Required SOAP Elements SOAPs at Fresno State

These elements found on the 2019 version of the SOAP template, which you can access on the Assessment of Learning website:

http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/soap/index.html

**I. Mission Statement:**

The mission statement gives an overall description of the key aims and aspirations of a program. The mission statement should align with the mission of the Fresno State while addressing the specific needs of the program. The success of some of the aims or goals of the mission statement may only be able to be measured indirectly.

**II. Institutional Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes/Goals, and SLOs.**

**A. *Institutional Learning Outcomes.*** These are the university’s learning outcomes. They can be obtained on the following webpage:

<http://fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/fresno-state-assessment.html>

**B. *Program Learning Outcomes* (also known as goals)**

Learning Outcomes or Goals are general statements, should relate to the department mission and are specific to a discipline.  Program Learning Outcomes are typically broad statements that reflect knowledge or skills that students should have after completing the program. Each Program Learning Outcome should be aligned with at least one Student Learning Outcome.

**C. *Student Learning Outcomes* (SLO's)**

Student Learning Outcomes (objectives) are specific short-term outcomes that can be evaluated using both direct and indirect measures (direct and indirect measures are defined below).  Student learning outcomes are often specific to a department/program but they may also focus on skills such as the WASC core competencies: written communication, oral communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning. Student Learning Outcomes need to be stated in verifiable terms using action verbs such as *explain, demonstrate an understanding of*, *compare, evaluate,* and *analyze*. There are no minimum or maximum number of SLO’s for departments/programs but all SLO’s in the SOAP must be measured within a five to seven year period. Furthermore, the department must be able to collect and analyze an assignment that aligns with and can adequately measure each of their SLO’s.

**III. Curriculum Map**

A curriculum map is an organizational tool to indicate where in the program students take courses that introduce, develop, or master the program student learning outcomes. For programs that are highly structured and require students to take the major courses in a specific order, the curriculum map will be more precise. In departments where students have greater flexibility in terms of the specific courses and order in which they take major courses, the curriculum map may be adjusted slightly, for example it may have some courses grouped together rather than listed separately. However, every department/program must complete a curriculum map and indicate as accurately as possible the courses in which each SLO will be introduced, reinforced, emphasized, and mastered.

**IV. SLOs Mapped to Assessment Measures and Methods**

In this section, indicate what types of assignments (e.g. exams, papers, lab reports, creative works, or presentations) will be used to measure each student learning outcome and what methods (e.g. a rubric, criteria, or score) will be used to evaluate the assignments.

**V. Assignment Measures**

In this section, list the direct and indirect measures that your department will use to evaluate student learning. Each department or program should include three different direct measures in their assessment activities and at least one indirect measure. Departments/programs may select which specific direct or indirect measures they wish to use to measure each learning outcome.

**A. Direct Measures**

Direct measures of student performance are examples of assignments or projects that students complete during their progress through a program.  These may be embedded into a course, administered at key points, or completed as part of a culminating experience.  There must be a direct relationship between the specific SLO being evaluated and the nature and content of the assignment being used to evaluate it. The SLO and the assignment being used to measure it must align in order for the assessment to be valid.

Assessment of student learning may take place in conjunction with faculty grading of student work and the faculty member teaching the course may conduct the assessment. However, assessment and grading are two different activities. When reviewing student work for assessment purposes, the instructor must use the rubric or criteria adopted by the department for assessment. The rubric or criteria must be aligned with the SLO(s) being evaluated. When reviewing student work for grading purposes, instructors may use any grading criteria that the faculty member or department finds appropriate. When reporting evaluation of student work for assessment purposes, only indicate the results based on the rubric or criteria that was developed for assessment reports. Departments/programs should not report the grade or score earned by students unless the grades or scores are based on the same rubric/criteria that was developed for assessment purposes.

**B. Indirect Measures**

Indirect assessment measures ask students to self-report about various aspects of their education including what skills and knowledge they think they have gained. One of the most common indirect measures, surveys, often ask students what experiences students attribute their learning to, how students feel about what they know, and what students value as a result of their educational experiences. In addition, third-party reports of what students know and can do may represent an indirect assessment technique if the reports gathered are generalized assessments of student performances. The use of senior exit surveys, alumni surveys and employer surveys are encouraged as valuable indirect assessment techniques.

A formal or informal interview of students completing the program can help gain insight into both the achievement of learning outcomes and overall satisfaction with a program.  These could be done on an individual basis or in small focus groups.  The questions asked the students should reflect the objectives of the program, scope and sequence of the curriculum, and perceived value of their knowledge and skills attained during the program. Many of the same questions asked in an exit survey can be asked of individuals who have graduated and are alumni. However, in an alumni survey, there should also be at least a few questions about the relationship between a student's knowledge and skills relative to their graduate studies or career performance.  This measure of satisfaction with a program is useful in checking the match between program objectives and perceived usefulness after graduation.

**VI. Timeline**

One element required in the SOAP is a timeline that indicates when each assessment measure will be carried out. The timeline should be organized by academic year and should include assessment activities that were completed during the past two years and assessment activities that are planned for future academic years. Departments should create timelines for five to seven year periods at a time in order to be sure that they assess all of their student learning outcomes within this time frame. If a department indicates that a measure will be carried out in a given year and due to extenuating circumstances needs to assess a different measure, the department needs to note this in their assessment report.

**VII. Closing the Loop**

Closing the loop refers to using the findings from assessment activities in order to improve student learning. This is one of the most important aspects of the assessment process. The university needs to be able to demonstrate that departments and programs have considered assessment results and made changes when warranted. Results can be used to either confirm that assignments and curricula are effective or to make changes in instruction, curricula, or programs. How assessment findings have been used to draw conclusions about what is effective and to make adjustments or changes should be documented.

***When departments/programs revise or update their SOAP, please send a copy to their College Assessment Coordinator and the University Director of Assessment, Dr. Douglas Fraleigh (douglasf@csufresno.edu).***