

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNVIERSITY

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING PLAN



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## CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY Academic Assessment of Student Learning Plan

The current CWU Academic Assessment of Student Learning Plan can be summarized as follows:

1. Who is assessed?	Students from undergraduate and graduate programs and general education.
2. How are they assessed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual Academic Assessment Review - each CWU degree program submits a report annually summarizing (1) what outcomes were assessed (2) how they were assessed, (3) what was learned, (4) how current assessment results will be used to improve learning outcomes, (5) how past assessment results were used to improve learning outcomes.</li> <li>2. Program Review Process - summary results are reported every five years.</li> <li>3. Institutional assessment efforts such as the NSSE survey, Institutional Research senior surveys, Institutional Research/Career Services, alumni surveys, etc.</li> </ol>
3. What is learned?	Assessment results are continually gathered and used by programs, colleges, and academic affairs. What is learned is summarized and reported annually and every five years as part of the Annual Academic Assessment Review, the Five Year Program Review process, and the Annual Assessment Report.
4. How will current assessment results be used to improve program learning outcomes?	Summarized in the Annual Academic Assessment Review. Also summarized in the Program Review process.
5. How have past assessment results been used to improve program learning outcomes?	Summarized in the Annual Academic Assessment Review. Also summarized in the Program Review process.

The following pages list some of the assessment methods used at CWU. They also give details on the Annual Academic Assessment Review process and how programs are evaluated on how well they use assessment results to improve program learning outcomes. See AAAR:

<http://www.cwu.edu/~avpugrad/programreview/yearlyreview.html>

Program Review:

<http://www.cwu.edu/~avpugrad/programreview/fiveyearreview.html>

The Central Washington University (CWU) Academic Assessment of Student Learning plan provides a transparent look at the ways in which the university measures itself academically and in relation to its institutional mission, goals and academic strategic objectives for student learning. In the mission and goals of Central Washington University is this statement: “The University will 'maintain and strengthen an outstanding academic and student life on the Ellensburg and University Center campuses.’” Academic Affairs strategic objectives refer to “cultivating a creative and challenging learning environment” and “preparing students for their personal and professional lives and for lifelong learning.” The University accomplishes these goals and strategic objectives through effective curricular, instructional, and assessment processes. Assessment of student learning outcomes is an ongoing departmental, college, and university responsibility and the cornerstone of continuous improvement at CWU. Evidence of student learning and academic achievement at CWU is gathered from three basic sources: general education, program-related, and other institution level data (e.g., institution-wide surveys). These data sources form the basis for decision-making and continuous improvement efforts related to student learning at the departmental, college, and institutional levels.

## General Education Assessment

CWU offers a liberal arts education in order to cultivate thoughtful and responsible persons and citizens, to prepare them for the world of work, and to teach them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. In order to accomplish those broad goals, the general education program seeks to promote effective reasoning, broad and deep learning, and the inclination to inquire. Specifically, CWU General Education Program Goals are:

1. Students will become thoughtful and responsible members of society and stewards of the Earth.
2. Students will respect diversity of background, experience and belief, and will value the different perspectives that this diversity brings.
3. Students will achieve fluency in reading, writing, oral communication and information technology.
4. Students will master the basic principles of logical, mathematical and scientific reasoning.
5. Students will develop an appreciation of the breadth and depth of scientific and humanistic knowledge.
6. Students will develop a sense of the interconnectedness of knowledge.
7. Students will integrate knowledge from diverse fields of study in order to solve real-world problems.
8. Students will become aware of the manifold ways that knowledge evolves.
9. Students will develop a disposition to ask incisive and insightful questions.

Central Washington University assesses general education outcomes in a variety of ways (surveys, focused projects, studies, and standardized exams). Following is a short description of these efforts.

## **Perception Data**

There are a variety of measures and data that are used at CWU to assess student perceptions as to General Education Outcome achievement. These data come primarily from alumni and national standardized surveys that are routinely administered each year.

### **Alumni Surveys**

Alumni surveys are administered in two formats as a part of examining student perceptions of academic quality and development while at CWU. The Office of Institutional Research administers an alumni survey biennially to CWU bachelor degree recipients one year and five years after graduation. Respondents rate a list of academic skills by importance, and then report how satisfied they are with the contribution CWU made to their development in those same skills.

The Office of Testing and Assessment Services administers an alumni survey targeted to graduates of programs engaged in the program review process each year. See the following website

<http://www.cwu.edu/~avpugrad/programreview/programreviewschedule.html> for a yearly list of those program graduates assessed. Respondents rate a list of academic skills by importance to career and then how prepared they were from their CWU educational experience in those same skills.

### **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is used across the nation and is administered to CWU students yearly by the Office of Institutional Research. Although not intended to assess students' perception of achievement, this survey has been viewed as an informative institutional instrument as it assesses first year and senior students' effort and time dedicated to educationally meaningful activities and the extent to which institutions emphasize effective educational practices. Several of the questions are relevant to General Education outcomes (verbal and written communication, critical-thinking, values, and ethics).

