

Student Outcomes Assessment and Success Report AY2017-18 *Completed reports due from the dean to the Assessment Office via Blackboard by October 15. Deans, assessment coordinators, and/or department chairs set their own internal deadlines for material review and request for refinement if not suitably addressing questions.*

Unit/Program Name: Master of Public Administration **Contact Name(s) and Email(s)** Nathan Myers (Nathan.myers@indstate.edu)

Before you complete the form below, review your outcomes library and curriculum map to ensure that they are accurate and up to date. If not, you may submit a new version along with this summary. Templates are available on the [assessment website](#).

Part 1a: Summary of Assessment Activities

a. What learning outcomes did you assess this past year? If this is a graduate program, identify the Graduate Student Learning Outcome each outcome aligns with.	b. (1) What assignments or activities did you use to determine how well your students attained the outcome? (2) In what course or other required experience did the assessment occur?	c. What were your expectations for student performance?	d. What were the actual data/results?	e. What changes or improvements were made or will be made in response to these assessment results or feedback from previous year's report?
1. Mastery of an appropriate literature	Grades in PA 604 (Fall) and PA 605 (Fall)	80% of students to receive a grade of "B" or better for final projects.	69.2% (604) and 78.6% (604) reached that standard	Introduce a step-by-step approach to lit reviews; in-class modeling of appropriate sources and acceptable form and style
2. Ability to think critically	Final projects in both our methods (604 Spring) and our statistics (602 Fall) courses.	80% of students should receive a "B" or better on their final projects in both courses	30.8% and 56.3% respectively in those classes met this metric	In 604, assign just one type of analysis (e.g. analysis of variance); give distance students extra credit for watching lectures
3. Communicating in a diverse environment	Online weekly discussions based on questions, to be supported by weekly readings.	80% of students in 605 should receive at least a grade of "B" based on performance in online discussions.	71.4% of students met this metric	Move discussions from a miscellaneous answer to a dialogue format, in which certain students pose questions based on reading, and then respond to answers posed by other students.

Note: If you would like to report on more than three outcomes, place the cursor in the last cell on the right and hit "tab" to add a new row.

Part 1b: Continuous Quality Improvement

In no more than one page, summarize 1) the discoveries assessment has enabled you to make about student learning (a. What specifically do students know and do well—and less well? b. What evidence can you provide that learning is improving?); 2) what your assessment plan will focus on in the coming year; and 3) how will this information be shared with other stakeholders?

According to the data, we are nearing, but not quite reaching the three goals established for the program. It must be noted, though, that the current numbers are fairly congruent with past findings. We continue to be disappointed, especially, with the constant low scores we see in terms of our students' ability to think critically in regard to statistical analysis—or at least, their ability to demonstrate those skills. As far as the other two, activities—literature and the diverse environment—the numbers look better. We are hopeful that within the next reporting period or two those numbers will rise to surpass our goals.

That said, what it appears we should focus on is altering certain pedagogical techniques and evaluation practices in PA 604 and PA 602 that would enable students to distill their critical thinking skills—and raise their grades. As I recall, this has been a constant thorn in the side of our program, but we do intend to remove it. So we plan to implement the pedagogical techniques described above. And we expect to see improvement.

Part 2a: Summary of Student Success Activities

Based on the results of your assessment of student learning outcomes from Part 1 above, reflect on how this data will impact student success within your unit/program.

a. What goals/objectives were established this past year to aid student performance, retention, persistence, and completion?	b. What primary action steps were taken to make progress on each goal and who was responsible?	c. What data informs progress on each goal?	d. What were some accomplishments or achievements for each goal and/or challenges confronted?	e. Please indicate goals that are continuing and any goals that will replace a previous goal. Any additional goals can also be added on a new line.
A 3-year MPA program completion / graduation rate of 75% after three years.	Systematically track students from their first enrollment.	The Fall-to-fall retention rate; the completion rate over the course of the program; and the time to graduation.	We hope to realize a program completion rate of within three years, 80%, with that number rising each year for the next three years	Our time-to-graduation rate over the last four years is about 2.8. Our Fall-to-Fall retention rate averaged 64% over the last three years. We will begin tracking with students admitted in Fall, 2019, hoping to meet our goal by AY 2020-21.
80% capstone completion for capstone students (PA 697), in their final semester of work.	Follow up on students who fall into these categories: Don't register for 697 on time Drop out of 697	Our count of MPA degrees conferred has dropped from 18 four years ago to 14 in AY 2016-17.	Ours is a distance program comprised almost entirely of adult, mid-career distance students. Despite the difficulties presented by the	We would like to see 100% completion, but that's not reasonable. So we look for 80% of our students to complete their capstone

