Learning Outcomes, Program Objectives, Measures, and Targets⁴
- **Assessment Report** – in addition to the assessment plan, includes the Findings, Action Plans, and Analysis⁴
- **Closing-the-loop** – the final step in assessment; examining whether implemented changes (such as action plans) were successful; examining whether action led to the improvement of student learning⁵
- **Action Plan** – an organized activity undertaken to promote achievement of the outcomes, or an activity developed by program faculty to improve and/or grow the program⁴

1. Walvoord, B. Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education – Second Edition. 2010.
2. Suskie, L. Assessing student learning: A common sense guide. 2009.

3. Levy, J. A Brief Guide to Creating Learning Outcomes. Modern Campus, 2018.
4. Lowery, K. 2018 Assessment Showcase. USM Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment.
5. The University of South Carolina. Closing the Assessment Loop. Assessment Toolbox.