### **Graduating Senior Survey**

All graduating seniors complete a survey each year that assesses student satisfaction and perceived development of various academic skills (verbal and written communication, critical-thinking, solving problems, analyzing, and independent learning).

## **Student Achievement Data**

Measures of student learning as related to General Education help the institution understand how students are performing and what students know in relation to broad-based skills (information literacy, writing, quantitative and symbolic reasoning, and critical thinking) important for college graduates to attain. Assessment of these skills is reflected through four sources of information. These sources include Washington

Educator Skills Tests - Basic; Senior Exit Exams; Collegiate Learning Assessment and through individual programmatic study.

### **Washington Educator Skills Test - Basic (WEST-B) exams**

The Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board established the "Washington Educator Skills Test - Basic" (WEST-B) as a requirement for admission to approved teacher preparation programs. The WEST-B is administered by the Office of Testing and Assessment Services and measures basic skills in reading, mathematics, and writing through three subtests. These tests are given throughout the year with the results being analyzed at least yearly to describe achievement levels, trends, and differences between student groups.

### **Senior Exit Exams/Major Field Tests**

Some senior exit exams (e.g., Construction Management, Business Administration) are administered which includes measures of general education achievement (writing, critical thinking, etc.). Some of these exams are nationally standardized while some are locally created. Both types of exit exams provide some measure of general education achievement.

### **Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)**

The CLA is a nationally standardized test designed to measure [critical thinking](#), [analytic reasoning](#), [problem solving](#), and written communication skills. This test is administered by the Office of Testing and Assessment Services to a sample of first year and senior level students each year to provide an institutional level analysis of student performance and improvement of skills over the course of the instructional process.

## **Program Outcome Achievement**

Institutional evidence of student learning outcome attainment within degree programs is obtained in a variety of ways (surveys, standardized exams/tests, and annual student learning assessment reporting). Following is a short description of these efforts.

### **Perception Data**

A national survey of student attitude and expectations (National Survey of Student Engagement) and locally developed surveys (Graduating Senior Survey; Career Development and Placement Alumni Survey; Departmental Alumni Surveys) are used to gauge student satisfaction and success and provide evidence of student learning outcome attainment for degree programs.

### **Graduating Senior Survey**

All graduating seniors complete a survey each year administered by the Office of Institutional Research that assesses student satisfaction and perceived development of various skills developed in specific academic majors.

### **Alumni Surveys**

Alumni surveys are administered in two formats as a part of examining student perceptions of academic quality and development while at CWU. The Office of Institutional Research administers an alumni survey biennially to CWU bachelor degree recipients one year and five years after graduation. In addition, the Office of Testing and Assessment Services administers an alumni survey targeted to graduates of programs engaged in the program review process each year.

### **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is used to measure the extent to which institutions emphasize effective educational practice within major degree programs. Several of the questions are relevant to major degree outcomes.

### **Student Achievement Data**

Measures of student learning as related to degree program outcomes help the institution understand how students are performing and what students know in relation to content specific skills important for program graduates to attain. Assessment of these skills is reflected through three sources of information. These sources include Senior Exit Exams/Major Field Tests; Washington Educator Skills Tests - Endorsements (WEST-E); and through individual programmatic outcome obtainment.

### **Standardized Exams/Major Field Tests**

Central Washington University senior students in a variety of degree programs across all academic colleges (e.g., Computer Science, Business Administration, Biology, Psychology, and Sociology) complete standardized tests yearly as administered by the Office of Testing and Assessment Services as part of their program of study. Although not completed by all CWU students, the variety of degree programs represented and large number of student participants provides institutional documentation and evidence of student learning and achievement.

### **Washington Educator Skills Test (WEST-E)**

Central Washington University students preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school professionals need to know the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills necessary to help all children learn. CWU students complete the WEST-E prior to graduation as administered by the Office of Testing and Assessment Services to demonstrate this knowledge as part of their degree and teacher licensure and certification requirements for Art, Biology, Business Education, Chemistry, Driver Education, Earth Science, Elementary Education, English Language Literature Composition, Family and Consumer Sciences, General Science, German, Health and Physical Education, Library Media Specialist, Mathematics. Although not completed by all CWU students, the variety of degree programs represented and large number of student participants provides institutional documentation and evidence of student learning and achievement.

### **Annual Student Learning Outcomes Reports**

Programmatic assessment data is collected, analyzed, and reported by all degree-granting graduate and undergraduate programs each year. Student learning outcome evidence and the accompanying reports are based on the student learning outcomes listed in individual program assessment plans. The reports are reviewed by the program faculty, the program's Dean and the Associate Vice President of Undergraduate Studies and members of the University Academic Assessment Committee. Aggregation of results by program, college and university provides documentation of academic outcome attainment.