	Take an incomplete in 697, then don't return		nature of the program, we need to develop a system that will allow us to systematically track students, from their first registration	projects. We believe this will result in a rise of our degree count. In AY 2017-18, our capstone completion rate was 74%
Tie student success to our assessment activities.	Supervising and critiquing capstone students' (PA 697) final projects. Projects are typically papers of moderate (20 to 30 page), but which require students to perform original research, and to support it with an appropriate literature.	Pass rate for capstone students on two measures: ability to think critically, and the ability to find and use an appropriate PA literature to support their capstone projects.	The critical thinking element is especially important. As per our assessment report, our students are not recording satisfactory scores for critical thinking in earlier courses.	A review of the 17 capstone projects over AY 17-18 reveals that only about 59% of our capstone projects met high standards for critical thinking and understanding the literature. The others passed the course, but just met the standard.

Part 2b: Continuous Quality Improvement

In no more than one page, summarize 1) the discoveries that attention to student performance, retention, persistence, and completion has enabled you to make about program/department systems, processes, and norms as it effects students; and 2) how this will positively impact student success, including with regard to the readiness of students for graduate study or a career?

As faculty of a distance program, we are, in a way, handicapped by not meeting and coming to know our students first-hand. It goes without saying that closer student interaction with faculty, in the classroom and during advisement often translates in raising the likelihood that students will return from term— and graduate.

Most of our students are adult learners, with well-established careers in public or nonprofit service. And so earning our degree is usually not as critical as it is for students in other programs, students who might be looking for, or just starting, their careers. What motivates our students is not so much getting a job, but improving their knowledge and their skills through study, thereby placing themselves in positions to move up the ladder of their careers. So once they are admitted to the program, our goals are to, first, equip them with critical skills required of public administrators—and to get them across the finish line to graduation. A master's degree, in our field, often means promotion.

We have found, however, through observation and through other activities, such as program assessment, that a portion of our students are leaving the program without completing it; or demonstrating, when they do arrive at the final course (PA 697), that their critical skills that aren't up to standard. We aim to remedy this in two ways. The first is to track students as they move "through the pipeline" in order to provide assistance to, or just encourage, those who may fall out. And we also aim to raise the level of critical skills, and knowledge of the field, through students' capstone experience. We expect that changes in PA 604 and 602, described in our assessment report, will better equip students for the challenges presented by searching the literature and performing original research in 697.

Please note that there are two completion goals. The first is for our students to complete through the program, according to a contract or plan established at the outset of each student's study. So we aim to get them to their final semester and into their final project (697).

The second is to provide students with the skills necessary along the way to complete their capstone study, using the critical skills described above.

Dear Nathan,

Thank you so much for sharing your assessment process and findings for AY 2017-18 with the Assessment and Student Success Councils. You will find a comprehensive synthesis of the feedback compiled by both groups below. It is understood that some of the feedback might encompass practices that you already engage in but that are not documented in this report. As the purpose of this evaluation is focused on recognizing great work and helping faculty improve assessment practice, it is not necessary to retroactively add documentation. Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions or if there is any way I can assist you in further developing assessment in your program.

This report will be shared with the Associate Dean(s) and Dean of your college and summarized findings will be shared as composite college/institutional data with the President's Office and the Provost's team.

