

## EWU Programmatic SLO Assessment

AY 2015-16 and “Closing the Loop” for AY 2014-15

### Introduction:

Assessment of student learning is an important and integrated part of faculty and programs. As part of ongoing program assessment at Eastern Washington University, each department is asked to report on assessment results for *each* program and *each* certificate for *at least one* Student Learning Outcome (SLO) this year. To comply with accreditation standards, the programs must also demonstrate efforts to “close the loop” in improving student learning and/or the learning environment. Thus, this template has been revised into two parts.

### Resources:

Check this site for sample reports (created with the previous year’s template) by EWU programs and other assessment resources: <http://access.ewu.edu/undergraduate-studies/faculty-support/student-learning-assessment/program-slo-assessment.xml>

Additional resources and support are available to:

- 1) Determine whether students can do, know or value program goals upon graduation and to what extent;
- 2) Determine students’ progress through the program, while locating potential bottlenecks, curricular redundancies, and more; and
- 3) Embed assessments in sequenced and meaningful ways that save time.

Contact Dr. Helen Bergland for assistance with assessment in support of student learning and pedagogical approaches: [hberglan@ewu.edu](mailto:hberglan@ewu.edu) or 359.4305.

Use this template to report on your program assessment. **Reports are due to your Dean and to Dr. Helen Bergland ([hberglan@ewu.edu](mailto:hberglan@ewu.edu)), Office of Academic Planning, by September 15, 2016.**

**Degree/Certificate: Master of Public Health**

**Major/Option:**

**Submitted by: Dr Frank Houghton**

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

**Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2015-16**

**Part I – for the 2015-16 academic year:** Because Deans have been asked to create College-Level Synthesis Reports annually, the template has been slightly modified for a) clarity for Chairs and Directors, and b) a closer fit with what the Deans and Associate Deans are being asked to report.

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.

Develop professional communication skills

2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;  
 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;  
 SLO is met without change required

3. **Strategies and methods:** Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

Assessment of this SLO was focused primarily on a combination of the capstone research project presentation (which served as a terminal exam) combined with an evaluation of the written research projects. Assessments of the presentation/ terminal exam involved two internal faculty (Dr Olu Ekundayo & I) and one faculty from another Department (Dr Robbie Jackson from Speech & Language Disorders). I conducted the evaluation of the written projects. These projects had to be written up in journal article format as though for publication in a specific journal (by default the Washington State Journal of Public Health Practice, although this was subject to change if the student was deliberately targeting another journal for potential publication). I reviewed the written papers on the same basis as I am often asked to do so by academic journals.

4. **Observations gathered from data:** Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.

a. Findings:

The findings differ dramatically between the oral/ poster presentations and the written papers. 10 out of 12 of the oral/ poster presentations were really rather impressive. The posters were attractive, comprehensive and appropriate and students were well able to provide a lucid and accurate overview of their research, as well as provide a critique of its limitations.

The would-be journal articles however were of a lower quality. 2 of the 12 articles were strong, with most rating as mediocre. Literature reviews were loose, lacked a critical edge, and were far from comprehensive. The results and method sections were rather lightweight and the discussions were limited.

b. Analysis of findings:

The strong emphasis placed on oral presentations throughout the MPH and the focus on professional presentations appears to be paying dividends. However attempts to bring the capstone project up to publishable quality requires significant further work.

5. **What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?**

- a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

A significant number of changes are suggested:

- Students need to complete a number of annotated bibliographies
- Assessed work on referencing required
- Introduction of at least two Health Scholarship courses

- b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

The first two changes can be implemented starting August 2016:

- Students need to complete a number of annotated bibliographies en-route to completion
- Assessed work on referencing required

The development of two Health Scholarship courses will take place this fall (2016) and these will be submitted to GAC for approval over the 2016-17 academic year for first use in the 2017-18 academic year.

6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

This assessment is focused on the end of the course, which is a potential drawback. However the introduction of the Health Scholarship courses into the first year of the two-year MPH will allow a focus on writing skills to be evaluated earlier in the program.

**NEW: PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP**  
**FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2014-15 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT**

In response to the university's accrediting body, the [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#), this section has been added. This should be viewed as a follow up to the previous year's findings. In other words, begin with findings from 2014-15, and then describe actions taken during 2014-15 to improve student learning along, provide a brief summary of findings, and describe possible next steps.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The College-Level Synthesis report includes a section asking Deans to summarize which programs/certificates have demonstrated "closing-the-loop" assessments and findings based on the previous year's assessment report.

**Working definition for closing the loop:** *Using assessment results to improve student learning as well as pedagogical practices. This is an essential step in the continuous cycle of assessing student learning. It is the collaborative process through which programs use evidence of student learning to gauge the efficacy of collective educational practices, and to identify and implement strategies for improving student learning.* Adapted 8.21.13 from <http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/closing-loop.html>.

**THIS SECTION IS NOT RELEVANT TO THE MPH AS THE MPH WAS COMPLETELY RE-WRITTEN DURING 2014 (PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED WITH HELEN)**

1. **Student Learning Outcome(s)** assessed for 2014-15

2. **Strategies implemented** during 2015-16 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2013-14 assessment activities.
  
3. **Summary of results** (may include comparative data or narrative; description of changes made to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.): Describe the effect of the changes towards improving student learning and/or the learning environment.
  
4. What **further changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery**, etc. are projected based on closing-the-loop data, findings and analysis?

**Definitions:**

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.
2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** This checklist informs the reader whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.
3. **Strategies and methods used to gather student performance data,** including assessment instruments used, and a description of how and when the assessments were conducted. Examples of strategies/methods: embedded test questions in a course or courses, portfolios, in-class activities, standardized test scores, case studies, analysis of written projects, etc. Additional information could describe the use of rubrics, etc. as part of the assessment process.
4. **Observations gathered from data:** This section includes findings and analyses based on the above strategies and methods, and provides data to substantiate the distinction made in #2. For that reason this section has been divided into parts (a) and (b) to provide space for both the findings and the analysis of findings.
5. **Program changes based on the assessment results:** This section is where the program lists plans to improve student learning, based on assessment findings, and provides a broad

timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

Programs often find assessment is part of an ongoing process of continual improvement.

**6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed.**

Evaluation of the assessment plan and process itself: what worked in the assessment planning and process, what did not, and why.

*Some elements of this document have been drawn or adapted from the University of Massachusetts' assessment handbook, "Program-Based Review and Assessment: Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement" (2001). Retrieved from [http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online\\_handbooks/program\\_based.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf)*