Sincerely,

Kelley (x7975)

Program: Master Public Administration	
Assessment Practice Overall Rating: Developing (1.75/3.00) Student Success Practice Overall Rating (notes below in blue): Mature (2.50/3.00)	
Strengths	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall this is a strong report with clear information. I know your practice exceeds the “developing” rating given above, with the rating mostly reflecting missing information that can easily be added to future reports.• Learning outcomes are singular and fairly measurable.• Clear information provided about the courses in which students will demonstrate achievement of outcomes.• Good measures in final projects and weekly discussions.• Clear information about expected and actual student performance.• Excellent strategies to improve student performance based on the findings.• Clear and relevant student success goals with meaningful targets.• Good information in action plans to support goal attainment.• Clear analysis of data to inform goals and understand current standing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning outcomes 2 and 3 can be more specific as to what students will do to demonstrate critical thinking and communication. These are broad areas that can be interpreted in a variety of ways, so if there is a more specific outcome in mind consider refining these. Using student-centered language (what will the student do rather than what with the student gain) may help with this.• Indicate which Graduate Student Learning Outcomes are aligned with each of your program learning outcomes (this is helpful when graduate program review comes around).• Final grades in a course are typically considered a poor measure of a specific learning outcome since course grades are usually composites of student performance of multiple outcomes.• It is unclear from the report what tools were used to evaluate student performance – rubrics, checklists, etc.• Make note of how findings are shared.• Note which faculty are involved in carrying out the action steps.• For the first goal, note what interventions, if any, will be taken when systematic tracking of students raises concerns for meeting the goal.

Assessment (Parts 1a & 1b) Scoring Rubric is included below. Student Success (Parts 2a & 2b) Scoring Rubric is included below with no notations just for your reference (the SSC did not choose to report in this way).

Score was calculated on a 0 (undeveloped), 1 (developing), 2 (mature), 3 (exemplary) scale.

Evaluation Criteria	Exemplary	Mature	Developing	Undeveloped
<p>Student Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>At least one learning outcome that is aligned with program coursework is assessed this cycle.</p> <p>Learning outcome(s) is specific, measurable, and student-centered.</p> <p>Rationale for assessment of this outcome(s) is made clear (ex: it is part of a standing assessment cycle, a need was identified, etc.)</p> <p>Learning outcome(s) directly link to college, institutional, and/or accreditor goals/standards.</p>	<p>At least one learning outcome that is aligned with program coursework is assessed this cycle.</p> <p>Learning outcome(s) is specific, measurable, and student-centered.</p> <p>Rationale for assessment of this outcome(s) is made clear (ex: it is part of a standing assessment cycle, a need was identified, etc.)</p>	<p>At least one learning outcome that is aligned with program coursework is assessed this cycle.</p> <p>Learning outcomes(s) is measurable.</p>	<p>No learning outcomes are identified for assessment or the outcomes that are identified are not linked to program outcomes aligned with program coursework (e.g. – curriculum map) or are not measurable.</p>
<p>Performance Goals & Measures</p>	<p>Performance goal identified for each learning outcome is clear and reasonable (ex: based on previous performance data, professional standards, etc.).</p> <p>Identified measures are designed to accurately reflect student learning, including at least one direct measure.</p> <p>Tools used to measure student performance are described and were reviewed for validity or trustworthiness prior to use (note this in the report; attach tools if applicable – ex: rubrics, checklists, exam keys, etc.).</p>	<p>Performance goal identified for each learning outcome is clear and reasonable (ex: based on previous performance data, professional standards, etc.).</p> <p>Identified measures are designed to accurately reflect student learning, including at least one direct measure.</p> <p>Tools or processes for evaluating student performance on measures are described (attach tools if applicable – ex: rubrics, checklists, exam keys, etc.).</p>	<p>Performance goal(s) is identified for each learning outcome.</p> <p>Identified measures (ex: assignments, projects, tests, etc.) are poorly suited to performance goals or are solely indirect measures.</p> <p>Tools or processes for evaluating student performance on measures are not described.</p>	<p>No goals for student performance of learning outcomes is identified, and/or no measures are provided.</p>

Analysis & Results	<p>Data is collected using the measures and tools identified.</p> <p>Results are reported with clear description of quality analysis (e.g., analysis follows accepted statistical or qualitative procedures).</p> <p>Results are shared in relation to performance goals.</p> <p>Results are discussed in relation to college, institutional, and/or accreditor goals/standards.</p>	<p>Data is collected using the measures and tools identified.</p> <p>Results are reported with clear description of analysis (e.g., analysis follows accepted statistical or qualitative procedures).</p> <p>Results are shared in relation to performance goals.</p>	<p>Data is collected using the measures and tools identified.</p> <p>Results are reported with little description of analysis.</p>	<p>No data is being collected.</p> <p>No results are provided.</p>
Sharing & Use of Results for Continuous Improvement	<p>Clear information is provided about sharing and using results to inform practice.</p> <p>Discussion of what was learned from results is provided and connected to plans for sharing and using results to inform practice.</p> <p>A plan for adjusting performance, goals, assessment, and/or program components based on results is outlined.</p>	<p>Clear information is provided about sharing and using results to inform practice.</p> <p>Discussion of what was learned from results is provided and connected to plans for sharing and using results to inform practice.</p>	<p>Limited information is provided about sharing or using results to inform practice.</p> <p>Some discussion of what was learned from results is provided.</p>	<p>No information is provided about sharing or using results to inform practice.</p> <p>No evidence of reflection on results is provided (ex: discussion, conclusions drawn)</p>
Overall Rating	<input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary	<input type="checkbox"/> Mature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing	<input type="checkbox"/> Undeveloped

Student Success Activities Report Rubric (Part 2 of Student Outcomes Assessment Report)Unit/Program:

Office of Student Success/Office of Assessment & Accreditation Evaluation Date:

Evaluation Criteria	0 Undeveloped	1 Developing	2 Mature	3 Exemplary
Goals/ Objectives	No goals/objectives are identified.	Goals/objectives are poorly suited to addressing student performance, retention, persistence, and/or completion. Goals/objectives may also be modest at best such that little effort is required.	Goals/objectives are generally clear and reasonably well suited to addressing student performance, retention, persistence, and/or completion. Goals/objectives are also generally at least moderately aggressive such that appropriate effort is required.	Goals/objectives are all clear and well suited to addressing student performance, retention, persistence, and/or completion. Goals/objectives are also at least moderately aggressive in all cases such that appropriate effort is required.
Action Steps	No action steps are identified.	Action steps are weak, underdeveloped, and/or poorly suited to making progress on goals/objectives. No person(s) or group(s) indicated who will be responsible for the actions.	Action steps are generally clear and reasonably well suited to making progress on goals/objectives. Person(s) or group(s) responsible for the actions are indicated in most cases.	Action steps are all clear and well suited to making progress on goals/objectives Person(s) or group(s) responsible for each action are indicated, ideally with a timeline.
Data that Informs Progress on Each Goal/Objective	No data, quantitative or qualitative, is identified.	Data to inform progress are poorly suited to measure progress on goals/objectives.	Data to inform progress are generally well suited to measure progress on goals/objectives.	Data to inform progress are all well suited to measure progress on goals/objectives.
Assessment of Outcomes and Continuous Improvement	For goals/objectives in place the prior year, no reflection provided on achievements/challenges, sharing results, and/or plans for improvement or change based on results. No reflection on outcome assessment plan for continuous improvement provided for new goals/objectives.	For goals/objectives in place the prior year, modest at best reflection provided (and/or is vague or of questionable connection to results) on achievements/challenges, sharing results, and/or plans for improvement or change based on results. Modest at best reflection on assessment plan for continuous improvement provided for new goals/objectives.	For goals/objectives in place the prior year, generally appropriate reflection provided (and is reasonably well connected to results) on achievements/challenges, sharing results, and/or plans for improvement or change based on results. Reasonable reflection on assessment plan for continuous improvement provided for new goals/objectives.	For goals/objectives in place the prior year, strong reflection is provided in all cases (and is well connected to results) on achievements/challenges, sharing results, and/or plans for improvement or change based on results. Well-developed reflection on assessment plan for continuous improvement provided for new goals/objectives.
Overall Rating	<input type="checkbox"/> Undeveloped	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing	<input type="checkbox"/> Mature	<input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary